

Intro: Without a doubt, the hottest thing on TV so far this century is reality TV. You know what that is...they basically stick a camera on some real people in real life situations doing real things and let it roll. I must admit a fondness for some of the reality shows over the past few years. I think the thing I like about them is that they are mostly rags-to-riches stories. Stories about normal people like me who get the chance to win a lot of money by doing totally abnormal things. In fact, in 2 days there is a new one coming out starring Virgin Atlantic's own, Richard Branson, called *The Billionaire*. I think he is going to hire someone as President of his company or something. That's not a plug, it's just to say that even the UK is cashing in on reality TV. The rags-to-riches phenomenon.

Tonight: We're going to look at Mephibosheth. Note card, anyone? **2 Samuel 9:11b-13**

Question: who is this guy who sits at the table of King David? Dignitary? Ambassador? Court Official? Who? Who is he? And how did he get this highly sought after seat at the royal table?

(First thing you need to know is that...)

I. Meph was a cripple (**13b**)

- A. Tell story of battle in 2 Sam. 4; 1 Sam. 31:1-4 (no names). Years before this text, there was a great battle between the Philistines and Israel. At the time of this battle, Meph was 5 years old...
1. Meph's father was killed in this battle with the Philistines
 2. It so happens that the King and Prince of Israel were also killed. So, there was no one to stop Philistines from plundering the cities of Israel as they chased the Israelite army fleeing east across the Jordan. *If you can imagine the old Godzilla movies and the people fleeing in terror.*
- B. Tell story of Meph injury ("5-yr-old only run so far"). Well, the Israelite soldiers eventually get to Meph's house and frantically inform his nurse of the events and that the Philistines are on the way. So Meph and his nurse join in the mighty chorus of those running for their lives.
1. We're not sure where or when, but at some point in the frantic journey, Meph fell. Perhaps his nurse was carrying him and accidentally fell on him...we just don't know.
 2. We also don't know what happened to his legs. Perhaps the bones were never set right. All we know is that Meph is a cripple. He is lame in both feet.
- C. Tell how he ends up in house of Makir in Lo-Debar.
1. Well Meph and his nurse, along with many other Israelites eventually end up on the other side of the Jordan River, far away from the Philistines and anyone else. They settle in a little place called "Lo Debar." Means "no word." Quite a fitting name for people who are in hiding.
 2. The group in hiding is made up of a remnant of Saul loyalists. It's here, in this quiet and deserted place the Meph lives for many years until we see him again in this chapter. But why?

II. Meph was an enemy – (not only was Meph a cripple...)

- A. When Ish-Bosheth is killed in chapter 4, Meph becomes the sole heir to Saul's throne. You see, Meph is the grandson of King Saul, and the son of Jonathan, the prince.
1. King and Prince who died were Saul and Jonathan
 2. They weren't hiding from the Philistines. They were in hiding bc they were part of a conquered royal family. Members of conquered royal families don't have a long life expectancy. Why? Because the new king doesn't want them to rise up and revolt.
- B. Through a series of events, the throne of Israel shifts away from Saul and his line to David
1. Meph would have been king (Do you think he was angry? Maybe people told him that David killed his father and grandfather...he was only 5)
 2. 7 years later, in chapter 5, the whole country embraces David as King. Thus, the throne that once belonged to his father is now totally out of reach for Meph.

III. How on earth does Meph, this crippled enemy of the King, end up at David's table?

- A. David seeks him out in the first 5 verses. He goes to one of his servants that he knows has a history with Saul and asks if there are any descendants left in Saul's family.

2 Samuel 9 - Mephibosheth

1. But in a huge twist, David isn't interested in killing him off. Look. **READ 1-5**. Summoned by David to show kindness bc of his covenant with Jonathan in **1 Sam. 20:12-17**
2. Put yourself in his shoes. Knock at your door. Go see the king. He thinks he'll be killed, why shouldn't he? That's what happens to guys like Meph (**v. 8**). So Meph stands trembling before the king, probably waiting to die or be permanently imprisoned in some steamy dungeon.
- B. But David doesn't give him what he deserves as an enemy. Rather, in his grace; he seeks him out, raises him up, and restores his lost inheritance (**6-11a**)
 1. *Hesed* – 3 times (**1, 3, 7**). Goodness, loving-kindness. When this word is used of God, it is used to highlight His love in condescending to lowly creatures.
 2. David essentially adopts this crippled enemy as a son (king's inheritance; eats at king's table). Note well that Meph wasn't shown kindness because of who he was...that would have brought only death. Rather he was shown kindness because of who he was related to, Jonathan.
- C. ***What an incredible thing this is...can you believe this?!***
 1. What if you were Meph? A King that should have killed you, instead seeks you out, raises you up, and restores to you a king's inheritance that was lost? What would you do?
 2. Sound familiar? It should. It's you. **Eph 2:1-10**
 - a. **V. 1** – “were dead” read “severely crippled and utterly incapable of affecting our position”
 - b. **V. 3** – “children of wrath” read “enemies; loyal to the wrong guy.”
 - c. **V. 5a** – “even when dead” read “sought you out”
 - d. **V. 5b-6a** – “raised us up”
 - e. **V. 6b** – “seated in Heaven” read “restored lost inheritance, adopted as son, and seated us”
- D. Author not thinking of God and us, wants to show greatness of David (**why he spills it in v. 1**). David is a man after God's own heart, right (**ch. 7**)? How do we know? Because he acts like God here in chapter 9. So this text is here to highlight the greatness of David...but Meph is the object.
 1. ***In same way helplessness of Meph magnifies greatness of David, so our helplessness magnifies God's greatness. Eph. 2:7***
 2. We are pictures to the world of the greatness of God's grace (**1 Tim. 1:15-16**). As Meph is an illustration of David's greatness, so we are an illustration of God's.
- E. Well, needless to say, Meph was intensely loyal to his King for the rest of his days. (**2 Sam. 16, 19, 21**). He went to his grave serving King David. We should be such servants.
 1. In worship of His grace that rescued us from such a plight.
 2. In obedience to His commands (**Rom. 12:1-2**)
 3. In the telling of the story, highlighting God as our own hero. We are not the heroes of our story. We weren't saved because we were bigger, faster, smarter, or stronger than the next guy. God is the hero. We deserved only death, but God stooped to give us life.

Conc: Well that's the story of Meph. A cripple enemy of the King of Israel who ends up eating at the King's table as an adopted son, not because of anything he did, but purely because of the grace of the King. Meph is rags-to-riches. Really, riches to rags to riches. But the centerpiece of the story is David.

And that's our story too. Why wouldn't we worship, obey, and tell about such an incredible King? Incidentally, do you know that the most effective tool that you have for sharing the message of the Gospel is your own story? The retelling of your own experience with this hero-God...

Image: We are the ultimate rags to riches story. And God gets all the glory. **2 Cor. 8:9**