

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

PART II

STUDY NUMBER THIRTEEN - 2 Samuel 9:1-10:19

Today we are going to meet a very bitter,
resentful young man.

He has been handicapped from childhood.

He has probably not had very much social contact with people.

And as he enters into the story and into David's life today, we are going to witness what David does and how he handles the situation.

Mephibosheth has been dealt a severe blow in life. He has been hurt badly and we are going to witness him coming on the stage today and you may title this chapter, an *ILLUSTRATION OF GOD'S GRACE*.

Today David is demonstrating some love and some grace to Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth.

Let's Start, 2 Samuel chapter 9 and verse 1.

2 Sam. 9:1 David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

As you know as the result of the death of

Saul and Jonathan David has become king.
He is probably near 48 years old today.
He has been king now over all of Israel for about 11 or 12 years.

During this period of time David has accomplished the conquering of the capital city of Jerusalem, and as a result of the generosity of the king of Tyre, David has a fabulous palace in the city to live in, and he has been successful in getting the ark of God back into the city in a tent.

Last week we saw God say no to him because he had a desire to build a temple for the Lord.

God said no but I am going to build you a house, and I am going to make your house last forever, you are going to have an eternal kingdom.

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 David had

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.

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.

Now in those days when there was a rival kingdom, people did not work around that or send you off into retirement. You were killed.

I mean they wiped out the house of a rival king. So it would have been totally acceptable for David to wipe out the house of Saul totally and completely. And he asks Ziba, a servant of Saul, to come.

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. 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."

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Notice the words “still left.” David knows there have been a lot of deaths and so he is wondering **is there anybody still left from the house of Saul so that I can do what? “*Show God’s kindness.*”**

In verse 1 it was kindness, now he has amplified it. **It is God’s kindness that I am going to demonstrate to this house.**

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?”

And so Ziba says, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet.”

Now remember a few weeks ago I asked you to hold on to a verse in 2 Sam. 4:4.

In the midst of the civil war there was a little verse and it described Mephibosheth. Let me refresh your minds.

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.”

In the battle of the Philistines when Saul and Jonathan died in that battle word came back that both of them were dead, Mephibosheth's granddaddy and daddy both died, the nurse grabs him into her arms and begins to flee because that child is in danger now because the throne is empty and anybody that would be a rival to that throne would be marked for death. And as she grabs the child and runs, maybe they both trip and fall and he becomes crippled in both feet.

Possibly today Mephibosheth, is around 24 or 25 years of age. If he was 5 when his dad and grandfather died he was probably about 12 or 13 years of age when David assumed the throne of Israel and if David has been king about 12 or 14 years now Mephibosheth is somewhere around 25 years of age.

He has experienced being handicapped all of his life.

When he fell, the nurse probably fell on him and fractured both of his ankles. In those days you could not go to the doctor and get a fracture set, you lived with it for the rest of your life.

So he is doomed from five years old for the rest

of his life to a wheelchair, to crutches, to a palate, to be carried around by someone else.

He may be bitter and his self image and self worth are next to nothing.

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

Mephibosheth went into exile.

He went across the Jordan River and about 15 miles up from Jerusalem out in the pasturelands.

He is living on a farm out there all by himself being sustained by these people mentioned here in the study.

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

He could not travel by himself so David sent a group of people up there to get him and to bring him down.

What do you think Mephibosheth is thinking?
Oh man the FBI finally caught up with me.

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. This is a one-way trip to Jerusalem.

He doesn't know David.
He has no frame of reference.

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.

Mephibosheth just fell out of his wheelchair right on the floor and was scarred to death.

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."

"Don't be afraid" - I think David probably helped him back up and David felt him trembling as he assisted him. So his first command of kindness is to alleviate these horrible feelings of insecurity:
"Don't be afraid."

"David said to him" – and the reason for that is three things:

1. I will surely show kindness for the sake of your father.
2. I will restore to you all the land that belonged

to your grandfather Saul.

3. You will always eat at my table.

Mephibosheth, we are going to move you down here. I am going to treat you like one of my sons. You are going to eat at my 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?”

The little phrase “you shall always eat at my table.” That occurs four times in this passage.

(2 Samuel 9 in: verses 7, 10, 11, and 13.)

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

See his self image. Mephibosheth hit the floor again and has a question for David: “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.

David is 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.)

So we have 35 employees who are going to farm the property to bring in the bacon for Mephibosheth. He is going to be taken care of and he is going to always eat at the king’s table.

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.

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.

“So Mephibosheth ate at the king’s table” how? “Like one
of the king’s sons.”

He is treated just like one of David’s boys.

He is adopted into the family.

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

God in his wonderful grace provided
some wonderful lady for Mephibosheth.

And he is married and he has a little boy
by the name of Mica.

That is short for Micah.

And that means, “Who is like Jehovah.”

God is so good.

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

Now there is Mephibosheth, a recipient
of God’s loving grace through a king

who shows him kindness in remembrance of a friendship that he had with Jonathan.

Now David wants to do the same thing in chapter 10 but it kind of backfires here.

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

Nahash was really a tough old king of the Ammonites.

When Saul became king Nahash was trying to wipe out the Israelites. Saul's first battle was against them.

But when David came to the throne Nahash was good to David and had done some kind things to him.

David is thinking of him. He is 20 miles over to the east. He is thinking I really should do something to show his son that I really care about them.

Usually when somebody dies who is a great leader of state most of the embassies send people there. And so David in essence is doing that.

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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, David sends this delegation 20 miles east to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father and when he gets there, v. 3:

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?”

How many times in your life have you misinterpreted the kindness of someone assuming that it was an act of unkindness?

How many churches have been split,
how many friendships have been devastated,
how many homes have been broken?

It will probably shock us all to realize just how much human misery has been the direct result of the suspicion of someone’s motives creating dire circumstances that create great problems.

Why is it so hard to believe the best?
We just have a nature that seems to go,
oh, He is out to get me.

They never have a chance.

The nobles of the Ammonites doubt the legitimate intent of expressing sympathy to Hanun because of the death of his father.

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

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.

Shaving off the beard is serious. In those days a beard, even as it is true in Israel today, is a mark of status.

And these turkeys cut them half off. Shaved one side of their face.

You think that is enough they cut their long flowing robes off so low their buns were showing.

I mean it is bad, it is really bad.

Now we can pretty well predict what a redheaded angry king is going to do because we have seen him operate on two previous occasions when somebody did a number on him.

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.”

“Greatly humiliated,”
that is a great understatement.

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.

They headed north and they got 33,000 fresh soldiers to come and help them because they knew they were going to have to mobilize for war immediately against David.

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

What is missing? “David inquired of the Lord.”

You have not seen that at all in this study

and that is the tragedy that sets the stage for the next study.

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.

You have **DOUBLE DEPLOYMENT** here: you have the Ammonites coming out of the city, you have the 33,000 northerners over here, and they have Joab and the armed forces crunched in between.

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 decided we are going to take the northerners.

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

Abishai is a nephew of David.

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.”

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

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

The northerners took off.

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 (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.

Did David inquire of the Lord?

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.

God gave the victory but look at the thousands of people who died simply because some guys misinterpreted an act of kindness.

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.

And the only way you have any hope of experiencing God's kindness is through David's greater son, Jesus Christ. That is the only hope for man.

Lesson #3: David makes provision for the physical and financial needs of Mephibosheth.

In other words he took care of everything.
He met all of his needs.

Lesson #4: David treated 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.

Lessons Learned In The Life of David

PART II

STUDY NUMBER THIRTEEN - 2 Samuel 9:1-10:19

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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.

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QUESTIONS:

1. Read 2 Samuel 9:1-10:19 several times and in your own words outline what is happening in the life of David.
2. Why does David inquire about the house of Saul in verse 1?
3. Who is Mephibosheth and what is his problem?
4. What does David do for Mephibosheth, according to verse 7?
5. What do the Ammonites do to David's men who have been sent on a mission of sympathy, according to verse 4 of chapter 10?

6. What does David do for his men, according to chapter 10:5?
7. How does he handle the Ammonites according to the rest of the chapter?
8. How does Joab challenge his brother Abishai in the battle, according to verse 12?
9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?
10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

Lessons Learned In The Life Of David:

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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 treats 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.

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