



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Lessons from the Life of David

2 Samuel 9

“David, Mephibosheth and Unmerited Grace”

TRANSCRIPT

We’re turning to 2 Samuel chapter 9 and continuing our series in themes from the Life of David. 2 Samuel chapter 9, and we’re reading the 13 verses of the chapter.

“Now David said, ‘Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?’ 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!’”

I couldn’t help but smile a little at that rendering. I’m reading, as you may know, from the New King James Version for personal reasons, and this particular rendering I smiled at when I saw it because it’s apparently an attempt to make this contemporary. “At your service!” But, actually, in the Hebrew text, all that this says is simply, “your servant.” Perhaps, that’s the sense of it, and so we’re not saying it’s wrong at all, but I must say, I smiled at it, being an idiom of our day.

“Then the king said, ‘Is 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.’ 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.’ Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar. 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!’ 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.’”

I’m going to make a reference to this in the message but, perhaps, this is as good a place as any to make it. You notice this is the third time that we have had the term, “kindness” and it is the familiar Hebrew word *chesed* which is a reference to covenantal kindness. And so that lies in the background. This is the kindness of God’s covenant. So now in the 8th verse we continue.

“Then he bowed himself and said, ‘What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?’ 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. 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.”

So, evidently, what David has done is he has called Mephibosheth to the royal capital to sit at his table, and Ziba is to be the estate manager for him. Later on, we run into Ziba again. And so we want to bear these things in mind.

“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.’ Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants of Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king’s table. And he was lame in both his feet.”

May the Lord blessing this reading of his word, and let’s bow in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, we approach Thee through the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the marvelous access that we have. We thank Thee for the kindness that has been shown to us through the Lord Jesus Christ, our great Jonathan, the one whom the Lord has given. And we thank Thee Lord for all of the provisions of life that have been made for us. And as we reflect upon Mephibosheth’s sitting at the table of King David continually, we reflect upon the fact that in a far greater degree, from the standpoint of the spiritual blessings of the Lord, which are eternal, we sit at Thy table continually and will do forever, enjoying the blessings of the Sons of God. We are grateful and thankful for all that Thou hast done for us through the Lord Jesus Christ, our mediator.

We ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon our country, particularly in these critical days. We pray that Thy wisdom and guidance may be given to President Bush, and others who are in authority, politically. And then, for those who are serving in the armed forces of

the Coalition, we again pray for them. Give the generals and the admirals, give them wisdom and guidance. And, for our men, Lord, may Thy protecting hand rest over those armies. And if it pleases Thee, give them victory soon.

We thank Thee for the whole Church of Jesus Christ and we pray for each member today, and for the churches where the word of God is proclaimed. We ask Thy blessing upon them. We pray for those who faithfully minister the word of God, including the chaplains of our armed forces, who faithfully proclaim Thy word. Bless and direct through the preaching of the Scriptures today and may the Church of Jesus Christ be enlarged and deepened in their fellowship and communing with Thee.

We pray, Lord, for Believers Chapel and ask Thy blessing upon us, upon our leaders, our elders and deacons, and for the members and friends and the visitors who are here with us today, Lord, minister to each of us to the glory of Thy Name. For those who have requested our prayers, we pray particularly for them. We thank Thee for each one of them and we pray that Thou wilt so minister to them that their prayers may be answered in ways that will be most pleasing to Thee and to them. We commit each one to Thee. Bless us Lord as we sing together as we listen to the exposition of Holy Scripture.

May our day, if it please Thee Lord, be a day in which each one of us grow spiritually in the knowledge of Him who to know is life eternal and in whose Name we pray.

Amen.

[Message] The subject for today, as we continue our studies in the Life of David is, “David, Mephibosheth and Unmerited Grace.”

“When the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David, let not the name of Jonathan be cut off from the house of David.” So we read in the 20th chapter of the Book of 1 Samuel in connection with the covenant that was made between David and Jonathan.

This touching plea, “When the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David, let not the name of Jonathan be cut off from the house of David,” leading to the covenant between the two, sworn by David and Jonathan; that’s the background of David’s gracious magnanimity to Mephibosheth concerning which we read in 2 Samuel chapter 9.

This story of David and Mephibosheth is a story that first of all is history. The David, who swore loyalty to his best friend, Jonathan, still lives. It’s very evident that in the meantime, of course, David has become king over all of Israel. He was a fugitive when he first spoke those words to Jonathan and they agreed, together. But, it’s clear that the same person, who was the fugitive, is now the person on the throne of all of Israel.

Someone has said, “The man is not lost in the king.” And I think we can understand and appreciate something of the heart of David if we realize that coming to authority and power, as he has come, it, nevertheless, has not changed fundamentally the relationship that he bore to others and to the Lord.

Now, this chapter is most frequently known to Bible students as a chapter in which the typology of what is described here is emphasized. And I am going to emphasize it, myself, in a few moments. There is a danger, and we all know that, of having an overactive imagination when we come to biblical typology. And, frequently, things that Bible students see in the New Testament as reflective of the Old Testament are things that it is very difficult to see. And so we have been taught to be very careful when we’re talking about typology.

I’ve mentioned before, I think even in this series, that typology has three particular things associated with it that we must keep in mind; first of all that types are historical. That is, we’re not talking about allegories. We’re talking about typology and types are history. That is, the type may be a historical person, such as David, who is a type of Christ. Or it may be an historical institution, like the tabernacle, which is typical of the relationship between God and the people of God. And we may have even a type of an event, like the exodus, which is called a typical event in the New Testament. That, too, is

an historical event. And so when we talk about typology, we’re talking about things in history.

Now, secondly, the thing that characterizes typology is correspondence; that is, there is a correspondence in the historical person, event, or thing that corresponds to a person, historical thing or institution in the New Testament. So correspondence is characteristic of typology and usually is found, must be found. And when we say that, of course, we are saying, essentially, that the God who acts in Old Testament times, in Old Testament history, is the same God who acts in New Testament time and New Testament history, and because he is the unchangeable God, therefore, we may expect that the way he acts in the Old Testament and in the events of the Old Testament times is the way in which he acts in New Testament times and, in fact, is the way in which he will always act. So we have history and we have correspondence. And then, one other thing might be mentioned, generally we have predictiveness. And the reason we have predictiveness is simply by the force of the flow of time. What is typical in the Old Testament is predictive of something in the future. And so if we keep in mind historicity, correspondence, predictiveness, then we have the essentials of what we call biblical typology.

Now, I say it is possible for individuals to see things in the Bible that are very difficult for others to see. And, in fact, some people see some things that no one else seems to see, as biblical typology. But I want to suggest to you that because something seems a bit extreme, that we should not necessarily rule it out, because there are in the New Testament some very unusual things that are plainly stated to be types; that is, in the sense that it’s very clear they were. The term “type” may or may not be used. But, for example, Paul’s use of Genesis in Galatians chapter 4 has been such a puzzle in a number of ways that one is inclined to think that that would be an extreme use of typology. And we don’t have time to look at it, but if today you want to take a look at Galatians 4, you will see what I mean. If you turn to about verse 21 and read through the remainder of the chapter, particularly verse 24, where the apostle does say that these things are being

and the term in the original text is allegorized or at least the word from which allegory is derived there, but in my firm conviction, I think I can prove this, given a few moments time which we don't have in this hour, that what he is really saying is that these things are taken typically, they are being taken typically.

But then, of course, we have in Hebrews chapter 10 in verse 20, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews saying, after saying, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,” so that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is likening our Lord as minister to the great high priest on the Day of Atonement says that the veil of the place through which one entered into the Holiest of all, is typical of our Lord's flesh. That would seem to be rather extreme but, nevertheless, it's something that is supported by inspired Scripture. So we need to remember that there are extremes; but at the same time, typology is a genuine facet of biblical interpretation.

This chapter has been universally seen to have typical significance. It's a story basically in three parts. Very simply, it's the story of a person who illustrates the guilt of all of us, apart from redemption. It illustrates how, through God's grace and in Mephibosheth's grace, the grace shown to him as a result of Jonathan and David's covenant, individuals come to the assurance and possession of eternal life.

I think of a book that George Goodman wrote, many years ago, entitled, “From Guilt through Grace to Glory.” And that, an exposition of passages from Romans, illustrates what we are talking about here.

When I first was converted, William Pettingill was one of the leading Bible teachers of the time. He was an elderly man. And, in fact, he was probably as old as I am now. And everyone loved Mr. Pettingill, he was widely regarded as one of the outstanding Bible teachers all over the United States. In fact, you'll find his name on the Scofield Bible as one of the consulting editors. Mr. Pettingill used to say, “I have preached on almost all of the characters of the Old Testament with the exception of

Mephibosheth.” He said, “I have never preached on Mephibosheth because I couldn’t pronounce his name.” [Laughter] So I remember that so well, it stuck with me through the years. It’s amazing the things that stick with you from Bible teachers, things that sometimes have nothing to do with Bible teaching but, nevertheless, I’ll never forget that. When I meet Mr. Pettingill in heaven, I’ll remind him of the fact that I learned to pronounce “Mephibosheth” even though he was not. Of course, he said is facetiously. He was a marvelous Bible teacher.

Well now, let me just very simply treat the text before us today by pointing to the historical sense of the account, then the moral sense of the account, and we’ll spend most of our time on the typical sense of the account. One might ask, why was this chapter written in the first place? Well, the first lesson that stands out and probably the lesson that the author intended for us to get above all lessons I presume since he would not know what we know about the New Testament events and persons and salvation, he was writing it to show David’s loyalty to his word. He had, after all, sworn to Jonathan that he would be kind to Jonathan’s descendents. And they had made a covenant with one another because of Jonathan’s, in the case of David, ministering as a kind of mediator between his father, Saul and David and giving him information that protected him from Saul’s javelin. He had an over active javelin, you may remember, and so, as a result David and Jonathan made the covenant. And David promised that he would treat Jonathan’s descendents well and he would not ever do anything that would prevent them continuing.

So the chapter, first of all, is a chapter about loyalty to one’s word. And it raises the question of response to this loyalty on the part of Mephibosheth. Just very briefly, the account is very simple. David has a compassionate desire that he expresses in the very first verse. “Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” And then the word comes to him that there is an individual who can give him information, and Ziba, who was the servant of

Mephibosheth, gives him information that there is Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan, who is lame on his feet, and he's still living.

And so then in verse 5 through verse 8, the author of the account describes how David summons Mephibosheth to Jerusalem. He sent and brought him out of the house of Machir and brought him to his presence. And in his presence, Mephibosheth fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said one word. In fact, this is very reminiscent of some of our Lord's encounters. He said, “Mephibosheth?” There must have been a great deal of tenderness in that. And Mephibosheth answered, “Your servant!” And David said to him, “Do not fear,” that, too, reminiscent of our Lord's encounters with individuals who came into his presence.

At any rate, he summons him to Jerusalem. And then the remainder of the chapter in verse 9 through verse 13 is the account of David's enriching of Mephibosheth. He's blessed with property. He's blessed with status. Ziba becomes the estate manager. But he, nevertheless, is to get the returns from it. He has royal privileges. He sits at the King's table continually. That's his social security. And it's a kind of royal pension that is given for Mephibosheth out of the grace of David, the King, who lived in Jerusalem. And the chapter ends with a very notable little sentence, “And he was lame in both his feet.”

Now, that's the historical sense of the account and we learn from it that David is true to his word. That's very important. But, now, a moral sense is raised as a result of the story. And there is an intriguing question that arises, I think. And it's this, will Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth is Saul's grandson, will he be faithful to Saul or will he be faithful to Jonathan, his father? So the question arises because, after all, he is a descendent of Saul, the first king of Israel. He's a prince. And so the question is a question of loyalty. And will he be faithful to Saul? Or will he be faithful to Jonathan? And, in this latter case, he would justify David's risk in having him in his house.

Now, if you know anything about the Scripture and if you know anything about the East at that time, it was not uncommon at all, for individuals when they came to

authority, to massacre all the members of the king's predecessor's family. So it would have not been strange for David to massacre everyone and, if Mephibosheth should come to the throne by some happenstance, it would not have been out of the ordinary for him to massacre every one of the members of David's family. In fact, some have suggested that the reason that David brought Mephibosheth to Jerusalem is that he wanted to keep an eye on him. But when we think of Mephibosheth as an individual who is lame in both his feet, a cripple, it does not seem that that's the reason that David brought him to Jerusalem at all. And we should not entertain that. This action would not have very easily backfired on David.

But now, we come to the typical sense of the account. I know that the things that I'm going to say, if you don't know much about what Scriptures says, you might be surprised that someone contends that some of these things really are biblical truths illustrated by the story of David and Mephibosheth. So let me remind you that our Lord, himself, was a master in tracing spiritual parallels between the Old Testament and the New Testament or typical parallels: For example, our Lord, in the New Testament, confirms the fact that the Passover Lamb is a reference to Him. You read the Book of Revelation and you will see that in that revelation that he gave that's very prominent, for example, in Revelation chapter 5. But not only that, it's our Lord who said that the ladder by which God spoke to Jacob upon which the angels went up and down on, our Lord in John chapter 1 refers the ladder to himself. As he says it, "It's the angels who move up and down on the Son of man." And so it's very plain that he calls himself the ladder of the Book of Genesis, that is, the one who is the mediator between heaven and earth.

So our Lord uses typical incidents that seem rather strange at first glance, unless you've studied the Bible for a long time. To give you another illustration, in John chapter 3, the Lord Jesus is the one who says, "For God so." Well, in the preceding statement that "Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of man must be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should be saved." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the

wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” So our Lord claims that he is the Son of man, is the serpent, in type. And, of course, you understand, it’s our Lord as the sin offering that is particularly stressed. It’s our Lord who reminds us that the “manna” is a reference to himself as the “bread of God.” And there are numbers of other things that we could go on and talk about, even the water.

So when we talk about typology, our Lord is the one who, ultimately, justifies all of that, reminding us that the things that happen in the Old Testament are things that came to pass because of the principles of the one, unchangeable God, and in the New Testament those same principles are carried out; the same God acts in the same way, except now he acts in the fulfillments of the types of the Old Testament.

So with that in mind, let me say, first of all, that David’s purpose of blessing Mephibosheth illustrates the eternal purpose of our Great God in our salvation. David is the monarch. David illustrates God the Father. He shows kindness and, incidentally, he shows covenantal kindness. And the kindness is through Jonathan.

Jonathan was the mediator between Saul and David. And so, Jonathan, incidentally, his name means, “The Lord has given,” so he’s the one whom the Lord has given. So if David represents God the Father, Jonathan represents God the Son, and Mephibosheth as the one who receives the blessing, represents you and me, who are those who are lame on our feet and do not have an inheritance.

So what we are suggesting here is that the arrangements between the eternal Trinity are spelled out typically in what takes place. We know from the word of God that in Heaven, long before you and I could ever have known anything because this happened in eternity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit arranged among themselves to accomplish the redeeming work. The Father to do his particular work, the Son to do his particular work, the Spirit to do his particular work; we are told about the promise of life in the books of the New Testament, by the Apostle Paul. In our Lord’s

ministry, he refers to his ministry as one in which he was sent by the Father to accomplish the Father's will.

Let me read you two verses from John chapter 6, verse 39 and verse 40. Jesus said, “This is the will of the Father who sent me, that of all he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.” And then, to underline it by repeating it, “And this is the will of him who sent me, that every one who sees the Son, and believes in him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” So the Lord Jesus says that his ministry is a ministry that is carried out by the will of the Father, who has sent him.

So I suggest to you then that what we have in David's purpose of blessing Mephibosheth is reflective of God's purpose in saving sinners such as you and I are. The text of Scripture also makes it very plain that God does this by virtue of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One text that particularly comes to my mind is 1 John chapter 2 in verse 12, where the Apostle writes these words. In fact, I always when I read this text, I always think of David, Jonathan, and Mephibosheth. John wrote, “I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.” And so Jonathan is brought to Jerusalem, blessed by King David for Jonathan's sake. “I will show him kindness for Jonathan's sake.” Verse 7, “Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake.” Many other texts we could look at, but we don't have time to do that. I remind you that the Apostle Paul did say that our sins are forgiven by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ for his sake.

So first of all then, the purpose of David in blessing Mephibosheth, by reason of Jonathan and the covenant that existed between them, illustrates the great eternal purpose by which God blesses us through the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ and his saving ministry.

Secondly, there is a kind of deferred fulfillment in the promise and covenant that was made between David and Jonathan. That covenant and that promise were made very early in Jonathan's life and in David's life. As a matter of fact, in the meantime, a number of years have gone by. Jonathan has married and has had children. And, I think, that he may have had children when the covenant was made. But his children now have married and they have children because we read in verse 12, Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micha. So we have Mephibosheth now has reached a certain age. He has his family and he has children, but the promise that was made many years before by David and the covenant between the two, that David would preserve his family, is now going to come to fulfillment. But it's a deferred fulfillment. The years have elapsed between the covenant promises and the fulfillment. But that also is illustrative of the delayed coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the fulfillment of the promises that have been given to us through him: For example, Zachariah, when he is giving his Benedictus in Luke chapter 1. He, filled with the Holy Spirit, realizing what is going to be transpiring now says these words, talking about God blessing the children of Israel,

“Blessed is the Lord God of Israel; for he has visited and redeemed his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, who have been since the world began; that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he swore to our father Abraham.”

So just as the promises were given in the Old Testament, and there was a deferred fulfillment for many generations. So we have a deferred fulfillment of the promises that were made to Jonathan for his family by David the King.

We remember, I'm sure you remember, the famous text in Galatians chapter 4 in verse 4, “When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born of a virgin, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” And so the deferred fulfillment is recognized also in the promises David made to Jonathan being now realized in the kindness to Mephibosheth.

Thirdly, we also have a very interesting incidence of David's search for those who are the objects of the promises. Now, we read three times in verse 1, verse 3, and verse 7 that David speaks of the fact that there is kindness for Jonathan your father's sake. He calls it one time the kindness of God, suggesting also that this is something characteristic of the goodness of God.

But think of this individual who is brought to David, his name, itself, Mephibosheth. Now, in the Hebrew text “bosh” is the name for shame and Mephibosheth is a name connected with shame. In fact, in Chronicles, his name is called “Meribaal” so one can see that the name is not the kind of name that you would ordinarily choose for your children. In fact, some have suggested, Mephibosheth, there is some doubt about the meaning of the name, means “the shameful thing.” He is a fugitive.

If you look back at chapter 4 in verse 4, we read this with reference to Mephibosheth, when he was a child. “Jonathan's son,” this is 2 Samuel verse 4, chapter 4, “Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan,” that is, their death, “came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled. And it happened that as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.” He's a fugitive. He is a cripple. And, incidentally, in the Law of Moses, those who were crippled by some deformity or problem could not be priests. So, illustratively, Mephibosheth is an individual who is unable to be a priest, he is a fugitive, and he is a fugitive by virtue by his fall, incidentally. And so we have all of the things that suggest you and me. We are spiritual cripples. We are individuals who are sinners; we are shameful things in that sense. And we have been

crippled by virtue of the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden. And the Fall of Man has constituted every one of us as sinners. So Paul tells us in Romans chapter 5.

Mephibosheth also dwelt in Lodebar, an expression that means “no pasture.” In other words, he dwelt in a place where there was no real food. And, consequently, you and I, before we come to Christ, that’s the kind of land in which we live, Lodebar, no pasture. But, nevertheless, in spite of what we are, spiritual cripples by virtue of the fall, shameful things, God as David did for Mephibosheth seeks him out. And so we read here in verse 5, and remember too that he was a prince by birth and so you and I are created in the image of God and the purpose of God for us, ideally, was to be in the image of God apart from sin. But now, we read in verse 5, “Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar.”

I think this is so interesting because this illustrates our fourth point, the sovereign, compassionate love of David and of the Lord God, whom David represents. We read in verse 5, “Then King David sent and brought him out.” Now, if you have the Authorized Version, you have “And fetched him.” I like “fetched him.” To my mind, that’s very meaningful. When I grew up, and I was just a little boy, and I would visit my grandmother, and that was one of her favorite words. And if she was cooking in the kitchen she might say to me, “Fetch that spoon,” or “Fetch that pot,” or something like that. So, I rather like this. David sent and fetched him out of the house of Machir. What this illustrates so plainly is the divine initiative in the work of salvation. It is God who undertakes for us in our salvation. It is not we who take the initiative. It is not Mephibosheth who appeals to David to do for him what he had promised Jonathan, his father. This is David’s initiative; he shows the kindness of God, suggestive of our Lord’s marvelous taking of the initiative in our behalf, who came at the appointed time of the Father, carried out his ministry and you can see, in the ministry of the Lord, all of the kindness represented in David’s ministry to Mephibosheth to the ultimate degree.

Think of our Lord Jesus Christ, his marvelous pleadings with the men of his day to come unto him, the pathetic tones that he uttered when he uttered those expressions over the city of Jerusalem, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you under my wings as a hen does her chickens.” Or remember the tears that he cried at the grave of Lazarus, the anguished prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane, the stricken cries from Calvary itself, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me!” These, all express the overflowing love of our Lord Jesus Christ. The love that David had for Jonathan’s children is only a faith reflection of that, but it is a reflection. And as he loved Mephibosheth for Jonathan’s sake, so God loves his saints whom he fetches for the Greater David’s sake, the Lord Jesus Christ. If you look at the salvation of men in Scripture you’ll see this great principle found in every one of those salvations. For example, Abraham, it’s God who spoke to Abraham first; Jacob, it’s God who spoke to Jacob first; Moses, it’s God who called Moses; Paul, it’s God who spoke to Paul. These individuals are the objects of divine, efficacious grace, and calling. It’s not they’re seeking him. It is his seeking of us.

One notices also, the trembling response, fifthly, of Mephibosheth, who recognizes his unworthiness, because when David speaks to him and says, “Mephibosheth?” he answers, “Your servant.” David says, “Don’t fear, I will surely show you kindness.” And Mephibosheth bows himself before King David and says, “What is your servant that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?” He’s found by the grace of God.

I read a story of an individual who, many years ago, attended one of the Keswick conferences in England. When he came home, one of his friends noticed that his life seemed to have gained a good bit of inspiration from the conference. And so he asked him, “What’s your blessing that you have received?” He said, “Well, I learned to cash my checks.” [Laughter] I think that’s what we all, as Christians, need to learn to do. We need to learn to “cash our checks.” These promises that are found in the word of God are good, my Christian friends. They are just as good as if the United States Government

might write out a check to you. And they just need cashing. And the promises of God need cashing. And in the case of Mephibosheth, he acknowledges his unworthiness and responds to the grace of David as we should respond to the grace of God.

I'd like to say just a word now about something that's very important, in my opinion. In fact, if you remember me for nothing else, please remember me at least for this; he taught us spiritual inability apart from Jesus Christ. No overtures were made by Mephibosheth to David for blessing. The one person who could truly bless Mephibosheth was on the throne in Jerusalem, and it's he who makes the first move. All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. It's the nature of lost sheep to wander farther and farther. If you know anything about shepherd and sheep, you know that lost sheep don't go around saying, "Where is my shepherd?" They continually wander, wander and wander and frequently wander in such a place that they are unable to extricate themselves or, actually, walk off a cliff and are found dead. Sheep never go after a shepherd.

Why do you think that happens? Do you think God in heaven looked down from heaven and said, "It's very interesting. I've just discovered something," as he speaks to the angels in heaven. "I've just discovered that those sheep that were created, they don't ever go after their shepherd. They go the other way. I think I'll use them for an illustration in the word of God." No, no! They were created for that very purpose that way, so they might be a lesson to us. We are sheep! We are constantly wandering. That's our characteristic. We wander, continually wander; even as believers, incidentally, apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the word of God, we will wander. We always do. So the shepherd must do the seeking. And David does the seeking. Sheep never go after their shepherd, true alike, naturally, and spiritually. The God who sought Abraham in Uhr, the God who sought Jacob at Bethel, the God who sought Moses in Midian, the God who sought Saul in Tarsus on the rode to Damascus, is the same God who seeks every one who comes to Jesus Christ.

Mephibosheth was a cripple, lame on his feet, as the closing words of the chapter indicate he was lame on both his feet, just to underline the fact that he was an illustration of a spiritual cripple, for that's what we all are. And how accurately that portrays the condition of those who are out of Christ, the natural man is unable of himself to run in the path of God's commandments; he's a spiritual cripple. The utter inability of the unregenerate to meet God's requirements and walk acceptably before him is the truth written plainly across all of the holy Scriptures. The greatness of man, the freedom of man's will, the ability to accept Christ at any time, is now, something like the anesthetizing doctrine that is proclaimed from the pulpits of many of our churches. But let me assure you, that is not true to the word of God. The Lord Jesus said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.” May I say that again? “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.” Every one of you, including incidentally, those of you who say, “Well, I came by myself.” You came because you were drawn by the Father. You may not understand it yet, but that's why you came. “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.”

David, furthermore, didn't send a message to Mephibosheth, up there is Lodebar, and say, “By the way, I've sent Isaiah up there.” That was one of David's servants, I'm sure, had a name like that. Isaiah, not the Isaiah the prophet, he sent him up with a pair of crutches and he said, “Use these crutches and come down to me in Jerusalem.” No, not that, he didn't hand him the crutches and say, “This is sufficient grace for you,” as Arminians like to say, sufficient grace, no, we do not receive from God sufficient grace, which we are to improve by the fact that we believe. We are given effectual grace, efficacious grace, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and we come. Our salvation is not related to what God did and what I do. David did not say to him, “Mephibosheth, if you do your part, we'll do our part down here in Jerusalem. We'll make things nice for you if you come on down.” No. It's the kindness of God that is to be shown to

Mephibosheth. So God does much more than provide means of grace. The King, David, sent, and he fetched him. He sent and he fetched him. That’s our salvation illustrated.

Now, as I said, when I’m gone, you remember that. Remember that above everything else, my salvation is the work of the Lord God. And then you’ll have reason to say, salvation is truly of the Lord.

Well, there are two last things I want to say. I can say them in a hurry. When Mephibosheth comes to the capitol, he’s elevated to a place of exalted honor. No mere pension. He didn’t have to do his part. He’s endowed with more than he lost. Now, he’s the son of David, in effect.

Notice what it says, “He shall eat at my table like one of the king’s sons,” verse 12. So he, who was far off, located up in the northeastern part of the land, in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar, the place of no pasture, now he sits in Jerusalem, the capitol, in the palace of David, the King, at his table, continually. “Far off, brought nigh, through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,” Paul says. And so was he, ultimately.

And, finally, notice in verse 10 and verse 11, verse 13, it is stressed that this is a permanent arrangement. We read in verse 13, “So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king’s table. And he was lame in both his feet.” Continually. This arrangement is royal security for Mephibosheth. I like to think that this is something like the doctrine of the security of the believer. We have been brought in to a relationship of the Lord, and we are able to sit at his table forever.

As Revelation chapter 3 in verse 20 puts it, a text that I think, probably, has to do primarily with fellowship with the Lord God, our Lord says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and dine with him, and he with me.” And Mephibosheth, who dwelt off in the far parts of the land, now sits in Jerusalem at the table of the king, enjoying fellowship with King David continually. What a blessing has become him, has become his. The gifts of God are worthy of himself.

Alexander the Great once gave a city to an individual and the individual declined to accept it on the grounds that it was unsuitable to his condition. And Alexander said to him, “I don’t ask what’s becoming in you to receive, but what’s becoming in me to give.”

And so what we have is what is becoming, not to us, but is becoming to the Lord God and the marvelous, gracious character of our Great God in Heaven.

There’s a sequel that follows, later on, as you know. Later, Absalom revolts and as a result, Mephibosheth is lied about by Ziba, and David gets information from Ziba that Mephibosheth is supposed to think that he was going to succeed David on the throne, and so he takes the property away from Mephibosheth, and gives it to Ziba. But then, later on, when he finally comes back and he sees Mephibosheth, and Mephibosheth bears all of the physical appearances of having mourned for David the whole time that he was gone, realizes that he’s been wrong in his judgment and gives back half of the property to Mephibosheth. Why half? I don’t know. We may talk about that later on. But, nevertheless, he realizes that Mephibosheth all along has been looking forward to David’s return, to assume the throne again.

I don’t want to press this, but I think that probably that does illustrate how you and I as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the things for which we look, are inclusive of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I find in that a charming example of what should be our attitude toward the coming of our Lord; waiting, watching for him.

If you are here today and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we remind you that the grace of God that is reflected in the covenantal arrangement between Jonathan and David, is the grace that he has manifested in the coming of our Lord to this earth, to offer himself on Calvary’s Cross as a sacrifice for sinners, that sinner may be saved. And such are you and I; we are sinners. But the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient to cover our sins. And so just as David representing God the Father exercised the kindness of God, mediatorial kindness, through Jonathan to Mephibosheth, so God the Father offers to each one of you fugitives from divine forgiveness, wherever

you have fled, hiding from the Lord God, he offers you the kindness of God through the Greater Jonathan, the one whom the Lord gave, and the forgiveness available to him.

And so be responsive to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who has come and will fetch you to him, by his grace. Come to Christ! Believe in him! Trust in him as the Spirit speaks to you!

May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these incidents in the word of God that remind us of the ministry of our great Jonathan, the one whom the Lord gave, who has made it possible for us as sinners to experience the kindness of God, the covenantal kindness of God. We give Thee thanks. We pray, Lord, that if there should be someone in this audience who has not yet the experience of the kindness of God through Jesus Christ, the Greater Jonathan, we pray that at this very moment the Holy Spirit may bring them to the confession of their sins and the reception of him as their own personal Savior.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.