

# You are Mephibosheth

## 1 Sam. 13, 2 Sam. 9:1

**INTRODUCTION:** This morning I want to introduce you to one of my favorite OT characters. I've always been drawn to the parenthetical stories. The enigmatic stories. The parts of the Bible that we wonder why they are there. Such is the case with this young man named Mephibosheth, son of Jonathon, grandson of King Saul.

**CONTEXT:** Last week we saw the defining moment in the life of David - the battle with Goliath.

**TEXT: 1 Samuel 18:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

The first time David and Johnathon met - David is holding the decapitated head of Goliath in his hand, fresh from the battle. For some reason that initiated the greatest friendship in all the bible. Why?

**C.S. Lewis** said it this way - *"friendship is born in that moment when two people are looking at something and one says to another, "Oh... you too?"*

You may not know is that Jonathon had a Goliath moment of his own... Turn back a few chapters to 1 Samuel 13

**TEXT: 1 Samuel 14** Johnathon sees a garrison of the Philistines preparing to attack the Israeli army.

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, "**Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the Lord will work for us, for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few.**"

Does that sound familiar? Who said practically the same thing? Is that not almost the same thing David said of Goliath?

<sup>7</sup> And his armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul."

So here is the plan... EXPLAIN

<sup>8</sup> Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them. <sup>9</sup> If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. <sup>10</sup> But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the Lord has given them into our hand. And this shall be the

sign to us.”<sup>11</sup> So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, “Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves.”<sup>12</sup> And the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, “Come up to us, and we will show you a thing.” And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, “Come up after me, for the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel.”<sup>13</sup> Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him.<sup>14</sup> And that first strike, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow’s length in an acre of land.

And after that first strike God confused the army of the Philistines and they began to strike one another... then Israel’s army fell on them and defeated them at Micmash.

NOW you see why Jonathon liked David so much? They were cut from the same cloth! **From the time David and Jonathan friendship began it was perpetually tested and refined.**

Over and over Saul seeks to kill David, ultimately driving him into hiding among the enemies of Israel. But Jonathon was always loyal, always faithful and David was faithful to Jonathon as well.

**Then in 1 Samuel 31 Saul and Jonathon are killed in battle. The amazing thing about true friendship is even death can’t destroy it.**

Keep in mind in Israel’s monarchy kings rule by Divine right. There is as assumption of a Dynasty. So after Saul died, Jonathan would rule, after Jonathan, Jonathan son would rule and so on. But God had rejected the house of Saul from the throne and had chosen a man after his own heart - David.

Now when **Dynasties shift in ancient history it was assumed that they new dynasty would eliminate all claimants to the throne from the previous dynasty**, so that the new dynasty could rule unopposed.

So Jonathon and Saul are killed in battle... Jonathon has a 5 year old little boy named Mephibosheth. The story begins with the lady taking care of Mephibosheth hears about Saul and Jonathon’s death - she assumes David is going to come and kill Mephibosheth.

**NOW TURN TO 2 Samuel 4:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

From that point on this young man Mephibosheth was crippled. We are talking about a time, when there was no wheel chairs, a time when loosing the ability to walk meant

that you were destined to be a beggar in Israel. Not only that but for all he knew he was a fugitive.

Mephibosheth was on the run yet unable to walk.  
What a pitiful, poor existent his must have been.

His family dead, unable to provide for himself, living on the mercy of strangers, waiting to die.

At the age of 5 his whole world is turned upside down.

### **Have you ever had a Mephibosheth moment?**

- Maybe it was the betrayal of a spouse.
- Maybe it was the loss of a job.
- Maybe you go the Dr. Feeling fine and discover you are not ok.

Ironically, his Father originally named him **Mir-Baal** which meant "*opponent of Baal*". But his named got changed to **Mephibosheth** which means, "*Son of Shame*".

### **2 Samuel 9:1–13 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

Now that is a very odd statement - the wrath of David that might otherwise burn was quenched by the friendship of Jonathan. Now - he is not seeking revenge against the house of Saul - he is looking for someone to show Majestic kindness to.

Poor pitiful condition we were in. But look what happens next...

<sup>2</sup> Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant."

<sup>3</sup> And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet." <sup>4</sup> The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar."

Lo-debar means the house of no bread. Ironically - where was David from? Bethlehem - which means the house of bread.

Lo-debar is an arid dessert region. Mephibosheth is in this sort of witness protection program.

<sup>5</sup> Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.

David summons Mephibosheth and no doubt his heart stopped when he heard that David was seeking an audience with him. "This is the end!" Now I will die, no doubt he thought.

<sup>6</sup> And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I am your servant."

The next words out of David's mouth will seal the fate of Mephibosheth. David stands above this poor, pitiful, crippled young man in absolute power. He is Judge, Jury and Executioner. The David speaks...

<sup>7</sup> And David said to him, "**Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan.**"

Three Things the Story of Mephibosheth Produces:

1. Humility
2. Hospitality
3. Hope

## **1. Humility -**

<sup>8</sup> And he paid homage and said, "What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?"

Remember how in the story of David and Goliath I taught you that our natural tendency is to look for ourself in story. How are we like David and our Problems like Goliath? But then we said, "no we are more like the soldiers trembling on the sidelines and Christ is the GREATER David who slays a GREATER Goliath.

NOW - how do we see the Gospel in this story? We see Jonathon in the place of Christ, and David in the place of God the Father. Because of the death of Jonathon, kindness is shown by David to Mephibosheth. Do you see it?

Jonathon = Jesus

David = God

Who does that make you in the story? Mephibosheth = You

- Like Mephibosheth the wrath of God should be burning against you today.  
**Psalm 7:11** God is a righteous judge who is angry with the wicked every day!

It makes perfect sense that God's anger would burn against us! We have time and again lifted our fist toward heaven and said, "I'll do what I want when I want, regardless of your law".

- Like Mephibosheth we were helpless to do anything about our condition - we were dead in our trespasses and sins.

Oh if we had a moment of regret or repentance - like Mephibosheth our natural faculties betrayed us. We couldn't rise and go to God, we couldn't leave the chains that were bound to us. We were slaves of the prince of the power of the air!

**Tim Keller** said it this way, *"The Gospel shows us just how sinful we are - only the death of God's Son could save us. But it also shows us how loved we are - God's Son was willing to save us"*.

So that produces **HUMILITY** - I'm a sinner  
But it also produces amazing **CONFIDENCE** - I am loved

## 2. Hospitality -

David's kindness toward Mephibosheth was based on absolutely NOTHING that Mephibosheth could bring to the table.

God's kindness toward YOU was based on absolutely NOTHING you can bring to the table.

Luther said, "All we contributed to the equation of the Gospel is the sin God so graciously forgives"

Thinking on that SHOULD cause you to look at others differently.

Did you know that 90% of the counseling I do revolves around UNMET expectations?

There is ALWAYS a gap between what we EXPECT and what we RECEIVE - this isn't just a Christian thing, it's a law like gravity. It applies to everyone. Every religious has to decide how to respond to the gap.

- Islam says - put punishment in the gap.
- Hinduism says - put karma in the gap.
- Legalism - put guilt in the gap.
- Liberalism says - pretends the gap isn't there.

The Gospel allows us to put GRACE in the GAP - the grace God gave you, give to others.

humility, hospitality...

## 3. Hope

**David promises Mephibosheth 5 things:**

1. Security - "Do not fear"
2. Kindness
3. Restoration - all the land, massive amount, that belonged to Saul he gives him
4. Belonging - you always have a seat at the King's table, no matter what.
5. Sonship - 2 Sam. 9:11 says Mephibosheth was treated like one of the King's sons.

Don't you see it my friend. Mephibosheth recognizes that everything he had believed, thought, feared about David had been wrong. David wasn't angry - David loved Mephibosheth because of the merits of Jonathon.

**Oh thanks be to God we have a friend greater than Jonathon.** Now we poor, pitiful, bankrupt, crippled, based on our Jonathan... we have been summoned to take a seat at the Kings table.

Can you imagine?

- There is general Joab - at this table by virtue of his military skill.
- There is the high priest of Isreal - at this table by virtue of his high religious office.
- There is a prince and a princess - at this table by virtue of their heritage.
- There is an influential landowner - at this table by virtue of his wealth.
- There is the head of the scribes - at this table by virtue of their intellect.

And there in the midst of all of them - Mephibosheth... there entirely on the virtue of Jonathon.

ILLUSTRATION: Two years ago my father passed away. He was very poor. He was the youngest of 12 children. His father was a drunk. You know in all his life he was only given one toy and he kept it his entire life.. I have it today. He never graduated from high school, certainly never thought about college. But at the age of 25 a man of God shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with my Father and he repented and trusted Jesus as his savior.

Today my father sits at a table belonging to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords...

- He is not there by virtue of his wealth - for he was a poor man.
- He is not there by virtue of his religious office - for he held none.
- He is not there by virtue of his heritage - his father was a drunk.
- He is not there by virtue of his intellect - he was an uneducated man.

But there he sits none the less....Look around him!

- There sits the Apostle Paul.
- There sits Charles Spurgeon the prince of preachers
- There sits Moses, there Elijah...

And in the midst of them all there sits my father.

What about you? Did you know that you have been summoned to the King's table? Oh but you remember - you can only find your place based on the virtue of another. Have you given your life by faith to Jesus Christ?