

15—Mephibosheth’s View of David: A Gracious King

2 Samuel 9

Justice, mercy, and grace are three of the beautiful attributes of God. We could offer technical definitions for these triplets but the best explanation may be this simple: “Justice is when we get what we deserve. Mercy is when we don’t get what we deserve. Grace is when we get what we don’t deserve.”

Have you ever been the recipient of a fair share of justice? In my younger days of driving, I had what some call



**“Then he bowed himself, and said,
‘What is your servant, that you should
look upon such a dead dog as I!’”**

2 Samuel 9:8 (NKJV)



“a lead foot.” My foot just tended to be a bit heavy on the accelerator as I drove. That being the case, the police tended to notice. On one late Saturday night, my wife and I had been to visit her mother about 30 minutes from our home. We only had two children at the time. Zoe, our youngest at the time, was very colicky and would cry from about 4:00 at night until she went to sleep. This night was no different. She was in her car seat screaming at the top of her lungs. The officer pulled us over, walked up to the door of our car and just said, “You guys have a nice night.” Now, that is mercy. He did not give us what we deserved (maybe because we were already getting punished enough with the screaming baby in the backseat).

Yet, there have been other times the officer walked up to the car door and was just. When we first moved to Columbus, Ohio I was driving home on a four-lane road with a grassy median in between. I did not know what the speed limit was on that road. I just assumed it would be 55 miles per hour since it had multiple lanes and looked much like a highway. I was wrong. The speed limit was 35 miles per hour (no wonder I was flying by everybody else on the road). Well, the officer on his motorcycle with the radar gun noticed. He pulled me over. I said, “Officer, I just moved to town and did not realize the speed limit was 35 miles per hour.” It did not matter. He still wrote the ticket. Welcome to the neighborhood! That’s justice. I got what I deserved.

God is a just God. He is fair. He is able to give us what we deserve. Yet, our God is also a God of mercy and grace. He sees our weaknesses and chooses to forgive anyway through His Son, Jesus. We see a beautiful picture of the heart of God in the life of David in 2 Samuel 9 with Saul’s grandson, Mephibosheth.

According to oriental custom, many kings would have chosen to execute all of those in the lineage of the former king so no one could claim to be an heir to the throne. David could have done so to Saul’s children and grandchildren. Saul and his three sons, including Jonathan, died in battle (1 Samuel 31:6). However, Mephibosheth, Jonathan’s son, was still alive. Yet, instead of executing him, David goes above and beyond and chooses to show mercy to Mephibosheth who is described as “*lame in his feet*” (2 Samuel 9:3). This is a beautiful picture of mercy and grace.

Discussion Questions:

1. David and Jonathan were best friends before Saul’s jealousy forced an end to their open friendship. Before they parted, what promise did they make to one another (1 Samuel 18:13; 20:14-16)?

2. After the death of Saul and his sons, what did they do with Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son (2 Samuel 4:4)? Do you think it was wise for Ziba to tell David where Mephibosheth was located (2 Samuel 9:1-4)?

3. When Mephibosheth comes to David, what does he think will very possibly happen (2 Samuel 9:5-6)? How does David help calm his fears (2 Samuel 9:7)?

4. How does Mephibosheth feel about David's kindness (2 Samuel 9:8)? What does Mephibosheth call himself? How does David also ensure Mephibosheth's servants keep their jobs (9:9-12)?

5. Mephibosheth is described as "*lame in both his feet*" but David sustains him (9:13). How does this picture remind you of what God does for us through Jesus (cp. Isaiah 53:6; Mark 2:5,9; Romans 5:6-8)?

Key Lessons:

- Godly people keep their promises.
- A man after God's own heart is merciful, gracious, and forgiving.
- King David offered mercy to Mephibosheth for the sake of his covenant with Jonathan.
God is gracious to us for the sake of our covenant through the blood of King Jesus!

Additional Notes: _____
