

The Prince Who Became a Nobody Who Became a Prince Again

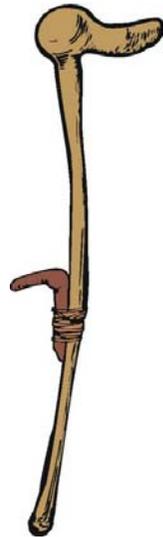
By Susan Verstraete

A long time ago, a little boy named Mephibosheth lived in his grandfather Saul's palace. Saul was the very first king of Israel, and I'm sorry to tell you that he was not a very good king. He was not the *worst* king Israel would have, but King Saul disobeyed God over and over. He was not sorry he disobeyed (though he was always sorry to get *caught* disobeying), and so God took away his kingdom. King Saul and his brave son Jonathan died in a battle with Israel's enemies when little prince Mephibosheth was only five years old.

Everyone at the palace was frightened and upset when the news arrived that the king and his son were dead. They knew that David had been chosen by God to be the next king, and they worried that he might try to kill Saul's family. When a king dies, his oldest son usually gets to be king after him. Since Saul's oldest son, Jonathan, died with his father, Prince Mephibosheth was next in line to be the ruler of Israel. *We* know that good King David wouldn't have killed Mephibosheth, but the people in the palace didn't know. They were very worried.

Mephibosheth's nurse rushed to pack some of his things. She knew that they must get away from the palace quickly to keep the little prince safe! But in her hurry to leave, something terrible happened. Little Prince Mephibosheth fell and was seriously hurt. The Bible says he became lame in both feet. He could never again run and play like other children.

Mephibosheth and his nurse went to live with a man named Machir in the city of Lo-debar. The prince was in hiding. No one could know he was Saul's grandson. It was even more important to be careful after some evil



men killed his uncle Ish-bosheth, who had tried to take Saul's place as king of Israel. In order to keep him safe, Machir made sure that Mephibosheth the prince grew up as "Mephibosheth the nobody special". Many years passed. "Mephibosheth the nobody special" grew up, married and had a little son of his own.

And then one day, it happened. There was a knock at the door. Messengers from the king came to take Mephibosheth to David's palace. Can you imagine how Mephibosheth felt? He probably kissed his little boy goodbye and sadly hugged his wife for what he thought might be the last time. I think he might have thanked Machir for helping him for so many years, grabbed his crutches, and sadly rode away with the messengers. He must have been sure that King David would not let him live to return home.

When Mephibosheth arrived at the palace, he threw himself on the floor before the king. But David said, "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." (2 Sam. 9:7). King David chose to treat Mephibosheth just like one of his own sons. He would even eat dinner with them every night! "Mephibosheth the nobody special" was going to be Mephibosheth the prince again!

Did you know that God has offered to do something like that for you, too? You might not be a prince or a princess, but God has offered to make you a part of His family just like David let Mephibosheth be part of his (Gal. 4:5). And just like Mephibosheth, you and I didn't do anything to deserve this kindness.

The Bible says that even though we were enemies of God—stupid, disobedient and foolish—God showed His mercy by sending His Son to save us. If we trust Christ to take away our sins, He makes us acceptable to God and lets us live forever as one of His children (Titus 3:3-7). So, by God's grace, "you the nobody special" can become you the royal member of God's kingdom (1 Peter 2:9-10).

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