

David and Mephibosheth

Notes for 30 Nov

Jim Cunningham

Read: [2 Samuel 9](#)

The Compassionate King

I propose two parts to our study. Firstly, to explore several issues connected with the narrative in chapter 9. Secondly, to tease out how disability is treated in various biblical passages in both the old and new testaments.

In order for us to be more informed on the subject I want to draw your attention to a number of biblical passages which may give a varied picture on the subject.

First of all, let's deal with David's compassionate side after confronting his brutal side in chapter 8:

1. Verse 3: "Is there no-one still left in the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?"
 - What motivated David to pose this question?
 - Can you explain the term "God's kindness?"
2. In verse 7: why do you think Mephibosheth appeared to be afraid?
 - "I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father." Was David's concern for Mephibosheth conditional?
3. In verse 8: "What is your servant that you should notice a dead dog like me?"
 - What does this tell you about Mephibosheth's sense of self-worth?
 - Is it to do with the collapse of his birth-right or his disability?
4. Mephibosheth was ultimately treated as a member of David's own family.
 - Was David taking a risk?

What does the Bible inform us about how to treat the disabled?

Can I ask you to read the following passages in preparation for this part of our study?

[Leviticus 21:16-23](#)

In the UK today, if we attempted to implement this we would fall foul of the equality act. In view of the fact that we were originally made in the image of God, can you give an explanation for this?

It appears to focus on outward disabilities. Today we know much more about hidden disabilities and potential for disabilities because of our knowledge of genetics. I am bald and carry a number of genetic mutations which cause autoimmune diseases; therefore, I would not meet the selection criteria. If we had a similar system for selecting males to administer sacrifices in a

modern day equivalent to the temple it is likely that the subset of 'perfect' males to chose from would be very small. In fact from a genetic point of view, would it be possible to select the perfect male?

[John 9:1-3](#)

The cause of the man's blindness is not related to the sin of his forefathers, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." Explain please!

Leviticus is not without compassion. Please read [19:14](#).

We live in an age of self-congratulatory self-righteousness. After all, the age of 'enlightenment' initiated care for the disabled. However, please read [Proverbs 31:8](#).

The New Testament in particular is my inspiration on how to treat the disabled. The whole ministry of Christ was a testament to that.

Read [Matt 15:30-31](#) and [Luke 14:12-14](#).

I expect the reading of these passages to generate points and/or questions to which you may want to respond.

If you were a legislator in the current UK parliament, debating [the assisted dying bill](#) (it had its second reading was yesterday, the 29th November 2024) how would you vote?