



**“Kindness Received &
Kindness Rejected”
2 Samuel 9-10**

**by Pastor Tim Dodson
at JF Believers Church
in Menomonie, Wisc
on October 24, 2018**

Certainly it is not hard to see the strange connection between these two chapters in 2 Samuel. To his credit, we see that David...*at this point now KING David*, seemed to have a gentle spirit and a soft heart despite being so very good at the “brutal” side of things. (i.e. warfare) Such reflects a heart that is powerfully present with the kindness of God, and so profoundly absent in much of the larger Christian world today.

David certainly had every reason on the earthly realm to erase every trace of Saul off the face of the earth. Had he moved to do so, few people would have blamed him. But he did more than let his young man Mephibosheth *live*, he actually moved to bless him in the greatest way David knew how. David had promised both Saul and his son Jonathan that he would not erase their family name...that he would not destroy all of their descendants once he became king. So David was a man of his word. Can you imagine that? An actual “man of his word” that does what he says he is going to do?

Our modern culture today embraces the ideal of “random acts of kindness.” Such is a nice idea, and we would all benefit from being open to such a practice. But there is also a very real place in the Christian life for *intentionally* planned kindness...one in which we carefully consider who might be the proper and righteous recipient.

Scripture records that at least 3 times David and Jonathan made “covenants” with each other. (see 1 Sam 20) Solemn promises to each other that occurred even *before God* warranted confidence and faith in each other. The follow through on their word was the measure of the man, (or woman) as it is for us also. This is why such a covenant relationship is provided in this church...this is why it means something to us, and is held very dear to many of us!

Imagine being in the shoes of Mephibosheth at this point. He is one of the few remaining members of the house of Saul. He is probably living each day in fear for his life; afraid that King David will come and kill him to ensure his hold over the kingdom. Mephibosheth had little going for him. He was a poor and crippled man whose family was gone now...most killed in battle. When he was 5 years old his nurse tried to run in the wake of the fall of his family and in the process he was dropped and his legs were permanently damaged. And then all of his life he has been warned that David might come looking for him, so he no doubt lived in fear and misery every day.

What we see here in the way of application is a beautiful picture of divine grace (especially when you remember the unkind and unjust treatment David suffered at the hand of Saul) – and a faithful promise followed through... In this picture we see all of the aspects of grace:

Mephibosheth was disabled – crippled in both feet – and David brings him from isolation and hiding in a desolate place to the palace in Jerusalem and gives him all the lands that had belonged to his grandfather, King Saul, BUT more than that David brings him into *his* family and treats him *as his own son* with all the privileges that such a position has!

In response, Mephibosheth approached the king with humility, bowing before him. He could have been vengeful in his approach, for by rights, the position of king (by blood) ought to be his! Note that David's actions were not contingent upon Mephibosheth's response, but a matter of honor and integrity on the part of David. Once again, such commitment and follow-through is very rare in our day...*even in the greater church*. We say we're going to do something...maybe even make public promises, but then often fail to follow through with action.

Today we live in a very different world. A world that needs someone to blame for everything that goes wrong in our lives. A "scapegoat" for every accident and a lawsuit for every splinter. I'm not saying that there very well may be legitimate issues that require a lawyer or a police officer, but we are most often way beyond such levels today. It's a time where in every case "someone is to blame" and further "someone is going to pay." So we sue one guy and shoot another one. After all, we have been wronged! And in our pride filled and entitlement age, we will have our satisfaction...

1 Corinthians 6:1-8 *Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? 4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? 5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! 7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!*

David not only did what he promised to do, he went above and beyond the call of duty. He "loved even with no guarantee or proof of a reciprocation of that love"...*Sound like anyone you know?* Matthew 5:41 calls us out: *"If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles."*

Now "on a roll", David in chapter 10 tries to again show kindness in a situation where no such overt act of kindness was mandated or even expected. And yet David went out of his way to bless others who were hurting and in a bad situation. However, things did *not* go so well this time! This time the people...apparently paranoid of some conspiracy against them, turned on their benefactors and shamed and mistreated them. This of course did not go over well with David, who essentially called in the marines. What about us? How are we to deal with such situations? Will we fail to show grace and love because we may not get it in return?

Ecclesiastes 5:8 *“A time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.”*

Romans 12:18 *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*

Note *“if it is possible”*. I think the Bible is very practical here. It says *“as much as it depends on you... as far as it's possible on your behalf, live at peace with everybody.”* However, I think this is also implying that sometimes it is impossible to live at peace with someone.

Ephesians 6:12 *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

Psalms 103:8 *“The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.”*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Why did David deal kindly with Mephibosheth?

What do you think was going through the mind of Mephibosheth when David summoned him to the palace? (fear!)

How is David's treatment of Mephibosheth similar to the way that Jesus has treated us? (note: he ate his meals everyday with the King of Israel!)

How does Mephibosheth's response and interaction with David reflect what OUR response should be to OUR king?

In what ways is the "king" so blessing you today? (...in ways you do not deserve?)

How can a person show kindness to others in a way that ensures that the praise for that act is attributed to God?

David kept his promise even though it was difficult to do so. *What difficult promises are you trying to keep in your own life...What long standing promise still awaits your fulfillment? What actions are you taking to fulfill that promise(s)?*

In chapter 10 we see David at war once again. It seemed that David was constantly having to fight. *Is there a good time and reason to fight?* (Note Jesus clearing the temple in the New Testament, and countless OT stories that included warfare to acquire lands that God wanted His people to have (he owned them remember) and numerous accounts of God's people fighting to defend the honor of God and the justice of the people.)

Why did David have to fight so many battles? (both personal and for Israel...)

Why wouldn't God just give him the land and protect him for his enemies?

Did David's victories tell us anything about God's plans for Israel and for His people?

What then would you say is the purposes of the battles and the victories experienced in your own life?