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Title: No Wonder It's Called Amazing

Text: 2 Samuel 9:1-13

The word "amazing" is an adjective which means "causing great surprise or wonder, astonishing." This word is used to describe God's Grace. We will look today at the Amazing Grace of God.

A story is told about Fiorello LaGuardia, who, when he was mayor of New York City during the worst days of the Great Depression and all of WWII, was called by adoring New Yorkers "the Little Flower" because he was only five foot four and often wore a carnation in his lapel. He was a colorful character who used to ride the New York City fire trucks. He'd raid saloons or nightclubs, with the police department, that were selling alcoholic beverages illegally. He would take entire orphanages to baseball games, and whenever the New York newspapers were on strike, he would go on the radio and read the Sunday funnies to the kids.

One bitterly cold night in January of 1935, the mayor turned up at a night court that served the poorest ward of the city. LaGuardia dismissed the judge for the evening and took over the bench himself. Within a few minutes, a tattered elderly woman was brought before him, charged with stealing a loaf of bread. She told LaGuardia that her daughter's husband had deserted her, her daughter was sick, and her two grandchildren were starving. But the shopkeeper, from whom the bread was stolen, refused to drop the charges. The shopkeeper said, "It's a real bad neighborhood, your Honor. She's got to be punished to teach other people around here a lesson. The major/judge (LaGuardia) sighed. He turned to the woman and said "I've got to punish you. The law makes no exceptions – ten dollars or ten days in jail." But even as he pronounced sentence, the mayor was already reaching into his pocket. He extracted a bill and tossed it into his famous sombrero saying: "Here is the ten dollar fine which I now remit; AND furthermore I am going to fine everyone in this courtroom fifty cents for living in a town where a person has to steal bread so that her grandchildren can eat. Mr. Bailiff, collect the fines and give them to the defendant."

The following day the New York City newspapers reported that \$47.50 was turned over to a bewildered elderly lady who had stolen a loaf of bread to feed her starving grandchildren. Fifty cents of that amount being contributed by the red-faced grocery store owner, while some seventy petty criminals, people with traffic violations, and New York City policemen, each of whom had just paid fifty cents for the privilege of doing so, gave the mayor a STANDING OVATION.

That, my friends, is the ESSENCE OF GRACE! It recognizes our wretched condition; it pays our debt AND...it gives us more than we could ever have imagined. **No wonder it's called amazing!**

The Old Testament passage we are going to look at today provides for us one of the clearest pictures of amazing grace in the Word of God. God uses David as a living illustration of what grace is all about.

- 1. Amazing Grace Is Extended (v. 1-5). A. The Reason for This Grace** – David says that he wants to show "kindness for Jonathan's sake." The word for "kindness" is also translated "goodness, mercy, favor, and loving kindness." The word "kindness" in the Old Testament is the equivalent to the New Testament word "grace." Grace is often defined as "the unmerited love and favor of God toward the undeserving." I like the acrostic: **God's Riches At Christ's Expense**. Grace is one person accepting another in a positive manner in spite of the unworthiness of the person being accepted. David desires to extend grace to a member of Saul's family. This is rather amazing in light of the fact that in those days, when a new king came to power, he might destroy every member of the former king's household, in an effort to prevent any rebellion by that family. The king's position was that powerful! David had the right to execute judgment, but HE CHOSE to demonstrate grace instead. David did this, not because the house of Saul deserved it – it didn't – but because of his relationship with Jonathan, and because of two promises he had made years before. David had promised both Jonathan and Saul that he would not totally destroy their offspring (1 Samuel 20:13-17; 24:20-22). So, this grace is extended because of another. David's grace was extended to Mephibosheth because of Jonathan. **No wonder grace is called amazing!** God extends His grace to the members of Adam's family – that's US! We do not deserve His grace, His love or His mercy. In fact, if we received what we deserved, we would receive judgment, damnation and Hell (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23). Yet, God extends His amazing grace to us because of Another. He reaches out to fallen, depraved sinners because He loves His Son; and because JESUS died for us on the cross. Neither you nor I have anything to merit us to God, but because of Jesus, we can experience God's amazing grace (1 John 2:12; Ephesians 4:32). **No wonder it's called amazing!** **B. The Reach of This Grace** – When David decided to extend grace, he did so WITHOUT ANY LIMITS. He is looking for "anyone that is left of the house of

Saul.” The house of Saul was the house of his predecessor and bitter enemy, but that did not matter. David was not looking for people who met a certain criteria, but ANYONE who was of the family of Saul was a candidate for grace. **THANK GOD that our Lord’s amazing grace knows NO boundaries!** God’s grace extends to ALL persons regardless of their past, their race, their social standing, their gender or their deeds. God does not reach out to save the righteous, but the sinner (Mark 2:17). God extends His grace to “*whosoever will*” (Matthew 11:28; John 7:37). Praise God, there are no limits on WHO can come. Grace is extended to ALL! That is how you and I got in. If you are lost, that is how you will get in as well! You see, NO ONE deserves it; but ALL can have it. **No wonder it’s called amazing!** **C. The Response of This Grace** – So David discovers that one of Jonathan’s sons is still living. He also hears the news that this man is crippled. Yet, the response of grace is not to ask what kind of man he is, or even how badly he is crippled. Grace does not concern itself with the man’s background, his surroundings, his abilities, his appearance, or his potential. The response of grace is to ask “Where is he?” As soon as David hears where this man is, he sends his servants to “fetch” him. Grace said, “I am not concerned about his condition, I WANT HIM JUST LIKE HE IS.” So it is with the amazing grace of God. He does not look upon us and concern Himself with our CRIPPLED SPIRITUAL CONDITION. He looks upon us through the eyes of grace. He sees us exactly like we are, but He loves us IN SPITE of what we are. He knows all about our past, our problems and our potential, yet He responds by drawing us to Himself ANYWAY! When grace fixes its gaze on one of the crippled sons of Adam’s race, it cares for nothing but drawing us to itself. **No wonder it’s called amazing!**

2. **Amazing Grace Is Embraced (v. 6-8).** For just a moment, let’s put ourselves in the shoes of Mephibosheth. He is one of the few remaining members of the house of Saul. He is living in a place called Lo Debar, which means “no pasture.” He is probably living each day in fear for his life for lack; maybe he’s afraid that King David will come and take his life away. No doubt he is a poor man. He does not have access to the wealth or the lands of his family. He is a crippled man. His father was killed in battle and when the news came, his nurse tried to flee with the child and he was dropped and his legs were permanently damaged (2 Samuel 4:4). He was five when this happened. Throughout most of his life he has been warned that David might find him. He lives in fear and misery every day. Then, one day it happens! There is the sound of horses and chariots outside the little house in Lo Debar. There is a knock at the door and in come men from Jerusalem. “The King wants to see you” they say. So, with a fearful heart he gathers what meager possessions he has and he leaves with the guards to go see the one man he never wanted to see. After a while the chariots arrive at the King’s palace. Mephibosheth is carried into the King’s presence. When he arrives there, NOTHING at all is like he imagined. Mephibosheth has entered the presence of GRACE. Notice how he embraces it. **A. With a HUMBLE Heart.** When Mephibosheth comes into David’s presence, he is aware that as a descendant of Saul he deserves nothing but judgment from the King. Therefore, he HUMBLER himself in the presence of David. **B. With a HAPPY Heart.** Instead of judgment, Mephibosheth experiences tenderness. He hears David call his name. To his amazement, he hears David speak PEACE to his heart. He hears the King as he promises him restoration of all the wealth and glory that once belonged to the family of Saul. Then, the icing on the cake, David promises to give Mephibosheth A PLACE AT THE KING’S TABLE! It is with a HAPPY heart that Mephibosheth embraces the treasures of grace! **C. With an HONEST Heart.** Mephibosheth is overwhelmed by the grace he has received. He acknowledges that he is undeserving of such love and mercy. Grace has been extended TO Mephibosheth and embraced BY him and nothing will ever be the same in his life again! What a picture this is of the lost sinner who encounters grace. When the King first calls, there is fear brought about by conviction (John 16:7-11). The sinner knows that he deserves nothing but judgment and damnation from the hand of God. Yet, the call comes and it cannot be denied. When the sinner responds to the call and is ushered into the presence of the Lord, he falls down in humility, reverence and worship. Then, the King speaks and He reveals the fact that grace has turned away His wrath, opened His heart and His Heaven and that grace offers to restore to the sinner EVERYTHING that sin took away! If you have experienced God’s saving grace in your life, then you know how overwhelming it is. Think back and remember that day when as a lost sinner you were brought by the Spirit of God into the presence of God. Do you remember the fear? Do you remember the feeling of dread? But, do you remember how He spoke peace to your soul that day? Do you remember how you came with nothing and left with everything? What grace! What blessing! What a great, wonderful, matchless, glorious Savior we have! When His grace is embraced, everything changes. **No wonder it’s called AMAZING!**
3. **Amazing Grace Is Expanded (v. 9-13).** When Mephibosheth came to David, HE did NOT get what he deserved. He received GRACE. When he received grace, he also received more blessings than he could have ever

imagined. Grace was expanded. Notice what grace provided to Mephibosheth and what saving grace provides to you and me. **A. Grace Provided a FUTURE.** In Lo Debar, Mephibosheth had nothing. He was poor, an outcast, a fugitive. He had no hope and no prospects for his future. BUT, when he met grace, everything changed! All of his present needs were met and his future was secured. Grace gave him something he never could have had in Lo Debar: Grace gave him a FUTURE. Grace gave him the PLENTY of the King! The same is true for all those who experience God's saving grace. In Adam, our Lo Debar, we had nothing! We were lost, undone and headed to Hell. We were outcasts and fugitives, running for our lives from a holy God who possessed the right and the power to send us to a lost eternity. But, when grace was extended AND embraced, EVERYTHING changed! What sin could never give us became ours in Jesus! For the first time, there was hope for the future. We are promised security – John 6:37-40; John 10:28; 1 Peter 1:5. We are promised a home in Heaven – John 14:1-3. We are promised that our needs will be met – Philippians 4:19; Matthew 6:25-34. We are promised His presence all the way home to Heaven – Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20. That is what grace gives to all those who embrace it! **No wonder it's called amazing!** **B. Grace Provided a FAMILY.** Mephibosheth was adopted out of Saul's family and into David's. Grace gave him something that he did not have: Grace gave him a FAMILY! Every day of his life, Mephibosheth was reminded by his surroundings and by the presence of the King that he was the recipient of grace. He was where he was because of the grace of the King! When a sinner responds to the call of grace and is saved, that sinner is immediately adopted into the family of God (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5). He is taken out of Adam (that doomed race) and is placed into Christ (Colossians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 12:13). You see, in Adam, we were doomed to death. In Jesus, we are destined for life (1 Corinthians 15:22)! Grace took us from our Lo Debar and brought us into the family of God (1 John 3:1-3). May we NEVER forget that we have what we have and that we are what we are simply by the good grace of an Almighty God (1 Corinthians 15:10). **C. Grace Provided FULFILLMENT.** Mephibosheth was a nobody in a house full of somebodies. There was Absalom, David's other sons, David's beautiful wives and daughters, Joab the general, proud and strong, princes and princesses, soldiers and statesmen, men of wealth and men of power – all of these took their place at the table of King David. But wait, as the family gathers, there is the sound of a crippled man coming down the hallway – the clump of his crutches, the sound of his dragging feet. It is Mephibosheth, and he takes his place at the King's table with ALL the rights and privileges of the rest! Then, when he takes his seat and the tablecloth falls across his legs – he looks just like the rest of them. Grace took a NOBODY from nowhere and made him a CHILD OF THE KING! That is the power of grace! Grace takes the lost sinner, changes him completely and gives him a seat at the Lord's Table. It takes us from our Lo Debar and makes us one of God's children. It puts us on even footing with all the rest of God's precious saints. When you embrace God's grace, He elevates you to a new position. The ground at the foot of the cross is level. We are equal – the same as Abraham, Moses, the Apostles or any other saint of God. You are HIS child, seated at HIS table and HIS grace has taken care of your past and your infirmities! That is the power of grace! **No wonder it's called amazing!**

4. **Conclusion.** Julia Johnston penned a great hymn that speaks to what we've shared today. The title of the hymn is "Grace Greater Than Our Sin." Here are the words:

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured, there where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

**Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin!**

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold, threaten the soul with infinite loss;
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold, points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide. What can avail to wash it away?
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide, brighter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace, freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see his face, will you this moment his grace receive?

Thank God for grace! Thank God for His saving grace! **No wonder it's called amazing!** Has its power, promises and provisions been made real in your heart and soul? If you are saved by grace, then you should know what I have been talking about. If you haven't, but feel like the King is calling you to come to Him, the time to do that is now. If you

would like to be saved, if you would like to have your fellowship with the King restored, OR if you would like to come and thank Him for His grace, this altar is open.