God’s Love for Us

(As See through the Story of King David and Mephibosheth)

2 Samuel 9

Background

King Saul was the first King of Israel. He started out well but he turned away from the Lord. He even plotted to kill David, whom God had anointed as the next king.

Jonathan was King Saul’s son and should have been in line to be the next King of Israel. He became a really close friend of David.

King Saul and Jonathan go out to battle against the Philistines and during that battle both of them die (1 Sam. 31:2). When the news of their deaths comes back to Israel, those who were relatives of King Saul and Jonathan panic. It was not uncommon for the new king to kill the rest of the royal family, so there was no other challengers to the throne.

In their panic, a young 5 year old boy named Mephibosheth, who was Jonathan’s son, was dropped by his nurse as she fled with him. The fall resulted in him becoming a cripple- both of his legs were broken so he could not walk. (2 Sam. 4:4)

Mephibosheth who should have been born into royalty was instead born into a fallen dynasty because of his grandfather’s rebellion against God. Mephibosheth was in exile and feared a death sentence if found out. He was helpless, poor, and lame. To be crippled in that day was shameful. Even Mephibosheth’s name adds to the portrayal of fallen man. His name means, “shameful speech from my mouth.” There was nothing he could do to save himself from this predicament.

With that background, let’s read 2 Samuel 9 and see what happens between King David and Mephibosheth.

2 Samuel 9:1-5

“David asked, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”

**2**Now there was a servant of Saul’s household named Ziba. They summoned him to appear before David, and the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?” “At your service,” he replied.

**3**The king asked, “Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God’s kindness?” Ziba answered the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is lame in both feet.”

**4**“Where is he?” the king asked.

Ziba answered, “He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.”

**5**So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel.”

I. The King’s Initiative 9:1-5

A. King David looks for one from the treacherous house of Saul upon whom he can show kindness because of his friendship with Jonathan. 9:3

B. He finds out that one of Jonathan’s sons is still alive and so he summons him to be brought to Jerusalem.

II. The Response of Mephibosheth 9:6

A. Can you imagine what Mephibosheth must be thinking. After all these years, he has finally been found out. Why else would the King call him, a cripple, to the palace but to kill him?

Read 2 Samuel 9:6-8

“**6**When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, “Mephibosheth!” “At your service,” he replied.

**7**“Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.”

**8**Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?”

B. Mephibosheth humbles himself before the king by bowing down.

C. He gives honor to the king

D. He is not looking for anything from the king.

E. He acknowledges the king and that his place before the king is a lowly servant.

F. In verse 8, Mephibosheth acknowledges that he is not deserving of anything from the king.

G. He does not try to make excuses or defend himself before the king.

H. He does not try to blame others for the situation he is in.

I. He says, “I am nothing but a dead dog.” In Hebrew culture there wasn’t anything much lower than a dead dog! Dogs were considered to be an unclean animal, and to call someone a “dog” was a term of reproach and humiliation.

III. The King’s Response 9:7-13

Read 2 Samuel 9:7-13

“Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.”

**8**Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?”

**9**Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul’s steward, and said to him, “I have given your master’s grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. **10**You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master’s grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table.” (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.)

**11**Then Ziba said to the king, “Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do.” So Mephibosheth ate at David’s[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Samuel%209&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8239a)] table like one of the king’s sons.

**12**Mephibosheth had a young son named Mika, and all the members of Ziba’s household were servants of Mephibosheth. **13**And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the King’ table, and he was cripple in both feet.”

A. He wants to show kindness to him for Jonathan’s sake

1. David had made a covenant of friendship with Jonathan (1 Sam. 21)

2. David promised that when he became king, he would never cut off his kindness from Jonathan’s family.

B. He restored to Mephibosheth all the land that belonged to King Saul. – He went from being poor to rich.

C. He made him as one of the King’s sons (9:11) – He went from being a nobody to a son of the King. He was given a new status.

D. He was to always eat at the King’s table (9:10, 11, 13). To sit down and eat a meal with someone was to enjoy relationship with them and this was the king.

He went from being on the outside to being on the inside.

E. Mephibosheth had done nothing to earn this or deserve this. This was an act of undeserved love from King David to a poor cripple.

IV. A Picture of God’s love for us

A. The fallen dynasty of King Saul is a picture of us, being born into fallen mankind.

1. Mankind was created by God and was given a kingly position in God’s creation.

2. But like Saul, man turned away from God in disobedience and fell into sin.

3. In Rom. 5:12 sin and its penalty of death was passed on to all mankind.

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—”

B. Like Mephibosheth, we were by lineage under the sentence of exile and death from God.

1. We were helpless. We could do nothing to save ourselves.

2. We were lame. We could not walk with God.

3. Eph. 2:1-3

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2**in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3**All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ephesians+2%3A1-3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29233a)] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.”

C. But like King David, God reached across the barriers that separated us from Him so that we could be reconciled to God.

1. God took the initiative to reach out to us.

2. In spite of the barriers of enmity and hostility which were erected as members of the fallen human race, God extended His love to us.

3. Eph. 2:4-5

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5**made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”

Col. 1:21-22

“Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=colossians+1%3A21-22&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29487a)] your evil behavior. **22**But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—”

D. Like King David, God took the initiative to search for us and find us.

1. We weren’t seeking Him

Rom. 3:10-11

“As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one;  
**11**    there is no one who understands;    there is no one who seeks God.”

2. We may have been like Mephibosheth hiding in fear, trying to avoid God.

3. But God wants us to know of His love and kindness for us.

E. Like King David made a covenant with Jonathan, God had made a covenant with fallen man.

1. In the Garden in Gen 3:15 we see that God had made a covenant to send a redeemer.

Gen. 3:15

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=genesis+3%3A15&version=NIV#fen-NIV-71a)] and hers;  
he will crush[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=genesis+3%3A15&version=NIV#fen-NIV-71b)] your head (Christ will defeat Satan), and you will strike his heel (Satan will think he won with Christ’s death).”

2. In the Abrahamic Covenant we see God’s unconditional commitment to His covenantal love for us promising to bless all people on earth through Christ.

Gen. 12:2-3

““I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great,  
    and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

3. Ultimately, we see God’s covenant love for mankind focused in the giving of His Son, Jesus at the cross.

4. As Jonathan, a member of the house of Saul, was the link between David’s love and Mephibosheth’s need, so Jesus, a member of the human race, was the necessary link between God’s love and our great need.

5. Heb. 2:17

“For this reason he had to be made like them,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=HEBREWS+2%3A17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29995a)] fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.”

F. As part of the sinful human race, we had lost everything but in Christ, we have regained our status of righteousness.

1. We have been brought into the family of God.

2. We have access to God and can commune with Him

3. We have been given every blessing heaven has to offer.

4. Eph. 1:3-6

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. **4**For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **5**he[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Eph+1%3A3-6&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29212a)] predestined us for adoption to sonship[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Eph+1%3A3-6&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29212b)] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— **6**to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”

Conclusion

God loves you. He took the initiative to call you to become His child. We are sinful and broken and yet Christ died for you and rose again so you could he forgiven and named as His own. He has a place for you at His table. He loves you and wants to get to know you.

There is nothing you can do to earn it or deserve it and there is no way for you to try to pay God back. You simply need to acknowledge that you are a sinner in need of rescue and receive Christ’s salvation and then praise God for it.

Because of God’s love for you, you now have a new status that has been freely given to you through Christ. You are a beloved child of God with all the rights and privileges. Do you see yourself that way or do you still see yourself as a cripple who is in fear and hiding?

God loves you and wants that love to transform how you live your life as His special child.

Small group questions

1. Have you ever felt like Meph, crippled, alone, helpless, unclean, afraid you might be found out, a “dirty dog”? When? Why did you feel that way?

2. How do you think Meph must have felt when he understood why he was called into the King’s presence?

3. Can you think of an expression of love that you have experienced that felt overwhelming? What happened? Why did you feel that way?

4. How are you like Meph as you stand before God in Christ?

5. What do think is the significance of 2 Sam. 9:13 when it says, Meph lived in Jerusalem and always ate at the kings table” and then it says, “He was a cripple in both feet”?

(He had a new status and yet still struggled with things of this world just like we will until we enter eternity)

6. What is one take away from this lesson of God’s transforming love?