

DestineNation
Mephibosheth and Me
2 Samuel 9:1-8
Pastor Ryan Heller
Part 2 of 5

Today we are talking about our DestineNation series. Over the last two weeks we've been looking at the life of David. God has a destination for the life of every person, and God has a destination for our church. We've been discovering that destination, the place God is taking us. I'm excited to continue as we talk about the grace of God. The amazing grace of God!

If you don't understand the grace of God, you really don't understand who God is. It is impossible to understand God apart from His grace. It's the way a perfect, holy God receives a sinful person.

I believe this message is especially pertinent to our culture and to our society, because everywhere we turn there is un-grace. There is a lack of grace. We see condemnation. We see judgment. We see it on the left, we see it on the right, we see it amongst the people and places of our stratosphere—un-grace and lack of grace. But God has a different plan for us. God wants us to understand His grace. And when the grace of God invades the life of a person, then it is contagious. We cannot help but give it away and express it to others. King David understood that. David was acquainted with the grace of God. In today's story we see the grace of God unfolding in the life of an unlikely individual. His name is Mephibosheth.

Many people love Bible names. Peter, James and John were Jesus' disciples. Saul, David and Solomon were kings. Joseph, Abraham and Jacob were Old Testament heroes. Maybe I could add one more to the list—Mephibosheth. If you are expecting, this would make a great name for a boy. If you have a girl you could call her "Phibby" for short, which is kind of cute. It's a difficult name to spell and even more difficult to pronounce, but it's a great, powerful name, because in Scripture it is synonymous with the grace of God.

To back up, David is the second king of Israel. The first king was Saul, but he was sort of crazy. Saul was a nut case. He liked to go his own way, and he forgot about the ways of God. The result was that God said, "I'm going to take the kingdom away from you and from your lineage, Saul."

When Saul discovered that David was to be his successor, he tried to take David's life. Much of 1 Samuel is devoted to David hiding in caves and running for his life. Interestingly enough, you would think that Saul's son Jonathan would hate David, because David was going to receive the kingdom Jonathan should have received. But in reality, Jonathan and David became the best of

friends. They were super-close, and at one time Jonathan even saved David's life and protected him from the wrath of his father.

With all of that in mind, David is reflecting. He is remembering his friend Jonathan, and in the same moment he is grateful to God that he has the throne, in spite of King Saul trying to kill him. And the story in 2 Samuel 4:4 really sets the stage.

“Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled, in her haste, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.”

Now, in the ancient world, when a king died, the other king that was going to take over would usually kill all the family and friends of his predecessor. Aunts, uncles, best friends, college roommates, third cousins removed. They wiped everybody out because they wanted to make sure nobody could make a claim on the throne after it had been taken.

Mephibosheth is ushered out of the palace upon the deaths of his father and his grandfather because the palace is in political turmoil. The nurse snatches him up, and in some way he is dropped. Without proper medical attention, he is left crippled for the rest of his life. The Bible doesn't give us all the details about what the accident was and how it happened, but Mephibosheth is left as a crippled little boy.

Fifteen to twenty years later, Mephibosheth is a man. David wants to remember his old friend Jonathan, and in 2 Samuel 9:1 he asks, “Is there anyone left in the house of Saul, that I may show kindness to him for Jonathan’s sake?” And David continues, “I want to show honor to my friend. Does he have any descendants left? Can you guys check that out? Can somebody Google that? Go figure this out.”

In verse 3, the king asks the same question, “Is there still no one left in the house of Saul I can show kindness to?” And Ziba, who was a servant, answers the king, “There is still the son of Jonathan. He is crippled in both feet.”

To be crippled in the ancient world was shameful. You were considered worthless. In fact, the name Mephibosheth means “a shameful thing.” The servant is saying, “He’s crippled, and by the way, he’s crippled in *both* feet. You don’t really want to have him come to the palace, do you?” David says, “That is not what I am asking. What I want is to show honor to somebody, not to serve in my kingdom, not to be the COO of the palace. I just want to show grace to someone.”

At the second church where I served on staff, a pastor I worked with very closely was disabled. He was born with some complications, and he had multiple surgeries. They fused his spine together, but he was confined to a wheelchair his entire life. I never had understood how difficult it was for somebody disabled like that to get around. You tend to take for granted that

you can walk to the store, or get up and go eat, or hop in the car and go somewhere. I had no idea!

And so my friend, this pastor, was always looking for a wheelchair ramp to get in and out of buildings and places. Sometimes you can't go in this door; you have to go in that door. Just driving the car was difficult. He would hoist himself up, position his wheelchair in between the door and the car, and pull himself up by the steering wheel. Then he would have to disassemble his wheelchair. Both of the wheels popped off, and he would put them in the back seat. It was a lot of work! He had fantastic upper body strength, but sometimes he would slip and fall. If he parked on the hill, the wheelchair might run down the hill, and he would have to go get it. It was complicated.

And then, he drove with a handset. He would do the brake and the gas with his other hand, the one he wasn't driving with. It was really complex. We were always wanting him to drive, because we lived in a university town that had no parking, and he always had that big handicap parking space. But my friend had to work hard to do things that many of us would do and never think twice.

Can you imagine 3,000 years ago? Mephibosheth has no medical treatment. There is no wheelchair, there are no wheelchair ramps, there are no elevators. He is totally helpless. I would imagine if he wanted to go to the bathroom he had to shuffle around on his hands, or someone else would have to physically carry him. Life is extremely difficult, and furthermore, to be disabled is considered shameful. Mephibosheth has all this going on in the background, but David is about to make a decision that is going to change the life of this young man, and he'll never be the same.

He brings Mephibosheth into the palace, and in 2 Samuel 9:6-8 he is shaking. He's terrified that David is going to hurt him, take his life. In verse 6, when Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay honor. David said, "Mephibosheth, don't be afraid, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan, and I will restore to you the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table."

Mephibosheth bowed down, and he said, "What is your servant that you should notice a dead dog like me?" You could say he was not a person filled with self-confidence. I mean, he calls himself a "dead dog." The Bible tells us he lived in a place called Lodebar, which means "a barren wasteland." It's a place where there are no crops. And he has the name Mephibosheth, "shameful one."

Circumstances aren't exactly the best for Mephibosheth, but things are about to change, and he's shocked. He's amazed that David would bring him to the palace and give him the inheritance of his grandfather, and let him sit at the table of the king. In fact, four times in this passage it's mentioned that Mephibosheth would eat with the king. It was the highest honor.

The only people who ate with the king were his own family. Mephibosheth was once the enemy, and now he's been brought near, and he's a son.

I hope you see the picture of the gospel that's being painted here, because when you see David you see the heart of God, and when you see Mephibosheth you see the sinfulness and the brokenness of humanity. When you see this whole story you see grace expounded beautifully, the grace that God wants to extend to all of us.

God shows his grace to us, not because of what we have done, but because of who He is. A lot of people say, "I'll show grace to her if she deserves it. I'll show grace to him if he does something to earn it." That's not grace. And in this story Mephibosheth has done nothing—absolutely nothing—to earn the right to sit at the king's table. It is orchestrated only by the one giving grace, King David. Isn't that beautiful? And that's what He's done in our own salvation. We don't deserve to know God. We haven't earned God's favor in such a way that we can call Him Father. God has freely bestowed it, given it to us, in spite of us, not because of us.

And in an instant, this young man's life has changed. David gives him the property of Saul's estate, making Mephibosheth instantly wealthy. He has honor. He has respect, all of the things he had never had before. And in verse 10, David actually tells Ziba, "Hey, I want your sons and I want your servants to tend to the house of Mephibosheth." Mephibosheth has 15 sons of Ziba and 20 servants. He has a staff of 35. All is looking up for Mephibosheth because of grace. Thirty-five people there to wait on him. And we are crippled in our sin, we are poor, but God has brought us to His table and given us the riches of every spiritual blessing in Christ.

We were enemies of God. Now we are sons and daughters of the king, and the reason so many are grace-less is because they've never been grace-full. It's impossible to give something away that you've never had. The Bible commands us to be gracious to others, but if you have never experienced where grace begins, it's pretty hard to give it away. David understood the grace of God, and because the grace of God had taken root in his life, he began to pour it out into the lives of others. David was a gracious person.

Today I can offer you four examples of what we can do to show grace to others, just as David showed grace to Mephibosheth. God has done something in your life, and now you want to give it away.

The first is showing generosity.

1. SHOWING GENEROSITY

To know the grace of God is to want to give it away. You have to *know* the grace of God to want to give it away. David shared with Mephibosheth when he said, "You can have my food, and by the way, you don't have to sleep in the servants' quarters, and you don't have to eat the leftover scraps. You can have the big T-bone steaks at my table every single night,

Mephibosheth.” David is generous. He has given the inheritance of Saul to Mephibosheth. Again, a person he did not even know.

The biblical perspective is that God has blessed me, and I want to bless others in return. Being generous with what God has given to us is the most natural response when we are truly grateful for God’s grace in our lives.

I am proud of our church; we’ve come so far in this area of gratitude and generosity. Our Reach Project has brought us an opportunity to really grow spiritually in giving. To date, the Reach Project fund has reached \$194,000. Is that not awesome? If you are new to the church, the Reach Project is the plan we’ve been working on over the last six or seven months to raise funds to get into our own facility. We would not be moving into a building in August if we had not had the Reach Project. People are giving and are being generous. Last week we received over \$12,000 for the Reach project, just here with our folks. This is fantastic. It’s amazing!

Two weeks ago another church gave us a \$50,000 gift, and a few days ago we received another \$50,000 gift. God is providing in an incredible way. This building we’re moving into is big. It seats about 500 in the worship area. There are 350 parking spaces.

What we said last week is that we need to raise a minimum of \$50,000 from within Edge Church this summer, and then we still will need to raise another \$150,000, either from our church or from some other churches that would want to help us. We’ve raised a lot. We are well on our way, but we still have a ways to go.

Some people have been asking when the church will need the money, how much, and so forth. Here’s what I can tell you: the sooner the better! Because we are moving in 48 days, and we have lots of work to do, and we’re trying to plan our budget, asking ourselves, “Can we do this,” “Can we do that over there,” “We’ve got to order this,” “We’ve got to install that.” You can’t do that in a few days. The earlier you can give to the Reach Project, the better. If you can give today, or in the next week or two, that is excellent, and if it’s not until later, at the end of summer, that’s good, too. We are grateful for every gift.

We are responding to the grace of God. God has been gracious to us, and now we are having the opportunity to show God our appreciation. We are giving to others, and some are going to have their lives changed as a result. When we give, we are saying we want other people to enter into the kingdom of God. That is what is going to happen.

Our church is going to continue to grow. Last week at our 9:00 am service we had the largest attendance we’ve had in several months. Today we already have had an exceptional morning. Our church is growing, even in this school. These days you have to *want* to come to Edge Church. You have to work at it, because, as grateful as we are to be able to worship in this school, it is located on a dead-end road. Can you imagine what it will be like on a street where 40,000 cars pass by every day? That’s what Smoky Hill Road is. People are going to see our sign.

Everybody in town will know where our church is, because it has the big green roof. Some ask me, “Ryan, where is the new church?” And I say, “Where the big green roof is.” And they say, “I’ve got it. I know exactly where it is.”

Our giving is making a difference. We’ve baptized 150 people in three and a half years. That is awesome. It’s exciting. We’re celebrating! We want to baptize 150 every year. I believe we have the opportunity to do that. Your generosity is what is making the difference. Your generosity is putting rocket fuel into the engine of Edge Church to help us reach this goal, and to change lives, and to make a difference in our community.

Next, we can love people.

2. LOVING PEOPLE

Another thing we can do is love people. David loved Mephibosheth. David didn’t even know Mephibosheth. He hadn’t even known Mephibosheth was around. Mephibosheth was considered shameful. David loved him anyway.

I hope God will continue to give Edge Church a heart to love. We’re about to have a lot of new people come through the doors of our church. What a wonderful opportunity to share the life-changing message of Jesus. We need to love others! We need to be ready to receive all these new people. It’s going to feel different. New building, more folks, lights, all that kind of thing. I’m sure some of you are going to show up and you’re going to start saying, “What can I do, I need to put pipe and drape up.” No, we don’t have pipe and drape. “I need to put chairs up!” We’ve been doing that for so long.

At our facility we will need to focus on loving and welcoming people. One of the staples of our church has been the welcoming spirit we’ve had, making people feel invited and glad they are here. We want to continue. It means we are going to need you to continue to serve. Some of you are serving every other week. We may need you to serve every Sunday for a couple of months as we’re trying to get on our feet. We will need to double the volunteer base in our kids’ ministry and in our First Impressions team, and probably our other ministries, as well. We may need you to serve over and above.

If you’re not serving, come join one of our teams. This is a perfect time to sign up and get involved, because we’re going to need your help come August 11, the day we move to the new building. It’s going to be terrific. Our service times are going to be at 9:15 and 10:45. There will be two services instead of three. I know all of you strong “Type A” planners are putting that in your phone right now. You will have to wake up a little bit earlier, but I’m telling you, it’s going to be worth it. We’re going to be loving the people.

Jesus was a lover. You have read Jesus’ story and His life. Jesus loved prostitutes, he loved tax collectors, and Jesus loved hypocritical religious people and everybody in between. Jesus just

loved people. Edge Church is a place that loves people because the grace of God has taken root in our lives, and the end result is that we want to show grace to others. I like this quote from Andy Stanley. He says, “Church is most appealing when the message of grace is most apparent.” It’s a terrific message.

We must forget our hurts and pains.

3. FORGETTING OUR HURTS AND PAINS

We have this inspiring message, and we want to reach more and more people. The third thing we see in the grace of God and expressing it to others is that we have to forget our hurts and pains. David could have resented Saul’s family and Mephibosheth for trying to kill him, but he didn’t. He was able to let go of that. You would think David would despise Mephibosheth. That he would despise the family of Saul because they were the ones trying to take his life.

To become the person God wants you to become, you have to put some things in your past behind you. You have to let go of some of the junk in your past, to become the woman or man of God that He wants you to become in the future. We have to forget some of our hurts and pains to put those behind us. Forgive others.

A lot of times we don’t love to forgive, we don’t like to forgive, we’re angry. When we’re angry, what do we do? When we are angry we feel a sense of self-justice, a sense of self-righteousness. A lot of times we love to be angry. It’s hard to live a forgiving life. We need to forgive others. We need to live a life of forgiveness, forgiving those who have wronged us, who have hurt us. Mephibosheth would never have encountered the grace of God if David had not shown the spirit of forgiveness he exemplified.

One of our values here at Edge Church is life transformation. You can’t meet Jesus and stay the same. We believe that if you meet Jesus Christ, your life is going to be different. God is going to change you. God is going to begin to work in your life. When you understand how much God loves you, and how much His grace can take root in your life, you start to pour it out into the lives of others.

And we must forgive our hurts and pains.

4. FORGIVING OUR HURTS AND PAINS

Unfortunately, shame can be one of the greatest enemies of forgiveness and grace. Shame can come in many different facets. It comes because, maybe, we have an illness we’ve prayed about and we haven’t been healed. Sometimes it comes from a decision we made that we’re embarrassed about. Sometimes shame comes because we’ve made mistakes in the past. Listen, know this: the grace of God is the antidote to shame. When you begin to understand these things you are accepted by God, not based on your past performance, but based on His

goodness and His character. It begins to liberate, it begins to transform, it begins to encourage. It builds you up.

For this, first we have to stop focusing on our feet. As long as we are looking down on our feet, all we see is our problems. All we see is our shame. All we see are the shortcomings of our lives. When Mephibosheth looked at his feet he saw his inabilities. When he began to understand the concept of grace, it began to transform his own existence. I believe the same will be true in your life. Some of us have been looking at our feet instead of looking at our God. We need to look up. We need to begin to look at God.

While we're looking at our feet, we should not forget about them, because sometimes when we see our feet, we see our need for the Lord. Sometimes it's in our brokenness, it's in our mistakes, it's in our inadequacies, it's in our difficulties. In those moments it reminds us, "I need the Lord, I need God in my life, I need Him, I need some help." So we don't focus on our feet, but we can't forget about our feet. When we do this, grace begins to flow in our lives.

I love Romans 8:1 because it says grace releases us not only from sin, but from shame, as well. "Therefore there is no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus." The depth of the grace we show to others reflects how deeply we understand the grace God has given to us. Have you met that grace before? Have you come to know Him? Because the hero of the story of David and Mephibosheth is not David, it is the God of David. That same God can come into your life today and begin to heal you, and transform you, and give you the strength you need to press on in spite of overwhelming adversities and odds.

The Bible tells us Jesus came, lived a perfect life, died on a cross and then rose from the grave. You can know Him today. You can know Him this morning.

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1. SHOWING GENEROSITY

All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Acts 2:42-44 (NIV)

2. LOVING PEOPLE

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"Don't be afraid," David said to Mephibosheth, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table."
2 Samuel 9:7

3. FORGETTING OUR HURTS AND PAINS

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ...

Romans 8:1 (AMP)

Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

2 Samuel 9:1 (NIV)

The king asked, "Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?" Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet."

2 Samuel 9:3 (NIV)

When Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "Your servant," he replied. "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table." Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?"
2 Samuel 9:6-8 (NIV)

4. FORGIVING OUR HURTS AND PAINS

Grace releases us not only from sin, but from shame, as well. "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."
Romans 8:1

Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

2 Samuel 4:4 (ESV)

The depth of the grace we show to others reflects how deeply we understand the grace God has given us. Have you met that grace before? Have you come to know Him? Because the hero of the story of David and Mephibosheth is not David, it is the God of David. That same God can

come into your life today and begin to heal you, and transform you, and give you the strength you need to press on, in spite of overwhelming adversities and odds.