

God's Saving Grace

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[0 : 00] I want to get right to the message because it's all about grace and we've been singing about grace.

! Sherry, of course, sang about grace. And so what I want to do this morning is take us to the Old Testament, where I believe is contained a story of grace.

Some would even call it a type of grace. And in my opinion, I think they're right. A type found in the Old Testament of an eternal truth.

And that eternal truth being grace, saving grace. So if you would, take your Bibles and turn to the book of 2 Samuel, chapter 9.

Find verse 1. And my text is really going to come from the entire chapter. 2 Samuel, chapter 9, starting with verse 1.

[1 : 18] I'm not going to read the text yet. And some of you have already found it. You have kind of scanned down through it. And you already know that it is the story about King David.

And a young man by the name of Mephibosheth. Before we read the text, though, I would like to maybe spend a little time setting the context, or maybe the historical context.

It's important for us to know where Mephibosheth and this whole event, really, fits into biblical history. Specifically, the history of Israel.

And I think it would be wise for us to go all the way back to when God was king of Israel. That Israel, the nation Israel, was a theocracy.

They had come out of the bondage of Egypt. And God had, of course, delivered them with a mighty hand out of Egypt. And really, in a sense, that is where they became a nation.

[2 : 21] As they came out under the blood, the blood of the Lamb. God made them a great nation, the children of Israel. And God was their king. We can skip a lot of the history after that until we come to the place where Israel was under the tutelage, we might say, under the leadership of a series of judges.

And we could talk a lot this morning about how Israel rebelled, and then they cried out to God, and God was merciful and delivered them. And then they rebelled and sinned and cried out to God, and God delivered them.

And each time, God set some judges over them to deliver them, to bring them back to himself. The last of the judges was Samuel.

And toward the end of Samuel's tenure as judge of Israel, God's people decided they wanted a king like every other nation.

Samuel, of course, if you know your Old Testament, got a little bent out of shape about that, because it seemed to him that they were, well, certainly rejecting God, but they were rejecting Samuel, rejecting his leadership.

[3 : 41] And so, in a sense, if I might paraphrase and make the story short, he complained to God about that. And God said, go ahead and give them what they want.

They have not rejected you. They have rejected me. And so God gave them a king like every other nation. His name was Saul.

Saul was a pitiful king. Pitiful king. They got a king just like every other nation.

Toward the end of Saul's tenure as king, now the nation is a monarchy now. Toward the end of Saul's tenure, Saul disobeyed God, and literally God ripped the kingdom, the kingship out of Saul's hands, ripped it from him, and gave it to another.

Gave it to his neighbor, the Bible says, and we know his name, don't we? David. David. King David. Well, the transition from Saul to David, of course, was a rather rocky transition, and Saul, of course, attempted on a number of occasions to snuff out David's life.

[5 : 01] Saul was not willing to relinquish his kingship, and so tried to do away with David, and possibly would have succeeded if it had not been for Saul's son.

What was his name? Jonathan. Jonathan and David, right off the bat, it seems, at least we get that sense from Scripture, that they right off had a close relationship, a friendship, a almost brother-to-brother, in fact, I would say even deeper than a brother-to-brother relationship.

As a matter of fact, the Bible describes it as a love that no man would even give to a woman, like a man would give to a woman. Now, that does not mean, as some have suggested, that it was a homosexual relationship, so let's just put that aside.

It was not that at all. Their souls were knit together, tied together, sewn together. They were one soul, loving each other so much.

They made a covenant with one another. We'll talk about that covenant as we go along. Made a covenant with one another that when David came to the throne, that he would remember Jonathan's family.

[6 : 31] As a matter of fact, David also made an extension of that covenant, even to Saul, that Saul's posterity would not be snuffed out.

And then we come to 2 Samuel chapter 9. Saul is dead. Jonathan is dead.

And now David has come to the throne. He is the bonafide, official, recognized king of Israel. And he has come to the throne.

And verse 1 says, Then David said, Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul? I'd like to stop right there before I read the rest of the text.

I'm sure that those servants of David and those who heard him speak these words, they thought right off, Well, here it comes. David is going to clean house.

[7 : 34] He's going to snuff out the life of those who would be his usurpers. Those of the house of Saul that might try to retain the throne and the kingship of Israel.

And it would be a common practice of the day for the new king and his administration to come to the throne and to wipe out all the competition. The old administration.

He would either have them exiled, put in prison, or executed. And so here is David come to the throne officially now and saying, Is there any yet of the house of Saul?

Well, let's read on. That I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake. 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. The king said, Is there not yet any one of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?

[8 : 44] And Ziba said to the king, There is still a son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet. So the king said to him, Where is he? And Ziba said to the king, Behold, he is in the house of Meker, the son of Amiel in Lodabar.

Then king David sent and brought him from the house of Meker, the son of Amiel, from Lodabar. Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself.

And David said, Mephibosheth? And he said, Here is your servant. David said to him, Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul and you shall eat at my table regularly.

Again he prostrated himself and said, What is your servant that you should regard a dead dog like me? Then the king called Saul's servant Ziba and said to him, All that belong to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson.

You and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him and you shall bring in the produce so that your master's grandson may have food. Nevertheless, Mephibosheth, your master's grandson shall eat at my table regularly.

[10 : 15] Now Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants. Then Ziba said to the king, According to all that my lord the king commands his servants so your servant will do.

So, Mephibosheth ate at David's table as one of the king's sons. Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micah and all who lived in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem for he ate at the king's table regularly. Now he was lame in both feet. Isn't that a marvelous story?

I don't know if any of you have read that story. In fact, I was half tempted to ask the question and get a show of hands how many of you know who Mephibosheth was.

Now I have a suspicion that a number of you would have raised your hands. But isn't it a marvelous story? Now, I believe that it is a picture.

[11:18] In fact, I think it is a type, an Old Testament type, of a New Testament truth or really an eternal truth.

And that truth being grace. Grace. God's saving grace. And I might just take a moment and identify some of the types here.

Now in the story, I believe King David represents Yahweh God. The one who extends grace. Yahweh God. That's King David.

It is, he is representing the covenant keeping God. In the story, though this is not part of the type because it is a word and I think a rich theological word in the text, we see the word kindness appearing three times in the text.

I don't know if you noticed that. I tried to emphasize it as I was reading it. But three times, you'll see the word kindness. It is the Hebrew word *chesed*. And it is the word, I believe, in the Old Testament, in the Hebrew language, that represents grace.

[12:28] It is translated a number of different ways in the Old Testament. Translated mercy in some cases. Translated more often, loving kindness. Sometimes it is translated, or the idea rather, is God's or Yahweh's unmerited favor.

Unmerited favor. Now, by the way, that's a pretty good definition of grace. God's unmerited favor. And three times we see it in the text.

In verse one, David comes to the throne and he says, Is there anyone in the house of Saul that I may show him what? Kindness. *Chesed*.

And then you skip on down there to verse three and there it is again. Of course, he's repeating his offer, repeating what he's extending there. And he says, The king said, Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness?

And here he includes of God. That's how we know that this is something more than just simply one individual showing kindness to another individual.

[13:38] This is not just simply being kind to somebody. This is something that is extended, that has meat to it, and it's based upon a promise, a strong covenant.

It is the kindness, the loving kindness, the unmerited favor of God. And then it appears, of course, again, as David, or rather, Mephibosheth, is standing, appearing, really, is on his face before David. And there, in verse 7, you see it again. David said to him, Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness.

There it is again, three times. So, kindness in the story, in this type of grace, represents grace. God's unmerited, faith. How about Mephibosheth? Can you guess who Mephibosheth represents? Well, he represents me.

[14:51] He represents you. He represents the hopeless, unregenerate sinner to whom God unmerited favor is extended.

Mephibosheth is me. I find myself here in this text. Do you? Now, let's consider three things about this grace from this text.

and they come in logical order, not only come in the order as it appears in the text, but logical when you understand the process, God's process of grace.

grace. And so it begins with grace extended. That's where it begins. That's where it began with God.

Long before we ever knew God. Long before we ever discovered anything about God or even discovered about His Word. Long before you ever trusted His Son, Jesus Christ, God extended His grace toward you.

[16:06] The extension of grace or grace extended. I want to divide that into three parts. Because we need to understand what this grace is founded upon.

And so we begin with the ground of grace. What do you mean by the ground of grace? I mean, what is it that this grace has sprung from or springs from the ground, the foundation of this grace?

Why is it that David, when he came to the throne, did not do what every other monarch would do and did do in his day? Even in our day it's still done. Why did David, was David compelled to come to the throne and extend grace to one of his enemies?

It was grounded on something, based upon something very strong. I've already told you what it is. It is a promise, a covenant that David made.

The ground of grace. Very clear from the text. Verse one, is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness?

[17:26] Then what does it say? for Jonathan's sake. There it is, see. He said, I don't know if I see it.

This is the ground of grace. This was the reason why David could extend this grace and did extend this grace for Jonathan's sake. Oh, yeah. This is it right here.

You see, David did not, I just about stepped off the edge of that thing. David did not extend this grace to Mephibosheth for Mephibosheth's sake.

In fact, David didn't even know Mephibosheth. In fact, he said anyone of the house of Saul. It was not based upon Mephibosheth.

He extended this grace for Jonathan's sake. because David and Jonathan had made a covenant with one another.

[18:29] And we can read about that and we'll read about that if you would look back to 1 Samuel. I can get it here.

1 Samuel chapter 18. And you know the basic story, but I want you to consider a few things about it. It's a beautiful story about this friendship between David and Jonathan.

And we start there in verse 1. Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David and Jonathan loved him as himself.

Saul took him that day, took David that day, and did not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan, verse 3, pay attention to this, very, very important. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt, all tokens, of course, of the covenant.

[19:37] But what about this made a covenant? You know, if we were to translate this literally into English from the Hebrew, it would be this way, they cut a covenant.

Cut a covenant. Oh, who in the world is that? See, this wasn't a mere handshake. It wasn't a kind of pat on the back or a hugging of one another.

This was a strong, binding covenant. As a matter of fact, though the Bible doesn't describe it here, we know enough about this cutting of a covenant and the customs of this day with Israel, we understand that what they would normally do would be to take an innocent animal and cut that animal in two and put one piece on this side and one piece on that side and the two that are making the covenant together would walk between the two pieces of that animal, that sacrificial animal, and it formed a binding covenant with God.

And in effect, they were promising to one another, but especially to God, and saying, God, do to me what has been done to this innocent animal if I do not keep this covenant.

David made that kind of binding covenant with Jonathan. And so now here years later, he has come to the throne. Jonathan, of course, is dead, but the covenant is still binding and David is now extending grace to anyone of the house of Saul because, you see, he extended the covenant to Saul, but really it's for Jonathan's sake.

[21:12] He says, is anyone of the house of Saul that I show kindness to? And he says, for the sake of Jonathan, for the sake of another.

Dear people, that is exactly what God has done with us. When he extends his grace, his saving grace, it is for the sake of his son, Jesus.

not for your sake. I'm sorry if you felt that it was because of you that he did that. Now, God loves you, make no mistake about that, but his saving grace was extended to you because of his son, Jesus.

God cut a covenant. In the mind and heart of God, it was in eternity past, as the lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

In reality, it occurred at the cross when the innocent Lord Jesus sacrificed his life, shed his blood.

[22:34] The covenant grace is extended for the sake of another. That's the ground of grace. grace. Don't ever lose sight of that. How about the sound of grace?

Secondly, there is the sound of grace. See, the ground of grace is the Lord Jesus. God extends his grace to the sinner for the sake of another, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But what about the sound of it? You see, grace, the grace of God has a sound to it. It is the proclamation of the gospel. Let's see how it appears here in this story.

Verse 1, David said, is there anyone of the house of Saul that I may show kindness to? It's a proclamation coming from the king.

It is a serious, earnest proclamation that anyone of the house of Saul come forward and I will show kindness.

[23 : 47] The kindness is extended. See, it's the sound of grace. It's incredible when you think about it that, well, I feel this way anyway, that I'm a part of the sound of grace.

The good news, come to Jesus. Come to him for salvation. Every time I stand behind the pulpit, in a sense, and not just me, not just the preacher, but Jonathan up here leading us in worship and leading us to sing the great hymns and choruses that are rich with scripture and doctrine and the faith.

It is a sound of grace to which we are responding. Evangelists, missionaries, spreading all around the world, and we support them and pray for them and some of us even participate in going ourselves here and there and to the uttermost parts of the world and we're part of the sound of grace.

We're like the king standing, say, is there anyone of the house of Saul that I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake? The sound of grace.

Aren't you glad that God is so gracious that he would include you? And as a matter of fact, he has made you plan A and there's no plan B to proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

[25 : 32] Isn't that an awesome thing that God would want us to do that? That he would extend his grace to that lost sinner through the proclamation of his gospel as we speak it and sing it and live it.

One on one or in groups like this or wherever it may be, the sound of grace is going out around the world. Thirdly, there is the you might snicker at this but I'm a slave to alliteration.

There is the hound of grace. It's really very neat. I would have to admit to you that I got that third point from the King James version of this text.

Some of you might have one in front of you. I don't know. I've been told that you generally have the New American Standard. That's why I'm preaching out of it this morning. In the King James it says there in verse 5 look at it.

Well I'll read it in the New American Standard first. Then King David sent and brought him. Sent and brought Mephibosheth. King James says he fetched him.

[27 : 00] Fetched him. Kind of like you know you say Fido fetch. That's pretty bad. Because really it's an awesome awesome truth here.

See the reality is that the King extended his grace to Mephibosheth but Mephibosheth could not come.

couldn't come on his own. You know why? The Bible says he was lame on both feet.

So in order for Mephibosheth to come to the King to receive his grace somebody had to go fetch him. The hound of grace. There you are.

Matter of fact you might remember a poem written a number of years ago and I think Michael Card put it some of it to music it's called the hound of heaven. Part of it goes like this I fled from him down the nights and down the days.

[28 : 11] I fled from him down the arches of the years. I fled from him down the labyrinthine ways of my own mind and in the midst of tears I hid from him and under running laughter.

that's Mephibosheth. That's every one of us who have received God's grace here today. We have to admit that it was not our idea.

We could not come. God fetched us. I think it's a picture of the Holy Spirit of course. Although again like with the sound of grace I believe that God includes me to participate in that.

That every time we proclaim the gospel it is the hound of heaven reaching out and pursuing. It's an incredible thought.

I mean let's just think for a minute about what we know about Mephibosheth. The Bible tells us in this text that he was lame. Do we remember how that happened? You could go back to, well let's just go back just a couple of chapters to chapter 4 of 2 Samuel.

[29 : 29] Chapter 4 and I think it's verse 4. Now Jonathan, do you see it? Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son crippled in his feet.

He was five years old when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, the report that they had been killed in battle. And his nurse took him, took him up, picked him up, fled to flee.

And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell, I don't know if she dropped him or she tripped or however it happened, but he fell from her arms apparently and became lame.

That is, he fell and evidently the bones of his legs were crushed in that fall and therefore he was lame in both legs and from then on the rest of his life, he was a cripple and could not walk.

That's how it happened to Mephibosheth, you see. Dear people, you and I cannot come on our own because we're cripples.

[30 : 45] Crippled by sin. Crippled by a fall. Literally. He could not come. I'll tell you something else about Mephibosheth.

He was an enemy. I tell you, this really allows us to see how incredible this grace is, the grace that King David extended and the grace that God extends to us.

You see, Mephibosheth was an enemy of the throne just by virtue of his birth. Now, he hadn't done anything against David. I'm sure he wasn't part of Saul's pursuit of David to snuff out his life.

Mephibosheth did not throw a javelin at David like Saul did. In fact, Mephibosheth may have not even been born at that time. He was only five years old when the accident happened and so forth.

Mephibosheth wasn't part of the attacks against David. He wasn't an enemy in a deliberate sense necessarily, but he was an enemy nevertheless just by virtue of the fact of his birth.

[31 : 52] He was born an enemy. As is the case with us.

Born enemies. of God. Born in sin. See, David extended his grace, sent out the hound of his throne, or like the hound of heaven, to fetch Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth could not come on his own, would not come on his own. He was an enemy of the throne. He was crippled by the fall. I'll tell you something else.

The Bible gives us a little snapshot, a little implication here. Where was he living? He was living in Lodebar. Now, I don't want to read too much into the text, but you do need to know that the name Lodebar means place of no pasture.

Now, that's rather interesting. But even if that's not significant, it is significant to know that Mephibosheth was living in exile.

[33 : 16] He was living in a place of hiding. He was an enemy of the throne. And he was living in that place of unfruitfulness, place of no pasture.

Now, I don't imagine they named it Lodebar for no reason at all, and I would imagine that it was a place where they could not raise sheep. No grass, maybe it was a rocky place, I don't know. But it was certainly a place of unfruitfulness, and that completes the picture.

That's who we are, apart from Christ. Living in unfruitfulness, living in exile.

Like the writer of Hebrews puts sin, terrifying expectation of judgment. That's where the sinner lives. Now, God has extended his grace to such as these. Enemies by birth, crippled by the fall, living in exile, in fear.

[34 : 24] And God sends out the hound of heaven to fetch him. to bring him unto himself. That's grace extended.

Secondly, grace embraced. By the way, this clock doesn't work, does it? What an idiotic thing to have a broken clock on the pulpit.

grace Anyway, grace embraced. See, it begins with the extension of grace.

God extends his grace. It's completed through the embrace of grace. Notice how Mephibosheth reacted to the grace of the king.

It says here in verse 6, Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, and what did he do? He fell.

[35 : 37] You have Bible out there? He fell on his face. Step number one in embracing God's grace.

And it is a humble heart. Humility. But there hasn't been a soul saved in pride.

You do not come to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation in pride. In fact, the Bible tells us in three places, as a matter of fact, and the principle is taught throughout scripture, that God repels, he stiff arms the prideful.

You can't come to the Lord Jesus Christ in pride. You can't come thinking you deserve his salvation. You can't come thinking that, well, I may not deserve it now, but I will deserve it.

And I'm just going to clean up my act and do what I can. You can't come in the flesh. You can run the race, but it will all be in vain. It will not come through pride.

[36 : 44] You must come to the Lord Jesus Christ in humility. Mephibosheth fell on his face before the king. A humble heart.

Secondly, a submissive spirit. Look at verse 6 again. Mephibosheth said, here is your servant. See, Mephibosheth understood his position. The king is king. I am the servant. The Lord is Lord. I am his bond slave. I do not deserve anything at the hand of the king. I am your servant. God, there is no salvation any other way. That is in respect to our embrace of the grace of God. [37 : 58] Humble spirit, submissive spirit. God, you're in charge of my life.

I am at your disposal. You are my Lord. You see, that's how salvation comes.

That he is Lord. And thirdly, through open confession. look at verse 8. Again, he prostrated himself and said, what is your servant that you should regard a dead dog like me?

You got to love that expression. Dead dog as me. See, Mephibosheth had nothing to commend himself.

Nothing in himself. Nothing in his life. Nothing about him. I mean, even from an aesthetic perspective, he was a cripple. He couldn't even walk. He was worthless. Couldn't work.

[39 : 05] Couldn't serve the king in any way really. Not any way significantly. Not anything he could do. He was worthless. See, he didn't come with this idea that I can somehow contribute.

That somehow I'm worth you saving. It was an open confession. And really, he said, I'm a dead dog. That's about as low as you can get.

That is as low as you can get. Jewish culture, a dog was the lowest on the totem pole. I'm sorry, ladies, women were next to the dogs.

That's the way it was. Shouldn't be that way. That's the way it was. Dog. Paul, I believe, also referred to himself as a dog.

See, look, those who embrace the grace of God, saving grace of God that's been extended for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, grounded on the covenant, the New Testament covenant.

[40 : 08] Those who embrace that grace must do so with an open confession, not only of their unworthiness, but sinfulness.

I'm a dead dog. In fact, you cannot help but sense that Mephibosheth is so utterly amazed and surprised that the king would extend his grace to a dead dog like him.

This just does not make sense. And I tell you, if we ever, if we ever lose sight of the awe of God's grace and his salvation, then we really become very dead, don't we?

Oh, we should never, ever trivialize the saving grace of God and think it's just such a common thing. It's not. It is a source of our, our constant source of our worship of him. Then one last thing and I'll be finished.

[41 : 16] There's grace extended. praise his name. They extend his grace. Grace embraced. And then there's grace experienced.

Grace is something you experience. I don't mean just simply the experience of the conversion itself. I believe there is a conversion experience, something that you ought to be able to tell others about, a real experience.

Now, that in itself is not simply the sole proof of your salvation. salvation. I mean, listen, folks, I know that I was born back in 1956.

I probably shouldn't have said that. You know how old I am. I was born back in 1956, but I don't know I'm alive because I remember that experience.

I'm alive because I'm alive today. God's grace is active in my life today. So there is an experience of grace that certainly begins at the point of conversion, something we should never ever get over.

[42 : 30] But there is the experience of grace that continues on from there, and it did with Mephibosheth, didn't it? And the Bible and the Holy Spirit inspiring the writer here, the Bible describes it in such a wonderful way.

In fact, he repeats it four times. Do you see it? Verse 7, And you shall eat at my table regularly. You say, is that it? Oh, this is great. Can you imagine? An enemy who's crippled who's living an unfruitful life in fear and exile, and now he gets to sit at the king's table, not just for Sunday afternoon dinner as a guest, but from that point on.

It is such a symbol of, well, first, a symbol of communion and fellowship. worship. But it's even more than that if we look at the other examples of it.

Look at verse 10. Mephibosheth, louder part of verse 10. Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, shall eat at my table regularly.

[43 : 54] There it is the second time. And then it's even better, the third time, verse 11. So Mephibosheth ate at David's table, and then what?

As one of the king's sons. Was Mephibosheth the son of David? No.

He is now. He sat at his table continually as one of his sons. I tell you that just does not make sense in our way of thinking.

To make an enemy a son. I tell you in a very real sense in regard to our salvation it makes no sense that God would turn a murderer one who murdered his son to now call us sons.

eat at my table continually. And then it's repeated a fourth time. Verse 13. So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem for he ate at the king's table regularly.

[45 : 15] And then he adds this little PS. Now he was lame in both feet. By the way when you sit at the table where are your feet?

Under the table. Even his weaknesses and his worthlessness was hidden from all sight.

Sat at the king's table. kind of reminds me of something David wrote in Psalm 23. Possibly the most beloved psalm in all of the psalms.

Certainly the most well known. In fact there were many of us here that could probably quote it. I would have to quote it in King James because I memorized it that way.

But listen to it again. Verse 5. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemy. Verse 6.

[46 : 17] Surely goodness and mercy or loving kindness will follow me all the days of my life. By the way loving kindness is chesed. God's unmerited favor.

David says surely chesed. Your unmerited favor will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord how long?

Forever. By the way that doesn't begin when you get to forever. It begins right now. Right now. So let me ask you a question.

How is it possible that an enemy of God who is spiritually and eternally crippled and living in fear and exile and unfruitfulness how could a person like that sit at God's table forever?

How? Grace God's grace God's God's Thank you.