

2 Samuel 4:4 *And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.*

2 Samuel 9:1-13 ¹ *And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?* ² *And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he.* ³ *And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.* ⁴ *And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar.* ⁵ *Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar.* ⁶ *Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!* ⁷ *And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.* ⁸ *And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?* ⁹ *Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.* ¹⁰ *Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.* ¹¹ *Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.* ¹² *And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth.* ¹³ *So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.*

- In Scripture, the word “lame” is a general term referring to imperfect limbs, either by birth or injury. The word refers to impairment or loss of power in walking, whether from rigidity, amputation, or deformity. Lameness is mentioned among the bodily imperfections that barred a descendant of Aaron from entering the Holy Place or offering sacrifices.

Leviticus 21:16-23 ¹⁶ *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,* ¹⁷ *Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God.* ¹⁸ *For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous,* ¹⁹ *Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded,* ²⁰ *Or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken;* ²¹ *No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.* ²² *He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy.* ²³ *Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them.*

- Basically nothing was done for crippled people in Old Testament times. Scripture reveals hardly a trace of medical science. This seems remarkable considering the long time Israel lived in Egypt, where medicine was cultivated to a high degree of excellence. Owing to their practice of embalming, the Egyptians were well acquainted with human anatomy. But Israel was different! They had several principles of hygiene in their Law, but these were due only to God’s command and not to their skill. There was a tendency in all serious sickness to fall back only on Divine providence. When the crippled King Asa “did not seek the Lord, but the physicians” (2 Chronicles 16:12), the Biblical record reproaches him. **In other words, God was the only hope for a cripple!**

STORY:

- time of chaos after the death of Saul and Jonathan; all Saul's descendants being killed
- five year old son of Jonathan, crippled when dropped by his nurse
- lived in a refugee city called Lodebar ("no pasture") for many years
- remembered because of David's covenant with Jonathan, called by the king to come
- reaction of fear and disbelief ("such a dead dog as I am")
- probably carried in some way to the palace (had to trust again)
- fell on his face before the king; frightened out of his wits
- allowed to eat at the King's table, even though Mephibosheth did not add to the "atmosphere"
- once his feet were "under the table," Mephibosheth was indistinguishable from everyone else!

PARALLEL:

MEPHIBOSHETH REPRESENTS THE DISABLED HUMAN SOUL

- Sin is described in various attractive ways by Hollywood, Nashville, San Francisco, etc.
- But the Bible presents it as a Mephibosheth, lame on both feet
- His nurse let him fall, but in reality the whole backslidden house of Saul was lame
- Sin let us fall, not just the "down and out" sins, but our rebellion against God
- We are crippled when we are dropped by what has been carrying us
- Only Jesus will never drop us!
- No matter what you think, sin is ghastly disfiguration and hobbling deformity

MEPHIBOSHETH REPRESENTS THE DISABLED HUMAN SOUL RESTORED

- He trembled at the king's invitation (is he going to destroy me, take vengeance?)
- We allow our fear to make us an exile ("no pasture")
- We do not believe that God would ever want to have us because of our lameness
- It is hard to let go of our old "comfortable" crippled life and trust someone else to carry us
- The best reaction is to throw yourself on your face at the feet of the King!

MEPHIBOSHETH REPRESENTS THE DISABLED HUMAN SOUL RESTORED FOR THE SAKE OF ANOTHER

- Despite our lameness, we are invited to the King's table because of a covenant
- "for Jonathan's sake" = "for Christ's sake" (i.e. little child's prayer)
- the covenant brought Jonathan to David's mind
- the new covenant brings Bethlehem, Gethsemane, Calvary to God's mind
- it is not for our sake that we are invited (humbling, but still life's greatest privilege!)

MEPHIBOSHETH REPRESENTS THE DISABLED HUMAN SOUL RESTORED FOR THE SAKE OF ANOTHER AND LIFTED TO THE KING'S TABLE

- It was more difficult then than now to get into the royal dining room
- Most able bodied men never got invited once, Mephibosheth ate there every day
- We do not add anything to the "palace" but God still wants our company!
- The gospel takes a man so low and lifts him to a place so high!
- **Once we get our crippled feet (humanity) under God's table, we can function as royalty!**

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Psalm 73:2-3,16-18 ² But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. ³ For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ¹⁶ When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me; ¹⁷ Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end. ¹⁸ Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.

John Bunyan

In 1660, when the British monarchy attempted to arrest the growth of independent churches by forbidding preaching, Bunyan refused to obey, was arrested and sentenced to remain in prison until he agreed to conform. He remained a prisoner of conscience for 12 years. During this time he turned to writing. He is most famous for his autobiography (Grace Abounding To The Chief Of Sinners) and his classic, The Pilgrim's Progress. However, he also wrote other beautiful works, like this poem:

**“Run, John, run,” the Law commands, But gives me neither legs nor hands.
Far grander news the Gospel brings; It bids me fly and gives me wings!**

DAVID DID THIS ACT OF KINDNESS BECAUSE SOMEONE HAD ALREADY DONE IT FOR HIM!

Psalm 23:5-6 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 for ever.

PUT YOUR FEET UNDER GOD'S TABLE!