

Mephibosheth and Bathsheba

The Life of David—part 7

March 17, 2019

This week we'll look at two stories of King David. The first will inspire your heart, but the second will break your heart.

DAY 1: David: undeserved kindness, returning good for evil

1. To appreciate this story requires us to simply recall the hellacious treatment King Saul had inflicted on David over the course of many years.

2. After King Saul is dead, and now that David is king, the following story begins...

2 Samuel 9:1 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.

3. In the history of kings, whenever a new house became king, the old house of king's sons, who would have been considered rivals to the throne, were executed. Instead, King David wants to bless a son of Saul! There is no power like that of returning good for evil. This is what is on David's heart to do!

4. This story parallels God's desire to bless people. Let's see the parallels.

a. David takes the initiative to find a son of Saul to bless.

Luke 19:10 The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

b. David sought to bless, not one who blessed him, could benefit him, or was "deserving."

Titus 3:5 "... not because of deeds done by us..."

c. The motive for David? "For Jonathan's sake!"

Ephesians 4:32 ...God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

d. The object of his desire? "... That I may show the kindness of God to him?"

Titus 3:4 But when the kindness of God appeared He saved us...

e. The position of the beloved? "He is ... in Lo Debar." "Lo Debar" means "a place of no pasture. He was fleeing from David, and fled to a barren place.

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

5. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Undeserved kindness; the wonder of grace

2 Samuel 9:6 When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "Your servant," he replied.

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.

1. Mephibosheth must have been dumb-founded by David's kindness. Underline each piece of kindness David demonstrates to him.

2. Let's look at the details of this astounding story. Each of the details, like yesterday's devotional, provides a stunning parallel to God's salvation of us!

a. Mephibosheth was allowed to live.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

b. Mephibosheth was encouraged to be at peace! "Don't be afraid..."

Romans 5:1 (RSV) Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

c. Mephibosheth was given his inheritance! "... all the land that belonged to your grandfather."

Matt. 25:34 "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world."

d. Mephibosheth was given generous provision. "You always eat at my table..."

Luke 15:23 (RSV) ... and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry;

e. Mephibosheth was given a position of honor! "...eat at my table, as one of the king's sons!"

1 John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

3. What strikes you most about David's undeserved kindness?

4. What strikes you most about God's undeserved kindness toward you?

DAY 3: David and Bathsheba, part 1

1. There are times in life where everything is "cruising." When David became king of Israel, this was true. The hand of God was on his life.

2. The nation rebounded from King Saul's reign, expanded territory, and was strengthened militarily. David was a national military hero, respected and loved.

3. About twenty years into his reign, David was "on top of the world." But at the time when kings went out to battle, David stayed home. This begins a series of small, but terrible decisions.

2 Samuel 11:2 One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful,

³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home.

4. Underline each bad decision in the preceding verses.

5. Each fateful decision was a small step in the wrong direction. Which step have you been most tempted to do? Why do you think that decision was so tempting?

6. What do you think was David's mindset along the way?

a. What happened to his call to duty, to be with his army?

b. Do you think he remembered that adultery was one of the Ten Commandments?

c. Do you think he thought about the possible consequences?

d. How do you think he rationalized his adultery?

2 Sam. 11:5 The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

7. Reality bites. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 4: David and Bathsheba. Conspiracy to commit murder, then a cover-up.

1. David's response to Bathsheba announcing her pregnancy is to panic, and try to do damage "control."

2. "Plan A" is to get Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, home from the battlefield as soon as possible, have him sleep with his wife, then "no one" would think that the baby is really David's.

3. Uriah returns, but out of duty and loyalty to his fellow troops, refuses to go and sleep with his wife. Even David's attempt to get Uriah drunk the next night fails.

4. "Plan B": Uriah is sent back to his unit carrying instructions from King David to put Uriah at the head of an attack that is doomed to fail. General Joab sends a message back to David.

2 Samuel 11:23 The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance to the city gate.

²⁴ Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

²⁵ David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage Joab."

4. Put yourself in David's seat.

a. On one hand, Bathsheba's husband is no longer in the picture, you can marry her, and everyone will believe that the baby is yours.

b. But Uriah was one of your thirty "mighty men." And others died in a senseless attack.

5. When you put your head on your pillow at night and try to go to sleep, what thoughts and images are swirling in your mind?

6. Sometimes, the hurricane that hits us in life is of our own making.

7. What strikes you about David's attempt to "control" the situation?

8. Have you ever been in David's shoes? Has your attempt to "control" the situation made things worse? As you look back, what would you have done differently?

DAY 5: David finally "hits bottom."

1. 2 Samuel 11 ends with these words...

*2 Samuel 11:26 When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him.
27 After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.*

2. When you read that last sentence, what thoughts come to mind? If you were David and heard that last sentence in real time, what would go through your mind?

3. Meanwhile, David "seems" to get off scot-free. For about one year, nothing happens. But then...

2 Samuel 12:1 The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor...."

4. Nathan the prophet confronts King David, but in an indirect way, through a make believe story. At the end of the story, David condemns the villain in the story, and thereby, condemns himself. The hammer finally falls, after about one year of delayed justice and punishment.

2 Samuel 12:7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.

⁸ I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more.

⁹ Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.

5. David is exposed. His sin, done in darkness, becomes public knowledge.

2 Samuel 12:10 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

¹¹ "This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.

¹² You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"

6. Finally, David is broken by his sin.

2 Samuel 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.

¹⁴ But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."

7. It took a lot of time, an act of God and a bold prophet to bring about brokenness. What struck you from today's devotional?