

Mephiboseth

Part 1

Speaker	Norman Anderson
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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:01] 2 Samuel, Chapter 4, Verse 4 And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet.

He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel. And his nurse took him up and fled. And it came to pass that she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame, and his name was Mephibosheth.

Chapter 9, Verse 1 [00:01:13] And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

There was of the house of Saul a servant, whose name was Ziba. When they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him?

Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son which is lame on his feet.

And the king said unto him, Where is he? Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Mekah, the son of Amiel in Lodibah.

[00:02:11] Then king David sent and fetched him out of the house of Mekah, the son of Amiel from Lodibah.

Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth? And he answered, Behold thy servant. David said unto him, Fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father. And thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. And he bowed himself and said, What is thy servant, that thou shaltest look upon such [00:03:01] a dead dog as I am? Pass on to, I think it's chapter 19.

Verse 24, 19, verse 24.

And Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet,

nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto [00:04:01] him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For thy servant said, I will settle me a nest, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king, because thy servant is lame. And he absconded thy servant unto my lord the king. My lord the king is as an angel of God. Do therefore what is good in thine eyes, for all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king.

Yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right have I, what right therefore have I, yet to cry any more unto the king? And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Go and Ziba, divide the land.

[00:05:05] And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

He was speaking this afternoon in the course of the Bible reading about the sovereignty of the grace of God, expanding itself on such as you and me.

I believe that here in the verses I've read, there's an illustration of that. [00:06:03] With the Lord's help, I just want to use it in that connection. So in chapter 4, we only read one verse, It came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame.

He fell and he became lame.

Man is a fallen creature.

When Adam fell in the garden of Eden, all his posterity were plunged into irremediable ruin. Mephibosheth suffered the effects of his fall throughout the days of his life.

You and I are suffering the effects of our first father's fall on our days, and we [00:07:04] shall do part from the grace of God, as long as we are here.

I would just like to notice, his name was Mephibosheth, Mephibosheth, the vice of Baal.

If you want to turn over to First Chronicles, you'll find he's got another name, Meribea. The man who listens to the voice of Baal, must of necessity experience the bitterness of Baal.

That's what Meribea means. So Mephibosheth suffered the effects of his fall to the end of his days.

[00:08:05] I just want to pass on now to chapter 9.

David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

Verse 7, And David said unto Mephibosheth, Fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake.

Verse 3, That I may show the kindness of God unto him.

This dear brethren, where there were deserts of judgment, kindness, where hatred existed [00:09:04] in the human breast, is met with the exercise of the kindness of God. What a wonderful expression, that I might show unto thee the kindness of God. Just think of it dear brethren. You and I, with deserts of eternal judgment, are now through infinite grace the subjects of the loving kindness of God.

So here's Mephibosheth, whatever he might have expected, I don't know.

Pardon me.

I just want to use him as an illustrative character from the Old Testament to illustrate some features in the epistle to the Romans. Verse 4, Where is he?

[00:10:04] Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Mekah, the son of Ammiel in Lodibah. In the epistle to the Romans, the grand theme of that illustrative epistle is the exercise of the saving grace and kindness of God.

And in chapter 7, the subject of that kindness says this, I am carnal, sold under sin.

Mekah means salesman.

So here's an illustration of a man who was under the power of that sin under which he was sold.

Sold under sin.

In the house of Mekah, the son of Ammiel. [00:11:04] Ammiel, what does that mean? This people is strong.

If you read Romans 7, you'll find that the subject there is at his wit's end, so to speak.

Why? He's got desires in the right direction, but he lacks the power to carry them into execution. So he says, It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

He's unable, dear brethren, to extricate himself from the condition into which sin had landed him.

He found there in Romans 7 that sin was too strong for him.

And I assure you, if you haven't yet learned it, each one of us here will make that same [00:12:08] discovery someday.

The sooner the better, because the sooner you make the discovery, the sooner you'll learn what deliverance is.

In the house of Mekah, son of Ammiel, from Lorivar, a place of no pasture, a place of fruitlessness.

If you go back into Romans 6, for instance, what fruit had you in those days when you were serving sin?

Absolutely impossible to produce any fruit for your own satisfaction or for the pleasure of God.

Obviously, the subject of Romans chapters 6 and 7 needed, as we all do, an outside help [00:13:14] to come in. You and I might know the blessedness and the power of deliverance from the power of indwelling sin. So Mephibosheth found at the hand of David kindness.

In the first place, for Jonathan's sake.

In the second place, the kindness of God.

Just think of it, dear brethren. The kindness of God.

God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead [00:14:04] in sins, has made us to live with Christ.

Infinite love and grace, is it not? Of course it is.

And the grace that has sought and found us and keeps us clean, one day will bring us to the glory, bring us to that blessed, desired heaven of every believing heart, to be with Christ where he is.

And in that day, God is going to open the heavens and set forth Christ in wonderful display.

And he's going to display in him and those who are with him then, the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

[00:15:07] Pass on to chapter 19.

You might need a reference again to that chapter we just left.

Verse 24.

Mephibosheth, the son of David, came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes. From the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

This verse spans a period in David's history when he was rejected.

And in his rejection, there was one heart at least that was true to him. [00:16:01] I wonder, dear brethren, how you and I are reacting to the kindness of God. It's been displayed to us in the death of Jesus. It's going to be displayed to the universe in the glorious manifestation of Jesus. And today, you and I, through infinite grace, are brought into the secret of it. And I wonder what the effect is to be. Well, here is Mephibosheth, a subject of this kindness that had been administered to him from the king. He was a true non-conformist.

Do you know what a non-conformist is? Well, that would lead us, doctrinally at least, into the beginning of Romans 12. Be not conformed to this world. And here is this erstwhile cripple.

[00:17:06] That's the right adjective to use. Here is that cripple. Lay him on both his feet.

Couldn't do anything to help himself. Either before or after that David's kindness had been administered to him.

And in that preceding chapter, which we've just read. Don't mean this chapter. Chapter we've just read and left. I said I might refer to it again. He was given a place at the king's table to eat bread there continually.

What a favor that this cripple had bestowed upon him to be brought from the distance of the darkness of his natural environment, to be brought into the king's presence and into the chambers of the king, [00:18:05] to sit with those who sat at the king's table and to eat bread there continually.

What a favor.

We spoke a little about favor this afternoon, didn't we? Having access by faith into this favor wherein we stand.

And it doesn't stop there.

And rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

So here is Mephibosheth.

He hadn't conformed to this scene from the day that the king departed until the day that he came again in peace. Your place in mind, dear brethren, is to be true to our absent and rejected Lord while He's away. [00:19:04] And in the measure of our faithfulness and loyalty to Him as dictated by a response of love to the love that has ministered to us and blessed us so richly, that is the only way that we'll take a place in this world as not conforming to it. Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.

But in all things you might be able to prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God. And that is preceded by this. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, which is your intelligent service.

[00:20:08] I wonder what Mephibosheth felt in response to this kindness that had been ministered to him. On the one hand, he certainly adopted a non-conformist attitude to the world around him.

I wonder what attitude he would adopt when he was seated at the king's table. Well, I don't know, but I do know what your attitude and mine should be. It should be one of unqualified and lasting response to the grace of God that has come out toward us and blessed us beyond our highest imagination.

[00:21:02] Just think of it.

Outside of Romans now, into Ephesians. Blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

Read down those opening verses. Ephesians chapter 1. Read an expression like this. Taken into favor in the beloved.

Just think of it.

To be treated by God the Father as His Son was to Him.

Taken into favor in the beloved.

Brethren, we are exceedingly well off.

Let's see to it then that our response will be characterized by the blessing that we have received that we might stand apart from this world that has crucified our Lord, the Son of God.

[00:22:06] Stand apart in the power of the conscious enjoyment of that world that we did refer to this afternoon. Somebody said the world to come, of which we don't speak. We do speak about it. We're speaking about it now. The world to come whereof we speak that finds its center in the Christ of God. That blessed man in the glory now who once stooped in infinite and lowly grace and walked that beautiful pathway that took him to death at Calvary. Just think of it, dear brethren. Before the love and the kindness of God could be your portion and mine, the judgment of God upon sin and sins had to be His at the place called Calvary.

[00:23:03] Brethren, let's see to it that our hearts and lives might be affected more by the loving kindness of God that has come out toward us in the person and work of His own beloved Son given to us now consciously in the gift of the indwelling Spirit that in the consciousness of it we might move through this world as more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Amen. One short verse in Ephesians chapter 2.

[00:24:12] Ephesians chapter 2, just one verse, verse 18.

For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

I'll just read John's writings for a moment, the closing verses of the 17th of John.

Verse 25 of John 17.

[00:25:01] O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. And lastly in chapter 4, the same gospel.

Verse 23.

John 4 and verse 23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. [00:26:04] For the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Just a few words this evening on this expression in the second chapter of Ephesians. It's one of these verses, you know, which are tremendously full. And the reason why I say it's very full is because each person of the Godhead is in this verse.

There aren't many words in it, quite a short verse, but it contains all the three persons of the Godhead. I think where we come across verses like that in the scriptures, well there's something vitally important about them, you know. [00:27:03] There's something which is of great value to us when God puts a verse of holy writ in that verse, is transcribed the three persons of the Godhead. We might have read of one tonight, but we didn't, early up in the fourth chapter of John. Very striking word. If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is, that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living waters. Three persons of the Godhead in one verse. Well anyway, for the moment, this little verse in Ephesians 2, just a moment with it.

For through him, through him.

Now the him there, of course, is the Lord Jesus. Through him.

It's the Son of God that comes before us here. And if we were to go back a little in this chapter 2, [00:28:04] we would find that it is through him, and his abundant work, him and his efficacious work upon the cross, that he has removed the partition, removed the enmity, removed the distance between Jew and Gentile, and brought into being one new man.

Now then, by him, by him.

So first of all, we are pointed in our thinking to the blessed Lord himself, and the accent seems to rest upon what he has done in this chapter, in having put out the enmity, and brought in peace in its place. It's a striking chapter, this. We could spend a long time on this chapter. The chapter itself, the chapter itself contains the workings of three divine persons. [00:29:01] The first few verses are God's work. The middle verses are Christ's work. The closing verses are the Spirit's work. In the section out of which we have read tonight, it's the Spirit's work really, isn't it? But it refers first of all to him, for by him, that is, by the Son of God, our blessed Lord, taking us back to what he has accomplished in his death upon the cross. We were speaking in our reading this afternoon about the question of enmity, the question of distance, the question of all that has come in through man's sin.

Well, the only way that any reconciliation could be effected was by the cross. Moved completely from the eye of God that in its place there might be blessed complacency and delight on the part of the Father. Oh yes, a wonderful work he accomplished, removing the distance. [00:30:01] Removing, some people used to say, he bridged the distance. He didn't bridge the distance, thank God, he removed it. Absolutely true, at the cross of Christ, he removed the distance and brought us out of darkness and delight, out of enmity into nearness. And here we have in this verse, first of all, what the Son has done, what he has done.

And if you have time afterwards to look up this chapter, the middle section of the chapter, you'll see something of the efficacy of that work. In removing every enmity, yes, even that which existed between Jew and Gentile, and forming in himself one new man.

Well, that's so far as we go with the work of Christ. Then he talks here about we both have access. Now when he says both here, he's speaking about Jew and Gentile. This is a remarkable verse, [00:31:02] you know, when you think about it. It's a triumph of grace. And my dear brethren, the formation of the one new man and the formation of the one body of Christ is nothing less than an absolute triumph of grace.

Who could have done it but God in his wisdom and in his resource? Who could have thought that the enmity of ages could be removed? Oh dear brethren, what a wonderful work it was. And now we both, both Jew and Gentile, on one common platform, not one higher than the other, the dispensational difference gone. Both, both having access.

Now we've talked a little bit in Ephesians, in Romans 5 this afternoon about this precious thought of access. We, through faith, we have access into this favour wherein we stand, [00:32:02] the favour of God, the place of standing. Nobody can alter that standing. It stands in all its blessedness. It can't be moved. We stand, dear brethren, in the favour of God. I love the thought, you know, I always have done, of standing in the favour of God. Some time ago, last week there, we were talking about the boards of the tabernacle. The Scripture said, they stood up upon silver sockets. And brethren, that's an illustration, I believe, what we've got in Romans 5. We stand in the favour of God. Wonder, dear brother and sister, have we got it?

Have we really got this? Like one used to say of old, get it with all you're getting. Have we got it, dear brethren, that we stand through infinite grace in the favour of God? Access through faith into that favour. But here, in this verse in Ephesians chapter 2, [00:33:03] it's access here, access by one Spirit.

Now then, we've had a reference to the Lord Jesus already, by Him, by Him, His work alone, His work alone, His death, His resurrection.

Now we have by one Spirit. Another person in the Godhead, He who has come and taken His indwelling place in you and me, and thank God, thank God, He is the uniting Spirit with regard to the body. With regard to what is corporate, it's the Spirit of God that holds all in one. It's the unity of the Spirit the Apostle speaks of in this same epistle. That which has been formed, formed by God, formed by the Spirit here, one unity here.

So we have this one Spirit which has been, [00:34:01] is before us. Now we have access by one Spirit.

Now He says, unto the Father.

Now here we have the other person in the Godhead. All three clearly and distinctly brought before us. Him, the Lord Jesus, the one Spirit, the Spirit of God, and thirdly the Father, the Father.

Now we have access, dear brethren, unto the Father.

Now I don't think we touched that, did we, in Romans 5.

We haven't got the Father, quite, have we, in Romans 5.

We have a wonderful place, we said, a pinnacle of truth in the middle of Romans 5. We join God, a great mountain peak, if you like, in the epistle. But we don't touch there, what we touch here.

It's the Father. And what made me turn to this verse, of course, was what our brother read about Macphagath sitting at the king's table, no longer a rebel, [00:35:03] no longer one of Saul's posterity, but as one of the king's sons, the king's sons.

When we come to this thought of the Father, we can't miss the point, can we?

Here we are on the ground of sonship, sonship. Not now joining in God, but joining in a Father made known to us, revealed to us. And here we have it then, access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Now, beloved brethren, what do we know about access to the Father?

What do we know about the practical working out, the experimental enjoyment of this, access to the Father?

You see, when we talk about this, we are touching that which is the absolute kernel of Christianity.

It's that which is absolutely vital to the Christian faith. It's the Father.

And brethren, whether you know it or not, [00:36:01] listen, take it to heart, dear brother and sister. We live in a day when God in His infinite grace has made Himself known as the Father.

Not as the Almighty God now, He's still that, of course. Not as the Eternal, He's still that.

But brethren, He's been made known to us and all the holy intimacy of Father, Father.

And when we talk about access by one Spirit unto the Father, I believe it's in the good and in the joy and the reality of a son's place, a son's place.

Our brother referred to the first chapter of Ephesians, that beautiful expression, taken into favor, in the Beloved.

Yes, in the Beloved, we're before God as He is before God. Before the Father as He is before the Father, in all the sense of the fine affections [00:37:01] and divine love.

Well, isn't this a wonderful verse? I'm sure you agree with me, it's a wonderful verse, this verse, in the second chapter of Ephesians. Through Him, the Blessed Lord, we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Short verse, short verse, two or three words, very few, and yet how blessed and how full and how complete it is. It's Christianity almost put into a nutshell, we might say.

The knowledge of the Father. Oh, my dear brother and sister, let's get these facts into our hearts.

What is characteristic, brethren, of Christianity?

If we're asked about these questions, what would we say?

Would our answer be, ah yes, the knowledge of God is the Father. That's it, that's the height, that's the height, that's the blessed position into which we have been brought. Now, having said that, just for a moment, I invade the writings of John.

[00:38:04] The end of the 17th chapter of John's Gospel, and, of course, this is John's line, isn't it?

This is John's line. When we come to the knowledge of the Father, this was the line that John took

up, wasn't it? The line of nature, and life, life and nature, the family circle, born again, the divine nature, knowledge of the Father. And so, on the end of 17th of John, these verses are very, very precious. I think there's none to equal them.

Ere the blessed Lord left this scene, and he went back to the Father, this wonderful, wonderful prayer, and at the end of it, O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, I have known thee.

He was one, dear brethren, [00:39:01] who came into this world, who knew the Father, knew the Father.

The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he knew the Father.

Here is the eternal Son, beloved brethren, of one who ever dwelt in the affections and the delight of a Father's love. Yes, he says, I have known thee, I have known thee.

And these have known that thou hast sent me.

And it's this verse I want to just touch upon.

And I have declared unto them thy name.

What name? What name?

What name is the Lord referring to here?

Well, clearly and distinctly, it's the Father's name he's referring to, the Father's name.

Not Jehovah now, not the mighty God, not the most high God. The name is the Father's name. I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it.

[00:40:03] Now, he says, but the love, wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Do you ever stop to think, dear brethren, and say to yourself, can it be possible? Can it be possible that grace could do this? That picketh up like Mephibosheth almost from the scrap heap, as we say, lame on both his feet, not much good for things down here, yet he's brought into a place of blessed relationships, sons at a son's table.

And here we have you and me taken up through infinite grace, dear brethren, and loved with that same love which is the portion of the Son.

The little hymn puts it, that love which rests on him in those bright courts above. Do you believe it, brethren? [00:41:02] Or do you just say, well, of course, it's what the Scripture says. Do you believe it?

Do you take it to your bosom? Do you take it to your heart and rejoice, and joy in the fact that a love rests upon us of the same order as that which rests upon the beloved Son of God? Yes, that's what it means, isn't it, in the verse our brother referred to in the first chapter of this epistle of Ephesians, accepted, taken into favor in the beloved. It's the Son's place and the love. This is not the love of God

now. We're speaking about the love of God this afternoon being made known to us. But it's a Father's love here, a Father's love. Sometimes we connect the thought of compassion with the love of God. But when we come to a Father's love, it's a love of complacency, a love that takes delight in us, [00:42:02] loves us as it loves Him.

Now, brethren, that's where we've been brought to from the distance into this place of infinite nearness and relationship and love.

Now, what's going to be the answer to all this? In our little reading this afternoon, we had an answer, didn't we, to what we found in Romans 5. As we have said, we touched little upon that peak, that peak in Romans 5, we joy in God. In fact, I'm going to say it's a peak in the epistle to the Romans, not just in Romans 5. We joy in God.

And I believe behind those words are a response, a lively response.

I believe it contains that which would, yes, worship and what God requires from you and me and looks for. We joy in God. We boast in God. We lose sight of ourselves. [00:43:02] We're lost in wonder, love and praise.

Now, here in the fourth chapter of John, there's a response, isn't there? A response.

And once again, you know, we can't help but think, can we, on the line of what we've been on today. You know, it was to a renegade woman that the Lord Jesus spoke these words. To an outcast, outcast, the Lord has to tell her of her past, her guilty past.

Outcast of society, she would be called nowadays, wouldn't she, in modern terms.

And yet it's to this woman that the Lord Jesus tells in sweet, blessed tones of what the Father looks for. What does the Father look for, beloved brethren, from your heart and mine? Well, our brother has been telling us about fidelity.

[00:44:01] I believe that's right, isn't it? We ought to be true to the Lord in our ways, in our conduct. Our brother has told us about how to be a non-conformist. Well, all right, twelfth chapter of Romans, that's it, isn't it? But here we just come to a point which may be, may be, is first, is it not? It's what the Father requires. The Father seeks, he seeks.

And the Lord Jesus came into this world to tell that woman, and tell you and me, that the Father seeks, such as she was, to worship Him.

And true worship is in spirit and in truth. No longer Jerusalem, no longer Gerizim, no longer a fixed place, no longer anything of that nature. Well, brethren, it's not tangible, it's in the spirit. Not connected with a place, not a tangible place, but in spirit and in truth.

[00:45:02] And my dear brethren, the Father desires this of you and me. I know it says, you know, in the Gospels, the Lord Jesus has said of Him, the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. That's meeting our wretched need. What about the Father's side? Oh, the Father seeks, the Father seeks. And what does He seek? He seeks worshipers, worshipers. And brethren, how good it would be, would it not, as a result of our little gatherings today, as we meditated upon the kindness

and love, the compassion of God, that it should come from these hearts of ours, that rising note, that rising note of worship to the Father, to the Father. You know, dear brethren, the day is coming when, not far off, perhaps from we all, shall throng those courts above. Yes, throng those courts of glory. [00:46:02] And our prayers, our theme, our song should be, well, it'll be one of worship, won't it? Worship.

His servants shall serve Him, for they shall see His face. I like that verse. His servants shall serve Him, priestly servants, for they shall see His face. We'll do it then in a full measure. May God help us in the meantime as we are impressed, as we have been impressed today by the kindness and love of God, our Saviour, and the knowledge of the Father. May it be, dear brethren, in the power of that one Spirit, and having access to the Father, we might worship and adore.

May it be so.