

Grace in a Barren Place 2 Sam 9:1-6

In the 1981 movie, “The History of the World Part 1” One of the most important theatrical releases of that decade, Mel Brooks famously quips, “It’s good to be king!” As long as you are in power, being the king and related to the king is very good indeed. There were great pros and cons to being related to the King in ancient times. On the good side was the fact that life was good. You had power, prestige, and access to the king. You lived an opulent lifestyle and no one said no to you.

But there was a very big downside to being related to the king. When power shifted to another family, they always worried that the previous family might rise up against them, so they killed everyone related to the king. Men, women and children. Anyone who might be a threat to the new dynasty.

David and Jonathan had always been very close. They remained close even when Saul declared open war on David. So, when Jonathan makes a strange request of David, you can understand it better based on understanding the history of that time. 1 Samuel 20:14–17 (ESV) — 14 If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love of the LORD, that I may not die; 15 and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever, when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” 16 And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the LORD take vengeance on David’s enemies.” 17 And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

Sadly, during the wars with David and the Philistines, most of Saul’s male family members are killed including Jonathan. However, one survives and David keeps his word to his friend by taking care of Jonathan’s son, Mephibosheth.

There are some lessons we will learn from this wonderful act of grace.

PRAYER

I. An Act of Grace

A. A barren place

1. On our way to Harding, we go through the little town of Datto that proudly displays its population of...93 next to the gas station and probably

the biggest employer in town. Just so you understand, that's 1/3 the population of Fulton.

2. Unless you're really needing gas, there is no reason to stop there.
3. When Jonathan was killed, the nurse took the young boy, Mephibosheth to flee what would surely be his death.
4. On the run, she falls with the young boy breaking both of his feet and crippling him for life. That alone would be a bitter blow.
5. They left the home of a king go to a place called lo-debar, which translates to "no pasture."
6. A barren place, out of the way. A barren place nobody notices. A Datto.
7. A good place to hide. A good place to be forgotten.
8. It's there David's soldiers find the young man and bring him to the king.

B. Act of Grace

1. Jonathan's son comes into the throne room, probably expected to be executed.
2. David tells him he wants to show him
 - a) English – kindness
 - b) Hebrew – loyal love or mercy
 - c) Another aspect of the Hebrew word is "a love or affection that is steadfast based on a prior relationship¹"
3. Imagine coming in expecting to die and then hear the king not only give you your life, but all your father's and grandfather's lands!
4. No wonder he responds with "why are doing this for a dead dog like me?"
5. His mind can hardly comprehend the grace just shown him.
6. David doesn't stop there.
 - a) You will now eat at my table.
 - b) Not just today, but every day for the rest of your life!

- c) Only family and the most honored guests ate at the king's table.
- d) David made this young man almost like one of his own sons.

II. Grace in a Barren Place

A. Before salvation, we live in a barren place

1. We all have our barren place; Sin has separated us from God.
2. Rom 3:1 tells us all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God
3. I don't know about you, but when sin has had a tight grip on my life, it can feel so barren in my heart.
4. Guilt and sin robs my life of any life-giving nourishment
5. My heart becomes as barren as Lo-debar
6. We live in the wasteland of sin; hopelessness, lost
7. We are spiritually crippled.
8. Cut off from God.
9. We often think God surely won't look for us here.
10. It's too ugly, forlorn, forgotten
11. Then comes the knock at the door of our heart.

B. Perfect picture of our grace

1. The story of David and Mephibosheth really is a perfect picture of the grace given us.
2. We stand before the king, fully expecting and deserving the notice of our execution only to hear we will be spared and the king is going to make us his son or daughter!
3. We should die, but God shows us grace, mercy.
4. As Karl Menninger writes, he gives us his "yes" face.
5. He tells a story about several men riding with President Thomas Jefferson on a cross country journey. They come to a swollen river and

¹ Swanson, J. (1997). [*Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew \(Old Testament\)*](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

an older gentleman standing next to it. He watches as the first few cross the river and then asks one of the men if he would carry him across. The man pulls him up behind him and takes him safely to the other side. As they move away, one of trailing men asked him, "why did you ask the president to carry you across?" The man replied, "I didn't know he was

the president, I just know that some people have a “no” face and some a “yes” face. His was the first “yes” face I saw crossing the river.

6. God gives us his “yes face”
7. He wants to give us grace.
8. He wants to take us safely to the other side.
9. He wants to redeem us and bring us to his home.
10. We aren't his enemy; he wants us to be his adopted children.

C. Grace at the table

1. Let's go back to David and Mephibosheth for a moment
2. Imagine dinner at David's house in the years to come.
3. Amnon, witty and clever, always an engaging dinner partner.
4. Absalom, handsome and strong.
5. Tamar, the beautiful daughter sits between the brothers.
6. Solomon eventually graces the table wisdom already sitting on his shoulders.
7. Joab the great general is a regular guest.
8. And then the shuffle of crippled feet is heard as Mephibosheth slowly makes his way to the table. He smiles timidly, still unable to believe he is accepted as part of this family.
9. Once he sits down, no one sees the crippled feet anymore, just the perpetually awed faced of their adopted family member.

D. An analogy for us

1. Have you ever thought about the fact that this story in David's life is an analogy of us and God?
2. We are Mephibosheth ... or could be if you're willing to allow Jesus to lead you from the wasteland to the place of grace.
3. He begs to redeem you and have you sit at the family table.
4. Something caught my eye that I hadn't caught in reading this story before.

5. The scripture implies that David gives Mephibosheth a choice to return to his family lands or stay with him in Jerusalem.

6. look at vs 13: 2 Samuel 9:13 (ESV) — 13 So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet.

7. He was given a choice to live with the king.

8. So have you.

9. Are you ready to come to the table or will you return to your barren place?