

BIBLE BRIEFING

“Grazing on Grace”

Second Samuel 9:1-13

Introduction

He was crippled at age five. He was grandson to King Saul, the son of Jonathan. When both Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle, Mephibosheth's nurse, filled with panic, scooped him up to run for their lives. He was the heir to the throne and was believed to be in danger. Surely David, whom God had anointed to become king after Saul, would seek to destroy the child.

In her haste his nurse dropped him. The fall was severe enough that he was left lame on both of his feet for the rest of his life.

Mephibosheth was crippled from a fall, and in fear of the true king. Mephibosheth is a type of us all:

1. We are crippled from a fall. It was Adam and Eve's fall in the Garden of Eden that crippled us. We are born unable to walk with God because of sin. Sin is imputed to us; it indwells us; we commit it as individuals.
2. We are in fear of the true King. I'm not talking about the fear of God, which is the proper reverence and respect for God. I'm talking about a fear that comes from ignorance about God. It's the fear of unbelievers that God is unjust, cruel, spiteful, mean, etc. It's the fear that asks, *“Where was God when...”* disaster or tragedy struck.

Against this dark backdrop the heart of David was revealed:

2 Samuel 9:1 Now David said, “Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?”

If only the nurse had known David! There was no need for panic; the fall could have been avoided.

If only Adam and Eve had known God had their best interest in mind! There was no need for disobedience; the fall could have been avoided.

David was determined to show unmerited love to Mephibosheth. We call it grace. It is what God determined to show Adam and Eve... All mankind... You and I.

We'll learn two things about God's grace: #1 God's Grace Is Always Searching For You, and #2 God's Grace Is Always Sufficient For You.

#1 God's Grace Is Always Searching For You (v1-5)

Saul had attempted to murder David on more than one occasion. If he ever had post traumatic stress, David might have heard the whistling of the javelin as it narrowly missed him – thrown by Saul in his madness.

Or he might have been reminded by certain shades of light about the many caves he was forced to hide within while on the run.

Instead he determined to show unmerited kindness to one of Saul's descendants. Yes, it was for Jonathan's sake. That, too, speaks to us symbolically. David had made a covenant with Jonathan. His actions were not simply based on his feelings, but on a covenant.

God the Father loves us not just based on feelings, but by covenant – the new covenant based on the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. You can be certain and secure of God's grace.

Grace conducted a search:

2 Samuel 9:2 And *there was* a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba. So when they had called him to David, the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" He said, "At your service!"

Evidently Mephibosheth was in hiding, because they had to investigate to find him. Adam and Eve hid from God – and their offspring, down to the present day, hide from Him. We don't even

know we're doing it because sin blinds us. If we are to know God, He must seek us out; He must find us; He must reveal Himself to us.

2 Samuel 9:3 Then the king said, “/s there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the kindness of God?” And Ziba said to the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan *who is lame in his feet.*”

God wants to show His kindness to every human being. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He is not willing any should perish, but that all would come to repentance.

It's shameful that unbelievers blame God for the evil, wicked things that occur in our world. They are Adam's fault; they are your fault; they are my fault. For His part, God is seeking to show His kindness against the black background of sin.

2 Samuel 9:4 So the king said to him, “Where *is* he?” And Ziba said to the king, “Indeed he *is* in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar.”

Hiding in **Lo Debar**. The meaning of **Lo Debar** is something like *no pasture*. It's an odd name, is it not?

Sort of like Nothing, Arizona... Or Deadhorse, Alaska... Or Burnt Corn, Alabama... Or Turkey Scratch, Arkansas... Or Wimp, California... Or Notown, Vermont. There's a bunch of them!¹

- being changed to bring change -

Lo Debar conveys the idea of want... Of being continually unsatisfied... Of never finding fulfillment. It is where we **all** live before we come to know God by His grace searching us out.

Where did you graze before you came to know God? There are a few fields common to us – Religion... Philosophy... Psychology... Man, are you left unsatisfied in those fields!

God wants instead to spread a table before you. It's a continual feast.

#2 God's Grace Is Always Sufficient For You
(v5-13)

¹ <http://www.legendsofamerica.com/LA-OddPlaceNames.html>

Mephibosheth was found:

2 Samuel 9:5 Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar.

There is no limit to those God is searching for. He so loved the world – the whole world – of humanity. Mephibosheth is typical of those who respond to God's love.

2 Samuel 9:6 Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, "Mephibosheth?" And he answered, "Here is your servant!"

Mephibosheth could not escape his heritage. He ought to be killed so as to be no threat to the throne. But instead he received grace from the throne.

2 Samuel 9:7 So David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually."

He would do it for Jonathan's sake – because he both loved and had covenanted with Jonathan.

God does it for Jesus' sake – because He both loves and has covenanted with Jesus.

Grace is only possible through faith in Jesus. Through it, and through Him, all that was lost to Adam and Eve will one day be restored to us.

In the mean time, God promises to sustain us. We may eat bread at His table continually.

God's grace is an abundant sufficiency to satisfy you. Just remember that it is spiritual satisfaction that is meant – not every material or physical satisfaction. When God told the apostle Paul that grace was sufficient, it was in the context of continued suffering.

Paul rejoiced in it!

2 Samuel 9:8 Then he bowed himself, and said, “What *is* your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?”

Did Mephibosheth have low self-esteem? Not at all! This was an accurate assessment of his life up until that point. He was no better to David than a **dead dog**.

Dead dogs give no affection... They don't fetch... They can't warn you of danger... I could go on, somewhat facetiously; the point is that Mephibosheth understood his life up to that point had not amounted to anything. In fact, it wasn't life at all.

2 Samuel 9:9 And the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, “I have given to your master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house.
2 Samuel 9:10 You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in *the harvest*, that your master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's son shall eat bread at my table always.” Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

Mephibosheth would be abundantly provided for without doing anything to earn or deserve it. It wouldn't even require any work on his part – except eating!

Our spiritual resources are abundant; they are immeasurable. We feed on the Word of God, find them there; then they work through us – without any work on our part, other than to walk by faith.

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Yes, there are spiritual disciplines. But they are really spiritual delights!

2 Samuel 9:11 Then Ziba said to the king, “According to all that my lord the king has commanded his servant, so will your servant do.” “As for Mephibosheth,” *said the king*, “he shall eat at my table like one of the king's sons.”

Like a son! You are loved just that way. Christians are frequently called God's beloved. It means that God the Father loves you just as He loves His own Son, Jesus Christ.

2 Samuel 9:12 Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants of Mephibosheth.

David provided for **Micha** as well (bad pun intended!). The mention of a son fixes our focus on our own offspring. Whatever hopes and dreams; whatever fears and doubts; we might have about them... God wants to provide His grace to them as well. The best thing you can do for your kids is to be committed to God.

2 Samuel 9:13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet.

Still physically lame. That would not change. But satisfied.

Grace is sufficient for you in just that same way. It is far above the material; far above the physical. We often miss it because we are too much about the physical and the material.

As long as we remain in these bodies, we will know what it is to be crippled and lame. We will struggle against the flesh – desiring to be set free.

Grazing on grace, we can see ourselves seated in Heaven, with Jesus, at the right hand of God.



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