



Unit .11

Session .04

A King Shows Kindness

Scripture



2 Sam. 9:1-13

1 David asked, “Is there anyone remaining from the family of Saul I can show kindness to for Jonathan’s sake?” **2** There was a servant of Saul’s family named Ziba. They summoned him to David, and the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?” “I am your servant,” he replied. **3** So the king asked, “Is there anyone left of Saul’s family that I can show the kindness of God to?” Ziba said to the king, “There is still Jonathan’s son who was injured in both feet.” **4** The king asked him, “Where is he?” Ziba answered the king, “You’ll find him in Lo-debar at the house of Machir son of Ammiel.” **5** So King David had him brought from the house of Machir son of Ammiel in Lo-debar. **6** Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, fell facedown, and paid homage. David said, “Mephibosheth!” “I am your servant,” he replied. **7** “Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “since I intend to show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all your grandfather Saul’s fields, and you will always eat

meals at my table.” **8** Mephibosheth paid homage and said, “What is your servant that you take an interest in a dead dog like me?” **9** Then the king summoned Saul’s attendant Ziba and said to him, “I have given to your master’s grandson all that belonged to Saul and his family. **10** You, your sons, and your servants are to work the ground for him, and you are to bring in the crops so your master’s grandson will have food to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master’s grandson, is always to eat at my table.” Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. **11** Ziba said to the king, “Your servant will do all my lord the king commands.” So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table just like one of the king’s sons. **12** Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. All those living in Ziba’s house were Mephibosheth’s servants. **13** However, Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem because he always ate at the king’s table. His feet had been injured.

Intro Options



Main Point:
God's grace through
Christ invites us to
come sit at His table
as His children.

Option 1

Tell your kids: Imagine you've just graduated high school. At your graduation party, you find out that a anonymous benefactor has gifted you one free year: this benefactor will supply all your necessary room, board, and expenses for one year. During this year, you may entertain and carry yourself however you wish. You're not given gobs of money (you can't go buy a fleet of cars or travel the world), but you are also free not to work or go to school. Make a list of the top five to ten things you would do with this available year.

Give the students time to make and share their lists. See how many folks, if anyone, chose to do good to others anywhere on their lists. Was doing good to others a common priority? In today's lesson, we'll see how David, once his kingdom was established, didn't simply rest on his laurels, but actually sought to serve and love others. We should be inspired by such an example.

Option 2

Tell your students: Imagine you've won "the charity lottery." It's a special lottery that awards you five million dollars, but with one catch: you have to give it away. You can give the money to whomever you want or whatever institution you want: it doesn't necessarily have to go to a charity. You just can't keep it for yourself. To whom would you give the money?

Give students time to think of and give their answers. See if any of them gave it to their enemies, or anyone connected with their enemies. Did anyone give any of the funds to keep any kind of promise?

Segue into how David bestowed his gift on one of the least and one of his potential enemies, just like God did in giving his fortune to us.

TEACHING PLAN

In 2 Samuel 8, we read of all the victories that David accomplished for Israel. The Lord gave him victory wherever he went and continued to establish his reign and kingdom (2 Sam. 8:14). It was here, at the height of David's reign, that he turned his attention toward getting the affairs of his house in order. And one of the first items up for him was to make good on a promise made long ago to bless the house of Saul.

Read 2 Samuel 9:1-5.



Here was the king of Israel, with all the power an earthly ruler could possess, and he was looking for ways to bless and extend kindness to another. And not just anyone either: he was looking for someone from his former rival's family to bless. This was unheard of in that day; it was customary for a new king to wipe out the former king's family to reduce the threat of a coup or revenge assassination. The last thing one would expect was for the king to seek out his political rival's family so he could show them kindness. And in this, we see the depth of David's character and trust in God. Deep down, he wanted to do good. He wanted to keep his word, bless the house of Saul, and honor his friend Jonathan.

▪ **What are some ways we can intentionally seek out how to do good for others?**

When David asked about someone from the house of Saul that he could bless, he was immediately told about Mephibosheth. As soon as David heard this, he sent for him. The text is clear that there was nothing that Mephibosheth could do for David. The kindness David would show would be purely one-sided: this was not a mutually beneficial relationship. David could gain nothing by doing anything for the family of his former enemy, and the previous chapter is pretty clear that David had all that he needed. He did not need any social capital, nor was this a publicity stunt to gain the approval of the people in the city. Everyone was already in awe of David. Instead, David blessed and extended kindness to Mephibosheth with no conditions, as there was no way Mephibosheth could repay him.

We are called to love others sincerely from a pure heart. We should labor to keep our motives in check and frequently ask why we are seeking to do good to others—what our true motivation is. This is what Jesus meant by not practicing our righteousness before men in order to be seen by them (Matt. 6:1). When we do that, we get exactly what we want: the only reward we get is the applause of people. Yet, in so doing, we miss the applause of God. David shows us a way forward. He did good and expected nothing in return. May we follow his example as we look for opportunities to extend kindness.

▪ **What wrong motives might guide our good deeds?**

COMMENTARY

2 Samuel 9

Main Point:
God's grace through Christ invites us to come sit at His table as His children.

1-5. When David asked who remained from Saul's family that he could extend kindness to, Ziba explained that one of Jonathan's sons, Mephibosheth, was still alive. But there was a catch: Mephibosheth was injured in both feet. A common worldview during David's day was that when someone had an ailment or sickness, it was usually brought on by that person's sin. We see examples of this in the way Job's friends responded to his suffering (Job 4–20) and in how the disciples viewed the man born blind from birth (John 9). Even though Mephibosheth's ailment wasn't his fault (2 Sam. 4:4), there is no question that he would have been perceived as an inferior person. This is what made David's kindness to him so astonishing, but it would not be the only reason.

Even before this, David gave us a glimpse of how unexpected his act of kindness would be. We find it in his desire to seek out someone to whom he might show kindness. He didn't decide to ignore the promises he had made to Jonathan and Saul so long before. It was likely that no one may have even known about his promises, and even if they had, who would challenge the king to make good on what he had promised? Neither did David simply wait for a situation to present itself: he sought one out. The way that David blessed Mephibosheth would still be an amazing act of generosity and kindness, but it's magnified by David seeking him out.

6-10. We have to wonder if David resonated with the words from Mephibosheth in these verses. In Saul's presence, David felt weak and useless, and this was now exactly how Mephibosheth felt. But the text shows us how different David was from Saul. Saul stood over David, seeking to take his life; David stooped down to Mephibosheth, seeking to give him a new life. This is the how the true king of Israel was meant to behave: blessing, defending, and protecting his people. David restored Saul's estate, just north of Jerusalem, to Mephibosheth. But the king did not stop there. He then commanded Ziba, his sons, and his servants (seventy-one people in all) to work for this crippled, fatherless, and nearly forgotten son of Jonathan. But even more astonishingly, Mephibosheth was given an open invitation to dine at the table with the king. Is there a better picture of grace than this? In this scene, we are reminded of the nature of God's kingdom.

99 Essential Doctrines *(p. 56, DDG)*

Adoption


Adoption into God's family is one the positive benefits of justification. Not only are we pardoned from the judgment against us through justification, but we also experience a change of identity—we become children of God (John 1:12; Gal. 4:5). Through adoption our relationship with God, which was once lost through the fall, is now restored, resulting in the benefits of being an heir of God and a co-heir with Christ (Rom. 8:16-17).

TEACHING PLAN

Read 2 Samuel 9:6-10



We have explored why David intended to show kindness toward Saul's house. Now, we see how he showed that kindness to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son. What is telling is the way that Mephibosheth viewed himself in the presence of David: he referred to himself as a dead dog (v. 8). Dogs are never spoken of in a positive sense in Scripture (see Prov. 26:11), so Mephibosheth identifying himself as a dog, especially a dead one, reveals that he felt as though he was nothing in the presence of David. The grandson of the former king—one who many might consider the rightful heir to the throne of that line—stands before David in absolute humility.

David could have easily chosen a few servants to go to Mephibosheth and share how the king was going to show him kindness. David did not have to talk to Jonathan's son face-to-face. No one would have thought less of the king had he merely sent messengers. The king is a busy person. And any act of kindness to the former king's line would be viewed as an exceptional act of grace in itself. But that is not what David did. He had Mephibosheth brought to him so that he could announce to him personally how he was going to show him kindness. 


This is the way of God's kingdom. While God certainly sent messengers in the form of angels and prophets to His people in the past, the expectation and hope was that God Himself would meet with His people personally and deliver them (Isa. 40:1-11). That is exactly what God did when He sent His Son to dwell among us and rescue us from our sin.

- **What does it tell us about God that He stoops down to bless us?**

Read 2 Samuel 9:11-13.



Perhaps the most shocking way David honored Mephibosheth was that he invited him to eat at his table all the days of his life. Mephibosheth would always have access to David and reap all the benefits of being at the royal table. There was no higher honor than anyone in Israel could have received. David, one of the most powerful kings in the world, treated this outsider as one of his own sons (v. 11). We have to remember that Mephibosheth did nothing to earn or deserve this blessing. He received all the benefits that David's sons received, solely because of an act of the king's grace.

Isn't this exactly what God has done for us through Christ? We have been adopted into God's family through faith by the death and resurrection of Jesus. We are now God's sons and daughters and given the full rights as His children. Now, God sees us the same way He sees His son, Jesus. What is true of Jesus is now true of us. All the rights and privileges that He received, we receive. All because of the unsurpassed kindness of our King (Eph. 2:7). 

- **Put yourself in place of Mephibosheth. How would you have reacted had you received the blessings he received?**
- **Why should God's grace to us motivate us toward greater love and obedience to Him?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God's grace through
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2 Samuel 9

9-13. This is how the gospel works. God accepts us as beloved sons and daughters solely on the basis of grace. The moment we place our faith in Jesus, we are adopted into God's family and we receive all the benefits and blessings of Christ. We are invited to God's table, and we get to dine there all the days of our lives. Just like Mephibosheth, there is nothing that we did to earn or merit this blessing. We were dead in our sins, straying from God, and as good as dead in God's sight. But God reached down, lifted us up, and seated us at His table (Eph. 2:1-10). This is how the gospel is radically different from any other worldview or religion. In the gospel, there is nothing that we can do to make God love us or want to accept us. He welcomes us to His table, not because of what we can do or have done, but because of what Christ alone could do and has done. This is why Paul calls us to praise the glory of His grace (Eph. 1:6,12,14).

Activity

First part: tell the students to imagine they live in a royal kingdom. The king will give each of them a gift of their choosing; it needn't be a tangible gift (e.g., they might ask for food for life, or the freedom to drive at whatever speed they like, etc.). Have each student share what gift he or she would choose.

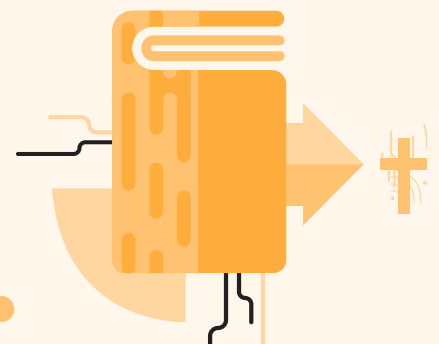
Second part: When you give your request to the king, imagine he offers you either the gift you requested, or a permanent seat at this table (e.g., living in the palace, having all your needs met by the king for the rest of your life). Which would you choose?

Third part: The king makes clear that whichever gift you choose, there are no conditions attached to the gift. You don't need to do anything to earn or maintain the gift.

To debrief: how many students chose their original gift or the seat at the table? Which is better? How is David's gift to Mephibosheth, and God's gift to us, better than anything we could have thought? Would you be loyal and obedient to the king even though such fealty and obedience wasn't required for the gift? How much more so ought we be loyal and obedient to the King who has given us such blessing!

(p. 58, DDG) Christ Connection

King David extended undeserved and unexpected kindness to Mephibosheth when he restored his lost estate and invited him to eat at the king's table with his own sons. God has extended kindness to us by graciously adopting us into His family as His children through Christ. As God's forgiven children, we look forward to celebrating at His table in His kingdom forever.



Our Mission

God's Story has always been designed to connect with our story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own. Suggested answers to these questions can be found on the right-hand side of the page for leaders.

Head



What is the connection between grace and obedience?

How should the grace of God in our lives motivate us to greater obedience to Him?

Heart



What does this story teach us about our motives when it comes to serving others?

How does the gospel challenge any selfish motivations toward giving or serving others?

Hands



How do our lives imitate Mephibosheth in this story? How should our lives imitate David's actions in this story?

What acts of kindness might you display this week to those who may have physical or mental differences?

Main Point: **God's grace through Christ invites us to come sit at His table as His children.**



Head

It is important to understand that grace is meant to make us more obedient, not less. If we think we can continue in sin because of God's abundant grace, then we have not understood grace in the first place. Grace does not prompt self-indulgence. Rather, grace, when rightly understood, motivates obedience. Grace transforms our desires and inclinations. Now, in Christ, we actually want to do what God says. Grace is not only the means of our salvation; it tutors us on how to live in such a way that pleases God and brings Him the honor that is due Him (Titus 2:11-12).

As we meditate on the gospel, it makes us want to obey God. As we consider what Christ has done for us, and what He gave up for us, how could we not desire to obey God? The more we understand and trust what Christ accomplished for us, the more we will be motivated to obey and submit to whatever God desires of us as we live today with an eye to the past of what God has done and another to the future of what He will do.



Heart

If we are honest, most of us would have to admit that we often do good for what we can gain. Our motives are often less than pure. We have a hard time doing good for its own sake. We often do good for others and even if we don't state it, we do so expecting something in return. We might do a good work for someone expecting them to make good on our investment of kindness one day when we are in need. Or maybe we give toward a particular cause because, deep down, we want to impress others. Our motives are often mixed at best; at times, we even do good for completely selfish reasons. However, because of the gospel and our renewed life in Christ, we can do good without expecting anything in return.



Hands

In this session, we have seen one of the clearest pictures of grace between people in the Bible. King David extended undeserved kindness to one who was as good as dead in Israel. But we need to be careful to see ourselves properly in this story. We are not to read ourselves into this story as David, but rather Mephibosheth. We are not the ones extending kindness from a position of power, but receiving kindness from a position of desperation and weakness.

We were dead in our sins in open rebellion against God, spiritually crippled men and women. But God has extended kindness and mercy to us. He sent His Son to redeem us from the curse and bring us under His blessing forever. And now, only after first seeing this story through the lens of Mephibosheth are we able to also see ourselves in David's role. We are called on to extend God's kindness to others and show them the mercy, love, and grace of our King. Who needs this kindness from you? How can you be a vessel of this grace to someone this week in your neighborhood, classroom, or team?