

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

5/13/2018 · Week 17 · Mephibosheth · 2 Samuel 7 & 9

1. Today we are looking at the powerful story of Mephibosheth (pronounced "Muh-fib-uh-sheth"), the son of Jonathan. Begin your group meeting by asking God to open your hearts to His words, then read together 2 Samuel 4:4 and all of chapter 9.
2. In 2 Samuel 4:4, we read that Mephibosheth was five years old when his father and grandfather (Jonathan and Saul) were killed. Upon hearing about their deaths, Mephibosheth's nurse fled in a furious haste that led to his crippling. When he was called to David, he was probably around age 20. Think about the bookends of Mephibosheth's story. If it began with utter fear (4:4, 9:7), what does it end with?
3. In this account, David fulfills the promise he made with Jonathan in 1 Sam. 20:14-17. David's declaration that Mephibosheth "shall always eat my table" (2 Sam. 9:10), was an expressed commitment of protection in ancient near eastern culture. What are some practical ways can we express this kind of commitment to our neighbors today? (To our friends, family, spouses, students, co-workers?) Who has God called you to protect?
4. 2 Samuel 9 is a wonderful demonstration of the important Old Testament conception of "loyal love." The Hebrew word "hesed" is found three times in the chapter (vs. 1, 3, 7). There is no exact English equivalent for this word. In various translations it appears as "kindness," "faithfulness," "mercy," "goodness," "loyalty," "favor," "devotion," and "steadfast love." How are each of these meanings expressed in this story?
5. The word hesed appears 246 times in the Old Testament. Take some time exploring a few popular uses of this term from areas of Scripture we read earlier this year. Divide these references among your group members: Genesis 40:14; Exodus 34:6-7; Job 10:12; Joshua 2:12-13; Ruth 2:20, 3:10; 2 Samuel 7:15; Psalm 135:5-9. How is the term expressed? What themes do you notice? When does it speak of relationships between men and the relationship between God and men?
6. The story of Mephibosheth can also be seen as a beautiful portrait of the gospel. In what ways does Mephibosheth represent fallen, sinful humankind? In what ways does David represent God?
7. In verse 8, Mephibosheth calls himself a "dead dog." However, David did not view him the same way. One Bible scholar put it this way: "When David looked upon this boy, he did not see a cripple; he saw Jonathan." Think of this phrase in Christ terms. Discuss the significance of the statement: "When God looks upon the forgiven, he does not see a damned sinner; he sees Christ."
8. Christ is the ultimate example of hesed. Take some time in prayer to PRAISE God for the what He has done for you through Christ! Try incorporating some of the words from the "hesed verses" you looked up earlier in your prayers.