

Read 2 Samuel 9:1-13

What – There is a lot of background needed to really understand this scripture. David is King of Israel, and He was patient in obtaining his throne. He waited on God for years and followed Saul as King, until God decided to fulfill His promise and make David king. In David's day, when a king became king, he usually PUT TO DEATH all of the possible heirs from the past king, thereby undoing any power struggle or claims to his throne from the past. David, however, in the spirit of the one true king, uses the person of Mephibosheth to illustrate to Israel what a king should be like. King's should show kindness and follow God. They should be willing to sacrifice for the people what God would sacrifice for His people. And most of all, he should be a man of his word and keep his promise, no matter the circumstances.

Why – The promise is a big part of what makes this scripture special. David and Jonathan (King Saul's son, Mephibosheth's father) had a covenant. Jonathan saw the evil in his own father and the anointing on David. Jonathan promised to do the will of God and protect David and in return David promised to remember Jonathan's family in the future when he was king (See 1 Sam 20:15 ff, 42). David, even at the risk of putting his kingdom in danger, follows through on this promise. In fact, David does more than follow through. He restores Mephibosheth to a respected place in the kingdom. He gives him enormous amounts of land and allows him to "sit at the kings table." This was a place of immense honor in the ancient world. Essentially, David took his enemy and made him a prince. This is incredible, and it foreshadows the relationship that a loving God wants to have with His sinful people.

WOW – But this scripture even goes beyond the promise. It speaks to how all of us should treat the people around us. The Hebrew word used here for "kindness" is *hesed*. It is used 3 times to describe David's feeling and actions towards Mephibosheth. This word is interesting. It is often translated from the Hebrew as "kindness", but it also means "duty". Being kind to others is not a choice, but a duty if we are followers of God. There is also a running metaphor of the "table" in this scripture as well. Look at Judges 1:7, the table is not always a symbol of love and affection as we know it through Jesus. In the Old Testament it was a sign of power. Kings had the "power" to feed many at their table or withhold goods from their enemies. Eating is a necessity and the kings controlled it. In addition to that, it was an honor to be in the king's presence at a personal time like a meal. We understand some of this from the Last Supper, but what we need to see is that the Last Supper draws its power from this example. Jesus CHOOSES as the King to invite us to his table. David's emphatic statement in verse 13 that Mephibosheth "always ate at the Kings table" reminds us that the love of God invites us into the presence of the King, even though we to are "handicapped" like Mephibosheth by our sin. God chooses to show us love and kindness at His table and He reminds us each time we share with Him that He is a God who shows His power by loving us.