

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

The Kindness of God II Samuel 9

Intro: David has been quite the busy guy in the last few chapters. In **Ch7**, David was busy accepting YHWH's will. David wanted to build a house (temple) for **YHWH** but God said, "No, but I'll build a house (dynasty) for you." In **ch8**, David was busy fighting YHWH's battles. He extended the influence of his kingdom (**YHWH's kingdom**) as far north as Damascus & as far south as the Gulf of Aqaba. Now, here in **ch9**, David is busy sharing YHWH's kindness. At 1st glance, this chapter might not seem to be very theological or devotional to us but in reality, it contains quite a bit of spiritual instruction, especially in its revelation of the critical importance & gracious benefit of covenant.

Covenant's a word that's gone out of style so a definition is warranted. A Covenant is a **treaty, agreement or contract made between 2 parties that includes a variety of responsibilities, benefits & penalties** depending on the covenant. A covenant can be struck between **equal** parties but in Scripture, they almost always involve a **superior** & an **inferior** party. The most important characteristic of a covenant, at least in ancient societies, is that they were **binding**. That aspect tends to throw people off b/c we live in a culture that doesn't want to be bound to anything, not even if it's beneficial. But, our text will show us that life under God's covenant provides a **firm place** for the believer to stand on & should produce a sense of **security, privilege** & even **wonder** in those who willingly enter into that covenant.

David has finally risen to the place of ultimate power in Israel (human). In his position, he could have easily annulled or simply forgotten any & all previous agreements made during his life on the run from Saul. After all, isn't that the way of powerful people? In 1932, while running for his 1st term, FDR gave a speech in Pittsburg that championed restraining govt spending. In 1936, he wanted to speak there again, this time in favor of govt. spending. When he asked an advisor how he could make such an about-face without seeming two-faced the advice was simple – **deny you ever made a speech in Pittsburg in 1932**. David could have done something similar, "It was only a ceremony & it was over 20 yrs ago!" He had more important things to consider now, like consolidating his power. But, that wasn't David's mindset. That's not who he was b/c David practiced

covenant loyalty.

1- David's desire is to show ***hesed*** to Jonathan's descendants. ***Hesed***: devoted love promised within a covenant; love that's willing to commit itself to another by making its promise a matter of solemn record. So, when David talks about showing ***hesed*** "***for Jonathan's sake,***" he's referring to that solemn commitment Jonathan asked him to make in **I Sam 20:15**. David had **sworn** to show ***hesed*** to Jonathan & his family & now he's preparing to fulfill that pledge.

Now, since David has sworn to do this he is now ***obligated*** to do it but we must not think David is acting merely out of a sense of honor or legal motivation. True, his covenant promise compels him to act now but what compelled him to enter into the covenant in the 1st place? **Love (I Sam 20:17)**. 15 – 20 yrs after making the covenant, it still controlled & directed David's behavior. That solemn word given in that solemn ceremony under threat of a solemn curse compelled David to act with covenant love; not out of obligation but out of love for the memory of his dear friend. Here is the **power** of a covenant: **a promise made in the *past* directs faithfulness in the *present*.**

This is a power the world seems to ignore. So many couples reject the idea of marriage b/c it's legally binding but adds nothing to their relationship. The mentality is that a marriage license is just a piece of paper, an empty formality.

Such an understanding is misguided, completely missing the point of the marriage covenant. It's not there to regulate the intensity of love – but the security of love. What the world shamefully fails to see is that true love is willing to bind itself, is willing to promise, it willingly & gladly obligates itself so that the other party can stand securely in that love.

This applies even more so for the believer. Our public profession of faith is a promise to live for the Lord. Our public baptism is a promise to follow the Lord. Our corporate observance of Communion is a promise to not just remember Jesus & the sacrifice He made on our behalf but to honor Him b/c of it. If you've never heard that – surprise! Each of these things are things we ought to do, not b/c we feel like it, not to earn favor with God but b/c we ***promised*** to do it. this is the power of covenant: our promise made in love in the past directs our faithful love in the present.

2-7- It's odd that David's people could locate Ziba but not Mephibosheth. It appears that neither David nor anyone in his court knew of his existence. Why? B/c Mephib was in hiding! This isn't his 1st mention in scripture (**II Sam 4:4**). He was lame b/c his nurse dropped him while fleeing but why was she fleeing? Not to evade the Philistines. She's running b/c she knows that since both Saul & Jonathan are dead, who ever takes the throne will want to execute her young charge. That's the way it was back then: when the old regime was removed the new regime consolidated their power by bumping off all the stragglers from the old regime: **consolidation by liquidation**, gruesome but effective.

By every indication, Mephib is in a heap of trouble. Even the writer introduces him as "**the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul**" which not only identifies him as **a member of the old regime** but as **next in line** to the throne! By all cultural norms & by all human reasoning, Mephibosheth has been summoned by David for execution. No wonder he falls flat on his face before David – he's terrified! But notice, his fear of David was founded on **assumptions** not **facts**. David & Mephib never had a relationship before this b/c Mephib didn't want one. He avoided David based on unfounded fears

But, David seeks to rectify that. **Vs7** is not only the focus of the chapter; it's the hinge upon which Mephib's life swings in a new direction b/c David's about to lay some **hesed** on him. David promises Meph 3 things: **protection - kindness** (not execution) **provision** (restore family property: income) & **position** (David's table). As far as David was concerned, his place wasn't to grovel like a servant at the king's feet but to sit at his table like 1 of the king's sons.

Herein lies the great benefit that covenant provides: David's provision for Meph is far & above what he promised to Jonathan. The **focus** of the covenant made in **I Sam 20:15** was in sparing Jonathan's life & that of his family when David comes to power. The agreement doesn't **limit** David to sparing Jonathan's family but it does seem to be the major concern. David clearly goes far beyond the bare requirement. He doesn't just spare Meph's life – he heaps goodness upon him. Above all else, David granted Meph the **honor** of having a **close relationship with the king!**

Do we recognize what's happening here between David & Mephibosheth?

David not only saves him from the shadow of death – he prepares a table before him. His kindness goes beyond survival to sustenance. Mephib is cared for by the king & will never face destitution. It shouldn't be too difficult to see that David's **hesed** is nothing but a faithful reflection of **YHWH's hesed** – which we have just seen displayed on David's behalf in **ch7**. Why does David go all out in showing kindness to Mephib? B/c that's what **YHWH** had done. There's no such thing as bare hesed with God. That's what He did for David & good news is: that's what He does for us (**Ps 23:1; John 6:35, Rom 8:32**)

8-13- David places Ziba in charge of running Saul's estate for Mephib. But, let's take a moment to consider the significance of Mephib. He's the person who is embraced by the covenant – he's enjoying immense benefit from an arrangement he had absolutely nothing to do with. There are 2 aspects of Mephib'd condition stressed in our text:

- 1) his **lameness** – mentioned in **vs3** & **13b**. Tho a son of a prince, he is a helpless, dependent cripple.
- 2) his **heredity** – mentioned in **6a** & 3Xs in **9-10** = the wrong stuff, the enemy, of the old regime & yet he's **spared** b/c of David's oath to Jonathan. Tho Mephib is technically the enemy, he is embraced in the safety of the covenant.

Mephib should have been executed & he knew it. That's why he's groveling before David. His lameness was in his feet **not** his head. But David's "**Do not fear**" was the sign that he was **not** going to get what was expected simply b/c of the covenant. B/c David made an absurd promise that no sane politician would ever had made. David had promised **hesed** to the enemy & now this covenant was Mephibosheth's safe shelter.

Hopefully, you can see that we're easing into deeper truth; that you're beginning to see a parallel between David's covenant love for his enemy Meph – the kind of thing that wasn't supposed to happen - & what Paul talks about in **Rom 5:10**. See, the only way to truly appreciate David's covenant love is to understand the source of it, the Author! In fact, Paul's goal in **Rom 5:6-10** is to emphasize the improbable quality of God's love for us. The 1st step in wrestling with the wonder of God's love is to come 2 grips with the fact that He has no business loving who He loves.

Who does Mephibosheth represent? Us!

Mephib thought of himself as worthless but the covenant gave him worth!

We are the Lord's Mephibosheths & there is absolutely no reason why we should be eating continually at the Lord's table but we are; no reason we should be granted access to the Lord's presence but we have; no reason we should be allowed to have an intimate relationship with Jesus but we can. Each of these things have been granted to us by virtue of the new covenant in His blood & our willingness to enter into that covenant of grace by faith in Jesus Christ.

If you do not know Jesus as your personal Savior= outside the covenant of love & favor. You are poor (spiritually bankrupt) & weak; physically unable to prevent the punishment for sin that is surely coming. Maybe you've been hiding from God. If so, it has made you fearful. But God is breaking your bondage to sin & self. Hiding is useless; for He knows where you are; resistance is futile b/c He always hits His targets. Wouldn't you like to be finally & completely free from the judgment of sin that will surely come & be escorted in & covered by the love of the covenant that God has provided for those who would respond to His calling & leading. "God doesn't lead me." He lead you here today. He called you to be here so you could here this message. He would much rather pour out His covenant love upon you than to bring down His righteous & just judgment upon you. Will you enter into His covenant of peace?

If you are a believer – are you enjoying all the benefits afforded to you by Christ? What does it mean to be in a covenant relationship with God? What are His expectations? What are our responsibilities? We know God will keep His part of the covenant but what is our part? Are we daily seeking divine assistance to fulfill our portion of the covenant?

