



## LIVING WORD EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Evangelical • Reformed • Catholic

### In Remembrance of Me

**2 Samuel 9:1-13 &**

**St. John 13:1-15**

Fr. William Klock

April 18, 2019 – Maundy Thursday

In 2 Samuel 9 we read a story about a young man named Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was the grandson of King Saul and the son of Jonathan. Saul saw David as a rival and sought to have him killed more than once, but Jonathan was David's best friend. Even when it came to Saul, David treated him with respect and honour. He could have killed Saul on more than one occasion, but he refused to do so. For all his faults, Saul was the King. He'd been anointed for that office by the Lord. And so David grieved at the fall of Saul and the death of Jonathan. We read a few chapters earlier about the defeat of Saul by the Philistines. And that's where we're first introduced to Mephibosheth, in a brief note. When Saul's capital, Gibeah, fell to the Philistines, one of the palace servants fled, carrying little Mephibosheth. As she ran, she tripped, fell, and dropped the little boy. We're not given the details as to how he was injured. He may have had compound fractures in both legs or he may have suffered a spinal injury, but whatever it was, he was left "lame in both legs".

Years later, after he'd defeated his rivals and enemies and cemented his kingship over Israel, David summoned a man named Ziba. Ziba had been one of Saul's servants. And David asked him, "Is there anyone remaining of the

house of Saul to whom I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (2 Samuel 9:1). Saul's family was gone. Jonathan was dead. It was common in the Ancient Near East that when a king was defeated, the victor hunted down any claimants to the throne and had them murdered. Israel was supposed to be different, but even in Israel we see Baasha doing just this, murdering the family of King Jeroboam after he took the throne. This is probably why the servant woman fled with Mephibosheth, hoping to save his life. This is why, after all these years, David has heard nothing of any survivors. He has to summon one of Saul's servants. And this servant tells him, "There remains a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet" (2 Samuel 9:3).

David sent for Mephibosheth. Every indication is that David only wanted to show kindness to his best friend's son. But Mephibosheth trembled in fear as he came before the King. "Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, and fell on his face and did obeisance" (2 Samuel 9:6). Imagine his fear. It's not hard to imagine that he'd been raised to fear David. He'd been raised in hiding. He knew the common practises of the day. He may have had no aspiration to the throne, but David wouldn't have known that. And so he came before the King. This was it. He was going to die. And David roars out, "Mephibosheth!" And I imagine this young crippled man trembling all the more. His voice shook as he lowered his head to the floor and pleaded as humbly as he could, "I am your servant." But then the unexpected happened. Suddenly he realises that David's roar, was not a roar of victory over

the last of his enemies, over this poor, lame man who posed no threat, but a roar of happiness as he met, for the first time, this son of his long-dead best friend. Imagine a grin spreading over David's face. "Do not be afraid," he said to Mephibosheth, "for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan; I will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul, and you yourself shall eat at my table always" (2 Samuel 9:7).

Imagine Mephibosheth's shock. Even he couldn't quite believe it. It didn't make any sense. He responds, "What is your servant, that you should look upon a dead dog such as I?" (2 Samuel 9:8) But David proceeds to instruct his people to return everything that belonged to Saul: his estates, their produce, his wealth—all of it—to be restored to Mephibosheth. And we're told, "Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons....[he] lived in Jerusalem, for he always ate at the king's table" (2 Samuel 9:11, 13).

What is it about being invited to another's table. What is it about sharing a meal? David didn't have to do that. He wanted to show kindness to Mephibosheth. He could have restored Saul's estates and their revenues to him and sent him on his way. But that wasn't enough. Mephibosheth was a prince and David honoured him by welcoming him into the royal household and to the royal table.

On Sunday, as we read about Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, we were also reminded that our King is unlike the world's kings. Cyrus, Alexander, Caesar...their kingdoms came by violence and the sword. They came riding into town on great war

horses or in chariots with armies of armed men at their backs. They put their enemies to the sword. But Jesus rides into Jerusalem, humbly on the back of a donkey and surrounded by women, children, and the common folk. He is the king who became one of his own that he might die for the sake of his people. This Lord is just the opposite of every other lord the world has known.

In our Epistle and Gospel tonight we read about the Last Supper. Jesus celebrated Passover with his disciples. He'd been talking for some time about going to his death. They didn't understand. And so this last night, before he was arrested, he did two things to help them understand just what was going to happen at the Cross and why it had to happen. He washed their feet and he gave them a meal. It's fascinating to me. As someone who loves a good theology book, it's amazing to me that when Jesus wanted to explain what the Cross meant, he didn't give a sermon; he didn't give a lecture on theology and theories of atonement. No. He washed their feet. And he gave them a meal. And now he's given us that same meal.

Brothers and Sisters, if you want to understand the Cross, come to the Table. Jesus is the Son of David. David summoned to his Table the son of his enemy and a man who could easily have been a rival and a thorn in his side. David made himself vulnerable. And he did so to show kindness to the man. In fact, if you go back and look at 2 Samuel 9, when he asked his court who might know if any of Saul's family lived, he said that he wanted to show kindness on behalf of Jonathan. But when he asked Ziba,

Saul's servant, he said—more specifically—that it was because he wanted to show *God's* kindness. God had made David king and David wanted that kindness to exemplify his reign. The Hebrew word is one you might have heard before. It's the word *chesed*. The King James translated it as “lovingkindness”. *Chesed* is a deep kindness, like that between a parent and child, that shows love and loyalty and grace. It never fails. And now the Son of David summons us to his Table. Tomorrow we remember his death and so tonight we remember that meal in which the King shows us his humility and his servant character. Tonight we remember the meal that explains his death.

Tonight the Son of David invites us to share in his meal. As the lamb, the bread, and the wine of the Passover reminded the Israelites of their deliverance from Egypt, so the bread and wine here are for us the body and blood of King Jesus, the lamb of God who has given his life for us, to deliver us from sin and death. And we come, like Mephibosheth. He knew he was the enemy of the king. He knew he was unworthy of the meal. We pray, “We do not presume to come to your Table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy.” The meal here at the Lord's Table reminds us of the death of God for sinners, the death of God for his enemies. And so we come, both like and unlike Mephibosheth. He cowered in fear. He knew nothing of David's mercy. But we come to the Lord's

Table in light of the Cross. We know the Lord's mercy and his lovingkindness. As we read on Sunday from Philippians: He did not grasp at his divinity. He did not exploit his position as God for his own gain. Instead, he emptied himself, took the form of slave, was born in our likeness, and became obedient to the point of death on a cross. If we will come, resting on his mercy and trusting in his death, we can also pray, “Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us.”

Let us pray: Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*.