

Kingdom of Lovingkindness

I. INTRO

- A. Story from the trip w/ one of the brake calipers seizing
- B. It's always striking when someone shows **radical kindness**
- C. Similarly, God's love (non-transactional, non-posturing) is striking when you see it
 - 1. He shows mercy to the broken, loyalty to the faithless, and grace to those who have torpedoed their lives
- D. The biblical term for that characteristic is *hesed*.
 - 1. Hesed is one of the most important words in your Bible
 - a) It is translated often as lovingkindness or mercy
 - b) It is the word used to describe God's loyal, never-ending love towards his people based upon his **promises** and **character**
 - c) The JSB Bible calls it God's "Never-Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love." That's *hesed*.
 - d) It's the kind of love that kicks down doorways, not b/c you deserve it but b/c it promised to be there
 - e) It is God's steadfast, unfailing devotion to His people, even when they fail Him. Love that never quits, mercy that never dries up, and loyalty that never wavers.
 - 2. One commentary went as far as saying it's God's MOST IMPORTANT characteristic (not sure I agree, but I see their point). The argument is:
 - a) In Exodus 34 God describes himself as abounding in *hesed*
 - b) Every covenant/promise depends upon his lovingkindness
 - c) His lovingkindness preserves his people through trials
 - d) His lovingkindness & all his promises culminate in Christ
 - e) It is the basis of all his promises, and is what keeps us focused in faith today that Jesus will come back for us
 - f) Simply stated, if God were not a God of lovingkindness, we would have no hope...
- E. 2 Sam 7, God made a covenant based upon his lovingkindness...
- F. 2 Sam 8, which we are going to talk about next week when we do chapter 10, God begins establishing that covenant based on his lovingkindness, not David's greatness
 - 1. He defeats David's enemies in the North, the South, the East, and the West
 - 2. He is providing the peace he promised → God is establishing the kingdom for David (2 Sam 7:11)
- G. 2 Sam 9, we begin with an unasked question: What kind of kingdom will David establish?
 - 1. Saul, too, was a man of military victory... So was Attila the Hun
 - 2. Military victory alone doesn't make your kingdom great... what does?
 - 3. The character of your kingdom, the defining characteristics

H. So let's see → what kind of kingdom will David establish? I think you can already guess... a kingdom of lovingkindness

II. 2 Samuel 9

A. *[1] And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him **kindness** for Jonathan's sake?"*

1. Back in 1 Samuel 20:14–17, Jonathan asked David to "show me the steadfast love (*hesed*) of the LORD" when he came into power.
2. This is exactly what David does. He doesn't wait for someone to come knocking. He has it on his heart as a DESIRE to show lovingkindness
3. **Hesed initiates mercy**. He made a promise and he intends to keep it
4. This mirrors the lovingkindness & covenantal faithfulness (*hesed*) that God has shown Abraham through David
5. David knows what it's like to receive a promise and have God follow through on it → he wants to do the same thing, to pay it forward
 - a) David wants to be like his God as an image-bearer, a reflection
6. David doesn't ask, "Is there anyone deserving of my favor and kindness?" He asks, "Is there anyone left for me to show *hesed* to?"

B. *[2] Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant." [3] And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the **kindness** of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet." [4] The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar."*

1. There is someone you can help, David...
 - a) **He's a cripple** → 2 Samuel 4:4 // In ancient culture, disability and royal blood from a fallen dynasty made him a permanent outsider.
 - b) **He's a nobody** from some backwater town → Lo-debar means "no pasture" or "nothing town"
2. Apparently, Jonathan has a son. He is an exiled, crippled man, hiding at the edge of the galaxy, carrying shame from his family's downfall, hoping nobody will find him, or thinking he'd be better off dead anyway
3. In other words, this is not a guy you want to hang around with as the king.
 - a) There's nothing redeeming about him from the eyes of the world.
 - b) Nothing to gain politically. No one to earn favor with.
 - c) There's no value added besides being true to a promise
4. This son is a picture of the state of mankind under the curse of sin
 - a) Sons and daughters of a fallen king (e.g. Adam)
 - b) Broken by the fall.
 - c) Hiding in shame.
 - d) Nothing to impress the king
 - e) *Romans 3:10: "None is righteous, no, not one."*
 - f) *Ephesians 2:1: "You were dead in your trespasses and sins."*
5. And what does God gain by having me around (so to say)?

- a) Do I impress him with my smarts and good looks? No

6. But *Hesed* doesn't care. *Hesed* seeks. *Hesed* pursues.

- a) God pursued David. David is a recipient of God's lovingkindness. He will do the same. He is reflecting the image of a loving God

C. *[5] Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar. [6] And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I am your servant." [7] And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always."*

1. This is fear before the throne, and Mephibosheth has every reason to tremble → new kings kill old heirs.
2. But instead of condemnation, he hears: "Do not fear."
 - a) Don't you see how David's actions here reflect the Lord?
 - b) David, a recipient of a great covenant, is like a mirror reflecting that love to another – the grandson of his enemy, no less!
3. This is the language of salvation. These are the same words God speaks when sinners stand before Him:
 - a) "Fear not, for I have redeemed you" (Isa. 43:1).
 - b) "Fear not; from now on you will be catching men" (Luke 5:10).
4. And then, David makes a triple promise.
 - a) "I will show you kindness" — loyalty motivated by love, not pity.
 - b) "I will restore your inheritance"
 - (1) That which was taken away, I will give back to you
 - (2) That which sin stole, grace will return 100 fold!
 - c) "You shall eat at my table always."
 - (1) Now this is interesting, b/c lots of people ate at the king's table, right? But there's something different about this
 - (2) This isn't just a meal... this implies that Mephibosheth will eat at the table with him always (as a family member)
 - (3) For all intents and purposes, this is adoption language
5. David received God's Never-Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love... And now, as a recipient, he reflects the same

6. *Hesed* gives that which is undeserved... mercy and grace

D. *[8] And he paid homage and said, "What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?"*

1. Dogs aren't well-liked in the Middle East... Mephibosheth gets it.
2. But confession is the doorway to grace.
 - a) Peter: Depart from me...
 - b) Isaiah: Woe is me...
 - c) Centurion: I am unworthy to have you under my roof...
 - d) Tax Collector: God, be merciful to me, a sinner!

- e) Paul: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners... and I am the worst of them all.
- 3. Until we see ourselves as “dead dogs,” we will not humble ourselves
 - a) If we don’t humble ourselves, we cannot sit at the King’s table.
 - b) He has to exalt us, we don’t posture to get a seat; we don’t earn it
 - c) Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven
 - (1) What kind of kingdom? A kingdom of lovingkindness...
- 4. Hesus initiates, hesus pursues, hesus gives grace and mercy, and **hesed stoops to the humble.**
 - a) Jesus Christ humbled himself...
 - b) Jesus Christ came for the lost... and the sick...
 - c) Jesus Christ was counted among prostitutes, drunkards, and tax collectors...

5. Hesus stoops to rescue the humble, the underserving, the sinner

E. [9] Then the king called Ziba, Saul’s servant, and said to him, “All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master’s grandson. [10] And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master’s grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth your master’s grandson shall always eat at my table.” Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. [11] Then Ziba said to the king, “According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do.” So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table, like one of the king’s sons. [12] And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba’s house became Mephibosheth’s servants. [13] So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king’s table. Now he was lame in both his feet. (ESV)

- 1. Land, servants, provision — everything Saul lost is restored
- 2. “Mephibosheth ate at David’s table, like one of the king’s sons.”
- 3. For us, the gospel restores what our forefather Adam forfeited.
- 4. We, too, are adopted as sons... *Romans 8:15 – “You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”*
- 5. We too are raised from LoDebar, the backwater town, and now *Ephesians 2:6 – “God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly places.”*
- 6. We, too, are given a seat at the king’s table, the table of fellowship, the Lord’s supper, where we eat now in anticipation and one day in full joy
- 7. Picture cripples and beggars overseas...Picture Mephibosheth, with his crippled feet... with his “nothing to offer the king” vocation... with his heritage of enmity...
 - a) Mephibosheth, the cripple, sat at the king’s table... as his son... eating his food... a recipient of love and mercy
 - b) And every day Mephibosheth sat down, the linen tablecloth covered his crippled legs. Grace would cover his shame.
- 8. The King’s table is not about worthiness but about relationship.
- 9. The cripple’s weakness is hidden under the covering of covenant grace.

a) Heseḏ seats us at the table of grace

III. A greater table...

- A. Years before, God made a promise to Adam & Eve... then to Abraham: bless the whole world... narrowed it down through David's line
- B. Centuries later, another Son of David came full of *hesed* → Jesus Christ
 - 1. He, too, sought out the broken, the lame, the outcast. (Luke 14:21–23)
 - 2. He, too, said "Do not fear." (Luke 12:32)
 - 3. He, too, restored our inheritance of Eden and invited us to His table.
- C. In the story with David, the covenant with Mephibosheth was for Jonathan's sake (v7)... it was "in Jonathan's name"
- D. But in God's covenant with us, the New Covenant, secured by the cross and the empty tomb... it is "for Jesus' sake." It is "in Jesus' name"
 - 1. Ephesians 4:32 – "God in Christ forgave you."
- E. Every time we come to the Lord's Supper, we remember:
 - 1. We are Mephibosheth — once enemies, now guests at the King's feast.
 - a) Luke 22:29–30 – "I assign to you a kingdom... that you may eat and drink at My table."
 - 2. We remember that the cripple became a son
 - 3. We come limping, but the gospel seats us "like one of the King's sons."
- F. And one day, when we sit at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9), all our lameness will be gone.

G. The *hesed* of David foreshadows the grace of Jesus — covenant love that seeks, saves, restores, and seats us forever at His table.

- H. Like David, it is our job as image-bearers to reflect this lovingkindness to the world around us
 - 1. We seek out those who are in need of God's lovingkindness
 - 2. We share the life-saving news of Jesus Christ
 - 3. We lead our neighbors to a God who restores that which the enemy plundered and the locusts have eaten
 - 4. We want the Lord's table stuffed full of vagabonds and wanderers
 - 5. This is how recipients of covenantal faithfulness and loving kindness act
 - 6. David's kingdom would be a kingdom of lovingkindness. Jesus' kingdom is even more. Let's reflect that to a world desperate for *hesed* — desperate for a God who abounds in lovingkindness