

Mephibosheth: A Beautiful Picture of God's Grace

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OBJECTIVE: *To impress each person with the beauty of the grace of God by looking at this story so that those who already are living in it appreciate it more fully and those who are without it will long to be in it so bad they will obey!*

Introduction:

- A. Grace is something that every Christian holds very dear to their hearts:
 - 1. The sad thing is that we so often shy away from preaching on grace and talking about it
 - a. We do not want to leave people with the impression that God automatically bestows His grace upon us and requires no obedience
 - b. We might also fear speaking much on grace due to the charismatic movement
 - 2. Grace is something we must talk about and should greatly desire to talk about because without it we have no salvation! (**Titus 3:4-7**)
 - 3. What exactly is grace?
 - a. I think the best definition of grace can be found by looking at **Romans 5:6-8**
 - b. Someone once defined grace this way and it has stuck: "Unmerited Favor"
- B. When you study the Bible you sometimes will come across a story that is often overlooked yet it tells a beautiful story and is packed full of meaning:
 - 1. Sometimes it can be one of the most obscure events that just really leave a huge impact
 - 2. So it is with the account of the relationship that developed between David and Mephibosheth:
 - a. It is the picture of a powerful king reaching down and touching a lame man
 - b. While it does not specifically use the word GRACE – it is a story about grace, the most picturesque one in the Old Testament
 - 3. Mephibosheth did not deserve, did not earn, and could not repay the things which David did for him:
 - a. This is exactly what grace is! This story gives the BEST definition of grace!
 - b. We are all in the same boat as Mephibosheth so we should appreciate and gain insight into God's grace by looking at this example

I. The Most Beautiful Picture Of Grace In The Old Testament: (**2 Sam. 9:1-13**)

A. David is sitting and thinking about all the things that has happened to him in his life and one event in particular catches his attention → A promise to Jonathon:

- 1. Back while David was still being pursued by Saul over the kingship of Israel, Jonathan pulled him aside to talk with him about the future: (**1 Samuel 21:11, 14-17**)
 - a. Jonathan no doubt realizes that there will be bloodshed to occur
 - b. He knew that his father, Saul's, days as king were numbered
- 2. It was a standard thing that as a new king came to throne he would do away with all of the family line of the king prior to him
 - a. Taking care of any threat that would come against the current throne was standard
 - b. David here promises Jonathan that would not do that, that he would spare them!
- 3. Why such a commitment?
 - a. All throughout David's experiences with Saul, Jonathan protected him
 - b. A deep loving friendship had developed between David and Jonathan, a friendship like none other that we read of in scriptures!
- 4. It is after thinking about these events that David fulfills this vow (**2 Sam 9:1-13**)

- a. This word “kindness” that refers to David’s actions toward Mephibosheth could be translated GRACE just as well as kindness
- b. There are some valuable insights/reminders into God’s grace we learn here

B. We See From The Get-Go That The Grace David Extended Is Not Picky At All:

1. When David looked for someone he said, “Is there still anyone?” **(vs. 1)**
 - a. It does not seem that David cares who he finds, he just wants to find someone to whom he can extend the “grace” he had promised Jonathan he would extend
 - b. This is the exact way grace is! It does not look for
2. When they do find one man, Mephibosheth, it turns out that he is lame in both his feet:
 - a. As this account opens and closes it does so with a remainder to the readers that Mephibosheth was lame in both of his feet! **(vs. 3, 13)**
 - b. When the servant responds to David’s question he seems to be saying, “There is one man, however, he is lame!”
 - 1) David doesn’t hesitate at the servant’s reply, just asks: “Where is he?”
 - 2) David does not even ask why Mephibosheth is the way he is!
 - c. Look at the extent of his problems: **(2 Sam. 19:24)**
 - 1) He had to take special care of his feet → probably due to sores
 - 2) It was so severe that he could not go with David on his own accord
3. It is an interesting story how he wound up being in this condition
 - a. After David had taken the throne Saul and Jonathan both wound up being killed
 - b. Mephibosheth, who was only 5 years old at the time was grabbed up by his nurse and they fled – then an unfortunate accident: **(2 Sam. 4:4)**

C. David Brought Mephibosheth Into His Home And Made Him As His Own:

1. Before David brought Mephibosheth into his own home notice where he is living: **(vs. 4)**
 - a. Lo Debar in Hebrew literally means “No Pasture”
 - b. A place with no pastures, especially in that day, would have been a deserted place where no one wanted to live → Couldn’t raise animals!
 - c. Mephibosheth is living out in some obscure, barren field outside of Palenstine
 - d. Why would he be living here?
 - 1) It seems he was taken to this place when they were fleeing from David
 - 2) Hardly anyone even knows that he is here, he is in hiding and is even forgotten about by almost everyone
2. So when the servants of David come and knock on his door, you can only imagine the fear that would run through his veins!
 - a. This is the last thing he would have wanted to see as the door opened!
 - 1) Think about what was going through his mind as he was going to David
 - 2) Surely he thought he was about to be done away with!
 - b. This is why David’s first words to him are, “DO NOT FEAR!” **(vs. 7)**
 - c. David then reveals to Mephibosheth the reason behind his summoning
3. When David took him in, he became as one of David’s own sons! **(vs. 11)**
 - a. What a great transition this man made – from Lo Debar to Prince!
 - 1) Mephibosheth’s reaction to this shows how humble of a man he was
 - 2) He knew that he didn’t deserve what he was getting and couldn’t repay it!
 - b. He even refers to himself as a DEAD DOG! → The grace of David goes beyond his own comprehension **(vs. 8)**
 - b. What a scene it must have been within the household of David! All of those sons and daughters strong and beautiful and then hobbling in their midst there is a lame man
4. Not only did he live in his household, but he ate at the David’s table forever! **(vs. 7, 13)**

D. David Restored To Mephibosheth All That He Had Lost When His Father Lost The Throne:

1. No longer did Mephibosheth have to live out in the barren wasteland, but now he could possess again the land of his family, particularly the land of Saul **(vs. 7, 9)**

- a. Consider the fact that this comprised more than just a small crop of land, but this was all of the land a former king possessed – no doubt it was a great amount!
- b. This was a blessing of more than simple land, but this was ALL that Saul had possessed → This would have included all sorts of wealth and possessions!
2. Not only was it physical things, but David also gave him back Ziba and what seems like many other slaves to work for him **(vs. 10)**

Mephibosheth was a man who did not deserve the grace David extended to him, it could not be earned, and he could do nothing to repay him... so let's notice the similarities between him and us:

II. Lessons About God's Grace From This Example:

A. One of the great things about Bible study is to find things that parallel as well as the grace which David showed to Mephibosheth does to the grace which God gives to us:

1. I do not believe that this is necessarily a "type" and "anti-type" situation; however, there are so many similarities that it just makes you wonder if it was on purpose!
2. There is a passage that shows this parallel very well **(Eph 2:1-10)**
 - a. If you consider both texts → The story line is basically the same
 - b. Three times in this short text we read that we are saved by grace!
3. God is still looking for people that He may show kindness to:
 - a. As a matter of fact, his desire is worded almost identical to what David said
 - b. God says, "Is there anyone I can show the exceeding riches of My grace in My kindness toward in Christ Jesus **(vs. 7)**"

B. First of all we learn about our state before the Lord before His grace enters the scene:

1. Notice from the start we have something in common with Mephibosheth **(vs. 1)**
 - a. Remember, Mephibosheth referred to himself as being a "dead dog"
 - b. We should not view ourselves any different when it comes to our ability to stand before God on our own!
 - c. We would do good to see ourselves as Paul saw himself **(I Tim. 1:14-15)**
2. If it wasn't for God reaching out to save us we would all be without hope! **(Titus 3:3-7)**
 - a. God reached out to us in sheer love and kindness
 - b. Did we earn it? NO! Did we deserve it? NO! Can we repay it? NO!
3. Every time that Mephibosheth looked at the way he limped along or his crutches it would have reminded him of the grace which David had shown to him:
 - a. Whenever he limped into David's courts it served as a reminder to him
 - b. As we look back over our own sins and shortcomings, it should do the exact same thing for us and gratitude should never be a problem!
 - c. Even when we do fall, God has made provision for that in His grace **(I John. 2:1-2)**
4. In this we learn that like with David's grace towards Mephibosheth, God's grace towards us is not picky!
 - a. What God is looking for is anyone who will humble themselves and seek Him
 - b. God does not want to see any man perish, but He rather wants to extend His grace to everyone! **(2 Peter 3:9)**
 - c. There is not a select few to which the gospel is sent → It is a gospel that is for ANYONE who will believe! **(Mark 16:15-16)**

C. We Learn That God Takes Us Into His House And Makes Us His Own:

1. Before we come to the Lord, like Mephibosheth, we live in "Lo Debar"
 - a. As the old song goes we live "in a desert of sorrow and sin" → This is a barren place in the ultimate sense of the word!
 - b. Through God's grace we can leave our own Lo Debar **(Is. 62:2-4)**
2. As with Mephibosheth we have been adopted into a royal family: **(I John 3:1)**
 - a. There is a great amount of thought and love that goes into an adoption
 - b. With adoption someone is saying, "I want you to come into my family"

- c. It is an awesome blessing that though we once were dead in our sins, through Jesus Christ we can become sons of God!
- 3. When God bestows His grace upon us we are brought to sit in Heavenly places:
 - a. Not only to sit in Heavenly places but to sit there with Jesus Christ! (**Eph 2:6**)
 - b. In this we become joint heirs with Christ (**Rom 8;14-17**)
- 4. As Mephibosheth was brought in to dine at the king's table forever, so are we brought to dine at God's table forever! (**Rev. 3:20**)
 - a. We sit at the table with Lord whenever we commune with Him in the memorial supper remembering His Son's death
 - b. We sit at the table and dine with the Lord whenever we open up His word and spend time with Him
 - c. We dine at God's table through the relationship we enjoy with Him

D. God gives us an inheritance much greater than what David gave Mephibosheth:

- 1. David restored to Mephibosheth that which he lost when he became separated from the throne → God does the same thing for us:
 - a. When we sin, we separate ourselves from the Lord and because of the kindness God has shown to us we can be restored to Him
 - b. Through crucifixion of Jesus Christ God took a built a bridge that spanned the great chasm that was created when we first sinned & separated ourselves from Him
- 2. God gives us an inheritance that is far better than any earthly inheritance (**I Peter 1:3-4**)