

## GOD'S KINDNESS

2Samuel 9:1-13 (Key verse 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.”

In last week’s passage, we saw how David gained victory over all the powerful nations surrounding Israel....the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Amalekites. All these nations at one point in Israel’s history, oppressed the Israelites . Yet now they were all subject to David and even paid him tribute. At the same time, David became famous and was regarded as one of the greatest kings Israel ever had! Not bad for a man who once was a mere shepherd boy; the last born and forgotten son of Jesse. But how could David’s life be transformed in such a radical manner? We can suggest many reasons. But in the context of today’s passage, we can be certain that it was because of God’s kindness to David. In today’s passage, we will see how David showed God’s kindness to a crippled man, called Mephibosheth, and transformed his life as well! In fact, through today’s passage, we will learn that God is eager to show His kindness to all undeserving sinners, like Mephibosheth.....and just like you and me. I sincerely pray that the Lord may draw us closer to Him and fill our hearts with hope as we learn about His kindness this morning. Amen.

Look at verse 1. David asked, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul?” Now considering how in the previous chapter David defeated all his enemies SURROUNDING Israel, one would think that the reason David asked this question, was to now also wipe out his enemies WITHIN Israel. For it was customary when one royal house replaced another.....for the new royal house to kill all the potential rulers from the old royal house. **(2 Sam 19:28)** And since Saul’s house was replaced by David’s as the royal house, it would make sense for David, even after 8 years of becoming king over all Israel, to make sure no one in Saul’s house was still alive to challenge his throne.

But this was not why David wanted to know if there was anyone still left of the house of Saul? Look again at verse 1. Amazingly, David asked this question, because he was eager to show [God’s] kindness to anyone still alive in Saul’s family. But why would David want to show God’s kindness to the family of a rival king? Especially a king like Saul, who had treated him so badly? I am sure you can all remember how Saul mistreated David, right?..... When he was still alive, Saul lied to David, deceived him, tried to kill him several times and ultimately drove David into the arms of the Philistines. If this was not bad enough, Saul persisted to the end in setting his heart against the Lord. He openly disobeyed the Lord’s word, he honored himself over the Lord and when God departed from him, Saul in desperation even consulted a witch to bring back Samuel from the dead for guidance. Not to mention, that after Saul’s death and when David became king of Judah in Hebron, the house of Saul wage a war against the house of David for a long time. (3:1) Indeed, humanly speaking, Saul and his house were the last family on earth David would want to show God’s kindness. Right? So, why then did David want to show God’s kindness to someone in this undeserving family?

Look again at verse 1. It was for Jonathan’s sake.” Jonathan was the late son of king Saul, and once the rightful heir of his father’s throne. But Jonathan was nothing like his father Saul. As we learned in our 1st Samuel study, when God anointed David..... instead of Jonathan..... as the next king of Israel, unlike his father Saul.....Jonathan did not want to murder David.....to preserve his family’s claim to the throne!! Instead, Jonathan loved David. One day when David was in great distress because Saul who again tried to kill him, Jonathan showed David God’s kindness by protecting him from his own murderous father. (1 Sa 20:8) Yes, Jonathan chose David over his own father. He chose God over his own throne. And so showed God’s kindness to David. Therefore, David swore an oath before the Lord and promised Jonathan..... that one day when he becomes king, he would never stop showing God’s kindness to Jonathan and his family. **(1 Samuel 20:14-15)** Now in today’s passage, David still remembered his promise to Jonathan.....and though it was already

twenty years later, David was still eager to fulfill it. Therefore, to David, it was irrelevant who Saul was or what terrible things he had done before he died. Also, it was irrelevant that Saul's house once fought against David's house for the throne of Israel. All that matter was the promise he made to Jonathan. And because of this promise, David was eager to show God's kindness to someone in the house of Saul. The problem was, however, that in fear of being executed, everyone in Saul's family went into hiding. And David was unsure if anyone in Saul's house was still alive.

Look at verse 2. Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. As the steward in charge of Saul's estate, Ziba knew everything about Saul's family and their affairs. And if anyone would know if there was still someone left alive in Saul's family, then it would be Ziba. So they called him to appear before David. Look at verse 2b-3. The king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" "At your service," he replied. (NLT) The king then asked him, "Is anyone still alive from Saul's family? If so, I want to show God's kindness to them." Indeed, Ziba knew of someone!! He answered the king; there is still, Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both his feet. Upon hearing this, King David jumped to his feet and excitedly asked "Where is he?" Ziba answered, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar." Here we can see that God offers His kindness with joy and excitement.

Mephibosheth was exactly the kind of person David was looking to show God's wonderful kindness. And my word....as the crippled grandson of Saul, how desperately Mephibosheth was in need of God's kindness. Fifteen years earlier, when Mephibosheth was only 5 years old, he lost everything he held dear. When the news about Saul and Jonathan's death came from the battlefield, Mephibosheth's nurse picked him up and fled in fear that the king of the new royal family would execute him. But as she hurried to leave, Mephibosheth fell and broke both his feet. They never healed back properly, and so Mephibosheth became lame in both feet. (2 Sam 4:4) This meant, that from the young age of 5, Mephibosheth lost the ability to walk, except with great difficulty. As a child, he lost the ability to run, or play with his friends. As an adult, he lost the ability to work in the fields or fight on the battlefield. To make things even worse, was the fact that he lost his grandfather's land, his wealth and even his freedom to live openly as he had to always hide far away from Jerusalem, at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar in fear that the next king would one day find and to kill him. How terribly crippled was Mephibosheth's life!! As he lost everything he once held dear.

This sounds truly terrible, right?! Yet there is something even worse about Mephibosheth's situation. Despite his pitiful condition, there was nothing that Mephibosheth could do to change his situation. Also, there was no one around who could soothe his broken heart and restore his broken life. Except for King David. But David was under no obligation to show any kindness to Mephibosheth. Instead, humanly speaking, David had every right to execute Mephibosheth as a threat to his throne, and so put him out of his misery. Alternatively, if David did want to kill him..... David could simply ignore Mephibosheth. But because of his promise to Jonathan, David did neither of these. Instead, David sought Mephibosheth to show God's kindness to him. Look at verses 5-6. So, King David, had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. Now we must remember that Mephibosheth did not know the king wanted to show him God's kindness. Therefore, he was terribly afraid to appear before the king. But his fear and apprehension began to melt away when the king saw and greeted him with a friendly face, exclaiming: "Mephibosheth!"

Let's read today's key verse together. Verse 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." Mephibosheth could hardly believe his ears. All this time he lived in fear of King David, being certain that the king meant him only harm. Yet here David was telling him, "Don't be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness. It simply seemed too good to be true! And usually, when something seems too good to be true it really is; right? But not this time.....and not with God. But still, Mephibosheth wondered why would the king want to show him God's kindness? For he did nothing to deserve this wonderful privilege. Yet, David's kindness to Mephibosheth did not depend on who he was or what he did.

Instead, it all depended on that promise David once made to [his] father Jonathan..... to always .....no matter what.....show God's kindness to Saul's family.....just as Jonathan showed God's kindness to David. What an amazing concept, right?!! That God's kindness to Mephibosheth was certain.....it was guaranteed in a promise made between David and Jonathan.....even before Mephibosheth was born .....a promise that could never be broken.....regardless of who Mephibosheth was or what he did. Here we can see that God's kindness is unconditional?

The truth is, like Mephibosheth, we to have lost so much in this world because of sin....because of mistakes we made.....because of mistakes others have made. And in a sense, we are all crippled in one way or another, just like Mephibosheth. Moreover, like Mephibosheth, we too hide from God in fear that He will condemn us.....because of who we are and for all the sins we committed against him. Yet, the truth is for the sake of His son, Jesus Christ.....God wants to only show us kindness. For God's kindness does not depend on who we are or what we have done! Instead, it depends 110% on Jesus, on who He was and what He has done 2000 years ago.....and long before we were even born. Therefore just as Mephibosheth could be sure of God's kindness because of his father Jonathan, so you and I can be sure of God's kindness because of Jesus Christ. Amen!

But is God's kindness really that good? Let's again look at our key verse, verse 7b. **Firstly**, David said to Mephibosheth, I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul. Saul owned beautiful and fruitful land before he died. As Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth was entitled to own, enjoy and benefit from this land. Yet, he lost all of it on the day when his grandfather and father died on the battlefield. But with God's kindness, David would restore to him all the land that belonged to [his] grandfather Saul. Just imagine how this would transform Mephibosheth's life? Here we can see that God's kindness is restorative.

**Secondly**, David said to Mephibosheth, and you will always eat at my table." To eat at the king's table was not a small matter! Only a handful of the king's closest family members had the privilege to eat with him at his table. And only they could enjoy daily seeing him, talking with him and spending time with the king..... while enjoying the best choice food in Israel. Yet, David promised to allow a crippled stranger, Mephibosheth.....from the house of his enemy Saul..... to always eat at his table..... like one of his very own sons. I believe this is the perfect illustration of God's wonderful kindness.....which God always extends to and is meant to uplift us to the very presence of God.

How then did Mephibosheth respond to God's kindness that David showed him? Look at verse 8. Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?" Mephibosheth didn't feel worthy of such generosity. He considered himself a **dead dog**, meaning a worthless and insignificant person. But in David's eyes..... he deserved it because of his father Jonathan who had been faithful to David even at personal risk and cost to himself. Then what about you and me? Yes, like Mephibosheth we also see ourselves as dead dogs when we stand before God. However, this is not how God sees us. God looks at you and me through the blood of Jesus. And through Jesus' blood, we are sinless, we are lovely and very precious to God. Therefore God is more than eager to show you and me the same kindness that David showed to Mephibosheth. To restore our broken lives and adopt us as his very own sons and daughters.....who can freely spend time with Him in prayer and as we meditate on His word. Do you believe this?

Personally, when I look at my life, I am amazed at how God has shown his kindness to me. I was once a young man without direction in my life. And in my confusion, I committed so much sin as I wandered aimlessly around looking for meaning and direction. One year passed....then another.....and when I opened my eyes I was already 25 years old without any qualification or even idea of what I am supposed to do in life. To say I was hopeless and lost is an understatement. I was utterly desperate for something or someone to show me the way. It was then that my brother Andries invited me to a Bible conference. He did it again a few months later. And thereafter I started studying the bible with missionary Josephine. How the word of God just soothed my

dry and thirsty heart, as the Lord's kindness just washed over me as I did my morning devotion, wrote my bible testimonies and prayed privately in my room. Looking back now, I now see I was no different from Mephibosheth; crippled.....alone.....fearful and without any hope for a better life. But then, just as David sought out Mephibosheth.....so God sought me out through my brother Andries.....And over the last 15 years, I have experienced so much of God's kindness in my life. I was able to give my life as a campus shepherd for university students. I even established a house church with shepherdess Sarah for campus mission. I graduated from the University of Pretoria at the old age of 35. (Rather later than never, right!) I was appointed as one of the directors and leaders of this ministry. I have a beautiful home, with three cute cats, and a balcony where I can enjoy rest and peace. Like Mephibosheth, I too can say, O Lord, who am I that you have noticed a dead dog like me, and showed me so much of your goodness!! How fortunate I am to sit and dine with the Lord at His table. How blessed to have a personal relationship with God, whose kindness is so pure and wonderful. And not only me, but also each one of you. Amen!

Then how can we daily experience God's kindness in our lives? If we look at verses 9-13 we see that we simply have to follow God's guidance and accept His kindness with open hearts. After speaking with Mephibosheth, king David jumped to work and announced that he had given Saul's land back to Mephibosheth. He then arranged for Ziba, his sons, and servants to farm the land for Mephibosheth and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. Lastly, David arranged for Mephibosheth to relocate to Jerusalem and welcomed him every day at his table like one of the king's sons. What did Mephibosheth have to do? He simply had to accept God's kindness and humbly follow king David's direction. Amen.

In conclusion. Many times we seem to misunderstand God. We tend to misunderstand who He is, what He is like, and how He sees you and me. But in today's passage, we have learned that God is very kind. And He is eager to show His kindness to undeserving sinners, like you and me. Not because we are so lovely or good.....for indeed before the Lord we are like dead dogs. But because of Jesus Christ and what He has done for us 2000 years ago on the cross. Because of Jesus' blood, God has made a promise to never ever cut off His kindness from you and me. In fact, as we saw in today's passage, God is so eager to show us kindness that He will seek us out even when we hide from Him; like Mephibosheth. This morning, let's open our hearts to this kind God. And let's allow Him to take charge of lives. Surely, His kindness will then overflow in our lives. May His name forever be praised. Amen.