

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS

Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz 2 Samuel 9:1-13 Lent 1 *March 13, 2011*



¹Then David said, "Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" ²Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David; and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant." ³The king said, "Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet." ⁴So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar." ⁵Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. ⁶Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, "Mephibosheth." And he said, "Here is your servant!" ⁷David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly." ⁸Again he prostrated himself and said, "What is your servant, that you should regard a dead dog like me?" ⁹Then the king called Saul's servant Ziba and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. ¹⁰"You and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him, and you shall bring in the produce so that your master's grandson may have food; nevertheless Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall eat at my table regularly." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. ¹¹Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant so your servant will do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table as one of the king's sons. ¹²Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth. ¹³So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate at the king's table regularly. Now he was lame in both feet.

People of God – precious in His sight for Jesus' sake:

It's hard to find a parking place in Manhattan. A man – we will call him Bob – 35 years old – an inch taller than I am – Bob was looking for a parking place. He thought he found one. The only problem was – a lady named Lana – 24 years old – was standing in the parking place. She was trying to save the parking place for her boyfriend. You see people do that – at the mall – and so? People jump out of a car and spread out – finding a parking space – and standing in the middle of it – until their friend pulls in. It works – pretty much. It works unless someone is so determined to have that parking space – that they are willing to run over someone – to have that parking space! There are many very basic truths in the world. One is – people are very breakable! Another is – don't hit! Especially – don't hit girls. People are very breakable. Girls are especially breakable. Don't hit! Especially don't hit girls! Well Bob hit Lana. He punched her – so

hard—in the head—she’s in a coma and may very well die! There is so much swelling in her brain—she might actually die. And Bob’s defense? “*She hit me first!*” What? “*She hit me first!*” Bob has been charged in a court of law with felony assault. Bob says he’s very very—*2 very’s*—very very sorry. He’s also pleading *not guilty!* I don’t get that either. This is the world we live in—where people might literally take your life—for a parking place. How dark and cold and dead our hearts must be—to do physical hurt and harm to one another over parking! This Lenten Season—as we walk with Jesus down the mount of Transfiguration—and up to Jerusalem—to die on the cross to save us—think about your sins. Then thank and praise God for Jesus’ forgiveness. This first of six Sundays of Lent—we will

Learn About Jesus’ Kindness From David and Mephibosheth

1. Jesus always keeps his promises

2. Jesus gives us everything!

Context? 2 Samuel 6—the Ark of the Covenant went from the home of Obed-Edom—to Jerusalem. Uzzah died and David danced. Remember David—dancing in a linen ephod. He danced with all his might—for the glory of the LORD! His wife Michal—not so happy. And God’s Word says, **And David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, “How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants’ female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!”** And David said to Michal, **“It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the LORD—and I will make merry before the LORD. I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes. But by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor.”** And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death! 1 Samuel 6:20-23 ESV Chapter 7—God’s Covenant with David. Again—what a wondrous thing—that God should put himself under obligation—to promise to give blessings to his people! God’s Word says, **“Now the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies!”** Imagine if we could say that! If we had rest from Gadaffi and the Libyans—rest from the enemies in Iran and Iraq and Afghanistan and Pakistan—rest from home grown terrorists in New York and all across our country—rest from the Russians and rest from the Chinese and rest from the North Koreans! Imagine how blessed we would be! David appreciated the grace and goodness of the LORD. David told Nathan, **“See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.”**—that would be the Tabernacle! David wanted to build a temple to show love and respect for the LORD. The LORD told David—it was wonderful that David wanted to build a house of cedar for Him—but the fact is—when did the LORD ever tell the judges—the leaders of Israel—that He need them to build Him a house made out of very tall straight pine trees? Think about it! The LORD who made Heaven and Earth is not in Heaven wishing people would build Him something substantial to stay in! Heaven and Earth cannot contain the LORD of Hosts! The LORD would bless David and his people with peace.

David's sons would sit on his throne – and when they sinned – because the LORD loved them – he would discipline them! Then the sweetest Gospel promise, **"Your throne shall be established forever!"** Think about that! A throne established forever? Only Jesus can sit on a throne forever! How wonderful is that?!

Now David says a prayer of thanksgiving. Chapter 8 – the LORD delivered David's enemies into his hands. David won crushing victories – yet showed mercy to his enemies, too. He had the defeated army of Moab lie down – three lines. Two lines he put to death and the third line he spared! God's Word says, **"The LORD gave victory to David wherever he went."** 2 Samuel 8:14b Now comes chapter 9. And David said, **"Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"** Remember Jonathan – Saul's son – David's best friend? David and Jonathan were close! How close? God's Word says, **"The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."** 1 Samuel 18:1b That's close – a very pure and powerful and Godly love. In your whole life – you are truly blessed to have a friend like that. This Lenten time we are reminded of Jesus' words on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane – written down by the Disciple Jesus loved: **This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command."** John 15:12-14 So David asked: **"Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"** This was an old promise! If you make a promise a long time ago – who says you have to keep it? If you are the King, now – who is going to tell the king – remember that promise you made a long time ago? But God's people realize it's a serious thing to make a promise. And you want to do the best you possibly can – with the help of God – to always keep all your promises!

²Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David; and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant." ³The king said, "Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet." Ziba doesn't mention his name – *Mephibosheth*. Just the fact that he is crippled in both feet. How did that happen? God's Word says, (Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became disabled. His name was Mephibosheth.) 2 Samuel 4:4 Crippled in both feet back then meant what? He would have to be carried everywhere! You can't hardly walk if both feet are ruined. Even with crutches you need that third leg of the tripod – and so? In a selfish moment – truth be told – most people don't want to be with crippled people. We like to be by people who are exceedingly symmetrical and when some part is crippled it is almost by definition a-symmetrical. It reminds us of the fact that in this world so much is imperfect. The outside is the least of it. We are imperfect on the inside! That's why we are often times so selfish! If – most likely *when* – we become crippled – even if it's only for a little while – we would like everyone to be patient with our painful and often times painfully

slow progress. But it's easier to be impatient—in a rush—in a hurry—get out of my way! And that's sinful. That's wrong! By the grace of God—David saw past outward hurt and imperfection!

⁴So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar." ⁵Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

⁶Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, "Mephibosheth." And he said, "Here is your servant!" ⁷David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly." To eat at the King's table! I think it's hard for us to understand and appreciate what that means! That's the head table! When do you sit at the head table? When you are the bride and groom—when you are the best man and the maid or matron of honor. You sit at the head table at your retirement dinner when they give you the gold watch. At the confirmation dinner when you are the God-father or the God-mother. That's about it! And here was Mephibosheth—crippled in both feet—sitting at the King's table—not just once. That would have been wonderful enough—this was from now on! From now on it was the royal glass of OJ—*with or without pulp!* For lunch with your sandwich with the crusts cut off would you like a royal *dill* pickle or a royal *sweet* pickle—or do you feel like a *bread and butter* pickle? Hey, surprise me! And for supper it was the same. What kind of royal salad dressing tonight? I think we will have blue cheese—on the side—please! Very good sir! Thank you sir! This is just a small picture of grace—amazing grace. Jesus has invited me to sit by him at the forever wedding feast in Heaven. How wonderful is that? We get to sit beside Jesus because he took away all our sins!

Jump ahead in time. You know the historical account of Absalom—David's son—who tried to steal the throne from his father David. In the middle of the rebellion David fled from Jerusalem. His servant Ziba met David—some distance outside Jerusalem—with donkeys loaded with food—with bread and fruit and wine. And with some donkeys for David and his family to ride—to escape. Where was Mephibosheth? Ziba said he stayed behind—hoping to receive back his Grandfather's kingdom! After the rebellion was over—God's Word says, **²⁴ Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. ²⁵ When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?" ²⁶ He said, "My lord the king, since I your servant am lame, I said, 'I will have my donkey saddled and will ride on it, so I can go with the king.' But Ziba my servant betrayed me. ²⁷ And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king. My lord the king is like an angel of God; so do whatever you wish. ²⁸ All my grandfather's descendants deserved nothing but death from my lord the king, but you gave your servant a place among those who eat at your table. So what right do I have to make any more appeals to the king?"** Somebody is lying! They can't both be telling the truth! Either Mephibosheth still had political ambitions—or more

likely – Ziba was jealous and thought he had a chance to make Mephibosheth look bad. Sometimes people become jealous and sometimes people try to make somebody else look bad. Most experts seem to think the guy with the dirty feet and scraggly mustache and sweaty food stained clothes is probably telling the truth – but you don't know for sure. And doesn't that irritate us? Don't we want to know? Don't we want the guilty to be punished and the innocent vindicated? Don't we want fire from heaven to burn up the guilty? Don't we want the good guy to win? And what does David do? ²⁹ **The king said to him, "Why say more? I order you and Ziba to divide the land."** Where's the divine justice in that? What are we supposed to take away from all this? Is there no justice? Often times in this world there is not justice! People who speed whiz past us and we get pinched in Rosendale! People cheat on their taxes and we get audited! People take money at work and our locker gets searched! People say things about us that aren't true – and who sticks up for us? Who defends us? Nobody? It's not fair! It's not right! Sometimes it *seems* like Leo Durocher – Coach of the Cubs was right when he said, "*Nice guys finish last!*" And that's the way it might be in this world! But wait – just wait! When Judgment Day comes our Heavenly Father will have mercy on us for Jesus' sake. Because God keeps all his promises. He keeps his promise to be merciful to us because Jesus died and rose again to save us. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schultz