

Title: **MEPHIBOSHETH**
A PICTURE OF GRACE

Text: 2 Samuel 21:7

Subject: *Grace Portrayed in Mephibosheth*

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Tape # Z-89a

Readings: *Curtis Hall and Larry Brown*
2 Samuel 9:1-13

Introduction:

I never get tired of thinking about, singing about, talking about, hearing about and preaching about God's great grace. Like Noah of old, I have found grace in the eyes of the Lord. — "*The grace of God that bringeth salvation*" has brought salvation to me, and saved me. For more than 44 years, I have found by day and by night, in unceasing experience that God's grace is indeed sufficient.

(Ephesians 3:8) "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Turn with me to 2nd Samuel 21, and let me show you a beautiful picture of God's free and amazing grace in Christ. My text is found in verse 7.

David killed all the sons of Saul's house at the command of God. The slaughter of Saul's seven remaining sons was an

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act of strict justice. — **“But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the Lord’s oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul.”** All the sons of Saul were slain; *“but the King spared Mephibosheth.”* The title of my message is — **MEPHIBOSHETH — A PICTURE OF GRACE.**

There are many stories in the Word of God which have become precious to me. They are stories which portray God’s grace and mercy to me.

- What could better portray the love of God for his people than the story of Hosea’s love for Gomer?
- There could never be a clearer picture of God’s grace in salvation than we have in the stories of the Good Samaritan and Ezekiel’s Deserted Infant.
- Nothing could more forcibly set forth the loving care of God for his people than the story of the Good Shepherd.
- The covenant faithfulness of our heavenly Father is tenderly demonstrated by the story of the Prodigal Son.

Our Lord taught us by his own example that one of the best ways to preach the gospel is by the use of plain, simple parables, stories, and illustrations. Following the Master’s example, I want to preach the gospel to you by telling you the story of David and Mephibosheth. In this story the

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lovingkindness and covenant mercy of our God is beautifully illustrated. — **“The king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the Lord’s oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul.”**

But who was this prince Mephibosheth? He was Jonathan’s son, the last living survivor of the royal house of Saul. When the news of Saul’s death and of the death of his sons on the battlefield of Gilboa reached the royal palace, Mephibosheth was only five years old. His nurse took Jonathan’s little boy up in her arms and fled down to Lodebar. In her panic, Mephibosheth fell from her arms and was crippled. From that day on, he was lame on both of his feet.

2ND SAMUEL 9

Let’s go back to 2 Samuel 9:1-13. — **Sixteen years had passed since David made a covenant with Jonathan. Now, the time had come for David to fulfill his covenant promise to Jonathan** (1 Samuel 20:14-17).

(1 Samuel 20:14-17) “And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: (15) But *also* thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of

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David every one from the face of the earth. (16) So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, Let the LORD even require *it* at the hand of David's enemies. (17) And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.”

Here, in 2nd Samuel 9, **now established as King over Israel by the hand of God, David is determined to fulfill his covenant promise to Jonathan.** So he sought out last survivor of his dear friend and companion, Jonathan. David sent for Mephibosheth, and brought him to the palace. When Mephibosheth first learned that the king had found him, he must have been terrified. He knew what had become of Saul's sons. Fearful and trembling, he came into David's presence, expecting to be slain. What a blessed surprise he found! David showed him nothing but kindness and mercy. He was made to be as one of the king's sons.

Follow along, as I show you how this story is a beautiful picture of God's free, saving grace, setting forth the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Behind the noble kindness of David toward Mephibosheth, the marvelous grace of God towards us shines forth brilliantly. When the poor, crippled son of Jonathan was brought from Lodebar to Jerusalem, and made to sit at the King's table, I am sure that words could not begin to express his gratitude. And when a slave of sin and Satan is made an heir of God and

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joint-heir with Christ, he is lost in wonder, love, and praise. Eternity itself cannot render to the Lord the praise and adoration we desire to give him.

Proposition: David's kindness to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake is a beautiful picture of God's lovingkindness and tender mercy to sinners for Christ's sake.

Divisions: I want to show you four things about this man Mephibosheth, and show you how they speak of the grace of God to us in Christ.

1. Mephibosheth's Condition
2. Mephibosheth's Call
3. Mephibosheth's Communion
4. Mephibosheth's Covenant

HIS CONDITION

Mephibosheth was in a very poor and miserable condition when the King sought him out. He was an utter wretch, altogether unworthy of David's attention, regard, or favor. But David freely showed kindness and mercy to him. — So you and I are unworthy to receive anything from God; nevertheless, he is gracious to us.

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The name “Mephibosheth” means shameful, and a shameful man he was. — He was poor, destitute, and helpless. Well may all the sons of Adam be called “Mephibosheth.” We are “a shameful thing.” — “*We are all as an unclean thing*” (Isaiah 64:6). — “*From the soul of the foot even unto the crown of the head, there is no soundness in us, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores*” (Isaiah 1:6). — “*Man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity.*” Like the leper, we have an incurable disease. Like the harlot, we are defiled. Your name and mine is Mephibosheth, “a shameful thing,” in heart, in will, and in deed.

Not only was he shameful, **Mephibosheth was the king’s enemy.** He was the son of Saul, a natural enemy to David. He was hiding from David. **But David was not his enemy.**

- By nature, all the sons of Adam are enemies of God (Romans 8:7).
- We were hiding from God when he saved us.
- But God is not the enemy of his people.

- Through Jesus Christ God has reconciled us to himself (Romans 5:9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:19-20).

(Romans 5:5-10) “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (6) For when we were yet

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without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

(2 Corinthians 5:19-21) “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

- And God is ever beseeching lost, lame, languishing sinners to be reconciled to him.

Mephibosheth became lame through a fall (v. 3).

2 Samuel 9:3 “And the king said, *Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.*”

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2 Samuel 4:4 “And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *that was* lame of *his* feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* Mephibosheth.”

Even so, “God created man upright,” but we became helpless, lame cripples through the fall of our father Adam (John 6:44).

(John 6:44) “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

And Mephibosheth was far away from David, in a far country (v. 4).

2 Samuel 9:4 “And the king said unto him, Where *is* he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he *is* in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar.”

- He was far away from the King.
- He was far away from Jerusalem. — The place of blessing. — The place of peace. — The place of worship.
- He was in the house of Machir, which means “sold.”
- He was down in Lodebar, the place of no bread.

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- This is our condition by nature.

You who are yet without faith in Christ are far away from God. You are far away from Christ. You are sold under sin. You are in a desert place, where there is no bread. — **“Lodebar” is written across the fields of this world.** When will you wandering prodigals realize this? Come to your senses, man; and come to Christ (Psalm 68:6; Luke 15:16).

Psalms 68:6 “God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.”

Luke 15:16 “And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.”

Like Mephibosheth, you who are without Christ are in a miserable condition. Oh, may the Lord show you your condition!

HIS CALL

Mephibosheth was called by the king (vv. 4-5).

2 Samuel 9:4-5 “And the king said unto him, Where *is* he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he *is* in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar. (5) Then king David

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sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar.”

David sought Mephibosheth and fetched him to the palace. I love that word “*fetched*.” Don’t you? Here again, we see God’s marvelous grace toward sinners. He seeks his own sheep. And when he finds his sheep, he fetches it home.

David sought Mephibosheth — Mephibosheth did not seek David.

- A Sovereign Choice
- A Personal Call
- An Irresistible Fetch (Psalm 65:4; 110:3)

(Psalms 65:4) “Blessed *is the man whom* thou choolest, and causest to approach *unto thee, that* he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple.”

(Psalms 110:3) “Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

Salvation begins with God. He takes the initiative. Man goes astray. Man hides from God. But God seeks and finds his own. The Lord God declares, — “*I am found of them that sought me not.*”

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God almighty sends his Spirit to seek and find his people, who have strayed far away from him. He always finds them; and he always brings them home. He says, “*Follow me,*” and they follow. He says, “*Come unto me,*” and they come.

- Abraham was in Ur.
- Moses was in Midian.
- Zacchaeus was up in a tree.
- Saul was in the desert.
- The Ethiopian Eunuch

Mephibosheth came before the King in reverent submission (v. 6).

2 Samuel 9:6 “Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!”

- **When he first came before David, he revered him with fear and trembling.** He did not know what David would do with him. He could kill him, or he could let him live. So Mephibosheth threw himself at the king’s feet.
- **David broke the poor man’s fear.** He called him by name and spoke peaceably to him. — “*Mephibosheth, fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness.*”

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- **Have you thrown yourself down at the feet of Christ the great King?** That's the way to obtain mercy.

Blessed be his name, he calls his own by name; and he speaks peace to our souls!

Now get this — **Mephibosheth was received in all his deformity.** Just as he was, without any improvement, David received the poor cripple. And the Lord our God receives sinners in all their deformity.

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee -
O Lamb of God, I come.

Come ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall.
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.

Mephibosheth was received for the sake of another. He was received for Jonathan's sake (v. 7).

2 Samuel 9:7 “And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and

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will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.”

David received Mephibosheth altogether for Jonathan’s sake, because he loved Jonathan. So it is that God receives us altogether for Christ’s sake, because he loves his Son (Titus 3:3-7).

Titus 3:3-7 “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. (4) But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, (5) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (6) Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (7) That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

“God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you!” — On the basis of Christ’s righteous obedience as our Representative and voluntary death as our Substitute, God receives believing sinners. It pleases God to look on Christ and pardon all who believe on him. Just as David received Mephibosheth because of his relationship to Jonathan, God receives us because of our relationship to Christ.

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When Mephibosheth came to David, he learned to have a proper estimate of himself (v. 8).

2 Samuel 9:8 “And he bowed himself, and said, What *is* thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I *am*?”

Listen to me now. It is only after we come to Christ that we truly have a proper view of ourselves. Do not expect to find repentance until you come to Christ by faith.

Read on (vv. 9-10). — **Mephibosheth was reconciled to the King by an act of the king’s own mercy** (vv. 9-10).

2 Samuel 9:9-10 “Then the king called to Ziba, Saul’s servant, and said unto him, **I have given unto thy master’s son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.** (10) Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt **bring in the fruits, that thy master’s son may have food to eat**: but **Mephibosheth thy master’s son shall eat bread alway at my table.** Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.”

David restored Mephibosheth and made him as one of the king’s sons. Once again, he was made to be a prince in Israel. Not only that, — **Mephibosheth got more in David than he had lost in Saul.** — And we got more in Christ than we lost in Adam.

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- He has given us life eternal.
- He has given us peace (Romans 5:1).
- Christ has given us an incorruptible inheritance.
- Christ has provided for us all that we need.
- And in Christ we are given the highest possible honor and dignity as the sons of God (1 John 3:1).

Now, watch this: — **Under the king's table Mephibosheth's crippled feet were covered.** — He was still lame on both his feet, but his deformity was covered under David's table. Now, blessed be God, in Christ all the deformities of his people are covered!

HIS COMMUNION

Next, we see that Mephibosheth was granted perpetual fellowship and communion with the King. The king's house was his house. He dwelt with David. He was always accepted in David's presence. — **Children of God, it is our privilege and joy to dwell with the King.**

- We walk in his company.
- We are allowed to speak freely to him.
- We live upon his riches.
- We rest under his protection.

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Because of the grace he had received, Mephibosheth loved the king above everything (19:24-30).

2 Samuel 19:24-31 “And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came *again* in peace. (25) And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? (26) And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant *is* lame. (27) And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore *what is* good in thine eyes. (28) For all *of* my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king? (29) And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. (30) And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, **let him take all**, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.”

He waited patiently for the King's return. He wanted nothing but his King. Because of his great love for the King, Ziba despised him. How we ought to imitate this man Mephibosheth.

- Ought we not love King Jesus supremely?

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- Give up everything to him and for him.
- Wait patiently for the King's return.
- Desire nothing but Christ himself.

HIS COVENANT

Now, I want you to see one more thing: — All of this was done for Mephibosheth, because of a covenant made long before he was born (1 Samuel 21:7). When the King returned and finally destroyed all the sons of Saul (all seven of them), Mephibosheth was spared because of David's love for Jonathan. David loved Mephibosheth because of his relation to Jonathan and because of the covenant he made with Jonathan.

2 Samuel 21:7 “But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.”

And, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, all that we have in Christ and all that we have experienced of divine grace, has been given to us because of a covenant made between God the Father and God the Son long before we were born. Mephibosheth did not know anything about the covenant, but David did! God our Father loves us and

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deals graciously with us because of Christ and our relation to him. Indeed, he loves us as he loves his dear Son!

APPLICATION

- **Is there in this house of worship any Mephibosheth,** — Any wretched, poor, fallen, shameful, helpless sinner who needs mercy? Come, throw yourself down at the feet of King Jesus and sue for mercy.
- **Children of God, let our hearts be filled with love, adoration, praise, and thanksgiving for the kindness of God which he has shown unto us for Christ's sake.** As David fulfilled his covenant with Jonathan in Mephibosheth, so the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, will fulfill all his covenant in us (Romans 8:28-39).

(Romans 8:28-39) “And **we know** that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (31) **What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?** (32) He that spared not his own Son, but

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delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (33) Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. (34) Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Amen.