**We are all Mephibosheth’s - 2023**

**Charis is the Greek word for “Grace,” it is one of the most difficult Greek words to translate into English.**

**Words Like: - Favor - Beauty – Thankfulness – Gratitude – Delight – Kindness - And Benefit**

* **All derive from the root word “GRACE.”**
* **If we have a tough time translating THIS word, there is no wonder that *we struggle to comprehend the concept* of “GRACE.”**

**Digging through scriptures, we can come up with a picture of grace.**

* **Grace is ALWAYS tied to the heart and character of God.**
* ***In Isaiah*, we see that God longed to demonstrate His GRACE to a disobedient nation.**
* ***In Jeremiah* God underlined HIS GRACE by Promising to bring Israel back from captivity.**

**GRACE IS GOD’S CHARACTER DEMONSTRATED IN UNDESERVED LOVE!!**

**In fact…GRACE IS GOD!!! It is His Character illustrated in our lives with the scrawled signature at the cross.**

**GRACE = God giving us something we do not deserve**

* **Life - Another Opportunity – Success - Eternal Salvation**

**MERCY = God not giving us what we deserve.**

* **Health over Aids and STD’S – or Life over death in a fatal wreck**
* **Peace of mind over a nervous breakdown**
* **Faithfulness over OUR abandonment**

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**A couple of months ago I preached a message titled *Damaged good*!**

**Mephibosheth -** In Second Samuel, we read the story of ***A young man who was born into a royal family. He was the son of a prince (Jonathon) and the grandson of a king. (Saul)***

We pick up the story in **I Samuel 31**.

For years, **King Saul had pursued David**, the young man whom God anointed to replace him as king. **Saul’s obsession with hunting David down** left Israel’s enemies unchallenged; and when they realized that Saul was preoccupied with capturing and killing David, they amassed their armies to rise up against Israel.

On Mount Gilboa, ***King Saul, and his son, Jonathan, fought to the death*** as the Philistine routed *Israel’s overmatched and underequipped army*.

***Fleeing*** *before Joab’s mighty men*, all those loyal to Saul who sought to escape were slaughtered.

**All died by the sword, *except one child named Mephibosheth*, which means “*shameful one*.”** During the confusion and panic of fleeing from Joab’s men, ***Young Mephibosheth’s nurse dropped him* – Damaged Goods!**

***The nurse*** *managed to* ***escape with Mephibosheth*** to Lo-debar, across the Jordan, but **the fall permanently crippled the child**.

Even though he was **Jonathan’s son**, and the **grandson of King Saul**, ***Mephibosheth was destined to grow up in obscurity*** – crippled physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

* A sentence of **living death** had been pronounced over Mephibosheth.

**Mephibosheth** was the descendant of the anointed one of Israel, yet **he exchanged the truth of his position** for ***the lie of his circumstance***.

***He had come to believe that his present life had to be chained to past failures and tragedies.***

He was living in Lo-debar, *the name of which means***, “*dry and barren*.”**

* ***Lo-debar was the dwelling place of*** lack, poverty, dryness, and desolation.
* **It was the** wilderness, desert, and empty field of *no sowing* and *no harvest*.
* **Nothing** was there!

***Lo-debar was never intended to be a destination or a dwelling place, but it had become Mephibosheth’s prison of emptiness and isolation.***

* It was **not a life**, but **a living death**.

**The only way out of Lo-debar for Mephibosheth** required that a prior promise be remembered, and *a cherished covenant* be fulfilled.

**David sent the invitation** through Ziba, but **Mephibosheth had to move from Lo-debar to the palace to claim his blessing. *And so do we!***

**He had been** wounded, maimed by ***one who loved him*** and ***who had the responsibility to care for him***.

***Perhaps you know just how he felt*** *because you’ve been wounded by* **someone who *was supposed to care for you*** and ***prevent your injury***.

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**The Truth is… we are ALL Mephibosheth’s.**

**WE DIDN’T DESERVE GRACE OR MERCY….**

* ***After David became King, he had a right to kill any of Saul’s remaining family.***
* **There had been a rivalry between the two families for years.**
* **David now becomes king and takes the throne…let’s read:**

**2 Samuel 9:1-11 - David and Mephibosheth -** 9 David asked, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”

2Now there was a servant of Saul’s household named Ziba. They summoned him to appear before David, and the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?” “At your service,” he replied.

3The king asked, ***“Is there no one still alive from 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 lame 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.”

*5So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel.***6When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor.**

David said, “Mephibosheth!” “At your service,” 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.”

8Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?”

9Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul’s steward, and said to him, “I have given your master’s grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. 10You 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.)

11Then 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.

* **David Chose, that after he became King of *what he would do with a longtime family feud*.**
* **It was between the House of David and the House of Saul**
* **Instead of killing Saul’s family, which he had a right to do, he chose to respond with kindness.**
* **He sought after *who was left* in Saul’s family.**
* **Mephibosheth, a grandson of Saul (son of Jonathon) was still living.**
* **He was crippled in both feet. (Age of 5)**
* **He was taken to David’s house and to David’s table to eat.**
* **(He felt unworthy).**

**When God graciously offers us forgiveness of sins and a place in Heaven, we may feel unworthy, but we will receive these gifts if we accept them.**

**We will receive God’s gifts through trusting Jesus Christ, *not because we deserve it*, but because of God’s promise.**

**Ephesians 2:8-9 - Paul’s writing - 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.**

* **David’s kindness resembles God’s Grace to us.**
* **Even though we did nothing He still forgave us.**
* **Even though we didn’t deserve it… He gave it anyways.**
* **Even though we persecuted Him…He still loved us… THAT IS GRACE…**

We are creatures that have been drawn to pretty and nice things.

* We instinctively shun the unlovelies of life.
* Consequently, **we have a terrible time understanding the GRACE OF GOD**.

God’s GRACE loves when there is nothing good even beneath an awful wrapper.

Layer upon layer is removed and all that appears is more ugliness, God loves.

* **God Love’s us because He’s decided that we will be precious to Him.**
* He sent His Son to die on the cross for our ugliness. PERIOD!!!!

***It’s hard to imagine, isn’t it?* It’s even *Harder to accept*.**

**He simply reaches down into our torn, misshapen, world and makes people who are ugly, precious. –**

**MERCY** = God not giving us what we deserve

**Romans 9:15-18 - 15**For he says to Moses, “I will have **mercy** on whom I have **mercy**, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

**16**It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on **God’s mercy**. **17**For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” **18**Therefore **God has mercy** on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

**People are so busy trying to reach God** that they *completely miss the truth* that ***God has already* reached down to them**.

* **We cannot *earn God’s Mercy***--- If we could, **It would not be MERCY**!
* Life is uncertain, we should follow this shepherd who offers us eternal comfort.
* We will reach these places only by following him obediently.
* When you recognize the good shepherd, follow Him!

**Psalm 23:1-6 -**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. **2**He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

**3**He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. **4**Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

**5**Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. **6**Surely **goodness and mercy** shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

God is seen as a caring shepherd and a dependable guide. We must **follow** God and **obey** his commands. He is our **ONLY** hope for eternal life and security.

* **I am so glad that GOD gave me His MERCY and GRACE**
* **I didn’t deserve it… but I obtained it.**
* **How many of you are *sitting in places today that you didn’t deserve?***
* **How many of you have experienced…God’s GRACE and MERCY???**

***The King has sent me to tell you that there is a place for you in the palace!***

**Mephibosheth had spent a lifetime** hiding out in **darkness**, **existing** in fear, deception, nothingness, intimidation, and poverty. **But royalty came to him.** *The covenant of promise* **outlasted his hopelessness!**

You **don’t** have to **hide in fear any longer**.

**The King of kings has sent for you** and desires for you to dine at His table!

***When Mephibosheth came back*** to the palace of his childhood, ***he sat at the king’s table*, *ate a king’s meal*;** but the best part is that ***his paralyzed legs were covered*** under that table!

* To the world, he was **Damaged Goods**; but to the king, he was **a Candidate for GRACE! *And so are we*!!!!!!!!!!!**

**Listen to Pastor –**

**You may come to the Lord’s table as a wounded and maimed life, but once you sit down at His table, *your lameness is covered*, and you become just like everybody else!**

***Perhaps you’ve come today with the opinion that you’re Damaged Goods, but I’ve come to tell you that you’re just a Candidate for GRACE!***

**We are all Mephibosheth’s.**

**is Character**