

# “Find Your Mephibosheth” // 2 Samuel 9:1–13 // *The Life of David* #14<sup>1</sup>

(VAMP)

**I told our team earlier this week I’m glad they let me see that video with my dad in it in advance, otherwise I’m not sure I would’ve been able to recover fast enough.** . . . I hope this has been an incredible 21DOPF for you, and I hope you’ll join us this Friday as we celebrate the close of that this Friday night with regional prayer meetings. Even if you didn’t participate in our 21DOPF, be there this Friday--these are probably the most important events in the life of our church.

**Let me just say before we get started**--we have one more week and I hope you’ll use these last 7 days or so to really get still before the Lord and hear from him. That’s the purpose of fasting, btw--Just so we’re clear, **fasting is not a way to get God in a better mood to hear from you. A lot of people think God is like, “Oh! Look how hungry they have made themselves; now they deserve my attention!”** Listen: God’s readiness to listen to you was settled at the cross. You can’t do anything, fasting or otherwise, to make him more ready to listen to you. If you are in Christ, God could not love you more or be more eager to hear from you than he is *right now*. No--fasting is not a way to get GOD in a better mood to hear from you; it’s a way to get YOU

in a better position to hear from HIM. It’s about training your soul that hearing his voice is the most important reality in your life.

When Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness and Satan tempted him with bread, do you remember what Jesus responded with by saying? “Man shall not live by bread alone.” Do you ever ask, “Why did he quote *that* verse?” Well, when you are really hungry, food is a kind of life--it picks you up, makes you happy, adds enjoyment--food gives life. When you choose to fast, you take those hunger pangs and say to God through them: “Knowing YOU brings more life to my soul than eating food does. *I don’t live by bread alone*--life is not about the meeting of my physical needs--no, real life comes from hearing from you and knowing you.” (Normally, of course) you don’t have to choose between meeting a physical need and hearing from God, but fasting trains your soul that when you do have to choose which one is more essential for life, you’ll instinctively go for hearing from God.

So, as we enter our **3rd and final week of this fast**--even if you haven’t joined us yet--join us for this last week. Ask God to help you hear from him. **On our website you’ll find instructions** about how to fast, daily prayer prompts you can sign up for, & other helpful things.

One more important thing this weekend: It’s February, which is when our society celebrates Black History Month. At the Summit Church, we always say our goal is to proclaim the diversity of the kingdom and reflect the diversity of our community, believing that wherever the

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<sup>1</sup> Works Consulted: Tim Chester, *1 Samuel For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God’s Word for You)*, The Good Book Company, September 15, 2014; John Sailhammer, *NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); David Platt, “[The Kindness of the King](#),” through Pray the Word podcast, a resource

from Radical.net, posted May 11, 2019; John Piper, “[How a Dead Dog Loves a King](#),” sermon was preached at The Bethlehem Institute Graduation on May 28, 2006; Scott Sauls, “[A Home for the Weak](#),” sermon was preached at Christ Presbyterian Church on August 3, 2014; Timothy Keller, “[Covenant Love](#),” sermon was preached at Redeemer Presbyterian Church on August 16, 2009. Others as noted throughout.

gospel is truly preached it creates unity across any prior divisions. For a while, we've had a goal to be at least 25% diverse by 2025. Well, throughout this month, on our social media channels, we will be providing some resources, including stories of God's grace in the lives of our brothers and sisters of color in this church. Later this Spring, Pastor Bryan and I are going to take a few weeks and lay out God's plan for this in a few messages, so I'm looking forward to that. And let me also mention that Pastor Bryan teaches a class on Gospel and Race throughout the year that is open to anyone. You should check it out. More information and registration for those classes will come in Summit Weekly emails, so consider taking advantage of that opportunity.

OK? Let's take all these things to God in prayer... (mercies are new every morning; sorrow lasts for a night).

## Introduction

**Alright!** 2 Samuel 9... Last week my son Adon said that too often my messages feel like they're too long and with too many points, so he gave you the one primary takeaway point from last week: 'Christianity is not primarily about a bunch of things we're supposed to go and do for God; it's about standing in wonder at all he's done for us.'

Not to be outdone by my son: I'm going to try to do that again this week. This message has one, basic point... (I heard about a young pastor, btw, brand new at his church, preaching one of first messages and at some point he said, "And seventeenthly..." So, later his wife

was like, "Listen, you're going to lose people with so many points..." So the next week he stands up and says, "The message today is *pointless*." This message isn't quite "pointless," but it does have one basic point, and it is this: **Those who believe the gospel become like the gospel.** That's it. Let's take a look:

**9:1** And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

Jonathan, you recall, had been David's best friend. He'd tragically died in battle against the Philistines fighting at his father Saul's side. David had loved Jonathan with all his soul--you remember that Jonathan, as Saul's oldest son, should have felt entitled to be the next king, but Jonathan recognized God's hand on David and selflessly stepped aside so David could be King. And so, now that David is King, he wants to see if there are any relatives of Jonathan's still alive that he can show kindness to *for Jonathan's sake*.

So--they go on this nationwide search to find a relative of Jonathan and finally they locate an old servant of Saul's--a man named Ziba--and they ask him if Saul has any descendants still alive:

**Vs. 3:** And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan--Mephibosheth. He is crippled in his feet." (Mephibosheth, you might remember in 2 Samuel 4, had been dropped as a baby by his nanny during an enemy raid while she was trying to escape, and broke both of poor little Mephibosheth's legs, and left him permanently disabled.<sup>2</sup> Mephibosheth is a long word to say over and over. He needs a nickname--I thought of Fibby, or Meph--but that sounded like that could go bad pretty quick: David had a Meph problem; David scoured the countryside... You see the problem. So, we'll probably stick with the multi-syllabic Mephibosheth) **4** The king said to him,

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Samuel 4:4.

“Where is he?” And Ziba said to the king, “He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.” 5 Then King David sent and brought him up... 6 And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage.

7 And David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always.” 8 And he paid homage and said, “What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?”

12 ...So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem and ate at David's table like one of the king's sons... 13 And Mephibosheth was lame in both his feet.

This is a precious little chapter that captures the heart of the gospel in one simple story. If you remember last week, 2 Samuel 7, David had been the recipient of extraordinary generosity. David had tried to build a house for God, but God had said, “David, this whole deal is not about you giving to me--you’re not even worthy to give to me, you could never do it--no, it’s about me giving to you. You are not going to build me a house, I’m going to build you one. And my promise to you is unconditional, which means even when you and your family fail to keep your promises to me, I’m still going to keep mine to you. I’m going to put my Spirit permanently into you and give you a forever kingdom.”

David’s response to that, chapter 7, was worship. He sat before the Lord and just worshiped. In 2 Samuel 9, we are seeing the second part of his response; it’s the most natural, instinctive response in the world to receiving extravagant generosity. He says, “Find me someone to whom I can show extravagant grace like this.” David has

been shown extravagant generosity; he now feels the inward compulsion to show extravagant generosity.

**Three times in this chapter** (v 1, 3, and 7) **David says, “Go and find me...”** *Go and find me.* The point is: David is not responding to a need right in front of him; he’s not acting out of guilt or obligation because there is a need right in front of him. David is taking initiative. He says, “I’ve got to show grace to somebody. Go and find me somebody I can show this kind of grace to.”

**And who does David set his attention on? Mephibosheth.** Several things to note about him:

**First, Mephibosheth was technically AN ENEMY.** You see, in those days, when a new king came to the throne, the name of the game was purge. A new King didn’t want anyone of the previous king’s family left alive, because for sure there were still some people in the land who felt loyal to the old regime, and if there were relatives of the previous king alive, they’d wait until you went through a season where you were weak or unpopular and they’d mount a revolt against you. It happened all the time. Living relatives of the previous king were like one of those sleeping viruses in your body that wait until you’re weak and then they come out and attack you. It was just easier to get rid of all the previous King’s relatives to remove any potential rivals to the throne.<sup>3</sup> I know that seems bloodthirsty and cruel to us now, and it was, but in their eyes it made strategic sense--and it was the common practice of the day.

**That’s why, btw, it says Mephibosheth was afraid and “bowed down” before David-- literally, threw himself down** and started to insult himself, calling himself a dead dog. He’s 100% sure he is about to be killed.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. 1 King 15 - new king kills the old regime; 1 King 16 - new king kills the old regime; 2 King 10 - new king kills the old regime.

Mephibosheth was more than just an Enemy, however--he's also lame in both feet, which meant in those days he was considered basically useless. I know that is offensive to us now, and it should be, but this was a military and agrarian society, and being lame in both feet meant that he couldn't work, he couldn't fight; he had no value to a king. He's got to be carried around from place to place. So, not only is he an enemy, he's a drain on the King's resources.

**On top of that, many people considered someone lame in both feet to be cursed by God. Leviticus 21, in fact,** says that those lame in their feet were not allowed to enter into the Temple.

Furthermore, in Hebrew, there is actually some symbolism at work in Mephibosheth's name.

- Mephibosheth's name literally means **"spreader of shame."**<sup>4</sup>
- **Vs 4 says that he is from "Lo Debar,"** which literally means "No-Place" or "Nothing."
- This is a **current enemy from nowhere** who many regard to be useless and cursed by God, that David invites to sit at his table like he's one of the king's sons.

**And the word David uses for the kindness he wants to show to Mephibosheth is "hesed,"** which means unconditional love; covenant love; the kind of love that God had shown to David. And David does it all, he says, *for Jonathan's sake.* Mephibosheth may NOT have deserved any of this--but in David's eyes, Jonathan did.

**Can you see what's being played out?** David has been the recipient of extravagant grace; he now feels the compulsion to show extravagant grace. He is living out the gospel and our response to it.

You see, **every time we celebrate Communion,** we come and sit at the table of our King, though we formerly were his enemies. And, you see, unlike Mephibosheth, we were **more than just the lame children** of a rebellious granddad; we ourselves were the rebels; we had ourselves killed the King's own Son. And, **spiritually, we were far more crippled than Mephibosheth**--the mark of our sin cut deep--we were by nature, Paul says in Ephesians, children of wrath, sons and daughters of disobedience, without hope and without God in the world, spreaders of shame and rightfully underneath God's curse. **And our shame, unlike Mephibosheth's,** didn't come from outdated social mores; our shame was real; we actually were worthy of the cursing of God.

**"But God," Paul says,** "who is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he has loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses and sins, has made us alive together with Christ, and has raised us up to SIT with him in the HEAVENLY places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show off the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." He chose me just to show off his grace. God **literally invited us to sit at his table because of Jesus, our Jonathan;** and now we sit at his table as favored sons and daughters, loved unconditionally and irrevocably. We have a forever seat at the table because of God's *hesed* love.

**And in response to that, David searches for someone he can show grace to.**

- He wants to **find someone whom he can love** like he's been loved.
- That's **what I mean when I say that those who believe the gospel** become like the gospel. The indicator that you've experienced the gospel is you start to display the generosity OF the gospel.

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<sup>4</sup> Tim Chester, *1 Samuel for You*; <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/4648.html>

One of my **favorite movie scenes of all time is Liam Neeson's portrayal of the forgiveness of Jean Valjean in the movie rendition of *Les Mis***. (How many of have seen *Les Mis* the stage play? (raise hands), seen the movie (hands), or (bonus!) read the book! I love the movie rendition of this great book because people are not unexplainably bursting into song every few minutes... Though I do admit I enjoy the musical itself far more than I ever thought I would. It's like my favorite) But the scene goes like this... Jean Valjean was a convict released from a French prison who couldn't find work because everybody knows he's a convict and no one will hire him. Finally, an old priest finds him sleeping on the street and, out of pity, takes him in for the evening. At dinner, Jean Valjean notices all the silver in the house, so he wakes up in the middle of the night and robs the man. The priest hears a racket in the kitchen as Valjean is collecting all the stuff and comes in to see what's going on, at which point Valjean slugs him in the face and runs away with all the treasure. Early the next morning the police catch Jean Valjean and drag him back to the priest's house. They say to the priest, "We caught this man with all your silver and he has the audacity to say that you gave it to him! Just say the word and we'll take him back to prison. All the priest has to do is nod his head and confirm that Valjean stole the silver and Valjean goes back to prison for the rest of his life. The priest walks over, stands in front of Valjean, and looks him in the eye, and says, "I'm very angry with you, Jean Valjean..." and then he pauses for an uncomfortable amount of time, and then says, "I'm angry because you forgot to take the silver candlesticks I gave to you. They are the most valuable things in the house. You don't want to forget those," and he sends a servant to grab them and put them in Valjean's bag. The policemen are like, "Wait a minute, he was telling the truth? You actually did give him all this stuff?" And the priest says, "Of course I gave them to him. Unchain him at once." And the police take off Valjean's chains and depart, leaving only Valjean standing there with the priest, and Valjean says, "Why are you doing this?" And the priest says, "With this silver and these candlesticks I

have now bought your soul. You must promise to become a better man. Go, Valjean, and start a new life."

And Valjean does, and for the rest of his life, it's like he is looking for someone to whom he can show the kind of generosity he's received. First it becomes Fantine, one of his factory workers who has been oppressed and mistreated; then, it's her orphaned daughter, Cosette; then, a crazy man on trial for his life; then a young man named Marius, an undeserving rebel. Valjean has an impulse for generosity that is almost uncontrollable, an impulse that gets him into trouble, in fact. But Valjean can't help it. He **has to find a Mephibosheth** to whom he can show the kind of grace he's experienced. Those who truly believe the gospel become like the gospel.

Or think about the **woman in the Gospel of Matthew who comes to Jesus and shatters an expensive bottle of perfume over his feet** and then washes his feet with her tears and dries them with her hair. No one had asked her to do that; it was not even practical--she's not really meeting a need that Jesus has. She just has to pour out grace in response to the grace she'd been shown. Jesus interprets what is happening to everyone. He says, "Those who have forgiven of much, love much!"

**So, here's my question: Do you have any Mephibosheth-type relationships in your life?** Where you just--in response to being SO loved by Jesus--do something radically generous? You see, the gospel is that Jesus ransomed your soul with more than some candlesticks and silver spoons; he poured out his blood for you. And when you understand that, you're going to need to find some Mephibosheths.

**Let me explain a few places where I've seen people in our church respond like this:**

- **Adoption--That's literally what David does in this story.** He adopts into his family a special-needs teenager. Many of the couples I know at our church who have adopted say that they did

so because it just felt like a fitting response to the gospel. Here is an orphaned child--sometimes with a lot of personal challenges--but isn't that what God did with us, they say? I remember a couple in our church--at least, connected to our church--who were about to adopt a child but found out that the child was going to be born with spina bifida. The doctors told them that they could save the child, but for the rest of that child's life she was going to have significant challenges. The adoption agency said, "We'll understand if you want to back out." And sometimes, btw, I know that couples, through prayer, have to make a difficult decision to not adopt. But this wife was really struggling with it and she said that as they were praying through it, one night she had a dream, and in her dream she was in this big stadium as beautiful children were brought up on stage for adoption. Each child would be help up and someone would ask, "Who wants this one?" and various parents would volunteer to take that particular child. But then this one child, she said, was brought up who was obviously disfigured and the voice called out, "Who wants this one?" and the crowd, she said, went deathly silent; no one spoke. "Finally," she said, "someone stood up in the crowd and said, 'I'll take this one,' and she said, "in my dream, I looked, and it was Jesus. He walked forward to take the child."

**At that point in the story, I said, "Wow, that's so powerful," and the person telling me the story said, "I'm not done yet.** The lady said, "In my dream, when Jesus went down to get the baby, I got a glimpse of the baby's face--this baby that was all marred and disfigured, and it was my face on that baby.

She said, "I know the truth is that Jesus adopted me when I was disfigured and wrecked by sin, and I know he now wants us to take in this child as he took in us."

- **Maybe some of you couples or soon-to-be-couples should consider doing something like this as a response to the gospel.**

Adoption is not just about having kids if you are unable to--for Christians it is an act of worship.

- (And, **I do want to emphasize** as strongly as possible. This is not God's calling for everyone and this kind of work is not for the faint of heart--don't do it on a whim or because you get inspired or it feels trendy or cool. The only way I know for parents to endure in work like this is because they feel driven to show the same love to an orphaned child that Jesus showed to them.)
- Maybe, if you're not in a place where you yourself can adopt, maybe you can get involved in fostering or in our "SAFE families" program which supports parents in crisis so that their children don't end up in foster care.
- Or **maybe you could give financially** to a couple seeking to adopt. Talk to your campus pastor--they almost for sure will know a couple at the campus seeking to adopt struggling with money.
- Or **volunteer at [The Village Durham](#)**, started by a Summit member, that focuses on family preservation and helping parents whose children have been removed get their lives back together so they can get their children back.
- **Maybe your "Mephibosheth" application will take the form of a radical, financial gift to Jesus**--I know of one businessman who says, "I want to give away 90% of all that God has given to me, and my goal is to bounce my last check." "Why," you ask? "Because that's what Jesus did for me," he says. He didn't leave anything in the bank. He didn't tithe his blood for me, he poured out all of it." Maybe you won't give away 90%--in fact, I suppose that for most of you that's not possible. But maybe there's some possession you will give back to him. A car. A house. It's not even that God needs it--it's just your alabaster flask that you feel like you want to break over Jesus' feet. (Again, remember: the woman who broke the alabaster flask wasn't meeting a need of Jesus', she was simply driven by the desire to show generosity toward Jesus as he had shown it to her. )
- **Maybe your "Mephibosheth" application will come in the form of leveraging your talents** for God's Kingdom. Instead of using

your talents just to make money, you'll invest them in leading God's church. Listen, the ministry is not just for those who can't make it in the business world. I'd say God deserves our greatest minds and greatest leaders, Amen?--the ones at the top of their classes and the best in their fields. Isn't the church of Jesus worthy of that?

- **Of course, full-time ministry is not the only way to serve the Kingdom of God.** Some of you need to get good in the so-called secular world and use that for the Kingdom. We have a guy at our church who is a medical doctor at one of our universities here--one of the top guys in his field in the nation, who tells me that every year a group a doctor's cohort in Asia brings him out to lecture on behalf of his university on the latest trends in his field. Doctors from all around Asia, he says--Buddhists, Muslims, atheists--come to hear him lecture for a week. He says he always opens the week explaining how Jesus transformed his life and how the gospel shapes his view of medicine. I said, "Is your university ok with that?" He said, "Well, they are probably not crazy about it..." but then he got a twinkle in his eye and said, "But what can they do about it? I'm one of the top guys in the country in my field. They aren't going to say anything." He said I could use the story as long as I gave the accurate score of the game last night so that might give you a clue to where he serves...
- **Maybe your "Mephibosheth" application will be to take your talents and go to live in an unreached people group on one of our church planting teams.** Every day I pray through the Joshua Project Unreached People Group app on my phone. Every day a different people group with little to no access to the gospel.

- **For example, today...** And I think, "Who is going to tell these people?"
- To be clear: Living in a place like that is hard, and costly. But here's the question: **Isn't our Jonathan worthy of it?** I think of the words of CT Studd, whom I tell you guys about a lot--arguably Great Britain's most famous professional athlete of the late 19th century--walking away from all of it to live in an unreached people group. When asked why, he said, "Easy... *"If Jesus Christ be God, and died for me, then no sacrifice for him is too great."*
- Or David Livingstone, whose story I told last week, who would have been very successful as a doctor in Great Britain but gave his life to medical mission work in Africa. People asked him, "Do you ever regret that sacrifice you made?" And he famously said, "Sacrifice? I never made a sacrifice. Let's not talk about sacrifice. Jesus dying for me was a sacrifice. Using my talents to tell other people about him is an honor and privilege."<sup>5</sup>
- Or you parents have to consider whether you will let your kids...(my mom)
- **Maybe your Mephibosheth will come in the form of a great act of forgiveness:** forgiving someone who has hurt you deeply. And it doesn't make sense and people can't believe it and they say, "That person is not worthy of your forgiveness." But you're not doing it for their sake. You're doing it for Jesus' sake. Listen to this: **In October of 2006, a gunman took hostages** in a one-room schoolhouse of an Amish community in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. After shooting ten victims, five of whom died, the gunman killed himself. Within hours after the murders, members

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<sup>5</sup> For my own part, I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. . . . Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! It is

emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice. (Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, 1981, 259)

of the Amish community visited the killer's parents and expressed sympathy for their loss and offered support for the hard days they faced ahead. When the gunman was buried a few days later, his young widow and her three children were amazed to discover that half those attending the funeral were Amish, who showed nothing but support and concern for the murderer's family... The forgiveness and love shown by the Amish community became the talk of the entire country... It was so powerful, in fact, that a group of sociologists published a study of this incident, and one of their main conclusions was that our secular culture is unable to produce people who can handle suffering and offer forgiveness the way the Amish in this community did.<sup>6</sup> Many pundits across the country tried to claim the Amish's startling love represented "the best in 'us.'" These sociologists said that was naïve. They argued that the Amish's ability to forgive was based on one primary thing, and I quote: "At the heart of their faith was a man dying for his enemies, and if you are a member of a community that speaks and sings about it— rehearses and celebrates it— constantly, then the practice of forgiving even the murderers of one's children will not seem impossible. 'Most of us have been formed by a culture that nourishes revenge and mocks grace,'" the authors conclude, and they are right.<sup>7</sup>

Christians have an unusual capacity to forgive, and it's for *our Jonathan's sake*. Be ye kind, one to another, tenderhearted forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, as forgiven you. That person you are forgiving may not be worthy of your forgiveness, but Jesus is.

**Listen: Maybe your Mephibosheth will not be as grandiose as any of these.**

<sup>6</sup> In a made-for-TV film about the incident, writers created a fictional character, Ida Graber, an Amish mother of one of the murdered children who, in the movie, is so filled with doubts and anger at God, and so unable to forgive the gunman, that she

- Maybe it will be simply **forgiving your spouse** again for their thoughtlessness. And they may be past the point of deserving it. But you're not thinking as much about what they deserve, you are thinking about what Jesus deserves, and you forgive them for his sake. (I always hasten to add, btw, I don't mean letting yourself be trampled on in marriage. That's not helping you or them--if you're being trampled on or abused or taken advantage of, go see a counselor who can help you work through a healthy way to respond to your spouse.)
- **And maybe your generosity won't be in the form of some big, humongous financial gift**--maybe it will be you simply giving consistently, faithfully, sacrificially, month by month, adjusting your lifestyle so that God gets your first and the best.
- **Maybe your Mephibosheth application will show up simply in how you tip your waiter or waitress.** To bring it down to the very mundane. I know a guy who is extremely generous on tips--and he's not super wealthy, either. He's just always on the really high side. But when I commented on it one day and asked him why, he just said, "Well, Jesus was generous to me. It just feels right." Danny Akin, president over at SEBTS, tells a story about eating in a restaurant one Sunday and asking the waitress, "Well, how's it going?" And he said she barked back, "*Well, it's Sunday. Worst day of the week to work...*" He thought she was just talking about having to work on Sunday but then she said, "You know, all these Christians coming in after church..." She said, "They're so rude and condescending." And then, he said, she pulled out a little 4 Spiritual Laws tract out of her apron and said, "*That table over there left me this, but no tip. I get lots of these on Sundays. It's all about God's love, but this won't feed my kids.*" Friend, if you go to a restaurant, and you use one of these Summit pens, don't you put down a penny less than 20%--you get that? Really should be

almost leaves her faith. The secular culture has a hard time conceiving of a faith that moves toward forgiveness and not despair in a time like this.

<sup>7</sup> Keller, *Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering*, 177



closer to 25%--it won't make any real difference to you but it will make a huge difference to them. Do it for our "Jonathan's" sake. Even if the waitress or waiter is bad, *sometimes* I leave a big tip because I know--well, Jesus was generous to me when I didn't deserve it, and maybe I can give this waiter or waitress a little glimpse of that, because obviously they are having a hard day. BTW, I did that one time--this waitress in particular was a real jerk and my first inclination was to leave her nothing, because that's what I thought she deserved, but I sensed the Lord saying, "Don't do that," and so I did the opposite. I left her like a 30% tip. She followed me out the parking lot and said, "Why did you do that?" because she and I both knew she didn't deserve it. And I said, "Well, Jesus was super generous to me, and I wanted to do that for you." You say, "That's impractical." Listen: if Jesus went into a restaurant, even there he would go not to be served, but to serve.

You say, "Well, do I do this in every situation, in every business dealing?" I'm not saying that. **The point is: those who have experienced the generosity of the gospel can't help but demonstrate it.** It's like they just *have to find an outlet* to be generous with others somewhere.

Let me get you to write something down that is at the core of the Mephibosheth principle: **"Do for the one what you wish you could do for the many."** (I'm not sure who said that first but it's a great principle.) "Do for one what you wish you could do for many." You can't show this kind of extravagance to everybody. David couldn't invite everyone to sit at his table. So, "do for one what you wish you could do for many."

**Who is it for you?** Do you have Mephibosheth relationships in your life?

BTW, here's one more: maybe you could volunteer to serve our Grace kids--a ministry we have to kids with special needs. That would be a great way.

**The point of this message, like the one last week, is really simple:**

*Those who believe the gospel become like the gospel.* David became radically generous toward Mephibosheth in chapter 9 because God had been radically generous toward David in chapter 7--and until you see yourself as the recipient of the generosity of chapter 7, you'll never develop the generosity of chapter 9.

**You see, sometimes we read stories like these and try to apply them too quickly.** We think, "Well, I should be generous like David." But David didn't just up-and-decide to become generous because God commanded him. He became generous in response to God's lavish generosity toward him.

Listen, you'll never become generous like David in this story until you see that **you first sat in the chair of Mephibosheth.** You were God's enemy, helpless, a dead dog, dead in your trespasses and sins, when Christ died for you. While we were still his enemy, Romans 5 tells us, Christ died for us. **And in response to that,** you have to find your Fantine and Cosette. You have to find your Mephibosheth. You figure out a place to break open your alabaster jar of perfume. Only the generosity of Christ TOWARD you produces a generosity of spirit IN you. In fact, I think we could pretty safely say this: ***The depth of your instinct for generosity is the measure of your understanding of the gospel.***

**Well, I really, really, really wanted to end this today around the Lord's Table**--because that is literally the representation of us being invited to sit at our King's table, as a part of his family. (But, you're not going to believe this, the company who supplies our bread and cup is having supply-line problems and couldn't get us the supplies in time. I even called some of my pastor friends around the country to

borrow some from them and they are dealing with the same thing. This is something I feel certain the Apostles never had to deal with. I tried to get our teams to let me do the little "pass the bread loaf and pinch off a bit" and drink from one big silver chalice but COVID and flu season and whatever.

So, what we're going to do is walk through the Lord's table, just without the elements.

VAMP

## The Lord's Table:

- **Think:** You are Mephibosheth. A former enemy; a treasonous traitor. A spreader of shame. A nothing. Spiritually crippled. And you are invited. Have you ever received this? It's a gift. If you know you have, rejoice in it. Use these verses:
  - Do you need to be reconciled to God? Say, "Jesus, I know that I'm a sinner who needs to be saved. I believe Jesus died for my sins, and I accept your invitation to become your child and sit at your table. I surrender to you as Lord."
  - Verses to meditate on if you know you've made that decision:
    - **1 John 3:1**, Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God!"
    - **1 John 1:9**, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- Now, think: Think about the promises God has given you.
  - No condemnation.
  - Sins as far as East is from the West.
  - No weapon formed against you shall prosper, all those who rise against you will fall. "He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High will abide under the shadow of the Almighty."  
**Psalm 91:1**

- Though 1000 fall at your side, the danger shall not come near you.
- Romans: He that did not spare his own son, will he not also freely give us all things...
- Think about the promises that are yours sitting at this table.
- ~~Take the bread.~~
- Now, think: **Who is a Mephibosheth you can pour out generosity on?** Let the Holy Spirit bring to mind. If you don't know of someone, use this last week of 21DOPF to ask God to reveal that to you. ~~Drink the cup~~