

=UNUSUAL BIBLE STORIES=

Lesson 2

Mephibosheth, the Cripple

SCRIPTURE: II Samuel 9

INTRODUCTION: The story of Mephibosheth is a very interesting one. It is found in II Samuel 9. Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan. He had been crippled at the age of five when he was pulled to safety by his nurse during a battle. He was taken to the land of Lo-debar to live in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel. After the death of Saul and Jonathan, David wanted to do something nice in their memory. One day he called his servants together and asked, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" One of David's servants, named Ziba, stood to tell David that there was one left, that the son of Jonathan lived in the land of Lo-debar and his name was Mephibosheth. David sent his servants to the land of Lo-debar to the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, to get Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was brought to the king's palace. He was made as one of David's sons. He was allowed to eat at the king's table and live in the palace. Herein is one of the most beautiful stories in all the Bible. A little crippled fellow was adopted by the king.

POINT OF CONTACT: Discuss crippled people. Ask your pupils if they know any crippled people. If so, who are they? Perhaps the pupils know of some people in the class or in the church who are crippled. Discussion could follow concerning who they are and what their problems are.

There are few stories in all the Bible that picture the plan of salvation more beautifully than this story of the crippled boy, Mephibosheth. Let us notice step-by-step the plan of salvation in this beautiful little story.

- I. MEPHIBOSHETH WAS CRIPPLED BY A FALL. See II Samuel 4:4. During a battle he was picked up suddenly, no doubt was dropped, and was crippled. We do not know exactly what kind of condition was his, but we do know that he was crippled by a fall. This typifies all of us. We, too, have been crippled by a fall. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden were tempted by Satan to sin. They did sin, and in so doing, fell from innocence to a state of guilt before God. As federal head of the human race, Adam brought sin to the earth. Now each of us has faced the same temptation, and each of us has sinned. We have been crippled by a fall.
- II. MEPHIBOSHETH WAS UNABLE TO HELP HIMSELF. He was, no doubt, a helpless cripple in the house of a relative. This pictures the fact that there is nothing the sinner can do to help himself. The sinner is helpless as far as saving himself is concerned.
- III. MEPHIBOSHETH WAS SOUGHT BY THE KING. Read II Samuel 9:1-5. You will notice that David sent a messenger to seek the one who had been crippled by a fall. David represents the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus had made salvation available to us. He has sent a messenger, the Holy Spirit, to tell us that He wants us to come to the palace to live with Him forever. The message of King David as sent by the servant was to tell the one crippled by the fall that a place had been prepared for him in the king's palace. The message of Christ as sent by the Holy Spirit is to tell all of us who have been crippled by a fall that we may come to the place prepared for us to live with the King of kings and the Lord of lords forever.

(Teacher, if there are unsaved students in the class, remind them that they are being sought by the King. Tell them of Heaven, of the King's palace. You may turn to John 14:1-6 or Revelation 21:1-4 and show them the glories of Heaven and the home that is prepared for us. Show them how the Holy Spirit knocks at the door of their hearts and wants them to receive Christ.)

- IV. MEPHIBOSHETH WAS WILLING TO GO. No one can go to Heaven unless he chooses to do so. The Bible says, "Whosoever will may come." Notice, the "will" is important. God forces Himself on none. Many times people will say, "When my time comes, I will be saved." The truth is, the time is now, and God has offered salvation to all who "will" receive Christ.

- V. MEPHIBOSHETH WAS CARRIED TO THE PALACE. Bear in mind, he was a cripple; he could not go himself; he was carried. It is not our job to save ourselves. It is our job only to give ourselves. It is the job of the Holy Spirit to take us to the palace. Can you picture little Mephibosheth being carried by a servant to the palace? No doubt there were some hot days and some cold days, some peaks and some valleys on the way; and yet all the time, he was being taken to the palace. The Christian is being taken to Heaven. He has the Holy Spirit as his guide. There are high days and low days, hot days and cold days, good days and bad days; but the Holy Spirit is always with us. (Teacher, stress the importance of the pupil yielding to the Holy Spirit and following Him day by day, whether on the mountaintop or in a valley.)
- VI. MEPHIBOSHETH WAS HONORED BECAUSE OF ANOTHER. In this story, perhaps David best represents God the Father, and Mephibosheth represents the Christian. Mephibosheth's father, Jonathan, represents Jesus Christ. Jonathan had been a friend to David. It was not because of himself that Mephibosheth was honored; it was because of his father, Jonathan. It is not because of us that we go to Heaven but rather because of Jesus Christ. He is our Saviour and, as Jonathan did, He stands for us at the right hand of the Father. Jonathan stood by David that Mephibosheth may be honored; Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father that we may some day live in the Heavenly palace.
- VII. MEPHIBOSHETH ATE AT THE KING'S TABLE. Notice II Samuel 9:7. This is a very interesting thing. Mephibosheth was as any other of the king's sons. He was not as big, but he was just as much a son. He was not as mighty as some, but just as much a son. He was not as handsome as some, but just as much a son. As he sat at the table in the evening, the Oriental tablecloth would strike him across the waist. As far as people could see, his infirmity was not there, for he was covered by the whiteness of the Oriental tablecloth. He was crippled, but that was covered. Linen represents the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We, too, are sinners. Yet Christ covers us with His own righteousness, and in the sight of God, our infirmity does not show.
- VIII. MEPHIBOSHETH BECAME AN HEIR OF THE KING. Read II Samuel 9:9. You will notice that all that pertained to Saul and his house was given to Mephibosheth. He became a legal heir. We have become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. All that belongs to God belongs to us because of Christ. See Romans 8:17.
- IX. MEPHIBOSHETH WAS WILLING TO SERVE. See II Samuel 9:6. Notice the last three words, "Behold thy servant!" Mephibosheth did not say when he came to the king's court, "Behold thy cripple," or "Behold thy lame one," but "Behold thy servant!" There was not much he could do, but he would do what he could. He was not willing just to be served; he wanted to serve. Now the truth is, salvation is all of grace. We can do nothing to save ourselves, and certainly we do not deserve to be saved. Nevertheless, we ought to be willing to serve God. It matters not how little the talent, how little the energy, how insignificant the Christian, he should give himself in service for God.
- X. MEPHIBOSHETH REMAINED THERE. He was to stay at the king's table. What security! Here is a beautiful picture of the security that God offers to us.
- XI. THERE IS A SAD ENDING TO THIS STORY! MEPHIBOSHETH WAS NOT ALWAYS TRUE AND LOYAL TO DAVID. He was always as one of David's sons. He never lost his position, but he did at one time become unfaithful. David had been subjected to a bitter battle with his own son, Absalom. Absalom had rebelled against his father, and David had left the palace. Many remained loyal and went with David, but Mephibosheth stayed at the palace. How often this is the case in the Christian life. We are crippled. We have been brought from poverty to riches, from Lo-debar to the palace. We eat at the King's table. We are one of the King's sons. We have all that belongs to the King. Yet oftentimes we do not stand for Him as we should. (Teacher, stress the importance of standing for Christ always—at home, at school, at work, everywhere! We should always take our stand for the Lord Jesus Christ.)