

David Is Kind To Mephibosheth

2 Samuel 9:1-13

MEMORY VERSE

PSALM 119:77

“Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; for Your law is my delight.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

For every two children, you will need an elastic or cloth bandage, a glass of water, a newspaper and a buttoned jacket or sweater.

Yarn and masking tape.

One copy of the template “Deputy Sheriff of Kindness County” (enclosed with your curriculum) for each child in your class (you may want to use yellow or gray cardstock so that it looks like a badge), scissors and tape.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Physical Limitations

We will learn in our story today about a boy named Mephibosheth who was lame in both of his feet. There are many children who have different kinds of physical limitations. This game will help us to understand what it may be like to not have the use of your hands. Some people suffer from different ailments which may limit the use of their hands. Let’s find out what that may be like.

For every two children, you will need an elastic or cloth bandage, a glass of water, a newspaper and a buttoned jacket or sweater. Form pairs. Have one partner from each pair wrap up the other’s hands (both) in elastic bandages so he or she can’t use any fingers. Have the child with the wrapped hands each complete the following exercises:

Drink a glass of water

Page through a newspaper

Put on a buttoned jacket or sweater and button all of the buttons.

Switch roles so the other partner can experience the same thing.

Ask the children what it was like to not have the use of their fingers. What do they think it would be like to not have the use of both of their feet? In today's story we will learn how David showed kindness to a boy Mephibosheth who couldn't use either of his feet and how **God wants us to be kind to others.**

LESSON TIME!

In the 13 verses that we will study today, we see a very beautiful example of David's kindness and grace towards one of Jonathan's sons. And we will also see a precious picture of God's grace to each and every one of us. We see a picture of a loving God who desires to show kindness to us.

When David was exalted to be king over all Israel, he desired to show compassion to the house of the fallen king, Saul. He also wanted to repay the love, which his special friend Jonathan had shown to him at an earlier time. David had made a covenant (or special promise) with Jonathan that when he was king that he would show kindness to Jonathan's family. Here we see David being mindful of the duty of gratitude even when he reached the highest point of the glory of the kingdom. **God wants us to be kind to others.**

We can learn from this example that we need to honor our word. Jonathan had already died in battle and it would have been very easy for David to just forget about the promise that he made to

Jonathan. After all who would know whether or not he followed through on a promise? Well, God knows and He wants us to carry out our promises towards others. When God blesses us we need to remember to bless others with kindness. **God wants us to be kind to others.**

2 SAMUEL 9:1-5

Now David said, "Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

And there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba. So when they had called him to David, the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "At your service!"

Then the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan who is lame in his feet."

So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar."

Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar.

It had been about 18 years since Saul and Jonathan had been killed. David was now established as king over all of Israel. God had blessed him greatly and he was probably remembering back over his life and reflecting on how faithful God had been. He remembers a promise that he made to Jonathan. The promise was

that he would show kindness towards Jonathan's family (the house of Saul). **God wants us to be kind to others.**

So David now tries to find out whether there was any one left of the house of Saul to whom he could show favor for Jonathan's sake. He had called Ziba, a former servant of Saul's, and asked him if there was anyone left in Saul's family who had a special need. Ziba was the person who took care of all of Saul's property, so he probably was the best person to ask about Saul's family.

Ziba told him that there was a lame son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth who was still alive and living at Lo-debar. Lo-debar means a pastureless or barren place. Mephibosheth lived in a place where he could just stay away from people.

He may have thought that if David ever found him that he would be killed. Normally when a new king took over who was from a new family, they would kill all of the relatives of the former king so that no one could try to rise up and take over again.

David immediately sends for Mephibosheth. Can you imagine what Mephibosheth must have felt? He was the grandson of Saul and was out in the wilderness hiding and all of a sudden David's servants are at his door asking him to come to David's palace. He probably thought that he was going to be killed.

We also see here that Mephibosheth was lame in both of his feet. He was crippled and unable to walk. We learn in the Bible how it happened. Eighteen years earlier when his father Jonathan and grandfather Saul were killed it was a pretty scary time for everyone. No one knew what might happen next.

When she heard the news of Saul and Jonathan's death, Mephibosheth's nurse thought she had better get Mephibosheth to

a safe place and hide. So she picked him up and took off running. Somehow she trips and falls. Mephibosheth lands in such a way that he probably injures his spine and is no longer able to walk.

Mephibosheth is a picture or example of our lives apart from Jesus. He was born into a family that was fallen, Saul's family. The Bible says that we are born fallen, or sinners. We are condemned already. Mephibosheth lived in a barren place. Our lives are empty and barren apart from a relationship with God. Mephibosheth was lame in both his feet. Without Jesus we can never live up to what God has created us for. He has a special plan and purpose for our lives and it begins with a relationship with Him.

There was nothing that Mephibosheth could do about his condition. He just wanted to hide out and stay as far away from David as possible. This is a picture of our lives when we don't know Jesus. We just want to stay away from the Lord as best we can. However, the Lord loves us greatly; and just like David searched for Mephibosheth, He comes to find us. **God wants us to be kind to others.**

2 SAMUEL 9:6-8

Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, "Mephibosheth?" And he answered, "Here is your servant!"

So David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually."

Then he bowed himself, and said, "What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?"

As soon as Mephibosheth saw David he was afraid. He just fell to his face out of respect to David. Notice David's response! He was not angry at Mephibosheth, but just gently and kindly spoke his name, "Mephibosheth?" Then Mephibosheth answers back to David with respect and says, "Here is your servant."

The first thing that David says is "Do not fear." What wonderful words for Mephibosheth to hear. Then David goes on to say that he is going to show him kindness., and the reason he will show him kindness is for Jonathan's sake. David was going to show him kindness because of the promise that he made to Jonathan. Then he tells him that he will restore all of his father's possessions and he will allow him to eat at his own royal table for the rest of his life. **God wants us to be kind to others.**

David was a man after God's own heart, and would be faithful to his promise he made with Jonathan, Mephibosheth's father. Mephibosheth expresses his thanks and gratefulness for this favor with deepest respect and states that he is unworthy of any such favor by comparing himself to a dead dog. It was truly an honor to be able to sit at the king's table everyday, and to have access to the king.

Are you perhaps afraid to answer God's call to come to Him? We might think that God would never want be kind to us. We have sinned and done wrong things. But the opposite is true. He tells us not to fear and then shows us all of the wonderful ways that he delights to show us kindness. We only need to come to Him.

Three "Legged" Relay

Split the class up into two teams. Then within the teams have the children make pairs. Using yarn, have the children stand next to each other and tie their legs together. When each team is ready, have them line up (use masking tape to mark a starting place).

Say go and have a pair from each team go to the other side of the room and turn around and return. When the pair has returned, the next team may go. If you have odd numbers, have someone from the first team join the remaining person for the last team. Make sure that there are even pairs.

Explain to the children how important it is to work together and help one another. The pairs that worked best are those pairs that talked to one another and helped one another. That is what God wants us to do. **God wants us to be kind to others.**

2 SAMUEL 9:9-13

And the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given to your master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house.

"You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in the harvest, that your master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's son shall eat bread at my table always." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king has commanded his servant, so will your servant do." "As for Mephibosheth," said the king, "he shall eat at my table like one of the king's sons."

Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants of Mephibosheth.

So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet.

David then summoned Ziba, the servant of Saul and told him that he and his sons would cultivate the land for Mephibosheth's restored land and to treat him as David's own son. Thus all of Ziba's house, his sons and servants, were servants of Mephibosheth. They worked for him and took care of his land, while he himself took up his home at Jerusalem, to eat daily at the king's table.

There are some beautiful pictures in this story that can apply to us as God's children. In verse 13 we see that Mephibosheth had to leave the barren land and enter into a land of peace. As he did so, he received a position of honor and access to the king. We need to decide in our hearts that we will leave the emptiness of this world to come to the King of kings when he calls us. He will then give us all of the riches of fellowship with Him.

Mephibosheth also never had to worry about where his next meal was to come from. David had restored to him the lands of his grandfather Saul, along with the servants to care for them, as he sat at the king's table. God calls us to leave the barren land of sin and death, and enter into a life of peace and fruitfulness when we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

When we do so, we have access to the throne of God continually. "Let us therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). We receive honor, for we become His children,

“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, through which he has made us accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:5).

We also never have to worry about anything, because he tells us in 1 Peter 5:7 to “Cast all our cares on Him because He care for you.” So just as David gave grace to Mephibosheth so God gives us our salvation by grace. Grace is undeserved kindness to a helpless one, which we are, and it gives a place of privilege to those who gladly receive it, and sustains and keeps him. What an awesome God we have.

We also learn the need to be kind towards others. The Bible teaches that towards others we should be an example of Jesus. Jesus was always kind and loving towards others. We should be same way. Who can you think of in your life to show the kindness of God towards? **God wants us to be kind to others.**

Deputy Sheriff of Kindness County

David made a promise to his friend Jonathan that he would always show kindness to his family. David kept his promise by showing kindness towards Mephibosheth. In this craft/activity we will make some Deputy Sheriff badges with a promise of how we will show kindness during the upcoming week. Next week we can check back to see if we kept our promise.

Refer to the template “Deputy Sheriff of Kindness County” enclosed with your curriculum. You will need one copy for each child in your class (you may want to use yellow or gray card stock paper so that it looks like a badge), scissors and tape. Give each child a copy of the template. Allow them to cut out their badges. Ask the children to think of a way they can show kindness this next week. Have them write down how they will show kindness next week on

the badge (assist the children who are learning to write). Allow the children to write their names on their badges. You can either hold onto the badge until the following week and ask the children how they did, awarding the badges to those children who followed through, or you can give them the badge to take home as a reminder of their promise.

Reinforce the lesson and today's theme as you do this activity.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be kind towards others, even if they may be your enemies. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

