

# THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

Church of Christ  
371 W. Main Street  
Greenwood, IN 46142  
(317)888-8288

[www.churchofchristatgreenwood.org](http://www.churchofchristatgreenwood.org)

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## ***Crippled Feet and Crippled Souls***

By John A. Smith

The story of Mephibosheth is one of the most endearing of the Old Testament. It is a tender story of mercy and love. Mephibosheth was the only surviving son of David's best friend, Jonathan. David had earlier promised his friend that when he became king he would not cut off Jonathan's lineage (1 Samuel 20:12-ff). When David had consolidated power in Israel and restored true religion, he turned his attention to this vow. He sought out the descendants of Jonathan to show them kindness for their father's sake (2 Samuel 9:1).

When Mephibosheth is found, he is living in Lo Debar (2 Samuel 9:4). This was a barren pastureless land that no doubt reflected the conditions in which he lived. It was the custom of Oriental monarchs to execute the entire family of their predecessor. It is only natural then that when Mephibosheth is brought before David that he is afraid (2 Samuel 9:6-8).

This was not the first difficulty in the life of Mephibosheth. When he was five years old, his uncle Ishbosheth (who had been a puppet king supported by Abner), was executed by two misguided captains in David's army. Perceiving that there might also be danger for Mephibosheth, his nurse fled with him. In the suddenness of

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their flight, she dropped him and he became lame (2 Samuel 4:4).

It is a crippled boy who is brought before David. In this society, cripples were more often the objects of ridicule and rejection than mercy and tenderness. He is one who had nothing to offer David. Yet, because of David's love for Jonathan and his amazingly tender heart, Mephibosheth is adopted into David's family (2 Samuel 9:10). David made provisions for his continued care.

We come now to learn of another man, who like Mephibosheth, is crippled. He cannot care for himself, direct himself, or provide what he needs most. However, his crippling injury was self-inflicted. This man was injured while running, but not away from a perceived threat. This man was injured while running away from God. He does not have crippled feet, but something far more serious – a crippled soul. This person is ME!

Like all men, I have willfully sinned and separated myself from God (Rom. 3:23; Isa. 59:1-2). Sin has caused my soul to be "crippled." When I fled away from God to serve Satan and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, I stained my soul. There is nothing that I can ever do by myself to remove the stain or to deserve to have it removed. It is to the mercy, tenderness, grace and love of my KING that I must appeal.

This King waits anxiously for my arrival at His banquet table. Not only does He wait, but He provides the way. While I was crippled and in rebellion, He died that I might live and be restored (Rom. 5:8; John 3:16).

While I admire the mercy and love of David, I am overwhelmed by the mercy and love of my King. Mephibosheth very well may have been lovable. He certainly was not responsible for his trouble. But that cannot be said about me. Amazing grace – how sweet the sound!

There are several other analogies that can be drawn between the man with crippled feet and the man with the crippled soul:

1. Mephibosheth once enjoyed the fellowship of his father, just as I once enjoyed the fellowship with the Father of my King. But in my case, it was self-inflicted sin that severed that fellowship.
2. When disaster and fear came, the nurse fled and Mephibosheth suffered a crippling injury. It was when temptation came that I fled from God and fell from holiness to become spiritually handicapped.
3. Mephibosheth had nothing, deserved nothing, and in fact, did not even try to win the king's favor. We too, are completely undeserving of God's grace and cannot win is favor by any merit of our own.
4. David took Mephibosheth from a barren place and restored him to a place of honor. God has also taken me from a spiritual wasteland and made us heirs of the kingdom.
5. David adopted Mephibosheth into his family, and he became as the king's sons. God has adopted us into His family making us joint heirs with His only begotten Son (Romans 8:15-ff). Thus, we have no reason to fear Him and multiplied reasons to love and serve Him.
6. Mephibosheth's crippled feet were a constant reminder of David's grace. So we, with the limp of sin, are continually reminded that God in His mercy has not dealt with us according to our sins. While forgiven, I carry around the scars of sin as a reminder of God's grace.

**May I never be allowed to forget the greatness of the grace extended to me. May I never forget the vastness of my King's love. May I never take His gifts for granted.**

**More Than A Conqueror**

**A Selected Thought**

Alexander the Great subdued the world about him, but he was conquered by his own lusts; he died in a drunken stupor. The Christian conquers his own lusts in order to subdue the world within him. Through Christ, we are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37).