

Mephibosheth, The Trophy of Amazing Grace

Text: II Samuel 9:1-13

You will not find a more vivid story of God's amazing grace in the Bible than in the story of Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan. Jonathan is one of those rare Bible characters of whom God has nothing bad to say. I Samuel 23:16: "And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God." Upon Jonathan's death David said in II Samuel 1:26, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." We see in I Samuel 18:1-4 that David and Jonathan had made covenant with one another. Unlike our modern day contracts, a covenant was binding. It is important to keep this covenant in mind as we move through the story of Mephibosheth.

I. MEPHIBOSHETH IS CRIPPLED AND BEREFT OF AMAZING GRACE

II Samuel 9:4

This son of Jonathan became a fallen prince. When word came to Mephibosheth's nurse of the demise of Saul and Jonathan, she fled as she carried him and fell. In the fall, evidently both of his legs were crushed beyond repair and he was lame from this time onward. His eventual home became Lo-debar, a distant place whose name means "a place of no pasture." It speaks of a remote place where death, rather than life, is nurtured.

God warned Adam in Genesis 2:17, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit and plunged the entire human race into sin and separation from God (Romans 5:12). Ephesians 2:12 says, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." The words of the old song, "Deeper Than the Stain Has Gone," say it well: "Dark the stain that soiled man's nature, Long the distance that he fell. Far removed from hope and heaven, into deep despair and hell."

II. MEPHIBOSHETH IS SOUGHT BY THE KING WITH AMAZING GRACE

II Samuel 9:1-5

Before we ever seek for deliverance in salvation, God came looking for us. Romans 3:10-12, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

In love and mercy, God seeks the sinner. Jeremiah 31:3: "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love:

therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." "O Happy Day" is a song that celebrates the covenant with God in salvation found in Jesus. It includes vivid imagery of the rejoicing of salvation by the author, Philip Doddridge in the second stanza: "Tis done-- the great transaction's done; I am my Lord's, and He is mine; He drew me and I followed on, Rejoicing in the call divine." John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

III. MEPHIBOSHETH'S RESPONSE TO AMAZING GRACE

II Samuel 9:6-8

In my imagination I can see Joab, Captain of Israel's army, leading an entourage to find and bring back Mephibosheth to the king's palace. When they found the lame prince, Mephibosheth was probably informed of the plan to take him to the king's palace. I can imagine Mephibosheth most gladly accepts and wonders what he should bring--what could the outcast bring as he comes to live with the king? I'm sure what little he had left was best left in Lo-Debar. Where Mephibosheth was going, his rags and meager belongings were no longer needed.

When Mephibosheth comes before the king, he reverently falls prostrate and declares himself a dead dog. There is a great story in Matthew 15:21-28 of a Gentile woman who desired Jesus to heal her vexed daughter. Jesus declared His mission was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. She persisted and, as recorded in Matthew 15:27, "...she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." In the harmony of Mark 7:28 we read, "And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." The response of our Lord to this humility is found in Matthew 15:28: "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Luke 14:11: "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Isaiah 57:15: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." What a great word Solomon gives in Ecclesiastes 9:4: "For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion." In reference to King David, II Samuel 9:11c tells us, "As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons." I love the Gospel song that says, "Once I was clothed in the rags of my sin, wretched and poor lost and lonely within, but with wondrous compassion the King of all Kings in pity and love took me under His wing."

IV. MEPHIBOSHETH'S GIFTING THROUGH AMAZING GRACE

II Samuel 9:9

Ephesians 2:4-7: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved; And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." In I Corinthians 3:21-23 God declares, "...all things are yours." The similar promise is made in II Peter 1:3a: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness...."

V. MEPHIBOSHETH'S DURATION OF AMAZING GRACE

II Samuel 9:10-13

Notice the wording: "...alway at my table..." (II Samuel 9:10b). "...For he did eat continually at the king's table..." (II Samuel 9:13a). Ziba slanders Miphibosheth during the rebellion of Absalom (II Samuel 16:1-4), but even then, the lame prince's life was not in danger.

Because of the disgrace King Saul brought against Israel by the slaughter of the Gibeonites, seven descendants of Saul must be put to death. But Miphibosheth was never in danger: "But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul" (II Samuel 21:7).

Going back earlier in our story, I bring to your attention II Samuel 9:6b: "...And David said, Mephibosheth...." He called Mephibosheth by name! John 10:3, 27-29: "To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out....My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

There will never come a day when one of God's sheep will ever be lost once they have been found.

-Pastor Pope-