

When Saul was the king, David became involved in a deep lifelong friendship with his son, Jonathan. It was a special and beautiful love that they had for one another. Jonathan had saved David’s life and time made the bonds of their relationship more beautiful and secure.

David is the king and this entire ninth chapter deals with David’s lasting love and respect and remembrance for his friend. It is a poignant picture of David’s passion to do something good, *“for Jonathan’s sake.”* The parallel of David’s showing kindness for Jonathan’s sake is remarkably like God showing kindness to us for Jesus’ sake.

This is a story about the Fall. David begins looking for the family of Jonathan and is directed to a son named, Mephibosheth [M E F I BOSH ETH] (MEPH). We might express it this way at this point, Mephibosheth was really in a bad way. When he was five years old his nurse heard about the tragic news of his father’s and grandfather’s deaths. Fearing for the young boy’s life, she snatched him up to run with him to a place of safety. In her haste, the nurse fell with the young Mephibosheth and as a result, he was so badly injured that he was lame in both feet for the rest of his life.

That might sound like the story of our spiritual lives. Something happened to the whole human race when it was very young. Back in the beginning, we took that terrible fall in the Garden of Eden and have been badly crippled ever since. Setting ourselves apart from the historical time line we participate in the temptation of separating “us” from “them.” Their past is theirs and we try to deny that it is a part of us - or that “we” are included. But our crippling is not physical; it is the lameness of sin. Sin has left us maimed, blind, sick, diseased and incurably ill. Sin has invaded the bloodstream of humanity and no antibiotic can kill it. Evidences of our fall are all around us. We try to change ourselves, we try to do better, we turn over a new leaf, we work a little harder, but we are helpless because we are basically unsound.

This Old Testament passage is about being found. David begins his crusade by asking, *“is there anyone left of the House of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”* David loved Jonathan so much with the pureness of human love, that he wanted to do something for somebody just for his sake, and his alone - in his name, in his honour, in his memory. This is a copy of the overwhelmingly lovely picture of God’s grace towards us. It came to us in the same way. We did not come looking for God. He came looking for us. We did not deserve his saving us, but he did it anyway. Luke declared, *“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save the lost.”* You would think it to be more logical if it were the reverse, that man came seeking the Son of Man to be saved but it was not that way. God was down the long road, straining with every divine nerve, searching for his crippled, sinful, wayward children long before they thought of coming to him. Grace is always two things. It is God’s initiative and it is God’s action for the undeserving.

Another lesson from this passage is a story about fellowship. Because he was the grandson of a king (King Saul), he was once an heir to the throne. But now the king is dead, his son, Mephibosheth’s father, Jonathan was killed in battle and now another king sits on the throne. Mephibosheth is just like anybody else in the kingdom, no longer does his royal lineage count. But for Jonathan’s sake, he is thrust into a position of safety, of

honour, of fellowship and of plenty. David says, *“He will eat at my table, he will eat with my sons, he will have all the privileges of my family. I claim him, I give him this for Jonathan’s sake.”* So, God says, *Now, for Jesus’ sake I will take this reclaimed, rescued, redeemed sinner, sick and injured by the Fall into sin, and I will place him at my table with the family of God. I will care for him, I’ll watch over him, I’ll let him know what fellowship divine is all about.*

Is it not interesting that the two main lessons in this OT story run so closely akin to the two sacraments of the Christian faith - baptism and communion? The kindness God shows to us for Jesus’ sake comes to us in what we call, the Means of Grace, in the Word of God, the Word written, oral and visible. Baptism is that means whereby we make our response to God’s kindness to us and we receive God’s forgiveness and justification and salvation in the waters of our baptism. Thus, we testify, *one Lord, one faith, one baptism.* Once baptized in the name of the triune God, there is nothing left to be given to God and there is nothing left for Him to claim. That is why we of the Reformed Catholic Church believe it is an apostasy to go about repeating one’s baptism. And the Sacrament of Holy Communion, by whatever name you may wish to call it, Lord’s Supper, the Last Supper, the Eucharist, the Holy Meal, this is that fellowship meal whereby we receive the renewal of the outpouring of grace and forgiveness of all our sins. God’s grace comes to us first in our baptism but then it comes to us again and again and again in the fellowship of the breaking of bread and the lifting the cup as directed by Jesus himself, *this do in remembrance of me until I shall come again.* Therein the covenant is sealed with the bread and the wine, the food of the table, the body and the blood of His Son.

And our text today is a story with a happy ending. David said Mephibosheth was to eat at the king’s table always, forever. All of this was for Jonathan’s sake. God, for Jesus’ sake promises we can be in divine favour and fellowship forever and ever and ever.

It sounds like the “happily ever after,” of a fairy tale, but it is the truth. We will have time and eternity to enjoy being a child of the King of Kings. Mephibosheth at first, could react only in fear, then in disbelief. Then finally in humility, reverence and gratitude. Our reaction is much like his. We are at first terrified of a holy God because of our sins, then we cannot fully believe the Good News of the Gospel which promises acceptance and forgiveness, but when full awareness dawns upon us, we fall in deep humility before King Jesus and promise him our loyalty and love until the day we die in the flesh, for then we will see him face to face. Amen