

March 01, 2026 - 2 Samuel 9: 1-13 - "A Sentence Changes Everything"

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[0:00] Please turn to 2 Samuel 9, 1-13. And David said, Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

! Now there was a servant of the house of Saul who named Wasiba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, Are you Ziba? And he said, I am your servant.

And the king said, Is there not still someone of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God to him? Ziba said to the king, There is still a son of Jonathan.

He is crippled in his feet. The king said to him, Where is he? And Ziba said to the king, He is in the house of Mephibosheth, the son of Amiel.

At Lodeber. Then king David sent and brought him from the house of Mephibosheth, the son of Amiel. At Lodeber. And Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage.

[1:16] And David said, Mephibosheth, And he answered, Behold, I am your servant. And David said to him, Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore you to all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always.

And he paid homage and said, What is your servant that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I? Then the king called Ziba Saul's servant and said to him, All that belong to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson.

And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, shall always eat at the table.

Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then Ziba said to the king, According to all that my lord the king commands his servants, so will your servant do.

So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micah. And all who lived at Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servant.

[2:31] So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king's table. Now he was lame both his feet. This is God's word.

Thanks be to God. A sentence changes everything. A sentence changes everything.

Some of you know the words that you hear from a prospect of an employer, that you got the job. Everything changes.

You know, once a job that, a door that never existed before, all of a sudden with a sentence, an opportunity is opened. Some of us know the relief of hearing a friend say that I forgive you.

Or maybe I'm sorry. And when you, the whole time while you expected distance and, and tension.

[3:38] I had a moment where I realized the sentence changes everything. When I was down on one knee for my engagements. And boy, when she said, I do, I didn't know that that, all this would change.

Would I, sold my car? Well, no, I guess that's when I met you, but, right? Or, even when she, she says, and you get the news, we're having a baby.

That'll change some things, right? First time parents, let me hear that amen. Amen. Maybe more on a serious note. Maybe you recall hearing the words of a doctor say that the test results came back clear.

And in that moment, that looming fear that kept you awake at night, it's been sitting on your chest, begins to slowly lift. Or maybe, for some, you've received a judgment in your favor. And you know what I mean by this, that a sentence changes everything. Where your future completely relies upon the hit of a gavel.

[5:05] A sentence truly does change everything, doesn't it? And what gives a sentence power is authority of the one who speaks it, right?

The greater authority, the greater the weight. When an ordinary person speaks like a friend and things like that, it still matters. But when someone with authority speaks, the future and outcomes can change within an instance.

Here in the passage today, a king speaks. And when he speaks, lives are decided. Lives are decided. Because when the king calls for you, you don't get to ask why.

There's authority in that. You simply come. You simply come. And that's exactly where the story begins, as a weak man is called and summoned by a king, Mephibosheth.

He's called and summoned before this powerful king, waiting to be hearing and waiting to hear what's to be said.

[6:24] Thinking back to last week, thank you, brother Carmen, for heralding the word for us, feeding us God's word last week. In chapter 8, we saw David beginning to establish a kingdom.

There's a lot of, like this is the highlight reel, like sports centers on it. Like this is happening. Wars are run. Administration is being established. The nation is stabilizing at this time period.

And David, he's looking pretty good. He looks very strong. He's not one to mess with. And so our text today, it's sort of like, where in the world did this come from?

It's like all of a sudden momentum is stopped. There's a pause. And the camera pans over and zooms in. The camera moves from this massive strength upon the horizon to a weak, crippled man. From national victories to a single personal encounter. We're invited to peer through a window today to see the kind of king David is becoming.

[7:46] To see the kind of king that David is becoming. And even more than that, this window looks deeper than a moment of truth back then.

But what we have for us today, when we peer through this window, we see a transcendent truth. What's that truth?

The main point, that covenant faithfulness brings hope to the weak. Covenant faithfulness brings hope to the weak.

The sermon title today is, A Sentence Changes Everything. And how I'm going to break this structure up is into three separate sections.

We're going to see the hunt for the enemy. I'm going to tease that out a little bit. We're going to see the heart of the king after the hunt.

[8:44] And then we'll see the hope that's established. I believe by the end of the time, every single one of us today, whether you're a Christian or a non-Christian, will leave with hope.

Because the hope is here. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for giving us something to hold, to cling to, to have faith in, to trust, to submit our lives to, to guide us, to encourage us, to convict us.

Your word is a double-edged sword. It doesn't matter which way it is swinging. It is going to cut. And sometimes it needs to.

Help us to be cut deeply by your word today. Cut from our pride. Cut from our sin. And clinging to you. Father, cleanse us of all unrighteousness by our faith today.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. The first section, just as I said, we'll see the hunt. The hunt for the enemy of the king.

[9:59] And we're going to see this from verse 1 to 4. Look with me with your Bible open. It says, And David said, Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

It's a little suspicious. A little bit. If you know the story from 1 Samuel, the book of Samuel that just came before this one, you may see that, it might seem like this is a loaded question, and I think it is. You definitely should see this as a loaded question. Because what is David's relationship for the, quote, house of Saul?

How's that relationship look, according to 1 Samuel? Pretty tense. Saul was the king before David. Saul tried to kill David on multiple occasions.

He hunted David. David was treated like an enemy of the state. And after Saul dies, obviously, Saul's house doesn't just disappear.

[11:19] It's not like the Lord of the Rings. You got the bad guy and all the bad, weird people and trolls go away, right? No. The king stands. And his house continues.

So after Saul dies, his house continues. It doesn't just disappear quietly. And so as long as Saul's house is alive, there's got to be looming conflict, expected conflict to unfold in the future.

And look at David now. He's looking pretty good, right? He's secure. He's established. He's strong. And he's got great authority. He's got great power at this time. And so think about it. He's asking, is there anyone left in the house, in the old king's house?

Is there anyone left? What does that mean? Well, usually it means, is there anyone left who could be a threat to my house, to my establishment, to my reign?

[12:34] Is there anyone left that possibly needs to be eliminated that will stand against God's king? Further, the fact that David asked this question publicly only intensifies that tension.

We should sense that today. This isn't David writing in his personal diary at night. No. This is an authoritative inquiry. This is a king's declared inquiry.

Is there anyone left? I think the king is on a hunt. I think he's on a hunt here. Those around him probably were left to wonder, what does David want?

Is he after mercy as he says he is? Or is maybe that just a strategy to kindly lure in the enemy, kind of like kindness, and then he'll clean up the mess afterwards?

Well, the first one to be summoned here in verse 2 is Ziba. A servant of the house of Saul comes and arrives without any known delay and subjects himself under David.

[13:52] He says, I am your servant. Notice he places himself under David's authority. I am your servant. In verse 3, the king reiterates the public inquiry that he opened with, that we read in verse 1.

However, things get a little bit more interesting here. It's not the same inquiry. It's a little bit different. And David labels his motive as to show the kindness of God.

If David were an evil king, this, he might be revealing his hands. Right here. The kindness of God as he's sharpening his swords.

I'll show him. Probably unsure of the honesty of David's. Ziba responds, indicating that, well, he says in this verse, in verse 3, there's still a son of Jonathan.

Saul's dead. Jonathan's dead. But he's crippled in his feet. Right? What a detail to include. Right? Here, the familial successor of the house of Saul is apparently not strong.

[15:07] He's not very impressive. He's not a warrior. He's not a threat. But he's significantly weak. In this day, weakness did not lead to opportunity.

They didn't have ADA rules and procedures for buildings and accommodations for that. No. Weakness in this day led to being overlooked, led to being marginalized, led to being dependent, led to being vulnerable.

And you see, this is a man with no army. He's the antonym of David. He has no influence, no platform, no ability to defend himself, not even ability to run if he were in trouble.

Completely hopeless. And in verse 4, the tension rises even deeper as the king summons this weak ancestor of the house of Saul. He says, And the king said to him, Where is he?

And Ziba said to the king, He is in the house of Maker, the son of Amiel at Lodeber. Now, something interesting about this location is this is usually a good place to hide in Lodeber.

[16:27] Right? It's sort of like how Florida is to Ohioans. Right? I heard that Florida's full. They're not taking any more Ohioans, so don't get any ideas, church.

They're full. It's where you go to hide, not wanting to be noticed, to blend in with the crowd and the city.

Doesn't this resonate with us? Look at this man. He's in weakness. He goes and hides in a place where he could easily kind of blend in.

And don't we do the same with our weaknesses? Aren't we often tempted to hide our weaknesses? No one likes to display their weakness unless you're Paul.

He boasted in his weakness. But y'all aren't apostles. We struggle with this. No one likes to display their weakness, whether that's emotional weakness or physical weakness or spiritual weakness or even disabilities of various kinds.

[17:35] We don't like it. We like to hide it. We like to fake it until we make it. Right? For many of us, it is our fear of exposure that keeps us hidden. And that is until the king finds us and he summons us out of hiding.

And this is exactly what happens here in this passage. In section two, we see the heart of the king toward his enemy. And the passage is reaching quite a bit of tension in verse five through eight.

Look with me in your Bibles. in verse five, this weak, crippled man is drawn out of hiding.

And try to picture this for a moment. Text doesn't give you the details, but he can't walk, right? He has to be carried. He can't, even if he took like an animal to ride on, he'd have to be lifted up.

How humiliating, right? for somebody. This vulnerable man is summoned from the shadows, carried by the mercy of those who were sent by the king.

[18:45] And I would label this as a very humiliating experience for him. Let's go inside this man's mind at this time. Probably a long travel.

They didn't have planes. So from low Deber to Jerusalem here. What do you think he's assuming?

Well, he probably isn't thinking that, oh, I wonder what's for dinner tonight with David, right?

He's not making dinner plans. He's making funeral plans. He's like, I know who my grandfather was. I'm toast. This is it.

This is the end. It's over. It's over. And here, weakness and power collide. They come face to face and Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, it's like the author's reinforcing, don't forget who this is.

The son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage.

[19:52] Fell on his face and paid homage. Church, this is not casual respect. This is fear.

Homage is a formal act of submission in the ancient world, especially a posture when someone fears an inevitable punishment coming up to pay homage.

For this weak man, his body language says it all. He falls flat on the floor and says, my life is in your hands. David says, Mephibosheth.

And Mephibosheth answered, said, behold, I am your servant flat on the ground. Notice how the narrative keeps pressing these roles too.

We need to pick up on that. David is the king in quotes and all the others are servants of the king. It's almost like the author is keeping us fully aware of the powerful and the powerless at the mercy of the king.

[21:03] Mephibosheth sells it even further. He reinforces that. He's calling himself, he labels himself as a dead dog. Worthless. I know you guys are probably dog owners.

You're like, how dare him, right? Dogs are not worthless. Well, in that context, this context, they were. And to make it even more worthless and meaningless, it would be a worthless being dead. Double worthless, right? So for anyone who is, who has, for us today, who has been in the presence of someone truly significant in status or rank, I'm thinking of like maybe our military service people who maybe are active or retired.

when you're in the presence of somebody high in rank, you make it known, right? There's a sense of reverence towards their status.

And we feel that. You know the sense of complete unworthiness in the presence of those in power. So picture the scene.

[22:13] Mephibosheth, I feel so bad for Mephibosheth, face down on the ground, helpless, unable to even pick himself back up off the ground before this strong, mighty king.

Judgment day has come. this is a pin-dropping moment. And in verse 7, David said to him, do not fear for I will show you kindness.

These are the words a trembling heart longs to hear. do not fear. Not because the king is weak and powerless or that Mephibosheth has earned something to not fear, but do not fear because the king

is about to act in kindness.

Why? For the sake of your father Jonathan. a sentence changes everything.

For the sake of your father Jonathan is covenant faithfulness. Turn the clock back in time, flipping back a little bit into 1 Samuel.

[23:52] I won't have you do that right now, but David swore two promises, two promises in 1 Samuel. One to Jonathan, Saul's son, and one to Saul himself.

To Jonathan, he promised, he said, I will show steadfast love to your house. To Saul, his hit man, to Saul, he promised, I will not cut off your descendants.

Two promises. In other words, before Mephibosheth was even born, before he had done anything right or wrong, before an accident happened that caused him to be crippled, there was a promise that was made, and David is faithful to it.

See, Mephibosheth's hope is not grounded in his usefulness. He knows, he says he's a dead dog. It's not grounded in his usefulness, not his strength, or his potential.

It's grounded in a covenant made on his behalf. What a covenant. Right? It says, I will restore you all the land of Saul, your father, and you shall eat at my table always.

[25:24] for this weak, this alienated man, marginalized, pushed to the side, it is upon the sole basis of the covenant faithfulness of the king that all that was lost is provided.

in other words, this fellowship here, this means nearness, he's never had before, inclusion that he's never had before, honor that he's never had before.

Back in this time, to eat at the king's table, it was more than just food. I'm sure it was great food, but it was more than food. It was more than that. It's more than all of these physical things, it's about status.

It's about a family-like intimacy. And what a profound shadow that David cast forward to the person and the mission of Jesus Christ.

In other words, this is the pattern of God's kingdom. wisdom. This is how God has been unfolding the message of Christ. Like, thinking about Mephibosheth and us, we have a lot in common, don't we?

[26:47] We, apart from Jesus, are not strong. We do not come with any sort of leverage to be more tasteful to Jesus.

We do not come with bargaining chips, right? We do not come with any worthiness that can stand upon our own accord in the presence of a holy God.

He is holy and we are not. I love how in one of R.C. Sproul's famous books, Holiness of God, if you haven't read it, what are you waiting for?

He says, when we understand the holiness of God, we understand what it means to tremble before Him. When we understand the holiness of God, we understand what it means to tremble before Him.

We come like Mephibosheth to the king of kings, weak, fearful, fully aware that we cannot, we can't demand anything from the king.

[28:02] Nothing. But His sentence changes everything. By our faith in Jesus, the holy God does not merely say, I will not destroy you.

It's not just that. No, by our faith in Jesus Christ, the holy God says, do not fear. I have shown you kindness.

I have made a covenant and I have provided a place at my table for you. See, our acceptance is unconditional upon us.

It's unconditional upon us, but completely conditional upon His covenant faithfulness towards us. But David doesn't just speak kindness.

You might say, well, does he follow through? Well, I'm so glad you asked because there's a couple more verses standing. In section three, we see the hope established from the king.

[29:08] From verse nine to verse 13. And we see that this covenant kindness, this sentence that changes everything, truly does change everything.

It's the new status that never fades. From verse nine through 11, David calls Ziba and gives instructions. Land is assigned, provision is secured, and servants are appointed.

There's a lot of movement, just as it were in chapter eight last week. In other words, the covenant kindness of this king is not merely sentimental.

It's not just something to feel good and feel better about yourself and, no, you're not a dead dog. Just get up and everything will be okay. It's not just sentimental. It's not.

This radically rearranges and reprioritizes this weak man's life. His entire life is reprioritized. In verse 11, at the end of verse 11, it kind of starts to resolve.

[30:14] The author says, Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.

This is stunning. The grandson of David's hitman, former king Saul, is not just treated like a tolerated survivor of the house of Saul.

He is literally grafted in to the house of David. Stunning. He's treated like family.

And this is long standing. Mephibosheth had a son. His name is Micah in verse 12. We have to appreciate how the author resolves and the narrator ends this account to sort of ends with a summary statement.

So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet.

[31:29] Why in the world was that necessary? Why would a statement like that be necessary?

maybe because he doesn't want you to confuse the basis of the blessing. Mephibosheth did not become strong.

He just got a new status. He didn't just grow in strength and might and then take his seat.

no. He was as weak at the end as he was at the beginning. Nothing in him had changed except the status that was defined by the king.

However, his weakness is no longer hopeless. He's still weak, but he's weak with hope. Not only that, but he's weak with hope at the king's table.

[32:37] What a humbling and identity shifting reality of the effect of God's grace through Jesus Christ, through our faith in Jesus Christ.

Those in Jesus Christ receive the high status at the king's table, the high status by our faith.

We have been carried literally by God himself because we tend to habitually hide, right?

We're Adam and Eve in the garden hiding from God because of our sin. We try to look good. We try to perfume our dead corpse as it is. That's who we are.

That's our nature of what we do naturally. But God in his mercy has carried us from hiding and seated us according to his mercy and not our merit.

[33:32] a sentence changes everything, church. We know our sin. We know our weakness.

We know our failures. We know our inability. We know our shame. And by the severity of, as R.C. Sproul puts it, sin's cosmic treason, sin's cosmic treasonous effect upon our lives.

Because of that severity, we often assume the king's question can only lead to judgment. And if you're here this morning and you don't belong to Jesus Christ, you're not a Christian, you're not a believer, you know it, no one around you knows it, but you know it, and God knows it, then you're trembling right now because of what lays in your future.

You are Mephibosheth in hiding. And the future does look bleak. One day you will be summoned by the king of kings.

You will stand before a holy, righteous God in judgment, and apart from Jesus Christ, you are in danger. There's a reason why the Lord has given us his word today to wake you up this morning.

[35:01] The king's call is not something that you can ignore forever. You can self-medicate the pain with alcohol or drugs. You can distract yourself with porn and all sorts of sensualities in this world, but you will one day come to a time where judgment will come, and the most loving thing that I can say to you right now is it doesn't have to end that way for you.

the gift of God's covenant faithfulness through Jesus Christ is yours right here and right now by your faith alone in Jesus.

Mercy is still offered today for you. What are you waiting for? What are you waiting for?

I pray that today you continue to tremble, but tremble with hope. Not hope in yourself, but hope in Jesus Christ.

For others, maybe you are a Christian, you wonder if God's kindness towards you has sort of run dry. Maybe you're in a season that seems kind of like a desert.

[36:20] All life seems sort of stale. You know what I'm talking about? Seems empty, somewhat meaningless. You just feel like a hamster in a wheel, void of joy.

What a reminder today that this hope was not found in Mephibosheth. And that hope that was not found in Mephibosheth, where was it found?

It was found in the covenant that was made apart from Mephibosheth before Mephibosheth was born, there was a covenant, a promise that was made.

Some of you may feel dry today, but your feelings subject to the fact and the truth and the reality of God's word.

God's love. It's not a matter of feelings. It's a matter of faith, faith in the covenant. So assurance in our salvation does not rest on what you've done for Jesus Christ, but it rests on what Jesus Christ has done for you.

[37:31] He is faithful to save you. He is faithful to keep you through the dry seasons and through the staleness of life. God's love. I invite us all, may we be found today weak in both our feet.

May we be found weak today in both of our feet. Why? Because covenant faithfulness brings hope to the weak.

Let's pray.