

LoDebar: The Grace of a King

(Adapted by Paul R. Blake from sermon by Steve Higginbotham)

Introduction:

A. 2Samuel 9 - Read

B. LoDebar was a town in the Old Testament in Gilead of Gad just south of the Sea of Galilee in old Israel. It is mentioned in the Bible as the home of Machir, a contemporary of David and the foster parent of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. LoDebar was a dismal place with almost no pasture and very little hope, a desolate, sad place where people went to disappear. While the name means "no pasture," it came to mean "no word, or no communication," as those who went there were almost never heard from again. One ends up in LoDebar when battered by the storms of life and believes that life is over for him.

C. Mephibosheth was the grandson of Saul and the son of Jonathan, whose nurse took him and fled when news of their deaths came. It was the custom of conquering kings to kill all of the heirs to the throne to discourage insurrection. Jewish historians state that his nurse dropped him as they were fleeing and his feet were damaged and untreated - 2Sam. 4:4.

1. Imagine this five-year-old's nurse telling him they would surely be killed if the new King David ever found out they were alive. You can almost hear her telling Mephibosheth: "This is King David's fault you are like this. You know what would have happened to you after your grandfather died. If I had not run with you, you would be dead, and if I had not been forced to hurry, I would not have dropped you. It's David's fault you are crippled."

2. Imagine being raised to adulthood from the age of five by Machir in LoDebar, the dismal land of no pasture, in the city of no news, knowing that you went from being the grandson of the king to an exile in hiding. You have no land or inheritance to give your children, you live at the mercy and generosity of Machir, you are disabled for life, and you live in fear that the king will learn you are alive. You are so little regarded and have so little regard for yourself that the responsibility and blessings given you are placed in another's care. Would you view yourself as anything other than a "dead dog"?

D. David is King over Israel at the height of his glory. He recalls a covenant he made with his friend, Jonathan - 1Sam. 20:13-17

1. David was heartbroken when Jonathan was killed - 2Sam. 1:17-27

2. He was determined to keep his vow regardless of how much time had passed or how few were alive that remembered.

3. He offered grace to one who was hopeless and helpless
a. Unexpected, unsolicited, unbelieved

I. MEPHIBOSHETH'S NEED FOR GRACE

A. He was separated from David the king, the city of Jerusalem, and the palace

1. Isa. 59:2; Eph. 2:12-13

B. He was afraid of David - 2Sam. 9:7

1. Isa. 6:5; Acts 5:12-13

C. He had no means of changing his condition - Rom. 3:23, 6:23; Heb. 10:31

II. THE GRACE OF A KING

- A. David was seeking someone to whom he could show kindness - Titus 3:4-5
- B. David poured out abundance on someone who had done nothing to earn it and who had no means of repaying it - Eph. 2:8-10
- C. David's grace was given on the merits of another - Eph. 1:3-7
- D. David helped a man who could not help himself - Rom. 5:6-8

III. THE PRODUCT OF GRACE

- A. Though Mephibosheth was still lame in both feet, each time he put his feet under David's table, his condition was covered - Rom. 4:7-8
- B. Recipients of grace show gratitude by faithfulness - 2Sam. 19:24-30
 - 1. He mourned while David was in exile
 - 2. He did not complain when Ziba took his donkey and fled and later spoke ill of Mephibosheth; he did not want to burden David at an unsettled time and put Israel at further risk by stirring up trouble

Conclusion:

- A. God has been good to us, much better than we deserve. He has given us the riches of His grace and has offered us a place in His palace and at His table.
- B. In view of that, what should be our response? While we can never repay him, we can show our gratitude by dedication to Him.