

Study #13

2 Samuel 9:1-10:19

Text:

- v. 1 David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"
 - v. 2 Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" "Your servant," he replied.
 - v. 3 The king asked, "Is there no one still left of 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 crippled in both feet."
 - v. 4 "Where is he?" the king asked. Ziba answered, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar."
 - v. 5 So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel.
 - v. 6 When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "Your servant," he replied.
 - v. 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."
 - v. 8 Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?"
 - v. 9 Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family.
 - v. 10 You and your sons and you 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.)
 - v. 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 table like one of the king's sons.
 - v. 12 Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica, and all the members of Ziba's household were servants of Mephibosheth.
 - v. 13 And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table, and he was crippled in both feet.
- 10:v. 1
In the course of time, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king.

- v. 2 David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father. When David's men came to the land of the Ammonites,
- v. 3 the Ammonite nobles said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think David is honoring your father by sending men to you to express sympathy? Hasn't David sent them to you to explore the city and spy it out and overthrow it?"
- v. 4 So Hanun seized David's men, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks, and sent them away.
- v. 5 When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, "Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, then come back."
- v. 6 When the Ammonites realized that they had become a stench in David's nostrils, they hired twenty thousand Aramean foot soldiers from Beth Rehob and Zobah, as well as the king Maacah with a thousand men, and also twelve thousand men from Tob.
- v. 7 On hearing this, David sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men.
- v. 8 When the Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance to their city gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the open country.
- v. 9 Joab saw that there were battle lines in front of him and behind him; so he selected some of the best troops in Israel and deployed them against the Arameans.
- v. 10 He put the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother and deployed them against the Ammonites.
- v. 11 Joab said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you are to come to my rescue; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come to rescue you.
- v. 12 Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The Lord will do what is good in his sight."
- v. 13 Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him.
- v. 14 When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans were fleeing, they fled before Abishai and went inside the city. So Joab returned from fighting the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem.
- v. 15 After the Arameans saw that they had been routed by Israel, they regrouped.
- v. 16 Hadadezer had Arameans brought from beyond the River; they went to Helam, with Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army leading them.

- v. 17 When David was told of this, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan and went to Helam. The Arameans formed their battle lines to meet David and fought against him.
- v. 18 But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there.
- v. 19 When all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them. So the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.

Introduction

Paula d'Arcy in her book Where the Wind Begins tells of an encounter in her ministry that touched someone pretty deeply. "He pulled away and began to strike back. Tears were in his eyes and on his cheeks. 'I'm angry with you,' he shouted, not turning back toward me but looking stubbornly away. 'You're making me hurt. I don't want to face these things. I can't stand the contents of my own mind.' 'I know you hurt,' I said softly. 'But facing pain is the only way through it. Don't forget, I've been there too.' There was a long silence. 'I want to die,' he said at last, still not turning around. I wasn't looking at him either. 'That's obvious, you're doing a good job of accomplishing it. Pretty soon you'll succeed.' 'I served a year in jail. My wife left me. I've got an eighteen year old son I haven't even seen since he was six.' 'We could go on trading mistakes forever. My list is probably longer. The point is in the face of death we both lived - - lived - - we have to figure out what's left of our lives and why we have them.'"

Life is not so neat nor is it always respectful. Instead, it seems to be what happens to us while we are making other plans. Thus it was without consideration for all my strenuous adjustments and all my fears, that I started down the entry ramp to a new highway. And I confess, it never occurred to me that it might have been an way to which I was being led, and along which I could be changed for the better. I felt only as we usually do, when confronted with something unknown and fearsome, I wanted to be allowed to have another way.

Lewis B. Smedes in his book Forgive and Forget says, "Are you capable of forgiving God when he has let you down and disappointed you by permitting bad luck and sickness and cruelty in his world and permitting some of these things to happen to you? You may react automatically. God cannot be blamed for anything so he cannot be forgiven for anything. The Psalms say, 'The Lord is just in all his ways and kind in all his doings.' Being God is never having to say you are sorry. When it comes to God, our instinctive

piety rushes to defend him against our own complaints. Maybe so, but we should not smother the primal screams of those who feel as if God has left them dangling in the winds of pain. Would it bother God too much if we found our peace by forgiving him for the wrongs we suffer? What if we found a way to forgive him without blaming him? A special sort of forgiving for a special sort of relationship. Would he mind?"

One of the mothers who lost her son in a serious automobile accident in the book His Five Smooth Stones by Herman Weiskoph says, "One of the things that helped me the most was the realization that God is in control. We as humans are inclined to feel that when things don't go the way we'd like them to go, that they are out of control and that God has not been watching over us. We may even feel that he has turned his back on us. Over the years, as the result of study and seeing God at work, I have learned that he is never unaware of my needs. So when my child was riding in that van that night, it was a great comfort to know that God's eyes were on Thomas. One of my favorite verses concerning this is 2 Chronicles 16:9, 'For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong on the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.' No hearts can be more perfect than those in which Christ lives, so I know God was watching to show himself strong at the moment that Thomas ended this physical life."

(Life has dealt a severe blow to meph.)

We would do well to call this first chapter in our study today as an **ILLUSTRATION OF GOD'S GRACE.**

Donald Grey Barnhouse tells the story, "Sir Edward Burne-Jones was a prominent artist in England during the latter part of the 19th century. One day Sir Edward went to tea at the home of his daughter. And as a special treat, his little granddaughter was allowed to come to the table. But she became naughty and her mother made her stand in the corner with her face to the wall. Now Sir Edward, being a well-trained grandfather, did not interfere with his grandchild's training, but next morning he arrived at his daughter's home with paints and palette. He went to the wall where the little girl had stood and there he painted pictures, a kitten chasing its tail, lambs in a field, goldfish swimming. The wall on both sides of that corner was decorated with his paintings, all for his granddaughter's delight. If she had to stand in the corner again, at least she would have something to look at. When a Christian commits sin and is put into a corner, God does not send him to hell. Instead, God paints pictures to illustrate his love and grace."

In this marvelous experience in chapter 9 of 2 Samuel we have David acting in grace toward Jonathan's son Mephibosheth.

Psalm 17:8

“Keep me as the apple of the eye. Hide me in the shadow of thy wings.”

Psalm 30:4,5

“Sing praise to the Lord, you his godly ones, and give thanks to his holy name, for his anger is but for a moment, his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.”

2 Samuel chap. 9:v. 1 David asked, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”

The scene of our study opens with a question from David.

Perhaps David is reflecting back over his life, overwhelmed with all of God’s goodness.

(Similar to last week! David finds himself wanting to do something! He’s running out of projects!)

Naturally, a vital part of that goodness was the friendship which he sustained for a number of years with Saul’s son Jonathan.

David is really missing his old buddy today, and he’s thinking back over the commitment that he had made to Jonathan while they were still alive, that he would care for the needs of his family.

Phillip Keller in his book A Gardener Looks at the Fruits of the Spirit says, ‘It is the kindness of God that enriches and energizes me not only spiritually but also morally and physically. I am surrounded on every side by the full-orbed environment of his overwhelming kindness. It comes flowing to me in a thousand forms from the fountainhead of his own love. All that I have and experience is an expression of his kindness. And wonder of wonders, marvel of marvels all of this in spite of my awkwardness, my waywardness, my stubbornness, my perverseness. Nothing so pulverizes my pride and humbles my hard heart before him.’”

David is saying, I want to show this kindness for Jonathan’s sake. This is to be a memorial for Jonathan, an act of love toward his family.

One writer says, “In those days you didn’t try to undercut your political rivals by bugging their offices or tapping their telephones or launching a smear campaign against them. You simply tried to kill them.

- v. 2 Now there was a servant of Saul’s household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?” “Your servant,” he replied.

Winter asks the question, “Who was Ziba? Ziba was a former servant of Saul’s who knew about the existence of Jonathan’s son Mephibosheth. The word Ziba is apparently from a Semitic stem of a word meaning ‘branch or twig.’ Since he was Saul’s servant, it is reasonable to suppose that he was from the tribe of Benjamin. He had been left behind when Saul went to battle but had kept a record of the activities of the family.”

Gehrke points out, “The reference to survivors from Saul’s house presupposes that the house of Saul had suffered severe losses and was threatened with extinction. In any case, Saul’s house had suffered considerable blood-letting and David’ royal pronouncement that he wished to show kindness to that house could well have been understood by people to have been spoken with the same irony as King Herod’s later statement that he wished to worship the newborn king of the Jews at Bethlehem.”

- v. 3 The king asked, “Is there no one still left of 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 crippled in both feet.”

In verse 1 David asks, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness?”

And now he asks Ziba the question, “Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God’s kindness?”

Keller points this out in his book [A Gardener Looks at the Fruits of the Spirit](#), “The truly kind person is one who does not flinch at the cost of extending kindness. He forgets his own personal preferences to proffer help and healing to another. At the price of inconvenience, labor and personal privation, he goes out quietly and without fanfare to bring pleasure to another. Sensitive to the sorrow and suffering of a struggling society, he undertakes to do what he can to alleviate the suffering. He tries to make the world a better and brighter place for those enmeshed in its pain and pathos. This is the quality of kindness that characterizes God our Father. He does care. He does suffer for us. Our heavenly Father does come to us in absolute honesty and openness. He lays down his life for us, and he expends himself

without hesitation to enrich us. He identifies himself with us in our dilemma, utterly merciful, totally compassionate, incredibly self-giving. He has our welfare and wellbeing ever in mind, always.”

Ziba answered the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet.”

2 Samuel 4:4

“Jonathan, son of Saul, had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled. His name was Mephibosheth.”

Mephibosheth was five years old when his grandfather and father were both killed on Mount Gilboa in the battle with the Philistines. The nurse, fearing for the life of this child since he was part of the family, picked him up in her arms and fled; but as she hurried to leave, he had a very serious fall and became crippled.

(5-30 13-37(1/2) 24-25Yrs)

“He is crippled in both feet.” Evidently, the nurse was fleeing with Mephibosheth as a woman would be fleeing a burning house. She would not let her kindergartener walk behind but would grab him up and rush for safety. She in her haste must have fallen and the boy fell very hard, and probably fractured both of his ankles. She probably fell upon him with her full weight.

He probably is totally dependent upon others for moving around. In our day it would be crutches or a wheelchair.

(Wouldn't he have a hard time with bitterness because of this! Self image, worth)

v. 4 “Where is he?” the king asked. Ziba answered, “He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.”

(Gone into exile!!)

Here Ziba gives the king the geographical information he requests for seeking out Mephibosheth. Lo Debar is east of the Jordan in Gilhead, probably some 10-15 miles northeast of Jerusalem, or could have been still further north.

Winter asks the question, “What had caused the boy’s lameness? The nurse taking care of the five year old boy had dropped him while fleeing from the invading Philistines. This was made clear in 2 Samuel 4:4 but it does not indicate that she was actually carrying him in her arms or on her back. She may have lost her hold on his hand as they were fleeing from the mountains, causing the lad to fall and become permanently injured. The exact nature of the injury is not given, but when David returned from his successful suppression of Absalom’s revolt, Mephibosheth said that he had not gone with David because he could not walk.”

Dr. Paul J. Jordan says, “It is mentioned several times that Mephibosheth was lame. Many of us at times feel that we are lame. Some of us are lame in our feet, and some are lame at the other end. But all of us have weaknesses. When we feel we are not able to meet every responsibility, we must have confidence that God will provide in his time and in his way.”

Vos points out, “Ziba informed David that Jonathan had a son crippled in both feet. This son Mephibosheth was born during David’s wanderings, and was dropped by his nurse and crippled at age five during the flight after the disastrous battle of Mount Gilboa. Since he had been living in seclusion ever since, David had no knowledge of him.”

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

Mephibosheth couldn’t come by himself, so David had him brought from Lo Debar to the city of Jerusalem. Mephibosheth was probably overwhelmed by fear, coming from the farming country to the big city, and then coming to the king probably meant he was going to be executed because he was part of Saul’s house.

v. 6 When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor...

He’s scared to death. He probably fell at his feet, and David helped him up and felt him trembling as he reached for him.

“David said, “Mephibosheth!
“Your servant,” he replied.

I am sure David said that word with an awful lot of emotion and kindness, and probably saw some likeness to his dear friend Jonathan in his son Mephibosheth.

- v. 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.”

David immediately says, “Don’t be afraid.” This is a command designed to alleviate the horrible feelings of insecurity that Mephibosheth has at this moment.

The reason for this command is: “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.”

There are three reasons why he doesn’t need to be afraid:

1. David is going to show him kindness.
2. He is going to restore to Mephibosheth the land of Saul.
3. Mephibosheth is always going to eat at the king’s table.

Luis Palau points out, “And David told him, ‘Mephibosheth, it’s not because of anything great or small which you’ve done, or which you failed to do. I accept you because of your father. I accept you because I promised your grandfather. Enter now into the king’s house and enjoy all the provisions on my table. You shall be as my son.’ What a picture of what God the Father does for you and me. We enter into the kingdom because of another. We could never earn the right at all. We sit at the king’s table and eat the king’s food on the merit of our relationship to another. We are accepted in the beloved, crippled, broken, non-persons in every sense of the word. He sought us out and called us to himself. All we had to do was acknowledge his gracious invitation and accept his provision. Mephibosheth could have rejected David’s offer. He could have clung to his own poverty, misery, and obscurity, spitting on the king’s messenger and spurning the king’s message. And he would have been a fool. Have you accepted your king’s astounding offer of pardon and provision? Have you taken time today to thank your Lord for seating a crippled soul like you at that table of the King?”

1 John 3:1,2

“See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God. And such we are; for this reason the world does not know us because it did not know him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We

know that if he should appear, we shall be like him, because we shall see him just as he is.”

(Rom. 5:12 | Rom. 3:19 | In Adam | In Christ)

John Watt points out, “Mephibosheth is a picture of what we all are by nature. The darker the picture the more it magnifies the grace of God. Mephibosheth was ruined by a fall he had when he was a child. So we all fell in Adam, and the whole human race was ruined by that fall. Since then, man has been unable to please God apart from his grace. Mephibosheth belonged to a family whom God had rejected. As God rejected Saul, then removed him, so he had rejected the first man and all his posterity. Mephibosheth belong to the rejected house of Saul. We belong to the rejected family of Adam. He had lost the inheritance and all pertaining to it. Have we not lost all through the fall of Adam? Everything has been forfeited.”

Observe the last little phrase in verse 7: “You will always eat at my table.” This little phrase is repeated no less than 4 times in 2 Samuel 9 in: verses 7, 10, 11, and 13.

When the Holy Spirit says something four times, it is obvious that he intends to grip our hearts with an important truth.

Redpath points out, “In this story we reach the high point of David’s life. Here was his grandest hour. Tragedy and decline came soon, but at this point David had captured the whole land which God purposed that his people should inhabit and possess. He had driven out all his enemies and was undisputed king over the whole nation. He took his particular moment to reflect upon early days, the days of testing, the days of suffering, days of rejection. And as he mused over the past and recalled Saul’s animosity to him, there came the thought, I wonder, is there any left of the house of Saul that I might show kindness to him.”

Phillip Keller points out in his book [A Gardener Looks at the Fruits of the Spirit](#), “I am ever reminded of the gentle and kindly David Livingston. His tremendous foot safaris took him for thousands of miles through unmapped territory among savage tribes. Yet wherever his foot prints were left behind, there remained the legacy of the love of Christ expressed in his simple, humble kindness to the natives. Long after he was dead and gone to his heavenly home, he was remembered in the Dark Continent as the Kind Doctor. What greater accolade could any man earn?”

Mephibosheth is like each of us before we come to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Redpath describes this, “These and a thousand other things invade the consciousness of the natural man. And over the years from childhood through youth, sometimes into manhood and even old age, he is characterized by these three words in his relationship with God: AWAY, AFRAID, AND ANTAGONISTIC.

J. Vernon McGee says, “This story reveals what a great man David really was. We usually think of David in connection with the sin he committed, and that is probably a natural thing to do. So it is in the life of David. We always concentrate on his big sin, and it was big. The trouble is, we give sparse attention to the noble life and exploits of David. Someone has said, ‘There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us that it behooves most of us not to talk about the rest of us.’ Maybe we ought to reevaluate our viewpoint of David. There are so many bright spots in the long life of David from that young shepherd boy who slew a giant to an old man wise in experience who could write ‘the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.’”

Psalm 56:13

“For thou hast delivered my soul from death, indeed my feet from stumbling so that I may walk before God in the light of the living.”

Psalm 73:2

“But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling; my steps had almost slipped.”

Psalm 116:8,9

“For thou hast rescued my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I shall walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”

J. L Packer in his book Knowing God says,

“Grace first inscribed my name
In God’s eternal book.
‘Twas grace that gave me to the lamb,
Who all my sorrows took.
Grace taught my soul to pray,
And pardoning love to know
‘Twas grace that kept me to this day
And will not let me go.”

June Hunt in her book Above All Else says, “It takes tears, loneliness, desperation and fear to realize the value of the remedy for all these: Jesus Christ. A friend of mine, who has experienced more than her share of adversity, said this to me, ‘I sometimes think Christians are like tea bags. You never know what kind you are until you get in hot water.’”

His love has no limit,
His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary
Known unto man.
For out of the infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

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

Mephibosheth hit the floor again and has a question for David: “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?”

I am sure being handicapped like Mephibosheth has been ever since he was 5, he has had to miss so much of what life had to offer; and he has such a poor self-image and sense of self-worth.

Since his father and grandfather have died in battle at such an early age, he’s probably never been noticed or considered to be much of anything now has he felt loved by anyone.

Ted Engstrom in his book The Pursuit of Excellence says, “Some of the world’s greatest men and women have been saddled with disabilities and adversities, but have managed to overcome them:

Cripple him and you have a Sir Walter Scott. Lock him in a prison cell and you have a John Bunyon. Burry him in snows of Valley Forge, and you have a George Washington. Raise him in abject poverty, and you have an Abraham Lincoln. Subject him to bitter religious prejudice, and you have a Disraeli. Strike him down with infantile paralysis, and he becomes Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Burn him so severely in a schoolhouse fire that the doctors say he will never walk again, and you have a Glenn Cunningham, who set the world’s record in 1934 for running a mile in 4 minutes and 6.7 seconds. Deaf in a genius composer and you have a Ludwig Von Beethoven. Have him or her born black in a society filled with racial discrimination and you have a Booker T. Washington, a Harriette Tubman, a Marian Anderson, a George Washington Carver, or a Martin Luther King. Make him the

first child to survive in a poor Italian family of 18 children, and you have an Enrico Caruso. Have him born of parents who survived a Nazi concentration camp, paralyze him from the waist down when he is four, and you have a incomparable concert violinist, Itzhak Perlman. Call him a slow learner, retarded, and write him off as uneducable, and you have an Albert Einstein.

- v. 9 Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, 'I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family.'

Now that David has made this commitment to Mephibosheth, he summons Ziba to come before him to make an announcement of his decision. 'I have given your master's grandson (Saul's grandson) everything that belonged to Saul and his family.'

I am making Mephibosheth the single heir of everything that belonged to Saul and his family during their lifetime.

- v. 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.)

Here in this 10th verse David outlines the job description for Ziba and his sons and servants:

1. They are to farm the land for Mephibosheth.
2. They are to bring in the crops at the time of harvest.

The reason they are to do these two things for Mephibosheth is because he is handicapped. Following this two-point job description, David tells them why: "So that your master's grandson may be provided for."

David tells them first what they are to do: to farm the land for him and to bring in the crops, and then he says what he is going to do for Mephibosheth: "And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table."

David, in essence, is saying that he is going to adopt Mephibosheth as part of his own family. And from now on he is going to eat at the king's table.

One is reminded of Song of Solomon 2:4

“He brought me to his banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.”

We too regularly sit at the Lord's table to partake of the bread and the cup which reminds us of his broken body and his shed blood.

We look forward with glorious anticipation to Rev. 19:9

“And he said to me, ‘Write, Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God.’”

What a precious option it is to each of us as his children to feast upon the bread of life and to drink the water of life on our daily pilgrimage here below.

Jeremiah 15:16

“Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy words were the joy and the rejoicing of my heart.”

Psalms 63:1

“O God, thou art my God. I shall seek thee earnestly. My soul thirst for thee; my flesh yearns for thee in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”

Psalms 104:27,28

“They all wait for thee to give them their food in due season. Thou dost give to them they gather it up. Thou dost open thy hand; they are satisfied with good.”

At the end of verse 10 we read, “Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.”

This meant that Ziba had 35 employees for this Mephibosheth project of farming that David is outlining for him.

- v. 11 The 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 table like one of the king's sons.

Ziba is immediately cooperative with the king, which he needs to be, when he declares himself that he will do whatever the king commands him to do.

Our text tells us then that Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons. He was actually adopted into the family now, just like the other sons of David.

John 1:12

“But as many as received him to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believed in his name.”

Romans 8:14-17

“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of slavery, leading to fear again, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, Abba, Father! The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

Galatians 4:4ff

“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons; and because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son in our hearts crying Abba, Father! Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, then an heir through God.”

The hymnwriter had it right when he said:

“Viewing here the works of God
I sink in contemplation.
Hearing now is blessed voice
I see the way he planned.
Dwelling in the spirit here
I learn of full salvation.
Gladly will I tarry in Beulah land.
I'm living on the mountain
Underneath a cloudless sky.
I'm drinking at the fountain
That never shall run dry.
O yes I'm feasting on the manna

From a bountiful supply
For I am dwelling in Beulah land.”
(Had to start singing here!!)

- v. 12 Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica, and all the members of Ziba's household were servants of Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth was five years old when his father and grandfather both died in the battle with the Philistines. When David came to the throne in Hebron, he was there for 7(1/2) years, so Mephibosheth was probably about 13 years of age when David ascended to the throne of all Israel and began to rule in the city of Jerusalem. It has been several years now since that time so Mephibosheth is several years older during the time has married and has a young son by the name of Mica. The name is really shortened for Micah, and the name means 'who is like Jehovah.'
(Must have meant a lot to get to marry!! To father a child!!)

All 35 members of Ziba's household became servants of Mephibosheth.

- v. 13 And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table and he was crippled in both feet.

Logistically, because of Mephibosheth's handicapped condition, it was much better to have him move all of his things from the house of Makir in Lo Debar down to the city of Jerusalem so that he could avail himself of the generosity of the king in allowing him to eat at his table.

David then makes good his covenant and commitment to Jonathan, his dearest friend by seeking out Mephibosheth and giving him these wonderful concessions. One is only reminded of 1 Cor. 2:9.

“The eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things which the Lord has prepared for them that love him.”

- 10:v. 1 In the course of time, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king.

The Ammonites were located straight east from Jerusalem about 20 miles. The Ammonites have been a real thorn in the side of the nation Israel for some time. Saul's first successful military campaign came against the Ammonites when they invaded Jabesh-Gilead, which lies almost straight north from the Ammonites, but on the east side of the Jordan River. Saul had a great victory on that occasion over the Ammonites.

It is believed that the Ammonites were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew, who left Abraham and settled in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah on the plains of Jordan.

- v. 2 David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father. When David's men came to the land of the Ammonites,

Once again, David is doing the thinking. In both of these chapters, he is seeking to show kindness. His desire in chap. 9 was to show kindness for Jonathan's sake. And now in chap. 10 he wants to show kindness to the Ammonites because Nahash had died who had shown kindness to David.

David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father. It would be just like any governmental delegation going to the memorial services for some dignitary of state.

Pink points out, "Why did David send his servant with a message of comfort to the king of Ammon? Why should he determine to show kindness unto the head of this heathen tribe? After engaging in so much fighting, it appears that David now desired a season of rest. This is borne out by what we are told in the very first verse of the next chapter. It was an attempt to promote amity between the ungodly and the godly. And the Lord blew upon this move and caused it to come to naught."

James 4:4

"You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world, makes himself an enemy of God."

The rest of verse 2 actually goes with the flow of thought that is in verse 3:

"When David's men came to the land of the Ammonites,"

in other words, they took the twenty mile trip east.

- v. 3 the Ammonite nobles said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think David is honoring your father by sending men to you to express sympathy? Hasn't David sent them to you to explore the city and spy it out and overthrow it?"

The nobles of the Ammonites doubt the legitimate intent of expressing sympathy to Hanun because of the death of his father.
(Joab's feelings about Abner! Why is it so hard to believe the best!)

They feel that David has sent this delegation to explore the city and spy it out and then overthrow it.

We miss so much and do so many terrible things because we cannot trust the good intentions of others.

Because of this simple misinterpretation of intent thousands of people are going to lose their lives.

v. 4 So Hanun seized David's men, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks, and sent them away.

Hanun listens to his mean who falsely interpret David's intentions and then act upon it by taking the men and shaving off just half of their beard and then cutting their robes into true mini skirts. He cuts the robes so short that the men's buns are showing.

Vos points out, "Accepting their interpretation of David's delegation, Hanun deliberately set about to insult David by humiliating his representatives. He had half their beards cut off, a most disgraceful treatment of an ancient Semite, for who beards were symbols of status; and he ordered that their long flowing robes be cut off up to the hips, immodestly exposing them."

We can actually predict what is going to happen in this situation without reading further because of David's past record with those who have reproached him. 2 Samuel 5:6,7 "The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, 'You will not get in here. Even the blind and lame can ward you off.' They thought, David cannot get in here. Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the city of David."

1 Samuel 25:9-11

"When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David's name; then they waited. Nabal answered David's servants, 'Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days? Why should I take my bread and water and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers and give it to men coming from who knows where?'"

David's response to Nabal's reproach is seen in 1 Sam. 25:13

“David said to his men, ‘Put on your swords.’ So they put on their swords and David put on his. About 400 men went up with David while 200 stayed with the supplies.”

You just don't rattle David's chain without getting a rumble in return.

After Hanun had done his DASTARDLY DEED to David's men, he sent them away.

v. 5 When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, “Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back.”

David got a message from the men that this had happened, and so he immediately sends another group of messengers to meet the men. The text says, “They were greatly humiliated.”
(Everybody laughing at them!!)

David then issues a command from the Oval Office for these first messengers who have been mistreated to stay at Jericho until their beards had grown and then come back.

They had evidently come straight east across the Jordan River from the Ammonites about ten miles, and arrived at the city of Jericho. The other messengers met them there and gave them David's command to stay at Jericho “until your beards have grown and then come back.” Jericho is about ten miles northeast of the city of Jerusalem.

One is reminded of the shooting down of the Korean jet liner and how the United States responded to this tragedy.

In his book Day of the Cobra Jeffrey St. John says, “Unfortunately, the term ‘accommodating’ could summarize much of the activity of the West when rage at what the Soviets had done was followed by impotent gestures that seemed only to embolden them; for example, in Tokyo, Canberra, Australia, London and Washington, Soviet envoys refused to accept formal diplomatic notes demanding compensation from the Kremlin for the victims of KL-007, each Soviet diplomat claiming that the United States was responsible for the death of those on the unarmed airliner. At all of this, Congressman Larry (Lawrence) MacDonald would have been neither surprised nor angered, only concerned at how unhealthy it is for to be consumed with outrage but hobbled by impotence born without fear. The fundamental problem, he had said,

countless times during his career in Congress was the inability of decent, intelligent people to believe they are personally as a nation and as a civilization threatened. 'We must realize that we as the United States citizens and as heirs to the western civilization should put our priorities in order and know that we are in a fight for our lives. It's a matter of whether this entire civilization is prepared to fight the Communist plague or be destroyed. This is not something that our children or grandchildren will face. This is something that we shall have to face.'"

In September of 1979 a national news magazine asked the Georgia Democrat Lawrence MacDonald whether the United Nations had been a success or a failure. He replied, "It was a dream that not only had failed but also had turned into a nightmare for the United States and the free world. Under the auspices of the United Nations, we have seen bloody wars in Korea and Vietnam, the subjugation of Eastern Europe and the mass slaughter of tens of millions of people in China. We've witnessed the Soviet invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. We have witnessed the genocide in Cambodia. In all of these instances the United Nations did nothing. I think we should admit reality. The U.N. has become a smokescreen for delusion of American sovereignty, for the diverting of American purpose, and the whittling down of our potential for world leadership. It is now and has been a cover for worldwide Communist aggression ever since its inception."

The historian Telford Taylor in the closing pages of his definitive work on Munich quotes Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn from his 1972 Nobel Prize-winning lecture, "The spirit of Munich is not a thing of the past. It was more than a short episode. I would even venture to say that the spirit of Munich is predominate in the 20th century. The entire civilized world trembled as snarling barbarism suddenly reemerged and moved into the attack. It found it had nothing to fight with but smiles and concessions. The spirit of Munich is an illness of will power of rich people. It is the everyday state of those who have given in to the desire for well-being at any price, to material prosperity as the main aim of life on the earth."

- v. 6 When the Ammonites realized that they had become a stench in David's nostrils, they hired twenty thousand Aramean foot soldiers from Beth Rehob and Zobah, as well as the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and also twelve thousand men from Tob.

Immediately the Ammonites recognize there is going to be retaliation because David is not going to stand indifferently by and allow this reproach of his messengers who were on a good will mission to the country of the Ammonites. They first hire twenty thousand Aramean foot soldiers from Beth Rehob and Zobah. These locations are about 40-60 miles north of Jerusalem, as well as

the king Maacah with a thousand men, and also twelve thousand men from Tob, which is about 30 miles north of Jerusalem. So the Ammonites turn north to seek assistance because they know they are going into battle with David, and they come up with a total of 33,000 soldiers to help them in their battle.

The Ammonites are mobilizing for military confrontation.

- v. 7 On hearing this, David sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men.

As soon as David gets intelligence reports of the hiring of these 33,000 men of war, he meets the challenge by having Joab take the entire army of Israel's fighting men to war against this threat of peace.

- v. 8 The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance to their city gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the open country.

We have a DOUBLE DEPLOYMENT here of the Ammonites in battle formation at the entrance of their city gate, and the northerners in another group in the open country.

- v. 9 Joab saw that there were battle lines in front of him and behind him; so he selected some of the best troops in Israel and deployed them against the Arameans.

Joab gets his intelligence reports and knows that the battle lines are in front of him and behind him; and so it's time for an effective deployment. He decides that he is going to take some of the best troops and go with them against the northerners.

- v. 10 He put the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother and deployed them against the Ammonites.

His only surviving brother Abishai, since Asahel fell earlier during the civil war as a casualty of Abner's spear, is given command of the rest of the men and sends them against the Ammonites.

- v. 11 Joab said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you are to come to my rescue; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come to rescue you.

Joab, in talking to his brother, said, ‘Listen, if the northerners become too much for me, I’m going to sound the alarm and you come to my rescue. And then if the Ammonites are too strong for you, you sound the alarm and I’ll come to rescue you.’”

v. 12 Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The Lord will do what is good in his sight.”

What a tremendous statement of faith and trust as the men go to war! Joab says to his brother, “Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The Lord will do what is good in his sight.”
(Rom. 8:28)

Courage is an outgrowth of strong conviction and an evidence of good character.

PFC Butch Strickland wrote a prophetic letter of his own death before giving his own life in rescue of a wounded buddy on Feb. 1, 1966 in Vietnam:

Dear Folks,

I am writing this letter as my last one. You probably already received word that I am dead and that the government wishes to express its deepest regret. Believe me, I didn’t want to die, but I know it was part of my job. I want my country to live for billions and billions of years to come. I want it to stand as a light to all people oppressed and to guide them to the same freedom we know. If we stand and fight for freedom, then I think we’ve done the job God sent down for us. It’s up to every American to fight for the freedom we hold so dear. We won’t be able to look at ourselves in a mirror, much less at our sons and daughters, because we have failed our God, our country, and our future generations. I fought for Sandy, Gail, Nell, Mom and Dad. When her kids get old enough, they’ll probably have to fight too. Tell them to go proudly and without fear of death because it is worth keeping the land free. I remember a story from Mr. Williams English classes when I was a freshman in high school that said, ‘Cowards die a thousand times, the brave die but once.’ Don’t mourn me, Mother, for I am happy. I died fighting my country’s enemies, and I will live forever in people’s minds. I’ve done what I’ve always dreamed of; don’t mourn me, for I died a soldier of the United States of America. God bless you all and take care. I’ll be seeing you in heaven.

Your loving son and brother, Butch

The final command from Joab to Abishai is “Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God.” And if we fight bravely, “the Lord will do what is good in his sight.”

Nehemiah 4:14

“When I saw their fear, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people. Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.”

“The Lord will do what is good in his sight.” Ultimately we come to the sovereign purpose of God and in situations like this the ultimate statement is to surrender to the sovereignty of God. “The Lord will do what is good in his sight.”

- v. 13 Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him.

Joab and his best troops experienced immediate victory from the northerners, for they fled before him.

- v. 14 When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans were fleeing, they fled before Abishai and went inside the city. So Joab returned from fighting the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem.

The Ammonites realized the handwriting was on the wall when they saw the 33,000 northerners fleeing from Joab, and so they fled back away from Abishai and his military forces inside the city.

The response to this on the part of Joab is he returned from fighting the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem.

- v. 15 After the Arameans saw that they had been routed by Israel, they regrouped.

This is not the end of the conflict. They are going to come back again, and so they regroup.

- v. 16 Hadadezer had Arameans brought from beyond the River; they went to Helam (which is probably 70-80 miles north of Jerusalem), with Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army leading them.

- v. 17 When David was told of this, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan and went to Helam. The Arameans formed their battle lines to meet David and fought against him.
- v. 18 But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there.
- v. 19 When all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them. So the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.

So as we come to the end of this chapter, we just chalk up another military victory for David and his armies.

Conclusion:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from these two chapters?

- Lesson #1: David remembers his friend Jonathan by caring for Mephibosheth.
- Lesson #2: Mephibosheth experiences God's kindness through David.
- Lesson #3: David makes provision for the physical and financial needs of Mephibosheth.
- Lesson #4: David treat Mephibosheth as his own son, allowing him to eat at the king's table.
- Lesson #5: Overwhelmed with gratitude, Mephibosheth names his son "who is like Jehovah?"
- Lesson #6: The misinterpretation of intention can lead to needless bloodshed.
- Lesson #7: The Lord will always do what is good in his sight.

We do not see that David inquired of the Lord here in this chapter before going into battle.

Psalm 4:7,8

“Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and new wine abound. In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for Thou alone, O Lord, dost make me to dwell in safety.”

Psalm 60:12

“Through God we shall do valiantly, and it is he who will tread down our adversaries.”

Psalm 71:7

“I have become a marvel to many, for thou art my strong refuge. My mouth is filled with thy praise and with thy glory all day long.”

There's no more beautiful picture in all of Scripture of what God does for the sinner, acting in kindness toward us, crippled by sin and the fall. He comes to make provision for our every need, assuming to full responsibility for caring for us, and bringing is ultimately to himself to spend eternity in heaven.

During World War 1 a British detachment had been cut off from the main forces in the front lines. They had gone out to explore and had been caught in the terrific fire of the Germans. Their communication or telephone line had remained open, but it was finally severed by a shell. The captain called for a volunteer who would trace the line to the point of trouble, bring it together and tie it. He warned it would be a dangerous assignment. Several volunteered and one was chosen. He crawled into no-man's-land and followed the wire. Finally he found one end in a shell hole, and feeling around in the icy mud, he discovered the other end, but he couldn't bring the ends in a position by which he might tie them, for the Germans had him under fire by now. So he just lay there and held the two wires together so that communication was restored. A shell fell close to him and exploded. He was killed but the communication was not disturbed. The next day after victory found this man frozen in death, holding one line in one hand and the other hand holding firmly the other end of the wire, and through his body the message had been going.

Nineteen hundred years ago there came from heaven one who restored communication through a line that had been broken by sin. He laid hold of God because he was God and he laid hold of man. He could not make the connection by his life; it was made when he died on the cross.

The British government took a picture of the soldier performing his duty in death, and underneath they put only one word: Contact.

Until his death, Dag Hammarskjold served as General Secretary of the United Nations. A breathlessly busy man, he made time to keep a diary of his spiritual pilgrimage, a devotional journal, which has been published under the title of Markings. It records the struggles which, unknown to the world, went on in Hammarskjold's own heart. In his early days he found life meaningless. He wrote, "What I ask for is absurd, that life shall have a meaning. What I strive for is impossible, that my life shall acquire a meaning. I dare not believe, I do not see how I shall ever be able to believe, that I am not alone." Such a conclusion parents despair, yet Dag Hammarskjold discovered what he yearned for in Jesus Christ. He said yes to God. "From that hour," he declares, "I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, has a goal."