

J.J.

**MEPHIBOSHETH**  
**GRACE : HOW IT WORKS AND HOW IT LOOKS LIKE**

*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?”*

*2 Now there was a servant of Saul’s household named Ziba. They summoned him to appear before David, and the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?”*

*“At your service,” he replied.*

*3 The king asked, “Is there no one still alive from 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 lame in both feet.”*

*4 “Where is he?” the king asked.*

*Ziba answered, “He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.”*

*5 So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel.*

*6 When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor.*

*David said, “Mephibosheth!” “At your service,” he replied.*

*7 “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 table.”*

*8 Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?”*

*9 Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul’s steward, and said to him, “I have given your master’s grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. 10 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.)*

*11 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.*

*12 Mephibosheth had a young son named Mika, and all the members of Ziba’s household were servants of Mephibosheth. 13 And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king’s table; he was lame in both feet.*

**INTRODUCTION:**

Heavenly Rates

A man dies and goes to heaven. Of course, St. Peter meets him at the pearly gates. St. Peter says, “Here’s how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven. You tell me all the good things you’ve done, and I give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in.”

“Okay,” the man says, “I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart.”

“That’s wonderful,” says St. Peter, “that’s worth three points!”

“Three points?” he says. “Well, I attended church all my life and supported its ministry with my tithe and service.”

“Terrific!” says St. Peter, “that’s certainly worth a point.”

“One point? Golly. How about this: I started a soup kitchen in my city and worked in a shelter for homeless veterans.”

“Fantastic, that’s good for two more points,” he says.

“TWO POINTS!!” the man cries, “At this rate the only way I get into heaven is by the grace of God!”

“Exactly, son! Come on in!”

Tomorrow, we celebrate Labor Day. I don’t know why it’s called Labor Day when we’re resting from our Labor. Today, we’ll not talk about work...we’ll talk about resting from works...it’s Grace.

**We’ve defined grace before :** we’ve said it’s unmerited favor.

**But this time, we’ll see it at work.**

We’ll talk about Mephibosheth in the Old Testament and through this story, we’ll see an illustration of God’s grace. **How it works and how it looks like.**

**It’s God’s initiative, we’ll see Man’s inability and we’ll talk about Grace’s Incredibleness.**

**Background :**

- David became king of Israel already.
- God has given him rest from all his enemies.

*2 Samuel 7: 1 After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him.*

- David was winning all his battles because of God.

*2 Samuel 8: 14 The Lord gave David victory wherever he went. 15 David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people.*

### I. GOD’S INITIATIVE

**First, it is God who looks for us.**

*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?”*

**Then the people around David knows that Saul had a servant named Ziba and Ziba was brought to him.**

*3 The king asked, “Is there no one still alive from 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 lame in both feet.”*

**To appreciate this further, we have to understand the background why Mephibosheth got crippled.**

- King Saul together with his son Jonathan was killed by the Philistines.
- Remember, Saul wanted David killed because of his jealousy of David knowing that he was anointed king.
- David mourned for the death of Saul and Jonathan.
- Afterwards David was anointed king.

- But you have to remember, Saul still had loyal people. Saul's commander Abner got one of Saul's son Ishbosheth (meaning : man of shame) and made him king over Israel.
- But Abner became a turn-coat because David was growing stronger and stronger.

**So the soldiers of Abner killed Ishbosheth.**

Knowing that this is happening...this is what took place afterwards

*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 disabled. His name was Mephibosheth.)*

**Why did they have to leave?** It's because Mephibosheth is next in line so they know he can be killed too and they think also that David would also kill them so that there would be no threat to the kingdom. **Mephibosheth went into hiding.**

**Isn't that what happened to Adam and Eve? They were hiding and yet who went looking for them?**

**GOD.**

**After they disobeyed God, this is what happened?**

*Genesis 3: 8 In the cool of the evening, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking around in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees in the garden. 9 The Lord God called to the man and asked him, “Where are you?”*

**And again, isn't that also the reason why Jesus came?**

*Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*

**Now what was the purpose of David for finding someone from Saul's household?**

*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?”*

*3 The king asked, “Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?” (chesed) loving kindness*

**This is what grace looks like.** It was God who looked for us. It was God who chose us. Remember, we were the ones who are hiding from God, the ones who are lost. and yet He comes looking for us.

**Remember, the preaching we had at the start of August in mission month.** He leaves the 99 to look for the 1 lost sheep...that's grace.

**When did God love us? Is it the time when we loved him back... no...**

*Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**There was nothing we can do to earn God's love.**

Which brings us to point no. 2

## II. MAN'S INABILITY

*3 The king asked, "Is there no one still alive from 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 lame in both feet."*

**Why was this emphasized?** It means Mephibosheth has nothing to offer. He can't even offer himself as a slave to David because he is crippled.

**When it comes to earning God's love or God's favour, there is nothing we can offer to God.**

**Money? Of course not! Giving to charity?**

The Bible says :

*Psalm 24: 1 The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;*

**That's why the lyrics of Don Moen "Lord I offer my life to you" is correct**

*What can we give*

*That you have not given?*

*And what do we have*

*That is not already yours?*

**What else can we offer? Our goodness?**

*Romans 3: 10 As it is written:*

*"There is no one righteous, not even one;*

*11 there is no one who understands;*

*there is no one who seeks God.*

*12 All have turned away,*

*they have together become worthless;*

*there is no one who does good,*

*not even one."*

**Our own righteousness?**

*Isaiah 64:6 all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;*

**Our hearts?**

*Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things  
and beyond cure.*

**There's nothing we can offer or trade to earn God's love and favour.**

**That's why the reaction of Mephibosheth is correct when he heard about David's offer :**

*7 "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 table."*

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

**It's the same reaction of the prodigal son when he returned back to his father.**

*Luke 15: 21 “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’*

**That's why the Bible says :**

*Ephesians 2:3...Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.*

**OUR ONLY CONTRIBUTION TO SALVATION:** A person was hearing about this because all his life he was raised in a religious environment thinking that we can earn our way to heaven and heard that there's absolutely nothing we can contribute to our salvation. So he asked the pastor, “Pastor, is it really true that we contribute nothing to earn our salvation?” The pastor said, “That's not true.” Then the man then asked, “So what can I contribute for my salvation?” The pastor said, “Your sins”

**Quote :** “You contribute nothing to your salvation except the sin that made it necessary.” – Jonathan Edwards

**That is how grace works and looks like.**

### III. GRACE'S INCREDIBleness

*3 The king asked, “Is there no one still alive from 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 lame in both feet.”*

*4 “Where is he?” the king asked.*

*Ziba answered, “He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.”*

*5 So King David had him brought from Lo Debar.*

**Two things again, I want to emphasize here.**

**Lo Debar** (no pasture).... This means, Mephibosheth was so destitute he came from a place where there is no pasture.

**he is lame in both feet.”**

**Again, Mephibosheth is of no use to David because he has no money, no power and he's crippled.** In fact, the best way David can use him is to kill him because he is a threat to his own kingdom.

**Later in the succeeding chapters, you will even read that Ziba, the servant assigned to Mephibosheth tried to turn David against this man.**

**Here's the story :**

Absalom, David's son rebelled against him and wanted to take his kingdom. In one part of the story, **Ziba tried to convince David that Mephibosheth wanted to be king.**

*2 Samuel 16:3 3 The king then asked, “Where is your master's grandson?” (talking about Mephibosheth)*

*Ziba said to him, “He is staying in Jerusalem, because he thinks, ‘Today the Israelites will restore to me my grandfather’s kingdom.’”*

*4 Then the king said to Ziba, “All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours.”*

**Later on, Mephibosheth proved to David that it wasn’t true because he did not want back again what David gave to Ziba.**

*2 Samuel 19: 24 Mephibosheth, Saul’s grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. 25 When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, “Why didn’t you go with me, Mephibosheth?”*

*26 He said, “My lord the king, since I your servant am lame, I said, ‘I will have my donkey saddled and will ride on it, so I can go with the king.’ But Ziba my servant betrayed me.*

**And here’s where we know that Mephibosheth only deserves death**

*28 All my grandfather’s descendants deserved nothing but death from my lord the king, but you gave your servant a place among those who eat at your table. So what right do I have to make any more appeals to the king?”*

**And this is the incredibleness of grace.**

Mephibosheth deserved nothing AND HE KNOWS IT. In fact, he deserves to die in the hands of David and yet he’s eating at the king’s table.

**What does eat mean to eat the king’s table?**

It’s only reserved for close associates and family members.

**Illustration:** Imagine, if you were to be invited by King Charles to dine in the Buckingham Palace. I’m pretty sure, you will be posting it all over Facebook.

But remember what David said :

*10...And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table.” (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.)*

*11 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 deserved death like an enemy but he was chosen to live like one of the sons.**  
Isn’t that who we are...children of wrath...meaning death

*Ephesians 2:3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

**BUT NOW... WE ARE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD!**

*John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:*

**Aside from that remember, he came from Lo-Debar-**

*4 “Where is he?” the king asked.*

*Ziba answered, “He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.”*

**Lo-Debar was so destitute they set De Bar Low.**

**He came from nothing but was given everything**

*8 Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?”*

*9 Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul’s steward, and said to him, “I have given your master’s grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. 10 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.*

**God brought him from no pasture... TO GREEN PASTURES!!!!**

**Isn’t that what our Lord Jesus Christ does for us.**

*Psalm 23: 1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

*2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,*

**And that’s what we have :**

*Ephesians 1: 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*

*John 10:10 I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

**But why did David give all this to Mephibosheth? Let’s go back to verse 1**

*David asked, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”*

**Why?** It is because Jonathan, even though he was the son of Saul and next in line to the throne helped David not be killed by his own father and the only thing that Jonathan asked from David is this...

*1 Samuel 20: 14 But show me unfailing kindness like the Lord’s kindness as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, 15 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.”*

**DAVID GIVES SAUL’S DESCENDANTS TO THE GIBEONITES :** And you will see that David in 2 Samuel 21 because of a famine sought the Lord and the Lord said that the famine is brought about the fact that Saul killed a lot of the Gibeonites (they were told by God to spare them and yet Saul killed them) and so David went to the Gibeonites and asked how can Israel make atonement..here’s what the Gibeonites said :

*2 Samuel 21: 4 “What do you want me to do for you?” David asked.*

*5 They answered the king, “As for the man who destroyed us and plotted against us so that we have been decimated and have no place anywhere in Israel, 6 let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and their bodies exposed before the Lord at Gibeath of Saul—the Lord’s chosen one.”*

*So the king said, “I will give them to you.”*

**But again, look at what David did :**

*7 The king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath before the Lord between David and Jonathan son of Saul.*

**The same with us, we do not deserve it but it was given to us because of what another person did...**

**And who is that person?**

*Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Now let me end this on how the chapter ended... no perfect way to end this but with this one.**

*13 And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table; he was lame in both feet.*

**The Holy Spirit placed it again there, to remind us what grace looks like.** We do not deserve it but one of these days but everything we have in Christ, we are now God's children and one day will be feasting at His table because it's ALL BY GOD'S GRACE...

**Let us remember that for the rest of our eternal life.**

**BREAKING OF THE BREAD**

**S.G.D.**