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MINISTERING TO MEPHIBOSHETH

Who is Mephibosheth? Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan, King David's best friend. Reading the texts in 2 Samuel, I noticed some very unique details about Mephibosheth's life. In 2 Samuel 4:4, we learn that he was crippled and made lame due to the carelessness of his nurse. According to Scripture, when Mephibosheth was five years old, there was trouble where he lived and his nurse decided to flee. As the nurse was hurrying to leave, she carried Mephibosheth and dropped him to the point of Mephibosheth being made crippled and lame for life. Why would I bring this up? Because many people in life, during their childhood, are crippled by accidental and careless acts of others. I mean both the physical meaning of a child and the spiritual realm of being a new convert in Christ. A person (or in some cases a pastor) we trust to take care of our needs becomes careless with the things and the people that God gives them responsibility over. Then ailment and dysfunction sets in. Unfortunately, the dysfunction and ailment has a lasting impact and becomes a part of the character of the individual. It affects our outlook, our actions, our potential, and our self-esteem.

The scriptures do not go into any more detail about the childhood of Mephibosheth. But the next instance that we hear the name Mephibosheth is in 2 Samuel 9. We discover that Mephibosheth has grown up and now has a son. David, in this text, wanted to show an act of kindness to any living descendent of Jonathan. Therefore David asks if there was any descendent of Jonathan alive. When a living descendent was confirmed, David wanted to bless him and treat him like he did Jonathan. There are key issues at hand here:

David showed kindness unto Mephibosheth: Based on the life-covenant that David made with Jonathan, When Mephibosheth came with a servant's attitude; it showed the principle of humility that is needed within the Kingdom. David wanted to fulfill the covenant and fulfill the vows made to Jonathan. This is very similar to the covenant God has with his children who confess Jesus Christ is Lord of all. This kindness is shown throughout the Scripture in reference to all discussions concerning Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth shows fear towards David: In 2 Samuel 9:7, David sees fear in the face of Mephibosheth. In a life marred with tragedy of being made crippled and losing your entire family, Mephibosheth fears more tragedy and rejection will be placed upon him. He fears that his life will be taken today since the lives of Johnathan and Saul were taken in judgement. It was custom to kill all of the descendents of a king who was being judged by God. David, instead shows mercy to Mephibosheth. This mercy parallels the mercy Jesus shows to his children. David is a form of Jesus while Mephibosheth is like you and me.

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David restores to Mephibosheth what was the property of his ancestors:

In this act of mercy, David restores to Mephibosheth the land that belonged to Saul. In some cases, we see the mercy of God in our lives when God restores something that was taken away from our ancestors and sets the house back in order.

David provides provisions to the needs of Mephibosheth: Knowing that Mephibosheth is physically unable to provide for himself, David appoints a servant and the servant's sons to manage the land that once belonged to Saul. There were vineyards and farmland there. Mephibosheth now had a group of people who would farm the land and sell the harvest for finances and have food for survival. Mephibosheth experienced the same realm of provision similar to the same realm of provision we receive when God knows that in certain areas, we cannot provide for ourselves. When we cannot provide for ourselves in certain areas, God in his almighty love and mercy, sends provision through other people to provide for our needs. Sometimes later on in life, the provision of yesterday betrays us. This happened to Mephibosheth, his own servants betrayed him (see 2 Samuel 19:24,25, and 30). David, being a form of Jesus, had to bring justice to the situation.

Someone had come against a loyal follower and someone he made covenant with and David had to be their help and savior. When justice was levied down, Mephibosheth went ahead and gave the land over to his servant knowing that the king was alive and still in control. With this knowledge of David still in control, Mephibosheth knew that David, like Jesus does for us, will supply all our needs according to his riches in glory. When one avenue of provision was betrayed and closed, God opens up another avenue that is better than the previous provisions before. The self-esteem of Mephibosheth changed over a period of time from being a dead dog to being a child of the father.

Mephibosheth was now able to eat at the table of David: When David made the provisions for Mephibosheth's needs, he also made Mephibosheth a member of his family. Mephibosheth no longer had to wallow in self-pity anymore. Mephibosheth never had to be lonely. Mephibosheth never had to do without. Just as David made covenant with Jonathan, and Mephibosheth being the son of Jonathan, we have an advocate to our heavenly father through our Lord Jesus Christ. We, like Mephibosheth, became part of a ruling family that has dominion over all things. Like Mephibosheth with David, we can sit at the table of God and eat and fellowship with Jesus and experience the presence of the King and the inheritance that was promised through association with the King, confession that Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

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Mephibosheth is still dysfunctional to a certain degree: The name Mephibosheth in Hebrew, actually means "shamed". This is very evident in the first meeting between Mephibosheth and David and later in 2 Samuel 19:28 when he feels the shame of his ancestors in a discussion with David. In 2 Samuel 9:8, the destruction of the self esteem is evident. Mephibosheth remembers when he used to walk and run as a child. He sees himself as a "dead dog" while David sees him as his own son. David desires to love, to provide, and to nurture Mephibosheth. If we look further in the scriptures in 2 Samuel 19:24, 25, and 30, we see that Mephibosheth is still physically dysfunctional after the initial meeting with King David in 2 Samuel 9. He still has the foot ailment that has been with him since his early childhood.

If we read the scriptures, when Jacob wrestled with God and became Israel, Jacob had a limp that lasted for the rest of his life. Paul had a thorn in his flesh (a messenger of Satan to torment him) for the rest of his life. Even though Jacob, Mephibosheth, and Paul had these problems that remained with them till death, the provision of God was so present upon their lives that they were able to move beyond the focus of their problems to the focus of doing the will of God. There is usually, in everyone, a dysfunction, ailment, etc (whether physical, mental, or spiritual) that remains in us for the rest of our lives. We never receive healing for those dysfunctions, etc. We constantly ask why God will not heal us. I will not attempt to answer, rationalize, nor philosophize that question, but with Christ, all things are possible. These three men had an experience that changed their lives forever. Jacob saw the increased providence of God upon him after wrestling with God.

Mephibosheth saw provision for a lifetime after meeting the king. Paul found the sufficiency of the Grace of God after questioning God about his life. The dysfunction and ailments stayed, but the power of God increased and the provisions of needs were provided to the very end. These three men saw themselves differently after their life-changing experiences. Jacob went from seeing himself as a deceiver to seeing himself as a ruler of many nations. Mephibosheth went from seeing himself as a dead dog to seeing himself as a descendent of royalty.

Even though Mephibosheth saw himself as royalty while remembering the shame of his ancestors. Paul went from seeing himself as weak to seeing himself as called by God Almighty. In fact those ailments and dysfunctions along with the experiences helped mold the humbleness that existed in all three people.

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In summary, Mephibosheth represents you and me. A person who struggles with life because of a dysfunction we face. Even though most of our ailments and dysfunctions are healed by God through his mighty works, some ailments and dysfunctions remain forever present and are taken with us to our graves. We, through the power of Jesus Christ, can be like Jacob, Mephibosheth, and Paul and learn to see beyond our dysfunctions and ailments that may never be healed and go forth fulfilling the will of the Father. How? By seeking first the Kingdom of God, and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. His grace is sufficient for you. His love endures forever. His banner over us is love.

Lord, right now in the name of Jesus, I ask that this article will help those that struggle with dysfunction that will never be fully removed. I ask that you show them that through the example of Mephibosheth, these people can still see themselves as children of their heavenly father and all provision will be made for them. I also ask you Lord to show these people how they can see beyond the ailment and dysfunction to fulfill their callings, gifts, and anointing. In Jesus name I pray AMEN!