

“Grace Undeserved”
2 Samuel 9
(Preached at Trinity, April 28, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight, we will begin to cover an episode of David dealing with Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan.
Putting the account together demands surfing through several different chapters—Chapter 4, 9, 16, & 19.
2. We first read of Mephibosheth back in **Chapter 4**.
 - A. Saul was dead. Three of his sons had died with him.
1 Samuel 31:2 NAU - "The Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua the sons of Saul."
 - B. We read in **Chapter 2** that Saul had one remaining son, Ishbosheth. Saul's general, Abner, resisted the rightful reign of David and put Ishbosheth on the throne. Being an opportunist, Abner soon defected from Ishbosheth and tried to gain position with David, but he soon died a the hand of Joab.
 - C. Ishbosheth was then assassinated and it was at this point we are briefly introduced to Mephibosheth.
2 Samuel 4:4 NAU - "Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth."
The purpose of introducing Mephibosheth in **Chapter 4** was to show the total destruction of Saul's house. All of Saul's sons are dead. His remaining heir, his grandson Mephibosheth, is around 12 years old. He would have been too young to rule and unable to fight when he got older. Saul's house was powerless.
With all of Saul's scheming to make himself great and his kingdom enduring this is what he got. He is dead. His sons, the potential heirs to the throne, are dead. The remaining heir, the son of Jonathan, was crippled leaving him unable to seize the throne.
3. Now, as we enter **Chapter 9** Mephibosheth is again the focus. The entire chapter is devoted to David's kindness towards this heir of Jonathan.
 - A. We read in 1 Sam. 20 that David had made a covenant with Jonathan.
1 Samuel 20:15-16 NAU - "You shall not cut off your lovingkindness (רַחֲמֶיךָ) from my house forever, not even when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." ¹⁶ So Jonathan made a *covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, "May the LORD require *it* at the hands of David's enemies."

- a. It had been 10-15 years since Jonathan had died and much longer since this covenant had been made. The text doesn't give any hints as to David's delay. Perhaps David presumed that with the death of Saul and all his sons there was no one surviving of the house of Jonathan.
 - b. David was married to Jonathan's sister and apparently she didn't know of any heirs. But David did not forget his promise to Jonathan. He began to inquire. Covenant promises do not have an expiration date.
- B. This **רַחֲמִים** or covenant love is prominent in this chapter – translated “kindness.”
Verse 1 - "that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake"
Verse 3 - "Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God"
Verse 7 - "I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan"
- C. We are reminded that God doesn't forget covenant.
Deuteronomy 7:9 NAU - "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;"
4. Tonight, I want to bring the first of three sermons on God's grace. Grace is one of the most prominent themes running throughout the Bible. It is a subject we know, and yet we don't know. We sing, “Amazing Grace” but do we know how amazing it is? To misunderstand the nature of grace is to misunderstand God's dealings with man. It is to misunderstand the nature of forgiveness and of our salvation. Paul writes, “For by grace you have been saved.”
5. Tonight I want to set before you the most basic element: Grace is undeserved
 This is the most basic concept of grace. Grace is the unmerited love and favor of God. It is God's undeserved love and kindness. This passage serves as a type of this undeserved kindness.
- I. Our attention is drawn to Mephibosheth's condition
- A. Mephibosheth was crippled
2 Samuel 4:4 NAU - "Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth."
- 1. We are introduced to a young man described as “crippled in his feet.” This was his identity.
 - 2. His infirmity was the result of an accident at the end of the war with the Philistines when Saul and Jonathan were killed. Mephibosheth was only five years old and his caretaker had taken him up to flee from the enemy. We aren't given details of his injury. Perhaps he fell from a horse breaking both ankles. In the absence of medical care the bones did not heal properly leaving him permanently disabled.
 - 3. We are to understand that Mephibosheth suffered a fall that left him permanently disabled. He is defined by his disability. He is never mentioned apart from his disability. Both **Chapters 4 & 9** refer to him as “crippled in both feet.” This chapter ends: "Now he was lame in both feet."

4. All of humanity suffers from a fall that has left us crippled, paralyzed and disabled.
Romans 3:23 NAU - "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"
Romans 5:12 NAU - "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned"
- B. Mephibosheth would have been seen as the enemy of David
1. Normally, the practice was for the new king to eliminate all rivals
 We can see this with the death of Ahaziah in 2 Kings 11
2 Kings 11:1-3 NAU - "When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring. ² But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah and stole him from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and placed him and his nurse in the bedroom. So they hid him from Athaliah, and he was not put to death. ³ So he was hidden with her in the house of the LORD six years, while Athaliah was reigning over the land."
 2. This was most likely one of the reasons Mephibosheth's nurse fled in such haste when he was five years old. She knew his life was in danger.
 3. It would have been consistent with the common practice of kings for David to search out Mephibosheth to kill him and thus remove any possible challenge to his throne.
- C. Mephibosheth was living in obscurity—far away from David
1. Mephibosheth was living in Lo-debar. The name means "pastureless." In other words, it was a barren and unfruitful place.
 2. Mephibosheth was living in a place far removed from Jerusalem. Mephibosheth was living in obscurity, far away from the king.
 3. Apparently, Mephibosheth had been so well hidden that even Jonathan's sister, David's wife Michal, didn't know of his existence.
 4. Mephibosheth was terrified when he was found by David. He expected death.
 5. Mephibosheth's response was that of humility and brokenness.
2 Samuel 9:6 NAU - "Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself."
2 Samuel 9:8 NAU - "Again he prostrated himself and said, "What is your servant, that you should regard a dead dog like me?"
- D. Does not Mephibosheth's condition describe us?
1. Like Mephibosheth we are all spiritual cripples, paralyzed in sin. Like Mephibosheth, our disability defines us. Like Mephibosheth, we were outcasts.
 2. Like Mephibosheth living in Lo-debar, fallen humanity is living in a barren place, far removed from the presence of God. We are crippled and unable to travel to God. He must come to us.
 3. Like Mephibosheth, we feared God. The thought of standing before God strikes fear in the hearts of fallen humanity.

II. Grace comes seeking us

- A. It is important for us to see that Mephibosheth did not come seeking David
1. He was dwelling far removed from David
For Mephibosheth he was dwelling in a place of safety far removed from David.
 2. The last thing on his mind was to come seeking David. He only saw David as a threat. He was satisfied living comfortably in the obscurity of Lo-debar.
 3. Like Mephibosheth, we did not come seeking God.
 - a. The first thing Adam did was hide from God. He feared God. He didn't trust God. God was seen as a threat.
Genesis 3:8 NAU - "They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden."
 - b. No one is seeking God
Romans 3:10-11 NAS - "as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; ¹¹ There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God;"
 - c. God's command to all is "Come."
Revelation 22:17 NAU - "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."
But dead men cannot come. Dead men are not thirsty.
 3. David came searching for Mephibosheth
2 Samuel 9:1 NAU - "Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"
 4. God came seeking us.
- B. Notice it wasn't because of anything of value in Mephibosheth
2 Samuel 9:1 NAU - "Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul,"
1. David did not enquire, "Is there anyone worthy?" "Is there anyone deserving?"
 2. In fact, Mephibosheth was a liability. He had nothing to offer. Over and over he is described in terms of his disability.
We are reminded at the final verse.
2 Samuel 9:13 NAU - "So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate at the king's table regularly. Now he was lame in both feet." He lived at Jerusalem with the king. He regularly ate at the king's table. And he was lame.
 3. This is the nature of grace. It is completely undeserved. This is a difficult truth for a prideful man to embrace. He is overwhelmed by his sense of self-worth. He has an incurable sense of entitlement—that he is deserving of every good thing.
He wants to remind God how good he is, how much he's done, how deserving he is. This is why it is so difficult for a fallen man to believe the Gospel.

4. God came seeking us when we were in our helpless, crippled condition. Grace came seeking us in a dry and barren land.
5. The only way for fallen man to be reconciled with God is for God to come to us in His grace.

Conclusion:

1. This is the nature of God's grace. It is undeserved, unmerited.
Grace is all of God – we can do nothing to earn it
2. An employee need not thank his employer for his wages
 - a. The employee has earned his wages and has the right to demand full payment
 - b. The employer is obligated to pay all wages due
3. Grace, on the other hand, cannot be earned. It can only be received.
4. Our only response is gratitude and love. We owe God all love and devotion.
We'll see that this was Mephibosheth's response—love, devotion, and loyalty to his king.