

## **PP The Table of Grace**

Illus Have you ever mastered the Rubik's Cube? I never have, but I have a nephew who can complete the puzzle in under 30 seconds. The number of different combinations in a Rubik's cube are 43 quintillion. That is the 43, followed by, a lot more numbers.

God's Word is even more vast than even this; its depths have never been plumbed  
So when we look to see what the Word of God has to say about the Lord's Supper, none  
of us should ever think we have exhausted all God's wants to teach us about this  
ordinance

Given to show us how rich His grace is, and to guide us in our celebration of the Lord's  
Supper

David had finally conquered all his enemies and was able to enjoy a rest from war  
Earlier, he had made a covenant with Jonathon, the son of Israel's former king Saul:

**PP** *"But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I  
may not be killed,<sup>15</sup> and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even  
when the LORD has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."*

1 Samuel 20:14-15

David would keep his promise and we see it unfold in our passage this morning  
Turn with me to 2 Samuel 9

There are three truths I want to point out from this passage that help us as we approach  
the Lord's Supper this morning

### **PP1-The Lord's Supper is a continual demonstration of God's Mercy and Grace**

(1-3)

Notice that David is looking for someone to show kindness to

There is no compulsion forcing him to show kindness, this is free grace

Often, a new king's wrath would pour out on any child or relative of the former king that  
could lay claim to the throne

But David, a man after God's own heart, looks to show kindness to any from the house of  
Saul

Not just kindness because it would gain something for himself, for his kindness was for  
Jonathon's sake, his best friend who had died

And not just kindness from his own fallen heart, but *'the kindness of God'* (verse 3)

**PP** This word *'kindness'* is the Hebrew word *chesed*, a covenantal term for mercy

Mercy expresses itself in action and was always to be reciprocal

One who experiences the kindness and mercy of another is to reciprocate when the  
opportunity arrives

When someone shows us mercy, we should be ready to give that mercy back when the  
opportunity arises

But we cannot show mercy to God, He doesn't need it, so we are required to show His  
mercy to others

This is what David means when he desires to show the kindness of God to the household  
of his former enemy

We see God's mercy, His *chesed*, His kindness clearly in the Lord's Supper

**PP** *“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” Eph 2:4-7*

The Lord’s Supper powerfully reminds us of this mercy, and grace in kindness

**PP 2-The Lord’s Supper is a continual reminder of Our Need (5-8)**

There is still one from Saul’s house still alive and his name is Mephibosheth  
*“Ziba said to the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet.”” (3b)*

Friends, can you think of even one reason why you deserve eternal life?

Illus John Newton said that when we get to heaven, there will be three wonders:  
(1) who is there; (2) who is not there, and (3) the fact that I’m there!<sup>1</sup>

Do you know what a lame person’s life was like for a Hebrew?

Lame in both feet means he simply cannot walk in a time where there were no  
wheelchairs and no prosthetics

A lame priest was not allowed to serve in the holy place

Lame animals were not fit to be sacrificed to the Lord

Entirely dependent on others, and often unable to earn a living, reduced to begging

Lameness was debilitating *and* humiliating

It is a metaphor for our helplessness in sin; for our complete need to receive grace

We are crippled by sin and unable to stand in God’s righteous presence

We are helpless and completely hopeless on our own

**PP** *“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.” Romans 5:6*

*“And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, “Mephibosheth!” And he answered, “Behold, I am your servant.” 7And David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always. And he paid homage and said, “What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?” (6-8)*

I wonder what was going through the mind of Mephibosheth as he was brought to the  
king?

He must have been terrified for David told him, *‘Do not fear’*

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<sup>1</sup> Source Unknown

Here he is, a grandson of David's former enemy Saul, a crippled rival to the throne  
His very life was in the hands of the king, he had absolutely nothing with which to barter  
No worth of his own, no merit to stand on, no value to David  
He had done nothing that deserved the blessings David was about to bestow on Him  
He came with empty hands, unable to offer even one single thing  
Yet David said to him, ***"I will show you kindness for the sake of your father  
Jonathon..."***  
What a picture of the Gospel!

**PP** ***"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing;  
it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."*** Ephesians 2:8-9

Friends, it is so easy to forget our continual need for grace  
No one comes limping to Lord's Supper, they are carried there by the grace of God in  
Jesus Christ  
We who have been saved by grace through Christ can so easily begin to think we have it  
all together  
We forget that our complete reliance on Christ is ongoing  
Have you ever wondered why the author included the last verse in this chapter?  
***"So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king's table. Now he  
was lame in both his feet."*** (13)

Mephibosheth was brought to the King's city, and ate as a son at the king's table, but he  
was still ***'lame in both feet'***  
We are still helpless apart from Christ  
The reason why Christ has told us to continue to observe this ordinance is to keep us in  
the shadow of His cross  
That we may remain awe-struck with His grace to us who deserved His wrath  
This doesn't produce low self-esteem as the world's experts would claim  
It produces humility, and confidence in God, and a fervent desire to love Him and show  
that love to others  
There is no healthier place than at the Lord's Table realizing that we are in constant need  
of His grace and continual recipients of His kindness  
It is only through His death that we have favor, only through His death that we have  
peace with God, only through His death that we have hope of eternal life, only  
through His death that we have the strength to obey God, only through His death  
do we have a new nature empowered by the Holy Spirit to live pleasing to Him  
The moment we come out from under the shadow of the cross, forgetting that *in  
ourselves* we are crippled and lame, that is the moment we forget the grace that is  
ours in Christ and the Lord's Supper becomes routine

**PP 3-The Lord's Supper is a continual reminder of Our Restoration (9-13)**

Illus When Billy Graham was driving through a small southern town, he was stopped  
by a policeman and charged with speeding. Graham admitted his guilt, but had to appear  
in court. The judge asked, "Guilty, or not guilty?" When Graham pleaded guilty, the

judge replied, “That’ll be ten dollars—a dollar for every mile you went over the limit.” Suddenly the judge recognized the famous minister. “You have violated the law,” he said. “The fine must be paid—but I am going to pay it for you.” He took a ten dollar bill from his own wallet, attached it to the ticket, and then took Graham out and bought him a steak dinner! “That,” said Billy Graham, “is how God treats repentant sinners!”<sup>2</sup>

Mephibosheth received David’s kindness, knew the extent of his need and responded with: ***“I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always.”***...***“What is your servant that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I? Then the king called...”*** (7b, 9-11)

The name Mephibosheth rolls strangely off our tongues

But it is a powerful name

Do you remember from two weeks ago, that names to a Hebrew captured a person’s nature, character and personality

We know that his birth name was Merib-baal from the genealogy table in 1 Chronicles 8:

***“The son of Jonathan: Merib-Baal [Mephibosheth], who was the father of Micah.”*** (34)

It is believed that copyists changed his name to avoid the similarity to the Canaanite god Baal

This would not be unusual as Jerub-baal became Jerub-besheth, and Ish-baal became Ish-bosheth

**PP** The name Mephibosheth means ‘*shame breaker*’

God’s grace, when responded to by utter deep humility, has the power to break shame in our hearts

**PP** ***“Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” says the LORD.***” Zephaniah 3:19-20

This lame man was brought to the king’s table and given the position of a son

His fortunes were restored

Friends, we are about to celebrate with sober joy, the Lord’s Supper

How will you prepare your hearts and minds?

My goal this morning is that the Lord’s Supper will remind us of the great kindness of God, Who sent His Son to die in our place so that we could live

That we would remember our continuing need because without Christ, we are completely lame

And that the grace and kindness of God would break our shame and free us to love Him and others

Let’s pray

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<sup>2</sup> Progress Magazine, December 14, 1992.



We do not deserve God's kindness which is why the Lord's Table ought to fill us with a right fear of God

The fear of God, according to Jerry Bridges is '*reverential awe, a mixture of fear, veneration, wonder, and admiration, all directed toward God Himself.*'<sup>3</sup>

The word 'awe' gets misunderstood when we use it toward something that we thought was really cool

It means to experience the emotions of dread and fear

A reverential awe of God is to realize that because of Christ, the wrath of God has been removed from us and therefore, our holy omnipotent God has mercy toward us

Because of Christ-*not for any reason in ourselves*-we are saved from God's wrath

Note the reverential awe in this man called Mephibosheth

Who is he? He is the son of Jonathon, David's best friend  
And he is called before the king and

The lame were not allowed to serve as priests in the temple of God

Mephibosheth was not only lame in one foot, he was lame in both feet

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<sup>3</sup> Jerry Bridges, *The Joy of Fearing God*, p. 19

Illus Longing to leave her poor Brazilian neighborhood, Christina wanted to see the world. Discontent with a home having only a pallet on the floor, a washbasin, and a wood-burning stove, she dreamed of a better life in the city. One morning she slipped away, breaking her mother's heart. Knowing what life on the streets would be like for her young, attractive daughter, Maria hurriedly packed to go find her. On her way to the bus stop she entered a drugstore to get one last thing. Pictures. She sat in the photograph booth, closed the curtain, and spent all she could on pictures of herself. With her purse full of small black-and-white photos, she boarded the next bus to Rio de Janeiro. Maria knew Christina had no way of earning money. She also knew that her daughter was too stubborn to give up. When pride meets hunger, a human will do things that were before unthinkable. Knowing this, Maria began her search. Bars, hotels, nightclubs, any place with the reputation for street walkers or prostitutes. She went to them all. And at each place she left her picture—taped on a bathroom mirror, tacked to a hotel bulletin board, fastened to a corner phone booth. And on the back of each photo she wrote a note. It wasn't too long before both the money and the pictures ran out, and Maria had to go home. The weary mother wept as the bus began its long journey back to her small village. It was a few weeks later that young Christina descended the hotel stairs. Her young face was tired. Her brown eyes no longer danced with youth but spoke of pain and fear. Her laughter was broken. Her dream had become a nightmare. A thousand times over she had longed to trade these countless beds for her secure pallet. Yet the little village was, in too many ways, too far away. As she reached the bottom of the stairs, her eyes noticed a familiar face. She looked again, and there on the lobby mirror was a small picture of her mother. Christina's eyes burned and her throat tightened as she walked across the room and removed the small photo. Written on the back was this compelling invitation. "Whatever you have done, whatever you have become, it doesn't matter. Please come home." She did.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Max Lucado, *No Wonder They Call Him the Savior*, Multnomah Press, 1986, pp. 158-9.

Throughout scripture, eating and drinking seem to tie in to experiencing the presence of God

***“Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel...they beheld God, and ate and drank.”*** Exodus 24:9-11

***“And before the LORD your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always... And you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household.”*** Deuteronomy 14:23, 26

Year after year, the Hebrew people of God were commanded to eat sacrificial meals, continually reminding that their sins were not yet taken away, and that the Messiah would one day come Who would do that very thing

Even today, at the end of the Seder dinner, Jews toast by raising their cups and saying, *“Next year, in Jerusalem!”* Meaning that one day the Messiah will come and they will live in the rebuilt Jerusalem.

But while the sacrificial meals pointed the Old Testament people of God forward, the Lord’s Supper points believers backwards and forwards  
It points us to the cross of Christ where our sins were fully paid for so that we eat in the Lord’s presence together with great rejoicing  
And it points us forward to when the fellowship of Eden will be restored and there will be even greater joy

***“Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”*** Rev. 19:9

This truth has prompted one Wisconsin church to redeem the Jewish tradition of a toast by raising their cups in anticipation and saying, *“Next time, with Christ”*  
From Genesis to Revelation, God’s aim has been to bring His people into fellowship with Himself and one of the great joys of that fellowship is that we can eat and drink in His presence  
We eat at the table of grace