

From Lo Debar to Jerusalem

2 Samuel chapter 9 records a very interesting story of King David rescuing Jonathon's son Mephibosheth according to the commitment of a blood covenant. This story demonstrates some very important truths of the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Mephibosheth was living in Lo Debar, which means a place of no bread. Jesus is the bread of life. The Word is our bread. Lo Debar to us is the place of no Word. In the story, Mephibosheth lived in Lo Debar. He was withering away because he had no Word, even in view of the fact that he was the lawful recipient of a blood covenant with a king.

Who was Mephibosheth?

It all started with the tremendous godly love between David and Jonathan. Jonathan was King Saul's son. Saul was jealous of David who had been anointed king. Saul was trying to kill David. In spite of this tension, David and Jonathan had a strong respect and a deep love for one another. I don't think that we can even compare it to something in our lives today, because they had a different culture then.

Jonathan, Mephibosheth's father, had made a covenant with David.

1 Samuel 18:1-4 (KJV) says,

1 "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

2 And Saul took him [David] that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle."

Most people do not understand the truths about covenants, especially blood covenants.

It is the strongest relationship that exists and it carries the most responsibility! Also, most people do not relate the blood covenant to the Word of God and to our relationship with God.

David blessed Mephibosheth out of covenant love.

The word for covenant love is checed. Checed, a Hebrew word, means covenant love. In Greek the same word for covenant love is agape. The Old Testament gives checed a very weak translation, usually calling it loving **kindness** or mercy. It can only be described in terms of a blood covenant.

David was an example of the heart of God showing that He has an ache to bless His covenant people. David was a callused warrior, but he cried out to bless his blood covenant family.

The following is some historic background about the war between the Philistines and the divided kingdoms, Israel and Judah.

As recorded in 1st and 2nd Samuel, during the time of Saul, Jonathon and David, there was an intense war going on between Israel and the Philistines. During that time Saul was intense on killing David. David refused to harm Saul even though he had opportunities, maybe out of respect for the office of the king and perhaps because David had cut a covenant with Jonathon, Saul's son. In 2 Samuel chapter 1 David learned about the death of Saul and Jonathan during the war.

David took over as king over Judah but Saul's family kept control over Israel. There are records of wars between the two kingdoms. Eventually David was made king over both kingdoms.

It is with this bloody background that fear hit the house where Mephibosheth was living and the nurse dropped him and made him crippled for life.

Fear of David caused the accident. But David had no intention of hurting them. David actually mourned for Abner, and Saul (2 Samuel 3:33). This was the heart of checed, covenant love.

Even after this horrible background, King David cried out to bless someone in Saul's household.

Can you imagine after all of the abuse David received from the house of Saul, that he now is aching to bless one of Saul's descendants? Notice in this Scripture that is aching to bless was for Jonathan's sake!

One day, the covenant love hit David so hard he could not stand it.

He just had to bless someone. So he called to find out who was a survivor of Saul's household, the father of Jonathan, with whom he had a covenant.

He sent for Mephibosheth to tell him of his love. Jesus is sending for us to tell us of His love, and He is sending us to tell others of His love for them. I can only imagine the entourage that the king must have sent for Mephibosheth. I can only imagine what fear Mephibosheth must have felt when he saw all of the army and weaponry of Israel at his front door.

2 Samuel 9:1-13 (NIV) says,

1 "David asked, 'Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?'"

2 Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, 'Are you Ziba?' 'Your servant,' he replied.

3 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.'

4 'Where is he?' the king asked. Ziba answered, 'He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.'

5 So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of

Ammiel.

6 *When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honour. David said, ‘Mephibosheth!’ ‘Your servant,’ he replied.*

[Makir means salesman, a merchandiser, as if to sell a daughter into a marriage of slavery. Ammiel means a clan of the people of God. Put them together and we see that we can be people of God who are sold into the slavery. This is Lo Debar, the place of no supplies, no bread of God. This has made us slaves to Satan even though we are children of God.]

7 *“‘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.**’*

8 *Mephibosheth bowed down and said, ‘What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?’*

9 *Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul’s servant, and said to him, ‘I have given your master’s grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family.*

10 *You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master’s grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, **will always eat at my table.**’ (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.)*

11 *Then Ziba said to the king, ‘Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do.’ So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table like one of the king’s sons.*

12 *Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica, and all the members of Ziba’s household were servants of Mephibosheth.*

13 *And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king’s table, and he was crippled in both feet.”*

That was the cry of David, but it is also the cry of Jesus.

Ephesians 2:4 (Amplified Bible) says,

4 *But God—so rich is He in His mercy! Because of and in order to **satisfy the great and wonderful and intense love with which He loved us,***

5 *Even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ; [He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him, for] it is by grace (His favor and mercy which you did not deserve) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ’s salvation).*

6 *And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together [giving us joint seating with Him] in the heavenly sphere [by virtue of our being] in Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One).*

Mephibosheth's disability is a picture of our spiritual disability.

His name means a dispeller of confusion and shame; one that scatters and breaks into pieces. Apparently God was using this name to indicate that when one finally gets to Jerusalem and understands that he has a blood covenant with the King, all the shame of the past is dispelled and broken into small pieces and cast out forever. Shame is a killer because it lies against who God made you to be. Shame attacks your very being and says that you will never be worthy or any good. You may have done some terrible things, which brings guilt, but God is not casting shame on you. He says to you that you are His, that you are righteous and His son/daughter.

Remember, Mephibosheth was Jonathan's son, the grandson of Saul, who had tried to kill David. He had been living beneath his rights. He had a covenant with the king and did not know it. He was living in Lo Debar, which means a place of no bread. He was actually living in fear of David, the king of Judah and Israel. His maid dropped him when he was young as the family was fleeing. They thought that they were fleeing the wrath of David. However they were mistaken.

David made sure that Mephibosheth was served the rest of his life by Ziba and his family. They ran the farm for Mephibosheth. David already had possession of Saul's wealth; the rest of Saul's family had pretty much melted into the desert. David could have kept this wealth, but he chose to exercise his covenant love, his checed.

David exercised all of his kingly authority for this covenant, and Mephibosheth ate at David's table the rest of his life.

Did Mephibosheth deserve this? Why do we need a blood covenant with a king?

Since the beginning of creation, man was the subject of blood covenants. Adam had a covenant with God that he broke. Many primitive cultures still believe that blood covenant brothers are closer relatives than those born of the same mother. A blood covenant intermingles the life of both partners and creates a new common life.

The King's Table

7 *“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.”*

What do we eat at our King's Table?

First we are fed on being in the presence of the Creator of all things, the Eternal I AM, the God who was never created, who always was!

Our greatest reward is to be in close intimate fellowship with the King, a deep often quiet communion with the One who loves us more than we can imagine. The longing for this is inherited by us from the King Himself who longs just to be with us quietly enjoying one another. Mephibosheth had not been seeking the King, but the King sought him.

When we experience this our needs for deliverance and material supplies take second place and pale in comparison with the rewards of knowing that we are no longer subjects of the King, but his child. We sense His deep love for us and His seeking us for His own enjoyment.

Then we are fed the Word of God planted in a human heart as a seed.

The Word of God is the Bread of Life. See next chapter for how the Word provides for all of your temporal needs while you are on earth,

Some comments about kindness.

Notice how many times David was motivated by kindness. I have heard and believe that one of the primary differences between animals and humans is the potential to be kind. I have witnessed wild animals in South Africa and how they hunt and destroy one another. I have seen right here in my own church how so many humans do not use kindness and destroy each other. I have been convicted by God how I also have, on some occasions, not shown kindness. Like in Matthew 7:3-5, the log in your eye compared to the splinter in your brother's eye. Mephibosheth was living in shame. Kindness is one of the anti-shame medications.

So many people, even Christians in church, instead of being kind judge one another, point out their faults and remind them of the burdens that may have. Then they give them advice on how to stop sinning so their burdens, sufferings, or sicknesses can be relieved. We are healed by love and kindness. Mephibosheth was healed because of David's kindness.

We need to “dress properly.”

Colossians 3:12-15 says,

“12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

Mephibosheth's last days. The gift or the giver?

2 Samuel Chapter 16:1-4 reveals the story of how Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant successfully attempted to steal his inheritance, the entire estate that belonged to Saul, his grandfather. Ziba lied to David about Mephibosheth, accusing him of attempting to take the king's throne from David.

David went along with it for a while until he encountered Mephibosheth personally as told in 2 Samuel 19:24-30. The record was set straight and the lie that Ziba told was revealed. David, in an effort to restore the inheritance to Mephibosheth, declared that Saul's estate be divided between Mephibosheth and Ziba. Mephibosheth answered with a most remarkable statement. He told David to let Ziba have the entire inheritance, and that all he wanted was to be with David. He was just happy that David had survived and that being with him and eating at his table would be enough.