

2 Samuel 9

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

This morning we continue the story of David's life and look at a passage showing kindness in practise and also look at the NT where we see Christ's kindness to us.

It is a challenging passage for us, giving a pattern for service and ministering to others in 2020. So it will be more than a history lesson, it applies to each one of us.

In the studying of 1 Samuel and so far in 2 Samuel, we know David's life has not been easy. Yes he was the anointed new King; but he was a long time in waiting. He was constantly on the run from Saul who wanted to kill him. Even when Saul was killed, the kingdom was divided; eventually Judah and Israel were united as God had planned.

To help understand David's actions we know Saul and David had an ongoing conflict, but David makes a commitment to Saul in 1 Samuel 24 v 20-22 which helps us understand. Saul says "Now I know for certain you will be king and the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand. Therefore swear to me by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family. Then Saul went back home and David and his men went up to the stronghold". Knowing this commitment David made to Saul, helps us to understand David's action.

Also we have this remarkable relationship which David had with Jonathon, Saul's son. He was like a brother to David. For Jonathon having loyalty to his father Saul and to David, who Saul was trying to kill, was very difficult. In 1 Samuel 20 v14-15 Jonathon says "If I continue to live, treat me with the Lord's faithful love, but if I die don't ever withdraw your faithful love from my household - not even when the Lord cuts off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth"

David's kind question: "Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul?"

In Chapter 7 God makes a covenant with David that he will build a house through him that will last forever v11 "The Lord declares to you The Lord Himself will make a house for you". Note here the Lord denies David's desire to build him a temple but God rewarded David's heart by building the King a house and a dynasty composed of David's descendants. This permanent dynasty Saul could have had and now David asks this question about Saul's family. David's question showed a great love because Saul made himself an enemy of David. It was customary in those days for a king of a new dynasty to completely massacre anyone connected with the prior dynasty. David went against the principle of revenge and against the principle of self-preservation and asked what he could do for the family of his enemy. Here we see David's true motives v1 "That I may show kindness because of Jonathan". Remember Jonathan and David's relationship and the promise that he made. His actions were honourable but also were because of his promises made in the past. Do we keep our promises?

Ziba the Servant of Saul's Household

Ziba who had continued to look after Saul's household and land informs David about Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son who is crippled in his feet from an accident when his nurse dropped him 2: Sam 4v4. This happened when they heard that his father Jonathan and his Grandfather Saul had both died in battle. His nurse rightly feared that a leader of a new royal dynasty would execute every potential heir. The kindness of God is key to this chapter and David wanted to show someone else the same kindness shown to him. Mephibosheth was in hiding and lived with Machir, son of Ammiel. This

speaks of Mephibosheth's low station in life as he did not even have his own house; instead he and his family lived in the house of another man. It has been suggested it may have been among his mother's relatives on the other side of the Jordan River (ie- back of Bourke).

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth v 5-6

Here Mephibosheth makes a humble appearance before David. I would imagine this would have been Mephibosheth's worst nightmare as it were like the knock on the door... so Mephibosheth was no longer hidden from David. He would have felt secure as long as he believed the new King didn't know about him but now his cover was blown. He fell on his face and prostrated himself before David. According to the custom of the times Mephibosheth had a lot to fear from David yet his fears of David were not founded on fact only on assumption.

David removes the fears of Mephibosheth v 7-8

"Do not fear"... as we know Mephibosheth did have a genuine reason to fear for his life as a direct descendant of Saul. But here David reminds Mephibosheth of the covenant he made with Jonathan his father, to show kindness to his descendants, against all customs. The restoration of Saul's fields near Gibeath would provide Mephibosheth income for future years plus the king granted him the privilege of eating regularly with David in the palace. This went far beyond giving Mephibosheth what was rightfully his. He gave Mephibosheth the honour of a close relationship with the king, a similar promise was given to the followers of Jesus. Jesus told His disciples that they would eat and drink at His table in heaven Luke 22v 30. Mephibosheth replied in an usual way for us today "what is your servant that you should look upon such a dead dog as I". This was a standard way of replying humbly, measuring a worthless and insignificant person, not feeling worthy of such generosity as Mephibosheth was not considering turning down David's offer. I would imagine all the years of hiding from the king and living in fear and poverty made Mephibosheth think of himself as worthless.

David's instructions to Ziba v 9-12

Ziba was like a manager of Saul's family estate; his role would now change, probably "coming down a few pegs". Later on we see Ziba's real motives. So the matter is settled concerning Mephibosheth "you and your sons and your servants shall work the land for him". Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants and now he was to provide for Mephibosheth's family because he now ate at David's table. I imagine Ziba would not be as we say today a "happy camper" but they were David's instructions for him to follow.

David fulfils the promise to Mephibosheth v13

We see Mephibosheth went to live in Jerusalem, no longer hiding in fear. He ate continually at the King's table, no longer living in obscurity and estranged from the King. So now he had great privileges before David. He was crippled in both his feet so Mephibosheth's weakness did not vanish, his life was far better but he was still a cripple. David showed Mephibosheth grace as David wrote about God's grace and forgiveness in Psalm 103. David was a man who knew the grace and deliverance of God many times,.

Some examples from Psalm 103 include:

- God forgives all your sins v3

- He redeems your life from the pit v4
- He crowns you with faithful love and compassion v4
- He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve or repaid us according to our offences v10
- As a father has compassion on his children so the Lord has compassion of those who fear Him v13
- For He knows what we are made of, remembering that we are dust v14
- As for man his days are like grass, blooms like the flower of the field when the wind passes over it, it vanishes and its place is no longer known v16
- The Lord has established His throne in heaven and His kingdom rules over all v19

David's kindness to Mephibosheth serves to illustrate the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards fallen mankind, even though God was under no obligation as David was to Jonathan. We as humans were convicted of rebellion against God and like Saul's house under sentence of rejection from God. Thankfully God did not leave us in our sin, even though we rejected Him. Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost. To those prompted by the Holy Spirit, that humble themselves before him and commit themselves to Him, God restores their inheritance to a better paradise than which Adam lost and we have a personal relationship with God Himself and will feast in heaven forever.

Ephesians 2 v1-10

God's Kindness to Us

Let us look at the NT about God's grace to us. So what is God's grace, well it is favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to His call to become children of God, as adopted, partakers of the divine nature and eternal life. To us as Christians it is a spontaneous gift from God which is generous, free, unexpected, underserved and unmerited. It is amazing how this OT story of David reflects and foreshadows God's grace to us as he showed Mephibosheth

If you have your Bible, turn with me to Ephesians 2 v1-10 which we read earlier. This text presents the immeasurable nature of God's grace which has totally changed both the Christians' reality and the way they will live forever.

This passage examines in terms of a "before and after" what happens and the working of the Holy Spirit in a persons changed life. See God's love and grace has radically altered everything about who we are, whose we are, about how we live, why we live and even where we live.

BEFORE

We were in a state of separation. The best word to describe the Gentile (that will be most of us) is without. Paul has already discussed the salvation of sinners in general, but now he returns to the work of Christ for the Gentiles in particular. So the Gentile is outside in several respects.

Without Christ

The Ephesians worshipped the goddess Diana and before the coming of the gospel they knew nothing about Christ.

Without citizenship

God called the Jews and built them into a nation. He gave them His laws and His blessings. A Gentile could enter the nation as a proselyte, but they were not born into that very special nation.

Without covenants

While the blessings of the Gentiles is included in God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12 v1-3) God did not make any covenants with the Gentile nations. The Gentiles were described as "aliens and strangers" and the Jews never let them forget it either!

Without hope

Historians tell us that a great cloud of hopelessness covered the ancient world. Philosophes were empty, traditions were disappearing and religions were powerless to help people face life or death. It sounds to me a bit like 2020.

Without God

The heathens had many gods (Acts 17 v16-23) Someone wrote in that day , that it was easier to find a god, than a man in Athens!! The writer of Psalm 115 contrasted the true God with the idols of heathens

v4 Their idols are silver and gold made from human hands

v5 They have mouths but cannot speak, eyes but cannot see.

It is worth noting that the spiritual plight of the Gentiles was caused not by God but by their own wilful sin.

Ephesians 2 v4 tells us that God, despite human rejection gives new life, manifested in God's gracious acceptance of sinners because of Christ. The contrast points to God's answer to our dreadful situation.

Rich in Mercy

Mercy is God's compassion for the helpless that relieves their situation. While grace involves God giving believers what they do not deserve. Mercy means that God does not give what is deserved, which is death. Remember David gave Mephibosheth what he did not deserve, showing mercy and love.

AFTER

Verse 5 He made us alive...even though we were dead.

Verse 6

Together with Christ Jesus, God's loving mercy not only makes new life possible, but by it God has made us alive, raised us up and seated us with Christ. God's great power has enthroned us with Christ in the heavenly places even as Christ was exalted to God'S right hand following the resurrection.

So v7-10 the work of reconciliation is seen in four key terms.

Kindness- God's loving action, like David to Mephibosheth

Grace- God's favour towards undeserving people

Faith - The instrument that brings us empty handed to God

Saved- equates with new life, forgiveness of sins, deliverance from our plight v1-3, liberation and resurrection.

In summary before and after

- We were without Christ now in Christ Ep2 v13
- We were aliens now we are part of a Holy Nation 1 Pet 2 v9
- We were strangers and now no more Ep.2 v19
- We were without hope now called to one hope Ep. 4 v4
- We were without God now we have the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Eph. 1v3

I read this story a man went to his minister and asked for help. "My wife and I need re-cancellation he blurted out. The minister knew he meant reconciliation. But in one sense re-cancellation was the right word. They had sinned against each other and the Lord and there could be no harmony until those sins were cancelled. A God of love wants to reconcile the sinner to Himself, but a God of holiness must see to it that sin is judged. God solved the problem by sending His son to be the sacrifice for our sins, thereby revealing His love and meeting the demands of His righteousness. It was truly re- cancellation. (Col 2 v13-14)

Challenge

We have seen a picture of Christ in the way King David showed kindness to Mephibosheth and in the NT how Christ reached out to sinners like us. Our Minister Paul gave the challenge to our growth groups in question 11. How should we respond to God's grace?

Where do you stand before the Lord? I pray you have accepted Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you are in Christ, part of a Holy Nation, children of God, having the one hope in Christ and having your ticket booked for Heaven.

Lets pray...