

The King Is Calling Us

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Date: 04 February 2023

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[0:00] Yes. Thank you very much, Ellie. Good morning, everybody. How you doing? Yeah. How many of you are here because you're going to the antique show afterwards? No? All right. I didn't know.

That's all good. It's all good. I think I saw somebody already drive up confused and was just like, let me back out and go the other way. So if you're seeing cars do strange things while I'm speaking, just know that there's, you know, it's going to be a little bit crazy. It started at 11 o'clock, but I'm glad to have you here. Those who are listening online, glad you can do that. If you're new, man, so thankful that you would come and be with us today. If you got your Bible with you, you can go ahead and turn in it to 2 Samuel chapter nine. If you don't, no worries. We always have them up on the screen as well and kind of try to help us locate where we're at. We're kind of in between things right now. So we ended our short series on following Jesus to become like Jesus. Next week, we are going to jump back into the gospel of Mark and finishing that out. And if you were, if you've been here with us for the last few months, you'll remember that we push pause on that for the Advent season, which begin in December. So if you were concerned, yes, we realize that the gospel of

Mark doesn't end at chapter 13. We are aware of that. Okay. All right. But today, what I want to do is kind of just a one-off sermon. I want to teach on something that I believe Jesus is calling us to be both personally in our lives, but also as a local church. And so in last week's sermon, if you were here, if not, no worries, because we learned about how God's grace flows to us, but also how God's grace flows through us to others. And the passage we're looking at today shows how that works out in time and place. It's a great case study, but it's more than that. I'm going to say this, this chapter that we're getting into, it has wrecked me and captivated me for the last four years. It's informed my life in Christ, but it's given me a clear vision for what I think God has called us to be as his people, as a local body representing him in this city where he's placed us at this time in history, which he has sovereignly chosen to do. And so the title of this sermon is the King is calling us. And he does so in two ways. We're going to look at this in two ways. He does so in two ways and both are equally important. First, he calls us out of hiding. And secondly, he calls us into his service. So let's read 2 Samuel chapter nine. And David said, is there still anyone left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? 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. And the King said, is there not still someone of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God to him? Ziba said to the King, there is still a son of Jonathan. He is crippled in his feet. The King said to him, where is he? And Ziba said to the King, he is in the house of Macher, the son of Amiel at Lodabar. Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Macher, the son of Amiel at Lodabar. And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, behold, I am your servant.

David said to him, do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. And I will restore to you all the land of Saul, your father, and you shall eat at my table always.

[3 : 36] And he paid homage and said, what is your servant that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I? Then the King called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, all that belong to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, shall always eat at my table. Now Ziba had 15 sons.

20 servants. Then Ziba said to the king, according to all that my lord, the king commands his servants, so will your servants do. So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.

And Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micah. And all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants. So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king's table.

Now he was lame in both his feet. This is God's word. So it's a great story. There's a lot more going on here than just David being a nice guy to a needy person. To get into some context of what has preceded this really helps bring this even more to life. King David had just recently become king of Israel. And he replaced this guy, King Saul, who had just died in battle. Now it's important to note that David and Saul were not family. In fact, years ago, God had rejected Saul as king over Israel, and at the same time anointed and appointed David to be his successor. Well, this did not go down very well with Saul. He was jealous of David because of that. He feared him and he turned David into public enemy number one. And so for the rest of Saul's years as king, he hunted David down like a dog, right? And he wasn't going so that he could be best friends with him. He wanted to find him so he could kill him. That is what's been going on up to this point. Now that Saul, now Saul's died. So you have this throne that is empty. And we have to remember that in the ancient world of kings and kingdoms, there was no concept or a value of a peaceful transfer of power. That is not how things work.

Wherever there was empty thrones, they were fought over fiercely, even to the death. And after Saul's death, what happened is that war broke out between Saul's family and David's family. And so Saul's sons, they weren't going to let go of his throne easily. But after a couple of years, what we see is that David ultimately wins. And at this, and he ascends to the throne and his throne is established. And this is the point of the story. We would enter into what we just read. And that's the backdrop. And so think about this. If all of that is behind in the scenes, right? That's behind the scenes. If you are one of Saul's kin and alive, you are scared, right? You are in protect your neck mode. That's what you're in right now. So when David begins this whole chapter and says to his officials, is there still anyone left of the house of Saul? You could have bet that they would have finished his sentence in this way.

[6 : 56] If there is anyone left, kill him. They would have assumed that's where David was going with this. But David doesn't do that. He doesn't do what comes natural to the human instinct. He isn't out for vengeance. He's out to show mercy. And see, this story is more than just a good moral lesson for us to be nice. This is a story that puts God's redemption on display. It's a gospel story that points to Jesus and anticipates his fulfillment of it as the true and better David that is to come.

Which means this, we can read this story and we can read ourselves into it and say, you know what? This is your story. This is my story. This is our gospel story. Jesus is our king that calls us out of hiding. Think about it. We are born rejecting Jesus as our king. We battle to sit on the throne of our own lives. We're battling against him. We aren't just indifferent to Jesus. We are at enmity with him.

We treat him like he is our enemy. Whether we're realizing we're doing that or not, to live your life on your own terms and to say like, I'm going to live it my way no matter what, and nobody is coming to tell me what to do, that is a rejection of Jesus as king.

And so when we live that way, what we end up doing is we, whether we want to believe that or not, we join in the spirit of the crowd that said crucify him. That is who we are.

Now we live thinking we've won. We're on the throne of our lives. We're living our way, how we want to live. The problem is in reality, Jesus isn't dead. He was crucified, but he didn't stay dead. He defeated death. He rose again. He ascended into heaven and now he is seated on the throne. And the Bible tells us from that place, everything, all authority and power has been given to him. And he sits as king in the heavens, everything made subject to him, including you and me.

[8 : 51] He's one. He has all the power. He has all the authority. We have none. Can you see how much like Mephibosheth we actually are? We didn't stand a chance. So what do we do is we live our lives far from the king, hiding from him, keeping a safe distance. And that's what Mephibosheth did. He's hiding out in this guy maker's house in Lodabar. And what's fascinating is, is like when you get into this story and even the names that are, that are given to us here, they, they have significance and they make the story come alive even more. See this guy, Macker, his name, it means sold, which the idea here is like one being sold as a slave. And so think of where Mephibosheth is. He is living in the house of slavery. And this house of slavery is in this place called Lodabar, which is far from Jerusalem, far from the king. And Lodabar means no pasture, no word. The whole point of Lodabar is to give people the impression of, you don't have to be there. The name tells you what's going on. It's like, it's like

Death Valley. You don't have to wonder what Death Valley looks like, right? You kind of get a figure of like, all right, Death Valley probably doesn't have a lot of lush vegetation and like streams flowing in it, right? It's a dry desert where there is no life. And that's the idea behind Lodabar. It's a place barren of life. But it's not just a place of material desolation. It's a place of spiritual desolation. That's where we lived before Christ in the house of sin, enslaved to it in the land of spiritual desolation. And the good news is that Jesus finds us there and he doesn't leave us there.

He goes and he gets us and he brings us back. He brings us into his presence. And in his presence, we see him for who he is. And we see ourselves in light of him for who we really are, which lays us bare of any excuses. We become just like Mephibosheth, humbled, totally dependent on Christ's mercy. When we look at Mephibosheth and how he responded to David here, we don't see him arrogant.

We don't see him entitled before the king. He doesn't see himself as worthy of anything. In fact, he says he calls himself a dead dog. Now you read that and you're just like, man, Mephibosheth, maybe get you some self-esteem classes or something like that. It's just like, bro, you are in like the pits, man. And we think that would maybe help him out and fix it. And you know, that's kind of the way of our culture, the modern moment we live in, this high value of, man, you just need more self-esteem. You need to think more highly of yourself. And the gospel says, no, no, no, no, no. What you need is you need to see yourself rightly and you need to see Jesus rightly.

You need to see that you are in need of his grace and mercy, which is what our king Jesus gives to us. And what do we hear? How does that come to us? This grace and mercy that he gives to us. Well, look at what he does to Mephibosheth. The first thing out of David's mouth, he speaks his name.

[11 : 52] The end of verse six, he says, Mephibosheth. You know, what's interesting about Mephibosheth's name and what it means? It means destroyer of shame. That's what our king does. We stand before him with the shame of our sin, of our rebellion against him, the guilt piled up on us. We are dead dogs.

We are without excuse, but Jesus in his mercy, he is our shame destroyer. And a part of that is when we hear for the first time his, our name on his lips, that he speaks to us. When he says our name, do you remember that? Do you remember the first time that's happened or it's happened since then?

Your name on the, the word in the mouth of our savior and how kind that is. And he, he lifts Mephibosheth's head and he destroys his shame and lavishes grace on him. And he does the same to us. He gives us what we don't deserve. Look at verse seven. He goes on to say this, do not fear for I will show you Mephibosheth kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan. I will restore to you all of the land of Saul, your father, and you shall eat at my table. This is the good news of the gospel to you and to me, isn't it?

Like we stand before this holy king and you know what? We're dead dogs, but he doesn't treat us that way at all. He treats us like one of his own sons. And then he gives, he begins to speak to us and fear begins to melt away because he doesn't speak to us judgment. And he speaks to us words of love, words of blessing, words of affirmation, reconciliation, and restoration in him. That's the beauty of the gospel. Think about the transformation that happened in a short period of time in Mephibosheth's life.

He's hiding out in a barren land without hope. And he is like, he's living in the house of enslavement in the land of barrenness. And now what is he doing? He is restored. He has an inheritance and he lives a life now of feasting at the king's table, just like one of the king's sons.

[13 : 59] That is God's grace to you. That is God's grace to me. No one can take that away and you can't earn it for yourself. I mean, think about how amazing this is. What does a king get out of showing mercy to a cripple? What does he get out of it? But that is the beauty of the gospel.

We come with our guilt. We come with our shame. We come with our failures. We come with total weakness. And what we find is that we are forgiven. We are restored and we are given a place at the king's table.

And we need to be grounded in that gospel identity. That is who we need to see who we are because it will keep us humble and it will keep us dependent on God's grace. It will remind us that we have a place at his table for no other reason, but that he chose to extend his mercy and grace to us.

We are just a bunch of Mephibosheths in this room. That is who we are, you and me. And look at the change in his life. He went from nothing to feasting.

And the more you feast at Jesus' table and rest in that identity, the more you get filled with his grace and his mercy. And it wells up and it builds up and it begins to spill out of your life. Because the grace that flows to you is also the grace that flows through you to others. And that's the other part of the story that we can't miss. Jesus is our king that calls us into a service.

[15 : 29] Jesus, he uses ordinary people. I am a very ordinary man. And he uses people like you and me to extend his grace to others. It isn't a fancy role. It's not one that gets a lot of attention or applause.

I went and I looked on Amazon. I was like, I wonder how many books have been written about this guy Ziba in 2 Samuel 9. You know how many books I found on Amazon that has every book ever printed? Nothing. Now, I would say that if you're a vegan hankering for some Erlunger Bondi raw almonds, Ziba's got you covered. All right. But the point is, is that the king's servant and the king's servants aren't the heroes here. But that doesn't mean the role's unimportant. Ziba is the means of grace in this story, as are the other servants under Ziba that remained nameless. And these guys, they are called to take the intent of the king's heart toward Mephibosheth and to incarnate it, to put flesh on it, to make it come to life. And as Jesus's servants, we're called to do the same thing. We're called to incarnate his grace, his heart to others. It is that simple. Look at what

King David called Ziba and his servants to do on behalf of Mephibosheth. Verse 9, then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, all of that belonged to Saul and all his house I have given to your master's grandson. And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce that your master's grandson may have bread to eat.

But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, shall always eat at my table. Now Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants. Then Ziba said to the king, according to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do. See, Ziba's calling here is absolutely clear. King David says, go and do what's in my heart. No arguing, no haggling. He just went and did it. What has our king called us to do as his disciples? Well, Matthew 28, 18, he says, go and make disciples, right? That's one thing. David sent his servants to go find Mephibosheth who was in hiding. Jesus sends us out to do the same thing, right?

He leaves the 99 to find the one. That's who he has called us to be. But Jesus sends us out much like them with a little bit of a twist. Our job like them is to bring them to Jesus. But how do we bring them to Jesus? By bringing Jesus to them. See, before Jesus ascends into heaven, in Acts 1, 8, he commands his disciples, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. That's our king's order to us. That's his orders, our marching orders as his disciples, as his servants. What are we called to do? Well, we're called to bear witness to him. That's what we're called to do.

[18 : 31] And another way of saying that is that we are called to incarnate his heart, to incarnate his purpose and his plan of redemption in this world. And when we do that, what we do is we make the invisible Jesus visible. And this calling is another kind of grace added to the free grace given to us in the mercies of God. And this other grace is a bit more costly, not because it requires us to earn it or pay for it.

It just requires us to die to ourselves. In his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer said it this way, costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again and again. The gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow.

And it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life. And it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin and grace because it justifies the sinner. And above all, it is costly because it costs God the life of his son. Ye were bought at a price. And what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is a grace because God did not reckon his son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the incarnation of God. Costly grace is the incarnation of Jesus.

It costs Jesus everything to do that for our sake. Will it not cost his disciples something to incarnate him in this world? Are we devoted to incarnating something else besides Jesus? Maybe it's the kingdom of our own stuff, our own lives that we are trying to build. Maybe it is incarnating the American vision of the good life instead of incarnating Jesus. The question for you and me that we have to reckon with, what does our life, yours and mine, what is it bearing witness to? Are we making the invisible Jesus visible? Now I realize that these are hard questions and these kind of questions can make us feel distressed, even ashamed, but I found the best questions are the one that make me feel a little bit uncomfortable because they are getting at some deep-rooted stuff in my heart. They're getting to the primordial stuff that God likes to get to. Now I would say this, it is tempting to hear this and run out of here and respond with like pragmatism that goes, pragmatism that goes a little too far.

And I don't want us to go out and think like, okay, how can I nail this down? How can I be a better, better at incarnating Jesus? And then we start making all these rules and this like perfect system that we can just feel really good about. Like if I, here's my checklist every day. And if I do all these things that, and then I know I'm good. It's not about that. It's not about that at all. As much as we wish it could be, it's not, which makes it elusive because it's primarily not about your doing or my doing. It's about our being. We are saved by Jesus to be witnesses of Jesus. So how do we be that to use bad grammar? Well, I would say this, displaying Jesus means living more intentionally where we are with what we have. Think about it in this story. David calls Ziba, commissions him. What does he say?

[22 : 12] David's like, I know you're already Saul's servant, probably living on Saul's property, caring for Saul's things. David doesn't change any of those things. All David did with Ziba was shift his focus.

Ziba, keep doing what you do and where you do it, just do it for me now. That's the difference. What Ziba did and where he did it never changed, just who he did it for. Os Guinness, Christian thinker, he calls this primary and secondary calling. As followers of Jesus, our primary calling is to make disciples and display Jesus. And that is the calling that leads every other part of our life.

Every other calling that we can be, the secondary callings, right? Everything else that you are, father or mother or husband or wife or son or daughter or friend, employer, employee, student, doctor, lawyer, mechanic, teacher, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. All those are secondary callings that tuck in behind your primary calling, right? Meaning you and me, we can display Jesus with what we already are doing in the places that we already go to. Seriously, we can do that.

And I'm not talking about like, hey, show up at work and preach a banging sermon every single time you're there. That's not it at all. Actually, it's just going to work with this new idea that what I am doing is for the King. When I wake up in the morning and I enter into my world and my, the way I interact with my wife and my kids, and then wherever I may go to the grocery store, what I am, I'm cognizant of intentionally is how can I bear witness to Jesus? And that affects the behaviors and the attitudes that I go in with so that he could be displayed. And when I think about, you know, if you go into your work, man, how is your work ethic? How is your integrity at work and the way you're behaving yourself? Is it dispensing the aroma of Christ or is it not?

And that is how grace can flow through us to others around us. It's one of the beautiful ways. And I want to say this before you poo poo this is like, yeah, yeah, just see whatever.

[24 : 26] It doesn't seem to really open up doors for the gospels. I've seen it. I've seen it open up doors for the gospel. My first job was with my brother's company. And so my brother, Scott, my brother, Ryan, they're a few years older than me. And I watched them. They had no problem not hiding their faith.

They weren't preaching sermons, but they weren't hiding the fact that they were Christian. And they went to work and they worked hard and they were ethical. They were integrous and they didn't compromise their witness at all. Now they got teased a lot. They got made fun of. They got left out of a lot of things by their coworkers. But over time, over the years, those same coworkers that tease them all of a sudden begin to seek them out. Why? Because when you engage in a life of sin, at some point, your life begins to fall apart because that's always what happens.

You got to pay the piper. And so because their life fell apart, all of a sudden, who were they going to? My brothers, because their life never seemed to be falling apart. And what did that do?

They came and they said to him, something's different about you guys. We don't know what it is. I don't know what's going on. Can you help me? Door opened for the gospel. Tom, he leads our Swansboro site, has this little charge to the congregation. You know, at the end, we always say, make disciples push back darkness all for the sake of the gospel.

And he kind of answered that, man, we go out like these little secret agents for, this is my Tom impression, little secret agents for the king. And when we go out, man, let's go and let's eat at the local restaurants. And when you're there, man, treat your waiter or waitress with kindness, treat them so well, better than they deserve, no matter what.

[26 : 10] Give them a generous big tip. Why? Because we're there and we're bearing witness to the king. We get to show them and lavish them mercy and grace. See, there doesn't have to be these major shifts in our lives. You don't, to follow Jesus and account for him doesn't mean you have to like quit your job, sell your stuff, move to the jungles of Ecuador to, to preach to people as a missionary. And I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that, right? That is a definite, legitimate calling too. But this is just intentionally living life where we're at, where we are at with what God has given us. So let's do that. And that is how Jesus's grace flows through his people to others. And what can happen is we can be like these little faucets that are dripping grace wherever we go.

And that grace can get on people and it could soak them. Let's do that. Man, let's saturate our city with the grace of Jesus wherever we are going. There is a ton of little ways to display the king, just like Ziba did and his nameless army of servants. Man, they had to tend the garden, cook the food, set the table, carry Mephibosheth to and from the king's table. That's what they were called to do.

It doesn't sound very heroic, but you know what? When they did that, all of them together, they incarnated the fullness of the king's heart towards Mephibosheth. And in God's economy, that's everything. It doesn't matter where we go. We are ever God's sons and daughters, and we are his servants. And I want to say this too, even if it's out there in life as we go, it's also here on Sundays when we gather as well. Now, I'm always a little bit concerned that we only ever make serving about Sundays, but we also don't want to ignore the fact that is a place that we can live this out. So often in the local church, it's the 20% carrying the 80%, but it doesn't have to be that way. And so as we come in here, man, you can jump in to serve on a serve team, whether that's in hospitality or in kids ministry. We always need kids ministry help, right? Youth ministry. A kids ministry worker just said yes and amen to that. We need musicians. We need tech people. We need all that stuff, right?

The more we come that way thinking, how can I serve? How can I be this little faucet that drips God's grace? What can happen is as more of us do it, there's a greater saturation of grace. Let's do that. Hey guys, let's get soaked when we come together in the grace of God. Now, before we end, one final thought, all this serving doesn't, we don't do it to earn God's love. We don't do it to earn the reward of eternal life. That is, that is freely given to us in Jesus Christ. We don't get a seat at the king's table because we serve. We are Mephibosheth saved by grace. Jesus came after us, called us out of hiding, forgave us, restored us, and gave us a place at his table. But man, let's make sure that is grabbing our heart. Let that be the thing that motivates us to serve. That like, man, I have been so loved. I have, I am so cherished. I have been so like lavish with grace upon grace, but by, by my amazing savior, that I can't help but realize, you know what? He does that for every other Mephibosheth around me. So I don't want to keep this all to myself. I don't want to be a me monster. I want to be like, thank you, Lord. Man, I want to, I want others to experience that same amazing grace.

And so we feast at the king's table. You get to do that. But you know what? We're also those who are finding every other Mephibosheth to bring them and join us at that same table. Amen.

[30 : 04] So as the band comes up and we respond to this, in a moment, we're going to respond by taking communion. And I want to say, if you're here, you are not yet a follower of Jesus. I want to say to you, man, the king is here right now and he is holding out to you his salvation. And I want to say this, there will be a day where we will all stand before the king of kings. We are all going to stand before Jesus and we will be judged. And none of your works are going to be good enough.

The only thing that is good enough was what Jesus has done and his death on the cross in your place. And he is offering to you right now, his grace and his mercy. So on that day, he won't have to give you judgment. He is offering you eternal life. Take it now, take it now. In a moment, there's going to be a prayer for you to pray up on the screen and pray that prayer. That's all it takes.

You don't have to jump through a ton of hoops. Jesus is here. Come to him, fall on his mercy. Now I want to say, if you're here, you're already a follower of Jesus. Remember who you are in Christ.

Hey, Mephibosheths, we're about to come to the king's table to feast on the one who this points to. He has lavished grace upon grace upon grace to us. And he invites us. We get to come for free.

So let's come. Let's come with thankfulness. Let's come with awe of how amazing this gift that we have been given in God's and the Father's Son, Jesus Christ. Now I want to give us a chance to respond to all that has been said, whatever the spirit has been doing in your heart. So we're going to take a minute and quietly go and pray to God. He's a God of grace and he loves you. And after or whenever you are ready, go to the table, take the communion elements, come back and just take it at your seat.

[32 : 00] Thank you. Thank you.