

Chapter 7 showed us David as the lead worshiper of God. In Chapter 8 he was the conqueror of the ancient enemies of Israel. Here in chapter 9 we see David merely performing an act of kindness for an unfortunate soul, Mephibosheth.

But is it David's kindness? Not according to David himself in verse 3. "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Among God's awesome attributes like omniscience and omnipotence we can sometimes overlook His simple kindness – perceiving a need and meeting it with grace and generosity.

One example is the good things God provides for all mankind, deserving or not. This is sometimes called

"common grace." From Acts 14:17: "... for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." Or Matthew 5:45: "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

But God also knows the personal distress of His children and delights in relieving it. Both Mephibosheth and the envoys to the Ammonites feel shame – Mephibosheth as the descendant of a failed king and the envoys as victims of a cruel prank. But David deals with both situations with understanding and the kindness of God. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, **kindness**, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:21-23).

Questions for study and discussion:

1. How does each detail of Mephibosheth's life correspond to the Christian's experience? Try to find verses.

Lame since he was a baby

Transfers loyalty from a wicked king to a righteous one

Compares himself to a "dead dog"

Lives in exile far from the capital

Is given servants

Eats at the king's table

Brought into a place of honor and glory, but not cured of lameness

Is a victim of slander (2 Samuel 16:1-4)

Is restored to David's favor (2 Samuel 19:24-30)

2. How does Mephibosheth also depict the nation of Israel? (see Romans 11:28)
3. Why is David eager to show kindness to a member of Saul's family?
4. What cruel act had the Ammonites previously threatened against the Israelites? What happened as a result?
5. Hanun's counselors advise him to act first in a presumed conflict with David. How well does that advice work for them?