A Crippled Covenant
(2 Samuel 9)
4/20/16; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

When Abraham Lincoln was 10 years old, his mother, Nancy Hanks, died of what was called "milk sickness."

As he sat by her dying bed, his mother told her son to make her some promises.

Since Abraham adored his mother, he was quick to honor her requests..

She told Abe, "I want you to live as I have taught you, to love your Heavenly Father and keep His commandments."

Then she asked, "Abe, also promise me that you won't use tobacco or drink whiskey. They just lead to too many problems."

Well, 10 year old Lincoln made those vows to his dying mom and stays by her bed until she breathed her last.

In the years after that, Lincoln miraculously rose from his incredible poverty to the highest office in the land…

Becoming the 16th president of the United States of America.

On one occasion, he was in a horse drawn coach with one of his army officers from Kentucky.

The Union army had soundly defeated the Confederates, and the army colonel was ready to celebrate..

So he offered Lincoln a cigar and a drink of whiskey as they rode tougher back to Washington…

Lincoln politely declined the cigar and the whiskey, telling the colonel that he had made a promise to his mom to never touch either one…

The officer replied, “Mr. Lincoln, you are the President of the United States and your mother has long been gone from this world. Just have a drink with me.”

Lincoln replied, “The world may have forgotten my mother, but I have not forgotten my promise.”

According to Lincoln’s biographer, he kept that promise to his mom to the end of his life,…

However, Lincoln is not the exception to the rule of promise makers….

Someone once said, “Show me a man that makes promises, and I will show you a man who break promises.”

We have seen that in our own lives and even in the lives of the people in Scripture.

Man is not known for his ability to keep promises, but rather by his ability to forsake promises made.

Though we are going to be looking at 2 Samuel 9 tonight, take your Bible and turn back to 1 Samuel 20…

In 1 Samuel 20, David feels threatened by Saul, and he goes to Jonathan, Saul’s son, for help.

He asks if Jonathan would help protect him from Saul.

Jonathan agrees but has a favor to ask of David as well in return..

Let’s pick up the scene in 1 Samuel 20:13…

Jonathan is talking to David here…

13 If it please my father to do you harm, may the Lord do so to Jonathan and more also, if I do not [i]make it known to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And may the Lord be with

you as He has been with my father. 14 If I am still alive, will you not show me the lovingkindness of the Lord, that I may not die? 15 You shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the Lord require it at the hands of David’s enemies.” 17 Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life.

So, here we have the covenant between David and Jonathan…

Jonathan promises protection to David since his father Saul wants to kill him, but in return Jonathan asks for protection from David…

Now why would Jonathan need protection from David?

They are friends, right?

That’s true, but Jonathan also knows how governments work in his day..

When the new king comes to power, his first act is to kill the former king and all his family, so that none of them claim the right to the throne…

This is how governments operated in 1000 BC, and Jonathan already knows this…

David is going to be the next king of Israel…

He knows that his father Saul's rule is coming to an end…

And as he sits with David, he is sitting with the one who would kill him when he becomes the next king of Israel..

So, Jonathan simply offers this promise to David…

I promise to protect you now, but you promise to protect me and my family in the future..

That was the covenant between David and Jonathan…

Now, flip forward to 2 Samuel 9 that we will be in tonight..

As you flip the pages, a lot of changes occur both in the lives of David and Jonathan..

Jonathan stays loyal to his promise to David until he dies in battle in the final chapter of 1 Samuel…

David continues to avoid being killed by Saul until Saul commits suicide in the final chapter of 1 Samuel…

And then David beings his rise to power…

And by the time that we get to 2 Samuel 9, we are most likely (though we can't know with precision) 15-20 years away from the promises of 1 Samuel 20..

David is now fully in control of the God's kingdom in Israel…

His reign is at its height.

His popularity with the people is also at an all time high…

At this point in his reign, David can do as he pleases..

But look at what he desires to do in verse 1 of chapter 9….

Then David said, "Is there yet [a]anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

David simply remembers his promise to Jonathan years earlier and desires to find someone in Jonathan's line to show kindness to…

This seems most unusual for a king…

The verse would normally read….

The David asked, “Is there anyone else from Saul’s line who needs to be executed? I want to make sure my kingdom is secure.”

But not David.

Jonathan made be long gone, but the covenant that David made with him isn’t….

And so tonight, let’s look at how David kept his promise to Jonathan in 2 Samuel 9..

We will do that by looking at 3 truths about a covenant…

Truth #1 is found in verses 1-4….

I. Covenants Motivate Behavior (1-4)

Let's read verses 1-4 of 2 Samuel 9…

1 ***Then David said, "Is there yet [a]anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" 2 Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David; and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant." 3 The king said, "Is there not yet anyone 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 crippled in both feet." 4 So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-de-bar."***

So, here we are at the height of David's reign as king…

Last week in chapter 9, we watched as David exercised his rule over Israel and even over Israel's enemies…

Here's last week's map where we see the extent of the kingdom…

As David simply displayed his authority over Israel…

Verse 15 of chapter 8 really summed up the chapter last week for us….

David reigned over all of Israel…

And with that thought in mind, we see verse 1 of chapter 9….

David is now at rest in some ways and he wants to seek how he can keep his covenant promise to Jonathan…

That is example #1 of how a covenant directs our actions and motivates our behavior…

Simply put, promisees should effect the way we live, right…

If you made a promise to love your spouse in sickness and health, you are at his bedside caring for him when he is sick…

If you made a promise for richer or poorer, you stay even when the money goes away.

Promises direct our actions…

And David finds his actions being directed to locate someone, anyone who may benefit from the promise he made to Jonathan years ago…

Aren't you glad that the Lord is motivated to act in accordances with the promises that he makes to believers…

Phil 1:6

He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Aren't glad that God is a promise keeper?

Aren't you thankful that God is motivated to act according to the promises that He made to us?

Well, that is David here?

He is on mission to find someone to show covenant loyalty too even though he is not obligated to do it?

David's promises simply cause him to act…

Now, we need to look at a map of the region to get our thoughts together…

Because David locates a fella named Ziba who was a servant in the house of Saul….

And Ziba tells David…

"Yes, there's even a son of Jonathan still around…."

He is a crippled boy who lives in the house of Machir in Lo-debar….

If you look back at our map, you will see that Lo-debar was most likely located east of the Jordan River and south of the sea of Galilee…

And he is living in the house of a man named Machir…

We know from other passages in 2 Samuel 17 that Machir was a wealthy man, and he had probably taken in the crippled boy as an act of compassion…

So, David has found someone to show kindness to in the line of Saul and Jonathan…

So, he sends for him…

And for us, we are simply reminded in verses 1-4 of the need to let our commitments motivate our behavior…

If you say, follow through…

David had made a promise and he was going to honor it, no matter how difficult or time consuming it may be…

There was once a day when a man's word and a handshake was as solid as an oak tree…

That day has long past, but for the people of God, we need to be people of our word as much as possible…

Because the God we say we represent to the world is a God of His Word in every way…

So, truth #1, Covenants Motivate Behavior….

Truth #2….

II. Covenants Exceed Expectations (5-11a)

So David sends for this crippled descendant of Saul and Jonathan in verse 5….

Let's pick up the scene…

5 Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-de-bar. 6 Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, "Mephi-bosheth." And he said, "Here is your servant!"
7 David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the [b]land of your [c]grandfather Saul; and you shall [d]eat at my table regularly." 8 Again he prostrated himself and said, "What is your servant, that you should regard a dead dog like me?"

You may the name Mephibosheth…

We first heard it in 2 Samuel 4 when Israel was not united under David and Ish-bosheth was the king in the north…

He was mentioned in that chapter as an example of how weak Saul's family tree had become..

Jonathan was dead.

Ish-bosheth, Saul's other son, was not a courageous leader…

And Jonathan's son was lame…

Well, here in 2 Samuel 9 we meet Mephibosheth again as the lone survivor of Saul's house and line…

And so Mephibosheth comes and he falls down before David…

He may be lame, but his mind is sharp, and he knows what happens when the new king calls in the old king's family..

It is usually a sword to the neck.

And so he comes in and falls before David declaring himself David's servant..

Well, David first words are "Do not fear, Mephibosheth. I didn't call you here to hurt you but to bless you."

And all that I am about to do is because of my covenant with your father Jonathan…

It mat be a 20 year old promise but I am going to keep it regardless..

And I am going to keep it because I promised this to your father whom I loved dearly…

Now remember, the covenant between David and Jonathan simply said that David would not wipe out Jonathan's descendants when he became king.

Essentially, all David had to do was to let Mephibosheth live and he would have honored the promise…

But David is not content with just honoring the covenant to the letter, he wants to bless Mephibosheth as well…

So in verse 7, he showers Jonathan's son with 2 incredible blessings above and beyond sparing his life..

The first blessing is this…

David is going to return all of Saul's land to Mephibosheth.

And second….

Mephibosheth is going to be able to fellowship regularly with David at his table…

That is an incredible act on David's part.

He wasn't obligated to do any of that, but he went above and beyond the requirements of the covenant to bless Mephibosheth…

Let me share two quick applications for us tonight from this…

#1 - As believers, we need to not only meet but exceed expectations in our service to others…

We live in a day where people are content just to get by with the bare minimum…

Instead of asking, what does it take to make an A on an assignment, students won't to know what is the very least to do in order to not get an F…

Workers have the same mentality….

What is the least amount of work I can do and still keep my job…

Instead of pushing beyond what is expected, I want to just meet the lowest standard and go home…

We live in a society and a culture that constantly lowers the bar and never raises it….

What message do you send to a boss who knows you are a believer when you do just enough to skate by?

What message do you send to your friends and family when they see you do the bare minimum?

If you want to make a gospel impact on others, do more than people expect you to do.

And you will stand out like a sore thumb in this world of underachievers…

What else do we see in David's abundant blessings offered to Mephibosheth?

#2 - God is not a God of bare necessities, but a God who meets and then exceeds our needs as His people.

In order for you to make it to heaven, God simply needs to forgive your sin…

That is bare necessity of salvation…

God is holy and we are not.

In order to live in God's presence forever in heaven, we need a way to have our sins forgiven…

And the gospel of Christ provides that as Jesus died to satisfy God's worth against us by paying the penalty of sin in his death…

If God had done nothing more than that in salvation, it would have been enough…

If we had simply escaped death, that would have been enough to meet our need…

Yet, God is not a God of bare necessities….

Not only does he forgive our sin in salvation, he showers us with blessing upon blessing…

We get a new heart, like we talked about on Sunday..

We get the gift of being indwell by the Holy Spirit, who teaches us the truths of God through the Word of God…

We get the blessings of the church and the fellowship with other saints…

Salvation is not just about meeting our needs, it is about God exceeding our expectations…

What did Jesus say?

I came that they may have life, and have just the bare necessities….

No, he said , I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly…

And Mephibosheth is getting a taste of how a covenant not only meets his needs but exceeds them by a mile…

Let finish up this section by looking at the great blessings that David promises him…

Verse 9…

9 Then the king called Saul's servant Ziba and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's [e]grandson. 10 You and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him, and you shall bring in the produce so that your master's grandson may have food; nevertheless Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall [f]eat at my table regularly." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. 11 Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant so your servant will do."

Knowing that Mephibosheth is physically unable to work the land that he has just given him, David assigns Ziba and his men to work it for him..

It would have been one thing to give Mephibosheth the land and leave it up to him to figure out how to manage it….

But David gives the land and solves the problem of who is going to work it…

As king, he has the power to assign Ziba and his men to provide the labor and they simply obey the king…

Just another example of how David has gone above and beyond in honoring his promise to Jonathan…

So, we have two truths about covenants…

Covenants motivate behavior….

And covenants often exceed expectations…

Final truth….

III. Covenants Overcome Barriers (11b-13)

Let's pick up in the second half of verse 11…

11….So Mephibosheth ate at [g]David's table as one of the king's sons. 12 Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth. 13 So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate at the king's table regularly. Now he was lame in both feet.

If Mephibosheth were playing baseball, he would start out every at-bat with 2 strikes against….

First, Mephibosheth was a descendant of the old king..

He was Saul's grandson, and Saul had died in disgrace and left the nation of Israel in disgrace with his suicide and defeat on Mount Gilboa…

Though Saul was Israel's first king, he was no longer the nation's pride and joy…

And anyone associated with Saul would wear a badge of disgrace, especially someone as close to him as a grandson…

But second, Mephibosheth was lame…

Jews often viewed the lame as cursed by God and unclean…

They had very little compassion for those who were disabled, and so Mephibosheth didn't have a lot going for him in the eyes of the world…

But none of that mattered to David….

He was only interested in keeping his word to Jonathan…

It didn't matter who the beneficiary of the covenant was…

Bad reputation, crippled, wrong side of the river…..

David had made a promise and he was going to keep that promise…

His covenant with Jonathan would overcome any barriers like reputation of physical disability….

People who keep promises don't base it on what the person looks like, it simply comes out of a heart of love and commitment to the covenant…

The application of these verses to us is easy…

God's covenant with those who trust in Him are not based upon race or sex or nationality or physical ability….

God's promise to save those who call upon His name overcomes all barriers…

As a Gentile, I am very grateful for that…

According to the Bible, I was outside the covenant as a Gentile…

Listen to Ephesians 2:11-13….

11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, [i]excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off [j]have been brought near [k]by the blood of Christ.

For all intents and purposes, Mephibosheth probably thought that life was all but over for him…

Descendant of Saul…

Crippled in both feet…

Probably waiting around to die…

Yet, David sought him out in Lo-debar…

David brought him to his house and gave him the land back and a place at David's table…

And according to 13, Mephibosheth ended up living in Jerusalem and eating at the king's table regularly…

What grace is that!

Having 2 strikes against you doesn't mean you are on the verge of getting out…

It may mean that you on the verge of being saved.

Conclusion

What a simple chapter, but what an incredible chapter as well..

And in case you haven't figure it out already, look at the incredible picture that is painted in these verses?

A king wants to find someone to bless, so he seeks him out..

Bring him to his house, spares his life, blesses him, and gives him a seat at his table…

What a picture of salvation…

Where God seeks out people who often have 2 strikes against them…

Brings them to Himself, saves them, blesses them and gives a seat at His table..

David did that in chapter 9 of 2 Samuel…

But God has been doing that from the beginning of time to this very day….

In a very real sense, we are all crippled people incapable of making our way in the world…

Yet God has seen our disability, and not only spared our life, but also given us a seat at His table..

What grace is this…

That the lame walk, the blind see, and the dead have been raised to life in the name of Jesus Christ.