

November 10

Scriptures: Read 2 Samuel 9 & 10

Key Verse: “Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father’s sake...”. (2 Samuel 9:7)

Overview

This beautiful story that illustrates grace, mercy, and faithfulness, has its beginning in 1 Samuel. Jonathan and David had made a covenant, for not only themselves, the heads of the covenant, but their descendants as well (1 Samuel 18:3-4; 20:15, 42). After many years had passed and David had been greatly blessed by the Lord, he remembered this covenant with Jonathan and was faithful to his vow (1 Samuel 20:14-17).

David wanted to show kindness to Saul’s descendants for the sake of Jonathan, his beloved friend (9:1, 7). The Hebrew word translated as “kindness” does not adequately convey the true meaning, which implies covenant faithfulness and love. “The kindness of God” (9:3) implies undeserved mercy and favour. Mephibosheth, who was previously introduced to explain how he became disabled when only five years old (4:4), was brought to David’s attention by Ziba, a former employee of Saul, probably the steward over Saul’s estate.

Mephibosheth would have been too young to remember the friendship between his father and David; all he probably knew was that David was his grandfather’s enemy. When David summoned him from Lo Debar (far to the south and east of the Jordan), he must have been afraid for his life, for at that time it was usual for a new monarch of a different dynasty to destroy all heirs of the former monarch, so they would pose no threat. David’s kind words to Mephibosheth must have convinced him that there was truly nothing to fear (9:7).

David was good to Mephibosheth, who, having no merit on his own, was treated as David’s own son. This kindness gives evidence of David’s forgiveness to those who had despised and rejected him for so long. The undeserved mercy and unmerited favour shown to Mephibosheth illustrates well the kind of love God has for His people. As the Lord has invited us to commune with Him, David invited Mephibosheth to always sit at the king’s table. This was the highest honour possible. He restored to him all the inheritance of Saul, thus making him very prosperous. David not only honoured the covenant between himself and Jonathan, but also kept his promise to Saul, in that he did not cut off Saul’s descendants, nor destroy his name from the inheritance of his father (1 Samuel 24:21-22).

David’s kindness is again seen in chapter ten, when he sent an official delegation to Ammon to comfort Hanun when his father Nahash, king of Ammon, died. This same king had once waged war against the Israelite inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead but had been defeated by Saul (1 Samuel 11:1, 11). At some point, this king had shown kindness to David, probably during his time as an outlaw hiding from Saul. Now David wanted to extend his hand of friendship to his son Hanun, the new king. Rather than receiving David’s delegates with the respect they deserved, Hanun listened to his unwise advisors and became suspicious of them (10:3). They were insulted and

dishonoured in the worst way possible for eastern men of that time — shaving half their beards off. They were also humiliated by having their robes cut in the middle (10:4).

All this led to David's retaliation and a large scale war which caused the unnecessary deaths of many. David himself did not go to battle. He sent his commander, Joab, who wisely encouraged the Israelite army and using military strategy, deployed them against both the Ammonites and their Syrian allies. Joab, in effect, told his men to do their best and believe that God would "do what seems good to Him" (10:12). Hanun not only lost the battle but lost his Syrian vassals, who made peace with Israel and subjected themselves to David (10:19).

Prayer

Lord God, even as David took in the grandson of Saul, crippled by a fall, You have received us —we who've been crippled by the fall of the human family because of our sin. Forgive us and restore us. We need the provision of Your dwelling place and Your table each day.