

October 30, 2016
Sunday Morning Service
Series: The Life of David
Community Baptist Church
643 S. Suber Road
Greer, SC 29650
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To Ponder . . .

Questions to ponder as we prepare to hear from 2 Samuel 9:1-13.

1. In what ways does the David and Mephibosheth story illustrate our relationship with God?
2. How often do you think about God's grace?
3. When and how did you first hear the invitation to come and receive God's blessing of salvation?
4. What was your first response when you understood God's invitation?
5. How have you demonstrated your evaluation of God's grace?

AMAZING GRACE HOW SWEET THE SOUND 2 Samuel 9:1-13

After many years of serving God faithfully, Paul the missionary and apostle wrote to his dear, young friend Timothy and confessed, *"Though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus"* (1 Timothy 1:13-14). Only people who, like Paul, have been overwhelmed by God's grace can understand and appreciate what he confessed to Timothy.

To know with certainty that in my natural condition I was a horrible enemy of my Creator, and then to know that because of His

amazing grace I am now His dear child, is the most valuable and comforting of all knowledge. Multitudes of religious people in the world and throughout history know and have known a lot about God, or religion, or the Bible, or church, or just plain good stuff. But nothing compares with knowing that I deserve eternal punishment, and yet, because of God's grace through Jesus, I have eternal life with all the blessings that come with that promise right now.

We have concluded in our past studies that God chose to use David as a picture or type of the eternal Savior Jesus Christ. That is why God called David "the man after My heart." God chose to disclose the character of His heart in the man David as He used David in many ways to foretell the work of the Beloved Son Jesus. It is possible that the story in our text today is one of the greatest demonstrations of the work and heart of Jesus the eternal King, the gracious King.

Looking for an Opportunity to do Good (vv.1-8).

David, like the Perfect King, desired to show grace (vv.1-5). This very kind king was looking for someone in the house of Saul on whom to shower blessings. *And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"* (v.1). It does not appear that David was speaking to anyone in particular. He was simply looking for an opportunity to do good for someone in the house of Saul. More precisely, according to the Hebrew wording, David wanted to show *khesed* (the word translated *kindness*). This is unwavering love and loyalty. It means to show unchanging loyalty to a promise or vow out of a heart of love. It is the kind of love God shows.

But wasn't Saul David's enemy? Why would David want to show kindness to someone from his enemy's house? Actually, Saul wasn't David's enemy. David was Saul's enemy. While Saul hated David and wanted to kill him, David showed the most sincere respect for him.

This is a beautiful and accurate picture of the work of God toward us. In the same way, God continues to look among those who reject him to show us good. All of us are born with the same sinful

nature and attitudes that Satan and our parents Adam and Eve displayed. That we are born rejecting God is no small matter. That we naturally press down the truth, the knowledge we have about God, makes us His enemies. God's enemies are characterized by sin. The sin of God's enemies is the reason the beloved Son Jesus Christ died on the cross of shame. This is what makes God's grace so amazing. The truth is this: *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life (Romans 5:10).*

I told this story to our folks at a recent prayer meeting. During the week of July 4th our last horse got caught up in a fence the deer had knocked down. In the process, he sliced his leg deeply and, as it turned out, incurably. I treated the wound for a couple of months, but it only got worse. Finally, it became evident I would have to put Malachi down because his leg was infected and painful. This was the hardest thing I ever did because he had been a fine horse. I loved him and loved to be around him. Now try to imagine this unimaginable picture. It is the day I need to put Malachi down. So I say to him, "Malachi, I'm sorry but your wound is incurable. Therefore death is the only solution. But don't worry, your wound can be cured if I put my beloved son Michael or Matthew or Mark to death. In fact, only through the death of one of my sons can you be healed." Obviously, there was no way that was going to happen. But that is what God did for you and for me when He put Jesus the Beloved Son on the cross to pay the price for our incurable wound called sin.

Now that God had disposed of Saul, David looked for someone who could receive his mercy and grace as an expression of his love for Jonathan. Because David loved Jonathan, he looked for someone in his family to help. Likewise, because God loves the family of humanity, who He created for His own glory, He looks for people in this family on whom to shower His grace.

There is another teaching picture in David's desire to do good to a member of Saul's family. David also pictures the redeemed person's desire to help others. He was once being hunted for destruction by Saul even as Satan, our archenemy, desires to take us to hell with him. But Jonathan risked his life to bring David to safety. Now David remembered the wonderful work of his dear friend Jonathan and his promise to do good to his family. If you and I have

really experienced rescue from the consequences of sin, should we not desire that others would know the means of rescue? Look for the needy person and tell him or her the good news of God's grace.

The kind king discovered a needy person. David reached out to Ziba. *Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant." And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet" (vv.2-3).* Why did David contact Ziba? Though he is called *a servant of the house of Saul*, Ziba was obviously quite wealthy. He himself had 20 servants (v.10).

It appears that Ziba was in charge of managing Saul's estate, which was located not too far north of Jerusalem. The former king's estate would have been quite sizeable. But it appears that the estate was virtually under complete control of someone who was not in Saul's lineage. David wanted to fix that. He was not concerned to eliminate any lingering threats to the throne, as some Bible students conclude. Saul and his sons were dead, maybe for as long as ten years by now.

David was not trying to wipe out any possible resistance from Saul's family but wanted to make good on a vow he had made. Years earlier, when he was running for his life from Saul, David had made a vow to Jonathan to preserve his name for generations to come (1 Samuel 24:21-22). Granted, David had no part in the destruction of Saul's family, but neither had he purposely helped Jonathan's posterity. Now while David was enjoying the unchanging mercy (*khesed*) of God (2 Samuel 7:15), he thought about his own expressions of *kindness (khesed)* toward Jonathan.

David learned about Jonathan's son who was crippled. His disability was due to an accident in childhood. *Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 4:4).* A middle-aged, disabled man would not be a threat to the throne. Mephibosheth was not a threat. He was a man in need. Through no fault of his own, Mephibosheth spent his life dealing with a disability.

He pictures our own condition well. Through no fault of our own we came into life disabled by sin. We are not and cannot be what we should be in our relationship with our Creator because of our sin nature. We are indeed needy people.

The kind king brought the needy person to himself. *The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar."* Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar (vv.4-5). Lo-debar was a long way from Jerusalem. It was located about 70 miles north of Jerusalem and across the Jordan River. Was this like a self-imposed exile in order not to be in David's way? Mephibosheth was living with a man who would become one of David's most ardent supporters.

Compare how far we are from the Savior who desires to do good for us. Our sin separates us from His presence. We are in a God-imposed exile, unable to access God until we come to Him through Christ by faith. How will Mephibosheth, the relative of the king who had been at war with David, respond to David's kindness? How did we respond to God's kindness when we heard the news that He desired to make us one of His own through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ?

Mephibosheth, and even Ziba, illustrated a right response to grace (vv.6-8). When the king called, the needy person showed up. *And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage (v.6a).* It is true that Mephibosheth could have refused the invitation. However, refusal might have resulted in his execution. Or if Mephibosheth refused to show up, maybe David would have looked for someone else to receive his kindness. But Mephibosheth responded by going to meet with the kind king. Apparently, a servant brought him or he might have ridden the long way on a donkey. In some way he showed up at the king's palace and indicated by his homage that he understood the king's authority over him.

How should we respond when our King and Creator calls to us? We are aware that we have a King who is our authority because He reveals that truth in the things He has created. *For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things*

that have been made. So they are without excuse (Romans 1:20). We are aware of our King's character and laws because He has written them on our consciences. *They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them (Romans 2:15).*

Building on this revelation of Himself, God the King draws us to Himself by sending out messengers with the message of salvation. We hear it from friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, the radio, internet, television, tracts. But the only people who receive the benefit of the Perfect King's steadfast love are those who come to Him as He invites them and bow before Him revealing their understanding of His authority. Some people come to their Creator and try to strike a deal as if they were equals. Some people propose to add just enough of the King's kindness to keep them out of hell. We receive God's everlasting kindness when we bow before Him acknowledging His authority over us.

The needy person understood his position. He saw himself as a servant. *And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I am your servant" (v.6b).* Imagine what Mephibosheth must have been thinking as he bowed before the king and as the king uttered his name. He might have thought, "I'm as good as dead because my family fought against this king." There was nothing positive even in the very mention of his name. *David said, "Mephibosheth!"* Like Ishbosheth whose name was changed from Eshbaal, Mephibosheth was originally Merib-baal (1 Chron. 8:34) a reminder of the heinous false god Baal that was a perennial temptation to and thorn in the side of God's people.

Mephibosheth, a reference to false gods, is a picture of our natural condition as we come before God. We naturally want to serve self as god instead of serving the true God. We are children of Satan, God's archenemy. And yet there was no sign of displeasure or even of threat from the kind king. His address to this humble servant probably sounded much like the time King Jesus uttered a simple name: "Mary." Jesus' word was full of pathos and love. Mary fell at His feet and worshiped. And so when we come to Jesus and He utters our names, how do we respond?

Mephibosheth saw himself as lower than a servant. But the king offered incredible grace. *And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I*

will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always.” King David restored Saul’s family estate to lame Mephibosheth. The estate was located just 3 miles north of Jerusalem in Gibeah, near enough for Mephibosheth to keep an eye on it. What a great expression of kindness.

The needy man did not feel worthy of the king’s grace. *And he paid homage and said, “What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?”* (v.8). From self-imposed exile to sitting at the king’s table—why? Mephibosheth could not come up with one reason why the kind king should bless him. Nor can we. We who have received the bountiful kindness of God, His promise of unchanging love, should always remember the extent of that grace. God’s grace is valued most highly when we honestly assess our own sinful condition. Why would God love me when I have nothing to offering Him for His love? Of course we cannot “pay God back” because His grace is immeasurable and beyond value. But would David carry out the promise? Could Mephibosheth trust this one who his relatives counted as an enemy? Can you trust God to give you eternal life? Can you trust God to grant you eternal kind of life right now in this life?

Completing Good Intentions (vv.9-13).

David had a plan. The king’s plan was to heap blessings upon the object of his grace (vv.9-10a). *Then the king called Ziba, Saul’s servant, and said to him, “All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master’s grandson. And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master’s grandson may have bread to eat”* (vv.9-10a). David gave the estate of Saul to Mephibosheth. He gave the responsibility of caring for the estate to Ziba. Again we are reminded in verse ten that Ziba himself was no insignificant man. *Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants* (v.10c).

David promised a bunch of material blessing. But the temporal, passing, material gifts were not the greatest blessing to Mephibosheth. The greatest blessing was to eat at the king’s table. David told Ziba, *“But Mephibosheth your master’s grandson shall*

always eat at my table” (v.10b). Mephibosheth must have felt like David himself felt. When he contemplated God’s kindness to him, he declared, *“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows”* (Psalm 23:5).

And we who have come to receive God’s grace feed at the table of God’s Word not only daily but moment by moment. We experience what David said of God’s words: *More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb* (Psalm 19:10). We understand what the prophet Jeremiah meant when he said, *“Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts”* (Jeremiah 15:16). We realize what Jesus promised when He said, *“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst”* (John 6:35).

Imagine what it would be like if you grew up in an impoverished nation where a good meal was a little rice and maybe some milk and bread. Then one day you are adopted by a family that works at a large, thriving university. Not only every day, but for every meal, you simply walk into a dining hall that offers a huge array of different kinds of food. You are allowed to eat as much as you want—free! How long would it take to grow accustomed to this blessing and take it for granted? We who have come to receive God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ feed at His bountiful table all the time. While those who reject God’s invitation cannot even understand what we enjoy.

In closing, observe the response of those who received the king’s blessing (vv.11-13). Ziba concluded that he would do all that his Lord commanded. *Then Ziba said to the king, “According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do”* (v.11a). That is a good example of a right response to God’s blessing too. If we understand the God who offers grace, we willingly submit to His commands. God’s commands are not grievous or burdensome because they are part of His blessing. Too many people forego God’s blessings because, unlike Ziba, they want to argue with God’s plan for taking care of what He gives. The person who truly sees himself or herself as God’s servant, readily submits to what God desires.

It is as Jesus said, *“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love” (John 15:10)*. John, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, concurred. *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments (1 John 5:2)*.

And Mephibosheth would eat like the king’s son. *So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table, like one of the king’s sons (v.11b)*. He who was born in the “enemy’s” family now looked like one of the king’s sons. The picture should cause us to stop and wonder how valuable the Lord’s blessing is to us who have been adopted by the King of kings? How good it is to experience, *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him (Romans 8:16-17)*. In fact, we do not yet fully grasp the blessing of being the children of the King. John wrote, *Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2)*. Enjoy your blessings as children of the King.

And while we enjoy God’s blessings to us, we can always remember our ailment. *And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba’s house became Mephibosheth’s servants. So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king’s table. Now he was lame in both his feet (vv.12-13)*. Does it seem odd to end this wonderful story with the reminder that Mephibosheth was lame? Actually it is possible that the disabling condition heightened the king’s blessing.

Mephibosheth must have been a bit like Paul who never forgot the condition in which God found Him and drew Him to Himself. He confessed, *“For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:9-10a)*. That should be the ongoing response for all of us. By God’s grace alone we are what we are. And we are children of God, adopted into His family because of the provision of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, the King of kings, bought us through the

sacrifice of Himself and brought us into His family where we receive grace added to grace.

The King sends this invitation to sinners far and wide. Have you heard the invitation? Why would you not respond by coming to the King and bowing before Him confessing your sin that separates you from His blessings? Today is the best time to acknowledge your great need for salvation and to accept by faith the grace God offers to you.