

In our last study, we examined the further establishment and expansion of David's kingdom. We saw David subdue all of his enemies. He then reserved the spoils for the future construction of the temple that Solomon would build. David now fully reigned over Israel.

We also defined an important teaching of the Bible, the doctrine of God's kingdom, as well as what our part is in expanding the kingdom of God. This involved aligning ourselves with it and leading others into the kingdom of God. We are to be living as God's ambassadors to those around us. Now that David dealt with those opposing him, he turned to fulfilling an old promise he made to a friend several years before.

Let's examine this and see what we can learn about being men after God's own heart.

DAY 1

A Heart of Kindness 2 SAMUEL 9:1-4

Please Read 2 Samuel 9:1-4 and answer the following questions.

[1] What was the desire of David's heart, and why was that his desire (v. 1)?

[2] Who did David approach about this, and what was this man's response to his inquiry (vv. 2-3)?

[3] Where was this man when David was establishing his reign (v. 4)?

Note: This area was east of the Jordan River, about 10 miles south of the Sea of Galilee.¹

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] David demonstrated tremendous loyalty through his promise to Jonathan of caring for his descendents (1 Samuel 20). He easily could have done like many other rulers and totally wiped out his rivals—especially those of Saul's household. Instead, a heart of kindness moved David.

This word *kindness* is one of the most important words in the Old Testament, meaning "a loving kindness or mercy that is shown to someone, and is closely tied in God's character and covenant with His people."² Charles Swindoll adds that kindness here "should be rendered 'grace' ... positive and unconditional acceptance in spite of the other person."³ Likewise, God has demonstrated and extended His loving kindness and mercy to us.

What does Ephesians 2:1, 4–9 remind us about this?

[2] The servant Ziba described Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, as being "lame in his feet", almost as though he tried to discourage David from doing this. At the death of Saul and Jonathan, when Mephibosheth was five years old, he became crippled in an accident while escaping (2 Samuel 4:4). This word *lame* also implies something deeper, being dejected, contrite, feeling smitten by God.⁴ It's not surprising given his life and circumstances. In fact, he lived in Lo Debar, a place meaning "no pasture," a place of barren dissatisfaction and frustration.⁵

God has so much more for us than living in such a place of ongoing frustration and failure. His desire for us is to live abundantly regardless of our circumstances. Grace gives a place of privilege to the helpless!⁶

What do Romans 5:6–8 and Ephesians 1:3–6 say about this?

Daily Life Point: Alan Redpath well observed,

In this story we reach the high point of David's life. Here was his greatest hour . . . As we meditate upon David's kindness to Mephibosheth, we shall come to understand and appreciate more than ever God's gracious treatment of us.⁷

David is a great picture of Christ in all of this. The name *David* means "beloved." In fact, in this section David acts like God's beloved Son.⁸

Spend some time meditating on the unconditional extent that Christ went for you. Think of how He sought to bring you out of a dry and pointless existence—and through grace showed His love and compassion to you. Write out a few of your thoughts here and share them with your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

This week we will memorize a fitting passage, Lamentations 3:22–23. Review the passage several times throughout each day. By the end of the week, you should have it memorized.

Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22–23 NKJV)

DAY 2

Expressing Kindness
2 SAMUEL 9:5-8

Please Read 2 Samuel 9:5-8 and answer the following questions

[1] David proceeded to have Mephibosheth brought out of Lo Debar. What was Mephibosheth probably thinking when David brought him there, and what was Mephibosheth's response when he saw David (v. 6)?

Note: 1 Chronicles 8:34 and 9:40 calls Mephibosheth "Merib-Baal." The name *Mephibosheth* means "from the mouth of shame" or "one who scatters shame," while the name Merib-Baal is a little more positive, "one who contends with Baal."⁹

[2] How did David reassure him (v. 7)?

[3] What was Mephibosheth's relief and reaction to this good news (v. 8)?

Note: By calling himself a "dead dog," he meant he was useless and contemptible.¹⁰

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] Some may compare David to a type of Christ here. Christ reached out and brought us out of shame, out of a place that was barren, expressing kindness to us for His Father's sake, bringing us unto Him though we were a "dead dog" without hope! We were dead in our trespasses and sins. Speaking of the change for Mephibosheth, Ivor Powell stated,

He was no longer lonely, harassed, or dependent. His life was in the hand of his wonderful Benefactor. Faith banished doubts; joy replaced sadness; smiles removed frowns. He possessed a peace almost beyond comparison.¹¹

Read the following passages and record what they remind you about the great and undeserved grace God has shown you.

Lamentations 3:22-23

John 3:16–17; 10:27–29

Romans 5:17; 6:23

Titus 3:4–7

Daily Life Point: "Grace never leaves a man with his self-righteousness and pride. The cross brings us down to the very feet of our Lord in recognition that we are impotent, lost, and barren."¹² You are not much more than a dead dog in and of yourself. It is all what Christ has achieved for you that brought you to a place of fellowship with God.

We often think of Romans 12:1–2, but what about verse?

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith (NKJV).

We must humbly align ourselves with God. Please discuss the importance of this to you, and then share some thoughts about this in your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

Through the Lord's _____ we are not consumed, because His
compassions _____ not. They are _____ every morning; great
is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22–23 NKJV)

DAY 3

Enacting to Kindness
2 SAMUEL 9:9-11

Please Read 2 Samuel 9:9-11 and answer the following questions

[1] What was David's instruction for Ziba, his sons, and servants (vv. 9-10)?

[2] What was Ziba's response to this, and what was David's wonderful statement about Mephibosheth (v. 11)?

Note: It should be noted that Ziba had some ulterior motives in his seemingly positive reaction to all of this. We'll see this in 2 Samuel 16 during Absalom's rebellion.¹³

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] Not only has God's great and amazing grace saved us, but He has also adopted us as His children, enabling us to eat at His table as a child of the King! Jesus said in Revelation 3:20-21,
Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Read the following passages regarding this adoption into God's family and record some of the things you learn from them.

Romans 8:14-17, 31-32

Galatians 3:26-29

Hebrews 2:10-12; 12:5-11

1 John 3:1–3

Daily Life Point: As we saw in these passages, God adopting us as His children is a great and awesome privilege. With it also comes a great responsibility to act as His child, to seek to imitate and become more and more like Him.

What are some ways you feel you need to better carry out your responsibility as a child of God? Share your thoughts about this, as well as what it means for God to adopt you through His grace.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

Through the Lord's _____ we are not _____,
because His compassions _____ not. They are _____ every
morning; _____ is Your faithfulness.

(Lamentations 3:22–23 NKJV)

DAY 4

Continuing Kindness
2 SAMUEL 9:12–13

Please read 2 Samuel 9:12–13 and answer the following questions.

[1] What further detail is added about Mephibosheth (v. 11)?

[2] How did this story conclude (v. 12)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] At first glance, it might seem kind of pointless to mention the name of Mephibosheth's young son, Micha (or Mica in some translations). However, it makes more sense when you consider that his name means, "who is like Yahweh?"¹⁴ Mephibosheth was now able to praise God for the first time in years, as he continued to walk in David's kindness. Like him, we can praise God for His faithfulness and grace toward us. What are some things you read about God's faithfulness in the following passages?

Deuteronomy 7:7–9

Psalms 119:137–138

1 Corinthians 1:9

1 Thessalonians 5:24; Hebrews 10:23

Daily Life Point: God's grace and faithfulness have brought you to abide and walk in His kindness. What are some things that God has done for you that you can praise God for? Think of ways that God has shown you that there is no one like Him? Please record your thoughts and share them with your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

Through the Lord's _____ we are not _____,
because His compassions _____ not. They are _____ every
_____ ; _____ is Your
_____. (Lamentations 3:22–23 NKJV)

DAY 5

Developing Godly Compassion

Please read and answer the following questions about developing a heart of compassion. There will be no additional expanded questions today.

We have mentioned how God's kindness is one of the most important concepts in the Old Testament. It is love and compassion that is practically shown to others, and not just talked about. It is grace that David showed toward the house of Jonathan and Saul, not out of obligation to the promise alone, but out of the depth of David's character.¹⁵ Jesus said in John 13:34–35, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (NKJV). This kind of godly compassion marks us as His followers. Let's discover a little more about His loving kindness, and how we too must display this in our lives.

[1] Read the following passages using this same Hebrew term. Then record what they teach you about God's compassion and what that means for us.

Exodus 20:6; 34:6–7

Nehemiah 9:17

Psalms 25:10; 32:10

Jeremiah 9:24

[2] Where does a heart of godly kindness and compassion originate in our lives (Galatians 5:22–25)?

[3] What else do the following passages tell us about having a heart of compassion to those around us?

Proverbs 3:3–4

Micah 6:8

Ephesians 4:32

Daily Life Point: Kindness is the key theme of this chapter. It's an evidence of love that reflects God's kindness to us in Christ.¹⁶ Having compassion and mercy toward others is the least we can do in view of all that Christ has done for us! This isn't always easy to do, as some people may have hurt or misused us when we tried to show compassion to them. Yet haven't we done the same to Jesus?

Think about the following statement by Charles Swindoll, and write out some thoughts about how you will seek to show a heart of compassion to those around you:

"That's the way grace is. Grace isn't picky. Grace doesn't look for things that have been done that deserve love . . . grace is God giving Himself in full acceptance to someone who does not deserve it and can never earn it and will never be able to repay."¹⁷

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

Lamentations 3:22–23 NKJV:

DAY 6

Pursuing God's Heart

[1] David often serves as a great example to us of having a heart after God. Compassion begins with a heart of kindness, then it is expressed outwardly, acted out, and continues to be demonstrated in our daily lives.

What are some of the most important things you learned or were reminded of this week about having God's compassion toward others?

[2] No one deserves the compassion of God, which is why we should be thankful for all that He has done for us. God's grace covers our sins, just as the table Mephibosheth enjoyed sitting at hid his disability. Again, Charles Swindoll is helpful for us in understanding the main points of this week's study. After reading his thoughts, write out your own prayer of thankfulness for the great grace and kindness He has show to you in Christ.

It will take eternity for us to adequately express what this truth means to us—that He chose us in our sin and rebellious condition and in grace took us from a barren place and gave us a place at His table. And, in love, allowed His tablecloth of grace to cover our sin.¹⁸

[3] Lastly, please record any other thoughts or things that the Lord has shown you as you studied this week, and share them with your group so all can be encouraged by the things God is showing you.

MEMORY PASSAGE

From memory, write out this week's passage below. Then review the passage throughout the day. Be prepared to share the verse with your group.

Lamentations 3:22–23 NKJV:

PARTING THOUGHTS

There is no specific psalm that David wrote concerning these events. David does record in Psalm 31 how God's faithfulness, loving kindness, mercy, and goodness got him through the difficult times in life. This psalm is like an emotional roller coaster for David, going from peak to peak with an emotional valley in between.¹⁹

While the occasion for the psalm may be unclear, C. H. Spurgeon well said, "It is perhaps quite as well that we have no settled season mentioned, or we might have been so busy in applying it to David's case as to forget its suitability to our own."²⁰

Psalm 31 teaches us that God has given us His goodness. We will then experience even greater goodness in heaven.²¹ Let's close by meditating on this psalm, and perhaps we'll see how the goodness of God is able to minister to us in our own difficulties.

Psalm 31 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

In You, O Lord, I put my trust;
Let me never be ashamed;
Deliver me in Your righteousness.
Bow down Your ear to me,
Deliver me speedily;
Be my rock of refuge,
A fortress of defense to save me.

For You are my rock and my fortress;
Therefore, for Your name's sake,
Lead me and guide me.
Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me,
For You are my strength.
Into Your hand I commit my spirit;
You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

I have hated those who regard useless idols;
But I trust in the Lord.
I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy,
For You have considered my trouble;
You have known my soul in adversities,
And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy
You have set my feet in a wide place.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble;
My eye wastes away with grief,
Yes, my soul and my body!
For my life is spent with grief,
And my years with sighing;
My strength fails because of my iniquity,
And my bones waste away.
I am a reproach among all my enemies,
But especially among my neighbors,
And am repulsive to my acquaintances;

Those who see me outside flee from me.
I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind;
I am like a broken vessel.
For I hear the slander of many;
Fear is on every side;
While they take counsel together against me,
They scheme to take away my life.

But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord;
I say, "You are my God."
My times are in Your hand;
Deliver me from the hand of my enemies,
And from those who persecute me.
Make Your face shine upon Your servant;
Save me for Your mercies' sake.
Do not let me be ashamed, O Lord, for I have called upon You;
Let the wicked be ashamed;
Let them be silent in the grave.
Let the lying lips be put to silence,
Which speak insolent things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

Oh, how great is Your goodness,
Which You have laid up for those who fear You,
Which You have prepared for those who trust in You
In the presence of the sons of men!
You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence
From the plots of man;
You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion
From the strife of tongues.

Blessed be the Lord,
For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city!
For I said in my haste,
"I am cut off from before Your eyes";
Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications
When I cried out to You.

Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints!
For the Lord preserves the faithful,
And fully repays the proud person.
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart,
All you who hope in the Lord.

NOTES

- 1 John MacArthur, ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Word, 1997), p. 439.
- 2 Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Old Testament* (Chattanooga, Tenn.: AMG, 1994), p. 2317.
- 3 Charles R. Swindoll, *David, a Man of Passion and Destiny* (Dallas: Word, 1997), p. 170.
- 4 James Strong, "A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible with Their Renderings in the Authorized English Version", in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1890 Reprint), p. 78.
- 5 Alan Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell, 1962), p. 189.
- 6 *The New Scofield Study Bible, NKJV* (Nashville: Nelson, 1989), p. 378.
- 7 Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God*, p. 185.
- 8 Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Restored* (Colorado Springs: Victor, 2002), p. 57.
- 9 Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*. The New American Commentary, vol. 7 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), p. 355.
- 10 MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 439.
- 11 Ivor Powell, *David, His Life and Times* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1990), p. 227.
- 12 Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God*, p. 189.
- 13 Joe O. Lewis, *Layman's Bible Commentary*, vol. 5 (Nashville: Broadman, 1980), p. 94.
- 14 "Biblical Cyclopedic Index" in *The Open Bible* (Nashville: Nelson, 1985), p. 213.
- 15 R. L. Harris, G.L. Archer, and B.K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Workbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Moody, 1980), p. 306.
- 16 Warren W. Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas, 1993), p. 393.
- 17 Swindoll, *David*, p. 172.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 178.
- 19 James M. Boice, *Psalms*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1994), p. 269.
- 20 Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Nelson, Reprint), p. 57.
- 21 Boice, *Psalms*, pp. 273–274.

