

BARZILLAI – A GREAT EXAMPLE OF GRACE

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March 18, 2007

INTRODUCTION:

- A. David is a Bible character which many of us love for many reasons – all of which could be summed up in the statement: He was a man after God’s own heart! (Acts 13:21-22)**
1. There’s powerful meaning in that one verse – Why was he a man after God’s own heart?
 - a. Certainly it is not because he was perfect! David committed some pretty grievous sins which came at great cost to himself & others! How then could he continue to fit this description? He confessed his sin, repented, and returned to God!
 - b. He was a man after God’s own heart because he loved what God loved, hated what God hated, pursued what God pursued, and took on God’s character!
 - c. He also had a deep love for God’s law and the heart and mindset of a shepherd
 2. These are the typical reasons we give for David being a man after God’s own heart; however, there’s another reason we often neglect... He was a man of GREAT GRACE!
 - a. One example that stands out is when he sought out Mephibosheth to extend “kindness” to him when he didn’t deserve it and could never repay David
 - b. David often sought to show kindness **(2 Sam 2:5-6; 9:3; 10:2; 1 Kings 2:7)**
- B. Grace is not just a principle we learn about in the New Testament, but we find it being exhibited within the lives of men in the Old Testament as well!**
1. Some of the greatest lessons learned about grace comes through seeing it in action!
 2. Today let’s look at a somewhat obscure time in the life of David and learn some great lessons about grace... This example is that of grace and Barzillai
 3. Before we being let’s refresh on our minds our need God’s grace! **(Rom 5:1-2; Eph 2:4-8)**

I. GREAT GRACE SHOWN TO BARZILLAI

- A. To fully understand and appreciate these events let’s begin by laying the background:**
1. David’s own son, Absalom, had usurped David’s authority and stolen the throne from him
 - a. Without killing his son David was left with only one option – Flee Jerusalem... This meant giving up his throne and leaving the people he was ruling behind
 - b. As David leaves Jerusalem it is a sad picture – He and all of those with him are pictured walking up the mount of Olives weeping as they went! **(2 Sam 15:30)**
 - c. As David flees he is met by Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth (whom he previously showed great grace to), and Ziba lies to, curses, and throws stones at David
 2. As David is fleeing he crosses the Jordan and comes to Mahanaim where he is met by several men who show him great kindness **(2 Sam 17:27-29)**
 - a. These men had nothing to gain for themselves – No fame, no political agenda, no wealth... This man they are helping is fleeing like a fugitive... No self-interest!
 - b. This is in Mahanaim – This is where Jacob came centuries before & angels ministered him. Now it is David and the Mahanaim & angels come in the form of three men who bring all the food and supplies they need in the wilderness!
 - c. Notice among them is a man named Barzillai the Gileadite... The focus of our study
 3. At Hushai’s advice (an advisor loyal to David) Absalom went out personally to find David and to destroy him; however, Hushai sent warnings to David so he could be prepared:
 - a. David divided his men into 3 groups, they met Saul’s men, & David’s men prevailed
 - b. Absalom was riding on his mule when it went under some low lying limbs, his head got caught in the limbs & the donkey continued walking suspending him there
 - c. Even though David commanded them not to kill Absalom, Joab took the

- opportunity to do so & threw three javelins into the heart of Absalom killing him
4. When David receives the news he weeps greatly and after much urging from Joab and the rest of his men he prepares to cross the Jordan return to Jerusalem as king

B. As David approaches the Jordan he runs into Barzillai where he extends grace to him:

1. David remembers Barzillai's kindness and seeks to bless him **(2 Sam 19:31-33)**
 - a. Remember how David made Mephibosheth as one of his own sons, to eat at his table, & have his needs provided... This lame man is given a place of honor!
 - b. Now David is wants to take an 80 yr old man & bestow this great honor upon him!
 - c. What a setting at a king's table this would've made! You expect to find the best of the best at a table of royalty but not at David's! If Barzillai accepted the offer you'd have a lame man & an aged man! ...The recipients of David's grace!
2. David's gracious offer is met with a humble and gracious rejection **(2 Sam. 19:34-37b)**
 - a. Here we learn more about just how old Barzillai was... He was so old he'd lost his ability to taste, hearing dulled, & lost the ability to enjoy the pleasures of life
 - b. Barzillai reduces his own usefulness to king David – What he doesn't understand is that David doesn't care how useful he is... He just wants to show kindness!
 - c. Barzillai appreciates the offer; but, his greater desire is to stay where he is and live out what little life he has ahead of him there (older people don't like to move)
3. David's grace doesn't end there – He never forgets Barzillai & as he's about to die he gives Solomon instructions continue to show grace to his family **(1 Kings 2:7)**
3. What a beautiful picture of grace David paints – He wants to show kindness to anyone, despite their infirmities, ability to repay, or their age! His grace sought ANYONE!

C. We see in David a real life example of the grace God has shown & will show to us!

1. The parallel is not one of the strictest sense because David was indebted to a degree to Barzillai because of Barzillai's kindness to him when he was in need! **(Romans 5:6-10)**
 - a. God reached out to us when we could not save ourselves – Notice again the words Paul employs: We were without strength (weak), ungodly, sinners, & enemies
 - b. There is nothing we could bring God on our own merit to make up for our sins and nothing which we could give Him where He'd owe us anything! It's GRACE!
2. One of the great lessons we can take away from Barzillai is that a person is never too old to become a recipient of the grace of God! **(Matthew 21:28-31)**
3. Sometimes those who are like Barzillai in their feelings of uselessness and may walk away never responding to the gospel of Christ!
 - a. Some think, "I'm too old and so I am past a good age to enter the kingdom of God!"
 - b. "Why would God want me to obey the gospel... what do I have to offer Him?"
 - c. "I'm too old to come to Christ... There's nothing I can really do for Him anymore!"
 - d. Some say it's unfair – Why should one who has spent a whole life not doing what is right receive God's grace just as one who has been living it for 60 years?
4. Certainly it would be great if everyone obeyed the gospel in their youth; however, God's grace is available to everyone no matter what stage of life they are in! **(Titus 2:11)**
 - a. The gospel's message is to go to every creature – This would include both the young and the old... Those in the sunrise of life and the sunset of life!
 - b. God is not looking for those who are elevated in this world, who bring much to the table, have a world of talents, are rich, or have many years of service!
 - c. God's table looks much like the table of David! There you'll find people lame, rich and poor, old and young – All who could never repay God for His great grace!

5. Like with David and Barzillai we can receive great comfort from knowing that God does not forget what we do in service to Him and others (**Rev 14:13; Mark 10:28-30**)
 - a. Some of you have made many sacrifices to follow Christ, some have given up family, and some have faced persecutions... God has not forgotten!
 - b. We need to remember that when we do acts of service to God without self glorification as our motivation God knows, God will remember, & God rewards!

II. RESPONDING TO GRACE WITH GRACE

A. Not only was David a man of great grace but so was Barzillai:

1. From our first introduction we learn that Barzillai was a person given to showing kindness as he gave to David liberally to satisfy his needs in the desert
 - a. Remember, David wasn't in a position then to repay Barzillai for his grace - Barzillai didn't give to David thinking, "One day he will be king again and pay me back!"
 - b. In fact, the opposite is proven when a short time later he rejects David's offer
 - c. Also, what if Absalom, the one ruling in Jerusalem, found out about his assisting David (remember, a practical fugitive)? He could have been executed!
2. Even in his old age Barzillai was focused on showing grace to other people as asks David to show his kindness to Chimham (**2 Sam 17:37b-40**)
 - a. Notice who Barzillai picks – Not a son of his, a not close friend, or even a neighbor but likely his servant... How fitting for the table which David puts together!
 - b. Barzillai's request is that David do for Chimham whatever David had planned to do for him... What had Chimham done to deserve this? NOTHING!
3. Think for a moment what it would have been like to be Chimham on this day:
 - a. It started out like a semi-normal day but ended with a great change in your life
 - b. He started out likely as a slave and yet when the day ended he was as royalty
 - c. He started out having very little physically in this life to having anything he wanted
 - d. He started out from the depths of obscurity and ended as part of the king's house

B. What Barzillai teaches us is that those who appreciate grace look to extend it to others!

1. God has not extended His grace toward us so we can shut it up within ourselves, but intends for us to shine forth His to others! (**1 Cor 15:9-11**)
 - a. If we truly appreciate the grace that God has given to us we will be a people of grace who are trying to bring others to know that grace as well
 - b. We will treat others graciously because we know where we are, where we have come from, and understand that without God's grace we'd be totally lost!
2. This principle is most easily observed when it comes to forgiveness (**Eph 4:31-5:2**)
3. Even in the realm of physical things, God has been gracious to us in so many ways with the purpose of us being gracious to others! (**2 Cor 8:9; 9:7-8**)
4. We are called STEWARDS of the grace of God (**1 Peter 4:8-10**)

Conclusion: