

2 Samuel 9:1-13

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[0:00] Good morning, church. It is always a pleasure to be with you, and a little bit of a special surprise that I'm with you on this side of the pulpit this morning. Surprise to me, of course, not a surprise to the Lord. So we'll be taking an unexpected and humanly unplanned break from our exposition of the Gospel of John this morning.

We'll be in prayer for Nathan. Mr. Reminder will be on the lookout for ways to help the Rainers as Nathan is on the mend. Please be in prayer for me this morning, as this preparation had to be done in only a couple hours.

Thankfully for me, God is all-wise and powerful. It is only my responsibility to let the lion of God's Word out of its cage this morning. So join with me in prayer before we examine God's Word together.

Dear Lord, thank you for the breath in our lungs this morning. Thank you for gathering us together to sing your praises, to bear with one another through this life as you grow and sanctify us to the image of Christ, to celebrate the greatness of the Gospel and to cherish the depth of your kindness and wisdom shown to us through the testimony of your Word.

It is an abundant gift that we have your Word to explore and to see how you've revealed yourself to us in it. Help us to see your working today and obediently follow where you lead us.

[1:16] I pray that you would take this brief sermon and multiply its effects beyond what I think is possible, because we know that you give the growth. Thank you for your faithfulness to us, that we can count on it, and it is our hope everlasting.

We pray this and come to you in Jesus' name. Amen. Today, we will be looking at a powerful prefigure of Jesus Christ, as well as a name that I do not expect to be announced on Slack anytime soon.

Of course, that means we will be studying David and Mephibosheth this morning. I invite you to turn to 2 Samuel. The focus of our time today will be in chapter 9, but we will have some quick touch points earlier in the story to help frame our understanding of the situation in chapter 9.

So, at the end of 1 Samuel, in chapter 31, we read about Saul and Jonathan falling in battle against the Philistines. In chapter 1 of 2 Samuel, this news makes its way to David, and he weeps and mourns the death of his best friend and king.

David's poetic lament was captured and recorded. A few verses in the middle summarize it well. Verse 23 and 25 of chapter 1 of 2 Samuel says, David loved these men.

[2:51] God used Saul to put David in the position to bring much glory to God as David led campaigns and battles and defenses against people that hated God and Israel. Jonathan was a faithful friend and brother in arms with David as God preserved them through those many battles.

And despite Saul's determined murderous chase against David, David still loved and respected Saul, as we can see here clearly in David's mourning of Saul. There are many biblical phrases that have permeated English, and we read one, we see a common one here, how the mighty have fallen.

This was a genuine tragedy. I often hear this phrase used facetiously or sarcastically, so I want to be sure that we are not anachronistically reading that notion back into this. This was a real tragedy, a real mourning that David says in his feeling.

He repeats this rephrase how the mighty have fallen three times during his lament. This was a deep, impactful loss for the nation.

So in the power vacuum of Saul's death, the nation of Israel starts to crack politically, not unlike it was in the time of the judges. David is appointed king of Judah in the south, and Ish-bosheth, son of Saul, is appointed king of Israel in the north.

[4:10] Saul's general, Abner, took Ish-bosheth and endorsed him as king. In these politically unstable situations, people tend to listen to the guy who has control of the army, so Ish-bosheth became king.

We also read about David's general, Joab, and his actions during this politically unstable time. A while later, Abner, Saul's former general, defected and went and joined with David.

David, Joab, David's general, voiced his distrust of Abner to David. And he also, Abner, had a personal vendetta against Joab because Joab killed Abner's brother, Asahel, earlier in these conflicts.

So Joab quickly set about his plan to murder Abner, which he does. David publicly mourned Abner's death and confirmed that he had no role in the murder. News of this murder gets back to Israel and Ish-bosheth, and the city starts to go crazy, and Ish-bosheth loses his courage.

At the same time, in Israel, two raiding band captains were with Ish-bosheth in the city, and they take this tumultuous moment of this uncertainty following Abner's death as a moment for them to have opportunity for gain.

[5:25] So they assassinate Ish-bosheth and take his head to David, hoping that David will give them a reward because they took out David's enemy. David sees the men for what they are, murderers, and puts them to death for their wickedness.

In the middle of this account, in 2 Samuel chapter 4, in verse 4, the narrator kind of flashes back about Mephibosheth, likely so that the reader would understand why the next of kin was not appointed king after Ish-bosheth is murdered.

So this is 2 Samuel 4, verse 4. Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old. So, okay, that's the headline.

Jonathan had a son who was crippled in his feet. This is how he got crippled. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, the battlefield. And his nurse took him and fled. And as she fled in her haste, he, Mephibosheth, fell and became lame, and his name was Mephibosheth.

So in the chaos about hearing about a leader's death, in this case Saul's death, Mephibosheth has an accident and can no longer walk. Years later, in the chaos about another leader's death, in this case Ish-bosheth, his uncle is assassinated.

[6:38] So no one tried to take up this young crippled Mephibosheth and put him on the throne, as had been done for Ish-bosheth. So the political dust settles, and David is anointed king over a reunited Israel.

The chapters that follow this are generally quite positive. God gives David victory over the Philistines. David brings the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. God makes a covenant with David to uphold his house forever.

And God gives many more military victories around the land to David. And there is a repeated phrase there in chapter 8, in verse 6 and 14. The Lord gave victory to David wherever he went. And the narrator follows this latter verse, in verse 15, with this, So David reigned over all Israel, and David administered justice and equity to all his people.

So to be clear, at this point, this is a mountaintop, high point moment in the life of David. He has brought the Ark with him. God has made him victorious wherever he went.

[7:39] God has made a covenant with him that will last forever. I mean, this is the top of the top. There's justice and equity for all the people. This is a huge sigh of relief for this nation.

We must remember that this has been, what came before David was the reign of Saul, selfish, murderous, and at times pretty insane. And before Saul was the time of the judges, a very dark and depressing time in Israel's history, full of sin and wickedness.

So this had been since the time of Moses and Joshua, that the people would have known justice and peace like this about 350 years before. Now, we just celebrated the 250th anniversary of the United States independence earlier this year.

So with that context, 350 years feels like a long, long time indeed. So with that lengthy introduction, we now arrive in chapter nine, where we will consider first, David's intention in the first five verses.

So read with me in 2 Samuel chapter nine, verses one through five. And David said, Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul that I might show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

[8:50] 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. 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. The king said to him, Where is he? And Ziba said to the king, He is in the house of Mekir, the son of Amiel at Lodabar. Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Mekir, the son of Amiel at Lodabar. So from the very beginning of this account, we can see David's true and stated intention.

Is there anyone left that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? And then again, Is there anyone left that I may show the kindness of God to him? As we've already covered today and more beyond that and recorded in scripture, David knows well the enduring, faithful kindness of God. And that is what he is looking to show. It is out now, out of an overflow of God's kindness to him, that he seeks out who else he can lift up and bless to honor the promises that he made to Jonathan and Saul.

[10:04] So once again, getting back some other context, in 1 Samuel 20, verse 42, Jonathan summarizes the covenant that he and David made together. Then Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring forever.

And after David spares Saul's life in 1 Samuel 24, David swears this to Saul. So Saul said to David, Swear to me, therefore, by the Lord, that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and you will not destroy my name out of my father's house.

And David swore this to Saul. The difference in flavor from these two promises is telling about the difference in character between Jonathan and Saul. Jonathan's covenant is mutual and founded on their mutual faith in God and God's kindness to both of them.

Whereas Saul's is a little bit more, Hey, you could have just killed me, but promise you won't kill my sons after I die kind of thing. And it's very one directional. And yet David still agrees to it.

So I think that's noteworthy to see the difference in character between Jonathan and Saul. So, continuing. Likely since Saul's death, Ziba, who is Saul's former servant, had assumed the leadership and stewardship of Saul's estate and was probably sending the prophets to David as the new king like the other land managers would have done.

[11:33] Now, later on in 2 Samuel, after this account, we see Ziba deceive David in an attempt to actually undo what happens in this chapter. Even still, here in chapter 9, Ziba does what he is told.

So then the attention turns the other way from David to Mephibosheth in verse 6. And we can glean how he expected this summons to go. So now in verse 6 through 8, we'll consider Mephibosheth's expectations.

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.

And David said to him, Do not fear, for I will show you the kindness. 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. And he paid homage and said, What is your servant that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I? So Mephibosheth comes in humble, lowly, and respectful before David the king.

[12:38] Then even after, David brings him in on his own intentions, brings him in on his own plan, that he will show him kindness, restore to him Saul's estate, and invite him to eat at his table.

Mephibosheth continues his own self-abasement in verse 8, referring to himself as a dead dog, seemingly not believing that this could truly be a real offer, a real invitation to him.

The subtext that we can infer is that Mephibosheth expected David to carry out the norm when a reigning family regime changed to snuff out any chance of rebellion or treachery from the deposed family.

This political pattern happens all the time in stories, as it has happened repeatedly in history. It's a common story trope that a member of a wrongfully deposed family comes back to avenge his family against the usurper.

However, clearly, Mephibosheth is in no position to lead a rebellion against David. And he has definitely heard already that the Lord gave victory to David wherever he went.

Understandably, Mephibosheth likely assumed that he was about to be another victory in that long and growing list of David's victory. But David chose not to repeat himself and answer Mephibosheth's confused question.

[13:56] Instead, David moves forward to carry out his promise and declaration to Mephibosheth. So, verse 9 through 13 we'll consider the king's table.

Starting in verse 9. Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, All that belong to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson.

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 15 sons and 20 servants. Then Ziba said to the king, According to all that my lord the king commands his servants, so will your servant do.

So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micah. And all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants.

[14:57] So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem for he ate always at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet. So I want to consider three aspects to this chunk, this fulfillment of David's promise.

So first, restored. David gives the land and the servants back to Mephibosheth as they were to Saul that the land and the servants would provide for him.

As I mentioned earlier, this would not sit well with Ziba in the long term, but David is meaning to do right by Mephibosheth for the sake of Jonathan and Saul. The second aspect that he's provided for. Men who could not walk in this time did not have much, if anything, they could do to provide for themselves. Computer programming was not an available career path. Of course, God had kept Mephibosheth alive one way or another, but now, Mephibosheth was always welcome to eat at the king's table.

Now he was secure, not begging from one house to another. Mephibosheth is adopted, so not only was he welcome to eat at the table, but he did so like one of the king's sons, not as a beggar.

[16:08] This is a world-flipped, upside-down change in Mephibosheth's life. He was likely forced to beg for food, water, and shelter for the many years that he roamed the land in a land of civil war and political turmoil, and now the man that he thought would kill him has welcomed him like one of his own sons.

So this is a beautiful account of an overflowing kindness and faithfulness before God that we see exemplified by King David. But this is not the end of the story, it's just the foreshadowing.

God promised David that his son, that his house would uphold, that he would uphold his house forever. David fulfilled his promise, and God will also fulfill his promise to David.

So let us see how the son of David acts when meeting a man that could not walk. If you would turn in your Bibles with me to Mark chapter 2, we're going to read the first 12 verses together.

And here we will see a greater restoration, a greater provision, and a greater adoption. So starting in Mark chapter 2, and when Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home, and many were gathered together so that there was no room, not even at the door.

[17:36] And he was preaching the word to them, and they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.

And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, Son, your sins are forgiven. Now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, Why does this man speak like that?

He is blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone? And immediately, Jesus perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, Why do you question these things in your hearts?

Which is easier to say to the paralytic, Your sins are forgiven? Or to say, Rise, take up your bed, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the paralytic, I say to you, Rise, pick up your bed, and go home.

And he rose, and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, We never saw anything like this.

[18:47] So David did the best that he could do. He gave the best blessing that he could give to Mephibosheth, but he was only an Israelite king. As we read at the end of the story in 2 Samuel 9, Mephibosheth was still lame in both his feet.

He was fed now, he was clothed, he was sheltered, all good things, but he was still lame. Jesus sees this man's greatest need, his sin that separates him from the love of God.

Jesus not only identifies this greater brokenness than his physical body, Jesus has the solution and authority to carry it out. And to demonstrate that spiritual authority, Jesus shows his authority over the physical as well, and heals the man so that he can walk.

Jesus does not give the crippled man food, he gives him himself, the bread of life, that he may never have to hunger again. Jesus does not only restore his physical body, Jesus restores his relationship to his creator, the source of all life.

Jesus does not invite the man for dinner, he brings him to his true father so that he can be adopted, called a son of God and a co-heir with Christ, to share in the riches of God's grace forever.

[20:06] This is a greater David, that as David did the best that he could do, he did fulfill his promise. Jesus doesn't have any promise to this man, and yet he showed him this abundant kindness.

David was following through on his word, Jesus is going out of his way to fulfill and restore this man to life, not just physically, but ultimately, spiritually.

And it is in this way, and it is later through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that God would fulfill his promise to David to uphold his house forever. So, for some closing applications, first, we must see ourselves rightly within these stories.

We are the Mephibosheth and the paralytic. We have nothing to bring. We can often be confused by the great mercy of God toward us, expecting the natural consequences of our sin, but by faith in Jesus Christ, we can be restored, forgiven, restored to new life and everlasting life with God.

Always welcome to be with God like his own son. Once we have placed our faith in Christ, we are compelled by the love of God to tell the other beggars where the bread of life is.

[21:23] God's grace is not only abundant for me, it is abundant for all that would place their faith in Christ. So, if you have been so richly blessed to know God's forgiveness in Christ, you must understand that this blessing and goodness is not for you to keep for yourself.

Let's close in prayer.