

Christian Kindness

2 Samuel 8-10

Key Bible Texts

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Key Bible Verse(s)

“And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” (2 Samuel 9:1)

Background to the Study

Chapter 8 shows how David and his armies conquered neighbouring nations: the Philistines to the west, Moabites to the east, Syrians to the north, and Edomites to the south. The Lord helped David expand Israel's boundaries to their largest extent, fulfilling the covenant with Abraham. These provinces likely provided resources for David's future building project. The “gifts” in verse 6 were effectively taxes, indicating Israel’s control over the subjugated nations. David ruled justly, earning the respect of both the people and God.

Chapter 9 tells the story of how David honoured the descendants of Saul and Jonathan through Jonathan’s son, Mephibosheth. As we follow the story of Mephibosheth, we see how one generation benefited from the love and friendship of a former generation. In 1 Samuel, we read of the bond between King Saul’s son Jonathan and David. Now that David had been crowned king over the entire nation of Israel, had captured the city of Jerusalem, and had subdued the enemies that surrounded them, he began to make good on his personal promise to Jonathan that his family would not be harmed. Mephibosheth likely feared for his life as he travelled from Lodebar to Jerusalem, knowing new kings often eliminated the previous ruler's family. When he met David, he prostrated himself and declared his unworthiness, only to be met with surprise and relief when David declared him and his son part of his family, granting them Jonathan’s inheritance. As Christians, we also see an important example in David’s actions. He demonstrated his love for Jonathan by seeking out and “adopting” his son. God has done the same thing for us through the shed Blood of His Son, Jesus. We should desire to share that love with others by seeking to show kindness whenever possible.

After the death of Nahash, king of Ammon, David sent condolences to his son, Hanun. Hanun distrusted David’s motives and shamed David’s messengers by cutting off part of their garments and cutting off half their beards. Full beards were regarded as a sign of maturity and authority in Israelite culture, so Hanun’s act angered David and caused great offense. Hanun then allied with Syrian forces to attack Jerusalem. Joab divided his troops to confront the enemy on two fronts, winning a victory

near Rabbah. The regrouped Syrians later faced David at Helam, where Israel triumphed again, leading the Syrians to seek peace out of fear.

TESTIMONIES FROM OUR DAY

Many years ago, my grandparents moved their family of eight children to Portland, Oregon, so they could worship with the people of the Apostolic Faith Church. Not long after they arrived, one of their sons contracted diphtheria and passed away. During his illness, the entire family was quarantined, so my grandfather could not work. Even though my grandparents were new to the congregation, at various times people from the church brought groceries and supplies and left them on the porch. My grandparents felt loved and cared for! A family was grounded in the Gospel, and in the years since then, many family members from five generations have chosen to serve God.

We are engaged in spiritual warfare, but we are not alone; the Lord is with us, and we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with God's people worldwide. Many spiritual soldiers are not physically strong—like my mother, who was frail in her later years but powerful in prayer. She maintained long prayer lists, adding needs as they arose, and would follow up on them long after we had forgotten. She also wrote encouraging letters to housebound individuals, despite being legally blind, using large letters to convey her messages. Though not wealthy, she was generous, offering little gifts wherever she saw a need. Truly, she was rich in soul and character.

When my mother fell ill, it became our turn to help her. We brought her into our home for her final months, and it felt like a privilege to care for her, as if we were caring for an angel. The roles had reversed: my mother, who had given so much, was now receiving help. This mirrors the family of God, where we alternate between giving and receiving support. We are encouraged to bear one another's burdens, looking out for those who feel heavy-hearted or overwhelmed. We should be quick to offer a helping hand or an encouraging word, remembering to pray for those facing trials.

As we strive to support each other, we find that the saints of God are eager to empathize with our burdens and assist us when needed. God's family extends globally, and many of our fellow believers suffer persecution and martyrdom. Let us not forget to pray for those who are suffering, helping to lift their burdens. In doing so, we fulfill one of Christ's commissions to His people.

A Closer Look

Question 1

How did David find Mephibosheth?

Question 2

In chapter 9, David sought out Saul's descendent, Mephibosheth. What was his purpose in this, and how might this meeting have been different than what Mephibosheth expected it to be? David demonstrated both kingship and kindness. Explain why both of these were important in David's actions toward Mephibosheth.

Question 3

Is there someone in your life who you can be kind to. Name three specific actions you could take to demonstrate kindness to someone of a different generation or socioeconomic status.

Question 4

How many warriors did Hanun hire to fight against Israel?

Question 5

Joab planned his battle strategy and, then concerning the outcome, he said, *“And the Lord do that which seemeth him good.”* How does doing our part and trusting God for our needs fit together?

Question 6

What are ways we can help carry the load of Christian brothers and sisters who are in need?

Take Home

Just as David showed kindness to Mephibosheth and his family for Jonathan’s sake, we should show kindness to others – even those that we might perceive to be our enemies – for Jesus’ sake. God has done the same thing for us through the shed Blood of His Son, Jesus. We should desire to share that love with others by seeking to show kindness whenever possible. Who knows how far-reaching the blessings might be! Let us be quick to sense a need in the family of God and then do our best to help fill it.