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2 Samuel 9

“The Kindness of God”

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By the time we get to **2 Samuel 9**, David had been the king of Israel a little more than 15 years. After the victories he won over his enemies (described in chapter eight), he expanded the borders of Israel from about 6,000 square miles to 60,000 square miles! David was well established, well liked, and well off. At this time in his life he decided to show kindness to others who have been good to him over the years.

In this study, Pastor Gary teaches on the accounts of David and the Ammonites and David and Mephibosheth, King Saul’s grandson. He shares insights about blessings of receiving and the dangers of rejecting David’s offer of kindness. Pastor Gary also helps us understand that in these accounts David is a picture of Christ, and Mephibosheth is a picture of us.

David And The Ammonites

1. **2 Samuel 10:1-5** - *“In the course of time, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king. David thought, ‘I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me.’ So David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father. When David’s men came to the land of the Ammonites, the Ammonite nobles said to Hanun their lord, ‘Do you think David is honoring your father by sending me to you to express sympathy? Hasn’t David sent them to you to explore the city and spy it out and overthrow it?’ So Hanun seized David’s men, shaved off half of each man’s beard, cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks, and sent them away. When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, ‘Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back.’ ”*

2. The way the Ammonites humiliated David's men caused things to escalate into a war, and because Hanun was unwilling to accept kindness that was shown to him, the Israelites would end up killing 40,000 Aramean soldiers! ¹

David And Mephibosheth

3. Unlike Hanun, Mephibosheth was willing to accept the kindness of David, and though it's an ancient account, it paints a picture of timeless truth that impacts each of us today.
4. David wanted to fulfill his promise, made some 15 years earlier, to his best friend, Jonathan (Saul's son), before Jonathan died in battle.
5. **1 Samuel 20:14-15** - *"But show me [Jonathan] unfailing kindness like that of the Lord as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family - not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."*
 - a. King Saul was jealous of David and he made every effort to try to personally kill David or have him killed.
 - b. Jonathan recognized the jealous insanity of his father and was more loyal to David than he was to his father.
 - c. Even though Jonathan was technically next in line to be king, he understood that God's hand was on David and that God had sovereignly chosen David to replace his father as king.
 - d. A short time later, Jonathan died in battle, leaving a 5-year old son named Mephibosheth.
6. The Bible tells us that Mephibosheth had a nurse, who when she got word that Jonathan had died in battle with the Philistines, hurriedly picked up Mephibosheth and, panic-stricken, as she was running with him she either dropped him or he fell, which resulted in his being crippled in both feet.
 - a. **2 Samuel 4:4** - *"(Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled. His name was Mephibosheth.)"*
 - i. It's not known if he fell and broke his legs and they never healed properly or fell and broke his neck and was a paraplegic.
7. **2 Samuel 9:1** - *"David asked, 'Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?' "*

¹ The Aramean soldiers were mercenaries according to **2 Samuel 10:6**.

- a. At this point in the story, Mephibosheth would be in his early 20s and David would be in his late 40s.
 - b. The Hebrew word for kindness is *cheded*, which can also be translated, *mercy*.²
 - c. In Hebrew, Mephibosheth's name means, exterminator or breaker of idols.
8. **2 Samuel 9:2-4** - *"Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, 'Are you Ziba?' 'Your servant,' he replied. The king asked, 'Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?' Ziba answered the king, 'There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet.' 'Where is he?' the king asked. Ziba answered, 'He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.'"*
9. The fact that Mephibosheth was living at the home of Makir in Lo Debar speaks to his difficulties in life, and that because of his physical disability or his inability to work and earn a living, he and his family needed to stay in the home of a family friend.
- a. Lo Debar was located about 100 miles northeast of Jerusalem, on the eastern side of the Jordan River, about 15-20 miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee.
 - b. We don't know whether Mephibosheth was nervous, pleasantly surprised, or afraid when he learned that King David has sent for him.
 - c. It is believed, however, that the reason his nurse tried to flee with him was because she wanted to protect the dynasty, since Mephibosheth was King Saul's grandson, he would have been next in line for the throne.
 - d. The thought is that the nurse feared David would come to kill every surviving member of Saul's family so he could become king and eliminate every possible threat to the throne.
10. **2 Samuel 9:5-6** - *"So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, 'Mephibosheth!' 'Your servant,' he replied."*
- a. This scene must have been remarkable to witness, considering the fact that Mephibosheth *"bowed down to pay him honor"* even though he was crippled in both feet.
 - b. The Hebrew translation is, *"And he fell on his face in reverence."*
11. **2 Samuel 9:7-8** - *"Don't be afraid,' David said to him, 'for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my*

² This word is used 150 times in the KJV.

table.' Mephibosheth bowed down and said, 'What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?' "

- a. David went far beyond an act of kindness, which would have been to restore the land that belonged to his family; he graciously extended an offer to allow Mephibosheth to always have a place at the king's table!
12. **2 Samuel 9:9-13** - *"Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, 'I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table.' (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.) Then Ziba said to the king, 'Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do.' So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons. Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica, and all the members of Ziba's household were servants of Mephibosheth. And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table, and he was crippled in both feet."*

David Is A Picture Of Christ

13. Chapters nine and ten read like a parable, in that there is a king who wants to show kindness to people; one rejected the king's kindness (chapter ten), and one accepted it (chapter nine).
- a. The one who rejected the king's kindness died.
 - b. The one who accepted the king's kindness lived and spent the rest of his life in the company of the king, feasting at the king's table.
14. Seventeen times in the New Testament, Jesus is called the "son of David."
- a. **Matthew 1:1** - *"A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham."*
 - b. God had promised through the prophet Nathan to David, that the Messiah would descend from the seed of David.
 - i. **2 Samuel 7:11b-12, 16** - *"The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."*
 - c. In Jesus' day, this was understood, because **John 7:42** says: *"Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?"*

Mephibosheth Is A Picture Of Us

15. Mephibosheth's story
 - a. Mephibosheth was estranged from the king.
 - b. Mephibosheth was living in relative obscurity.
 - c. Mephibosheth was crippled.
 - d. Mephibosheth realized that in the presence of the king, he was nothing more than a "dead dog."

16. Our story
 - a. We are estranged from God.
 - b. We are living in emptiness.
 - c. We have been crippled by sin.
 - d. We have experienced a fall.

17. The remarkable thing for Mephibosheth, and us, is that the king sought us and pursued us!

18. It's interesting to note that the place David found Mephibosheth was Makir.
 - a. In Hebrew, Makir means, sold.
 - i. In **Romans 7:14b**, Paul said of himself: "[I] was sold as a slave to sin."
 - b. In Hebrew, Ammiel means, people of God.
 - c. In Hebrew, Lo Debar means, no pasture, barrenness, or emptiness.

19. The meaning is that the people of God were sold as slaves to sin and they lived in a place of emptiness, and that's where David found Mephibosheth, and that's where Jesus found each one of us!

20. Jesus pursued us because he is desperate to show us his kindness.

21. Like Mephibosheth, we have done nothing to deserve the king's kindness!

22. **Titus 3:4-5a** - *"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."*

23. It cannot be emphasized enough, that Christ sought us when we were living in Lo Debar, a place of emptiness, and he brought us to his royal palace, even though we were still lame because of our sin, so we could feast with him.
 - a. **Romans 5:8** - *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

- b. [Luke 14:16-21](#) - *“Jesus replied: ‘A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, “Come, for everything is now ready.” But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’ The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’ ”*

24. We are the crippled, blind, lame, and the poor, and Jesus has pursued us with his kindness.

- a. [Romans 2:4](#) - *“Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance?”*

The Conclusion

25. The one who accepted the king’s kindness first bowed down to the king, and just like it was hard for a crippled man to get down on his face before the king, it may be hard for some to humble themselves before the king, but that’s the only way to receive his mercy and feast at his table.

- a. [Revelation 19:9](#) - *“... Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”*
- b. [Revelation 3:20](#) - *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read and discuss [2 Samuel 10:1-5](#).
 - a. Allow the people in your group to share examples about a time in their life when they “rejected” the kindness of others/someone.
3. Read [2 Samuel 9](#) to provide an overview for the story of David and Mephibosheth.

4. Would others say you are someone who keeps their promises, like David, in [1 Samuel 20:14-15](#)? (See #7 above re: [2 Samuel 9:1](#))
5. Share examples of times when you've been intentional about showing kindness to others.
 - a. Was your kindness received by the person/others, like Hanun or Mephibosheth?
6. Provide an overview of the details about Lo Debar and the house of Makir son of Ammiel. (See #18 - #19 above)
7. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they lived in Lo Debar (no pasture, barrenness, emptiness, etc.)
8. Read and discuss [Romans 2:4](#) and [Titus 3:4-5a](#).
9. How did the Lord extend his kindness to you and free you from the slavery of sin?
10. Was there a time when you, like the people in Jesus' parable about the great banquet invitation, made excuses for your unwillingness to accept the kindness, salvation, and blessing of the Lord? (See #23 above)
11. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: would be thankful for the kindness of the Lord, who pursued them with his love and the invitation to feast at the king's table!

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).