

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



COFFEEHOUSE FIVE
THE RISE AND FALL AND RISE OF A KING
DAVID AND MEPHIBOSHETH
2 SAMUEL 9:1-13
01/28/2018

MAIN POINT

The grace of God extended to us compels us to extend grace to others..

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What's the longest line you have ever waited in? What was it like to wait in that line?

Have you ever had to wait for something significant to happen in your life? What was it? How long did you wait? Was it worth the wait? Why or why not?

Why do you think waiting can be so difficult?

We typically want things to happen quickly. We know what we want, and we want it to happen now. But much of life is spent waiting. David knew what it meant to wait. Though we might have the picture in our minds that David was anointed as king of Israel by Samuel and then was quickly named king, the process was actually much longer. David spent 20 years running and hiding from Saul. But once he became king, he extended the kindness God had showed to him to the most unlikely of people and places. That's because the grace of God extended to us compels us to extend grace to others.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

The first part of 2 Samuel records David's ascension to the throne. He had to defeat enemies both inside and outside of the nation. But in 2 Samuel 9, he was finally established as king.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 2 SAMUEL 9:1.

How would you describe David's attitude in this verse?

Look back at 1 Samuel 18:3 and 20:42. What do we know about David's relationship with Jonathan?

Even given David's close relationship with Jonathan and the covenant between them, his question in 2 Samuel 9:1 is scandalous. During that time, it was customary and even expected that David would execute every remaining member of

Saul's family because they were potential rivals. This was a matter of self-protection. But instead of protecting his throne, David looked far and wide for someone to show kindness to.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 2 SAMUEL 9:2-5 AND 2 SAMUEL 4:4.

What do you think Mephibosheth's upbringing was like?

Mephibosheth was undoubtedly in much physical pain for the majority of his life. In addition, this injury would have prevented him from doing any real work and probably caused social awkwardness. In fact, his name literally means "he scatters shame." Lo-Debar, where Mephibosheth was living, means "pastureless."

Why might this be a fitting place for Mephibosheth to grow up?

Put yourself in his place again, and imagine being summoned to appear before David the new king. What might you be thinking?

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 2 SAMUEL 9:6-13.

What's the most striking image in this passage to you?

How do these verses show us the nature of grace?

Mephibosheth went from a meaningless existence in which he was regarded as an enemy of the king to being in the king's household and treated as one of the family. This is a direct parallel of what happens to us in Christ. We go from being enemies of God to being children of God, and not because of any work of our own, but because of His grace.

Is "enemy" too strong a word for people outside of Christ? Why or why not?

It would be one thing if David simply ignored Mephibosheth, allowing him to go on living. That would be mercy. But grace goes further. It's not only refusing to punish someone, but granting unmerited favor. Similarly, God goes beyond forgiving our sin. He adopts us as His children. When we receive this kind of grace, we are compelled to pass it along to others just as David did.

How did Jonathan show the same kind of grace to David that David showed to Mephibosheth?

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 JOHN 4:9-11.

What is the progression of love in these verses?

We don't manufacture love and grace toward others; any true love must be rooted in what God has done for us in Christ. This is the gospel lived out. We love not because we are supposed to; we love because we have been loved.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What are some specific ways you have seen God's grace and love to you this week? How can dwelling on those things empower you to show love and grace to others?

How specifically can you mirror grace to those closest to you, like your children or spouse?

What's one way our group can pray for you in regard to someone specifically you are trying to show God's love and grace to?

PRAY

Thank God that His love and grace to you is not dependent on your performance for Him. Pray that you would dwell so deeply on His love and grace that you would be compelled to extend it to others.

COMMENTARY

2 SAMUEL 9:1-13

9:1–3. Established on the throne in Jerusalem after having effectively put down both internal and external opposition, David was now in a position to fulfill his commitment to “the house of Saul” (v. 1). Accordingly, at an unknown point in time but perhaps before the events of 2 Sam 21:1–10 (cf. esp. 21:7), he began a search for someone to whom he could “show kindness for Jonathan’s sake.” Ziba, a well-to-do (cf. v. 10) “servant of Saul’s household” (v. 2) who apparently managed the former king’s royal estate, was called in and questioned by the king.

The narrator’s seemingly unnecessary repetition of David’s question in v. 3 (cf. v. 1) is in fact significant in establishing the theme of this chapter. It underscores that David was not an enemy of “the house of Saul” (v. 3); in fact, he was an agent of “God’s kindness” working to benefit Israel’s former dynastic family.

9:4–10. Through his inquiry David learned that there was “still a son of Jonathan” (v. 4) apparently living with a wife and son (cf. v. 12) in a self-imposed internal exile “at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.” Makir, mentioned here for the first time, was a wealthy and powerful individual living east of the Jordan at Lo Debar in the Jordan river valley of Gilead. Later he proved to be one of David’s most loyal supporters (cf. 17:27–29).

Mephibosheth, known outside of 2 Samuel as Merib-Baal (cf. 1 Chr 8:34; 9:40), was “crippled in both feet” (v. 3) as a result of an accident in early childhood (cf. 4:4). David summoned him for appearance at the royal court. Appropriately—and perhaps somewhat awkwardly—the lame young man “bowed down” before the king “to pay him honor” (v. 6).

Using a dialogic script reflective of an interchange between a social superior and an inferior (cf. 1 Sam 3:9), David called out Mephibosheth’s name; in turn, Mephibosheth referred to himself as “your servant.” After establishing the sociological parameters of this relationship by giving the proper initial exchange, David issued a magnanimous decree that changed Mephibosheth’s fortunes forever. First, David restored to the disfigured, exiled Saulide “all the land that belonged to Saul” (v. 7). This would have meant that the family estate located about three miles north of Jerusalem in Gibeah would be returned to Mephibosheth. Second, David gave Mephibosheth a privilege that seemed to have perished the day his father Jonathan had died, the right to board at the king’s table “always.” Saul had accorded David this dispensation during his youth (cf. 1 Sam 20:5); now David returned the favor. Third, David provided Mephibosheth with a large contingent of servants and material wealth. He ordered “Ziba, Saul’s servant” (v. 9) along with his “fifteen sons and twenty servants” (v. 10), “to farm the land” that had originally belonged to Saul “and bring in the crops” for Mephibosheth so that Jonathan’s son “may be provided for.”

Mephibosheth’s response to the king’s magnanimous pronouncements was one of abject humility (cf. 2 Sam 7:18). After bowing down once again before David, he called himself “your slave” and “a dead dog” (cf. 1 Sam 24:14).

9:11–13. Ziba, whose destiny had also been changed by the king’s imperial edict, had no choice but to accept the new assignment—and this he did. However, when the opportunity presented itself, Ziba apparently tried to manipulate David to issue a different, more favorable edict (cf. 16:2–4).

Mephibosheth—and presumably his entire family, including “a young son named Mica” (v. 12)—was permanently relocated back in Benjamite territory “in Jerusalem” (v. 13). There Mephibosheth “always ate at the king’s table” even

though “he was crippled in both feet.” David’s acceptance of a lame man in his house confirms that the royal pronouncement banning “the lame” in the royal residence was intended as a figurative reference to an ethnic group, not mobility-impaired individuals.