



“R.S.V.P.”
2 Samuel 9
Small Group Plan

Mephibosheth
Me·phib·o·sheth
muh-**fib**-uh-sheth

When his father Jonathan and his grandfather Saul were killed on Mount Gilboa, Mephibosheth was only five years old. Fearing that the Philistines would seek the life of the young boy, his nurse picked him up and ran to escape with the rest of Israelites. But in her haste she dropped him and he became crippled in both feet (2 Samuel 4:4). His name means “*contender against shame.*”

Yes, his name is difficult to pronounce (just call him Shep), but his story is one of God’s amazing grace.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- How would it feel to unexpectedly inherit a fortune?
- Have you ever been given a gift that you could not repay?
- How did you express your thanks?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— FINDING “SHEP” —

2 Samuel 9:1-4

¹ David asked, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” ² Now there was a servant of Saul’s household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?” “Your servant,” he replied. ³ The king asked, “Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God’s kindness?” Ziba answered the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet.” ⁴ “Where is he?” the king asked. Ziba answered, “He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.”

- How might it feel to grow up disabled and crippled in a world with no products or social services designed to help you manage?

- After Saul’s murderous rage against David, why is David so kind to Saul’s lineage?
- What does this say about David’s character?
- David had two imprints on his heart — Saul’s rage and God’s grace. Why did God’s grace weigh more?

— CALLING “SHEP” —

2 Samuel 9:5-8

⁵ So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. ⁶ When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, “Mephibosheth!” “Your servant,” he replied. ⁷ “Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.” ⁸ Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?”

- What might “Shep” be thinking and feeling as he is escorted back to Jerusalem? Into the King’s throne room? To the King’s table?
- Why are David’s first words, “don’t be afraid” (v. 7)?
- What do “Shep’s” words in verse 8 reveal about his character?
- What happens when grace meets graciousness?

— HONORING “SHEP” —

2 Samuel 9:9-13

⁹ Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul’s servant, and said to him, “I have given your master’s grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. ¹⁰ You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master’s grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table.” (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.) ¹¹ Then Ziba said to the king, “Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do.” So, Mephibosheth ate at David’s table like one of the king’s sons. ¹² Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica, and all the members of Ziba’s household were servants of Mephibosheth. ¹³ And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king’s table, and he was crippled in both feet.

- Why do disadvantages (like crippled feet) embitter some, while humbling others? How can the same circumstance have opposite effects?
- Ziba is mentioned eight times in this story. Why? Why isn’t he left nameless? What is his place in the story? How might he be feeling as the story progresses?
- Why does David repeatedly say, “eat at my table” (vs. 7, 10, 11, 13)?
- How are we like “Shep” as we break bread at God’s table each Sunday?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- As in David's case, how can grace overcome hurt and bitterness today?
- David was searching for someone upon whom to “show God's kindness” (v. 3).
- How/Who/When/Where can you and I show God's kindness today?
- What would “Shep” conclude about David's invitation: (1) if he listened to his grandfather Saul, or (2) if he listened to his father Jonathan?
- Who are you more likely to listen to — the positives or the negatives? Explain.
- Close by thanking God for finding us, calling us and honoring us at His table.