

SUNDAY SCHOOL

A.P. 04-22-2018

HIGHLIGHT: Samuel 9

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David asked, "Is there anyone remaining from Saul's family I can show kindness to because of Jonathan?" ²There was a servant of Saul's family named Ziba. They summoned him to David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?"

"I am your servant," he replied.

³So the king asked, "Is there anyone left of Saul's family that I can show the kindness of God to?"

Ziba said to the king, "There is still Jonathan's son who was injured in both feet."

⁴The king asked him, "Where is he?"

Ziba answered the king, "You'll find him in Lo-debar at the house of Machir son of Ammiel." ⁵So King David had him brought from the house of Machir son of Ammiel in Lo-debar.

⁶Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, bowed down to the ground and paid homage.

David said, "Mephibosheth!"

"I am your servant," he replied.

⁷"Don't be afraid," David said to him, "since I intend to show you kindness because of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all your grandfather Saul's fields, and you will always eat meals at my table."

⁸Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant that you take an interest in a dead dog like me?"

⁹Then the king summoned Saul's attendant Ziba and said to him, "I have given to your master's grandson all that belonged to Saul and his family. ¹⁰You, your sons, and your servants are to work the ground for him, and you are to bring in the crops so your master's grandson will have food to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, is always to eat at my table." Now Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants.

¹¹Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do all my lord the king commands."

So Mephibosheth ate at David's table just like one of the king's sons.

¹²Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. All those living in Ziba's house were Mephibosheth's servants. ¹³However, Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem because he always ate at the king's table. His feet had been injured.



EXPLAIN

With some context, today's passage sparkles with vivid, emotional color. In Old Testament times, it was expected that an incoming king would kill all of the old king's family when he came to power. He couldn't take any risks that the family members, who had a technical right to the throne, would lead an uprising against him with enough support from the people.

When Saul died, David, who had been anointed by God through Samuel to be the next king, had the rights to the throne—ahead of any remaining family that Saul had. But according to the pattern of the world, the throne technically could have gone to Jonathan's firstborn, whose name was Mephibosheth. As David took the throne, Mephibosheth's nurse knew that his life was in danger and fled with him to a distant land, permanently injuring Mephibosheth's feet in the process. There he lived, crippled and afraid for his life, until today's passage, when he heard a knock at his door and learned that it was King David—the one who, by all rights of the day, was most likely there to kill him.

- v.1 David's search for members of Saul's family was for "anyone" who remained, not a certain number of them or only those who fit a certain criteria.

Because of Jonathan. David and Jonathan had a long-standing covenantal relationship, which is defined by Jonathan's promise to David in 1 Samuel 20:15 to never "withdraw [his] faithful love from [David's] household—not even when the Lord cuts off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."

- v.3 "The kindness of God" doesn't mean "kindness FROM God" so much as it does "kindness like the kindness that God has." This sets the entire encounter with Mephibosheth to be exemplary of the kind of grace that God shows us.

2 Samuel 4:4 explains that, as Mephibosheth's nurse was fleeing what she understood to be a threat to his life, she dropped him, permanently crippling his feet. He likely lived his life with the unfading fear that the king was coming to kill him and he couldn't even run away from it.

- vv.4,7 David's questions as to whether there even was an heir of Saul, much less where he lived, lend credibility to Mephibosheth's pitiful condition. He was in absolute hiding and completely "off the grid." When David came to his house, what David says speaks to Mephibosheth's fear. "Don't be afraid," David says, "I intend to show you kindness." These words come in stark contrast to what Mephibosheth had been expecting.

- v.10 *Mephibosheth ate at David's table just like one of the king's sons.* This line contains a powerful sense of melancholy. In 1 Samuel 23:17, Jonathan predicted that one day David would be king over Israel and he, Jonathan, would be his second-in-command. Jonathan would undoubtedly have been dining with him, too. David's best friend and covenant brother's ill-fated prediction would have rung in his ears as Jonathan's crippled son dined continually at his table.



APPLY

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you read in the text?
2. What might Mephibosheth have been feeling knowing that David was coming to pay him a visit? How did his feelings change in verse 7?
3. Why did David show Mephibosheth such kindness? What had Mephibosheth done to deserve it? Why does God show us grace today?
4. How did Mephibosheth respond to David's grace, considering David had every right to judge and even kill him? How do we respond to the grace of the King of Kings, who is the ultimate example of it?
5. How has God shown you grace? How do you express your gratitude for it? Share a story when someone showed you the kindness of God like David did to Mephibosheth.

RESPOND

Based on the dynamic of your group and how discussion has progressed, challenge your group to respond. Responses could include:

**Who is someone you need to show this kind of grace to this week?
Regularly thank God for the grace that He has shown you.**

Encourage one another through email, text messages, or coffee dates throughout the week to build up and encourage each other.

