

“I AM”: Grace

Have you ever had an occasion in which you were so happy that you wanted to celebrate? You received a promotion or a bonus at work, or a new child was born into the family, or very difficult circumstances were resolved. You wanted to celebrate and share your happiness with friends. So...YOU threw the party. YOU bought the meals. YOU provided for friends and family because you had received a special gift.

That kind of giving is an illustration of grace, and few shine brighter than King David of ancient Israel.

King David desired to build a more permanent temple for God that would replace the portable tabernacle that had been made at the time of Moses. The prophet Nathan gave him the 'go ahead' to proceed with his plans. However, at God's instruction Nathan quickly returned to tell David that as a warrior he had too much blood on his hands. He would not build a temple for God, instead, the temple would be built by his son Solomon.

Nathan continued with God's message to David, a prophecy and a promise:

**Your house and your kingdom
shall endure before Me forever;
Your throne shall be established forever.**

--2 Samuel 7:16

Though David may have felt a little sad over not being the builder of God's temple, he understood the magnitude of the promise. In response to God's gracious promise, David searched for someone on whom he could show grace. He found Mephibosheth, the crippled son of his dear friend Jonathan.

David brought Mephibosheth to his palace in Jerusalem, restored his family's land to him, and invited him eat daily at the king's table. Mephibosheth recognized his inability to offer anything in return, and referred to himself as a 'dead dog,' but David was delighted to offer his gift of kindness. (Read about Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9.)

In a figurative way every Christian is a Mephibosheth before the King of heaven. In reality, as sinful creatures we are nothing but 'dead dogs,' useless to God and undeserving.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, 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, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

--Ephesians 2:4-8

God does not *try* to be gracious. It is not 'second' nature to him. It is not a battle of the inner will in which grace wins out over something else. God is, in himself, by nature, full of grace. It is as if God could have said to Moses, "I AM who I am, I am grace."

Oh, wait . . . He did.

The LORD God...gracious....

--Exodus 34:6