

# John 3

by Robert F. Adcock

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*The sermon highlights the sovereign grace of God, demonstrated through David's kindness to Mephibosheth, which points to the gospel of Jesus Christ and God's love for humanity.*

**Duration:** 37:00

**Scripture:** Psalm 23:1, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, John 3:18, Romans 3:23, Romans 8:1

**Topics:** "Gods Love", "Showing Mercy"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of showing kindness to others, going beyond what is expected. He references historical events where governments were overthrown and the new administration would eradicate those aligned with the previous one. The speaker then reads two passages from the Bible, John 3:16 and 2 Samuel 9, highlighting the love and sacrifice of Jesus and the story of David showing kindness to Mephibosheth. The sermon emphasizes the need for justice and righteousness, as well as the destructive power of guilt and the importance of showing kindness and mercy to others.

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## Transcript

A beautiful song, a beautiful song. A beautiful truth, dying for me. The Lord Jesus died for me.

I'd like for us to read two passages this morning, one in the New Testament and one in the Old Testament. The one in the New Testament is John chapter 3. I'd like to read just two or three verses. And then in 2 Samuel chapter 9. John 3 verse 16, the Lord Jesus speaking, For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Now turn with me please to 2 Samuel chapter 9, the reading from verse 1. In the 8th chapter, it's the 14th verse, let apart, and it says, And the Lord preserved David wherever he went.

Verse 15 says, And David reigned over all Israel, and David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people. Now verse 1 of chapter 9, And David said, Is there yet any who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Zephah. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Zephah? And he

said, Thy servant is he.

And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God unto him? Zephah said unto the king, Jonathan hath a son who is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Zephah said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Maker, the son of Amiel in Lodibah. Then king David sent and fetched him out of the house of Maker, the son of Amiel, from Lodibah.

And when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face and did obeisance. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant.

And David said unto him, Fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's faith, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father, and thou shalt eat at my table continually. And he bowed himself and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am? Then the king called to Zephah, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertain to Saul and to all his house. Thou therefore, and thy sons and thy servants, shalt fill the land for him, and thou shalt bring him the fruit that thy master's son might have food to eat.

But Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat always at my table. Now, Zephah had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then said Zephah unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servants, so shall thy servants do.

As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table as one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micah. All who dwell in the house of Zephah were servants unto Mephibosheth.

So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he did eat regularly at the king's table, and he was lame on both his feet. I would like to connect the two passages that we've read with this thought in mind. Very often in the minds of people that perhaps have never been acquainted with the mercy and the goodness of the Lord, there's a concept that runs something like this, that God indeed is to be feared, and he's an angry God, and he's out to get me.

Any thought of the love and the grace of God are sometimes foreign to the minds of many that live in spiritual darkness. I believe that there's a lot of help provided along that line, because I believe the God of this world blinds the minds of those that do not believe. We're not asked to understand the gospel, we're asked to believe it.

Very often these misconceptions arise because perhaps in the course of one's life the adversity that crosses our pathway, and other things in the course of life that indeed are unpleasant, seem to have its impact to the point that many look upon God as being a God that all he wants to do is punish me. Inwardly, I think there is that recognition that I'm not right with God. Of course, the work of the Spirit of God is to convict men of that very fact, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

This story that we've read in 2 Samuel 9, I think, clearly sets before us some of the things that bespeak of the sovereign grace of God in dealing with his creature, man. When I think about David as a man, I know that he was not a perfect man. I know that the word of God tells us many things about David that are indeed, you want to hang your head.

It's shameful, it's disgraceful, the things that we read in the word of God. But of no other man in the Old Testament read I these words, he was a man after God's own heart. I'll tell you, he wasn't a perfect man,

he was a man that sinned, but he was a man that confessed and forsook his sin, and he loved the Lord.

He, indeed, is the one that when we read the 23rd Psalm, we are brought face to face with a man that had perfect confidence in his God. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He believed that with all of his heart.

And here is a man by the name of Mephibosheth that's living in a place called Lodibar, and the name itself means a place of no pasture. A place where there was not that which would make life pleasant. There was nothing there to refresh your soul with.

Lodibar, a place of no pasture. And yet, David would say, the Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

He leadeth me beside the still waters. David knew his God as the God that provided everything that was needed to sustain and keep life. The story as we've read it speaks for itself.

There are a number of things that I believe we can glean from it that remind us of things that are so important in the Christian life. First and foremost, at the very outset, I read those verses in the 8th chapter because I wanted to remind us that here was a man that respected justice and righteousness. He represented a God who is just and righteous, and he represented that God.

And he intended in the course of his administration as king to indeed be sure that his administration was characterized by justice and righteousness. But the 9th chapter carries us over and beyond that. He makes a statement in the very opening verse that someone that I want to show kindness towards.

This goes over and beyond what we're reading about in that 8th chapter. After all, in the course of the events that occurred during that time and period in history, and in many other periods in history, the very moment there was an overthrow of one government, there was a replacing of those that were in authority by others, in the normal course of doing business, the first business at hand was to eradicate everyone that had aligned themselves with the old administration. That's what they did very often.

Everyone that was a friend of the king, certainly all of his household, his sons, his servants, and so many that had been faithful to them. They were put to death so that they wouldn't represent anything in the way of a threat to the new king and his administration. But we discover that David is searching for someone of the household of Saul, especially someone that was closely akin to Jonathan.

Someone that he had coveted with during the course of this life, someone that he loved, someone that there was a kindred spirit between these two men. A love and a loyalty. Even though Jonathan, in all of his endeavors to be loyal to his father Saul, the king, he still recognized sovereignly David is to be the king.

And so David remembering that in the course of their conversation from time to time, Jonathan had recognized there will be a day when you will be king. And when you are king, don't forget my son. Don't forget my loved one.

And so out of the goodness of his heart, a man that kept his word, that considered the vow that he had made as being important, he says, Find someone of the house of Saul that I might show them kindness. I want to be benevolent toward someone that is in Saul's household. And of course he had in mind someone that was akin to Jonathan.

The word of God tells us that as Christians, kindness should be a part of our character, our personality. Be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. How kind are we in our relationships with each other? Do we have personalities that convey the thought that I am a kind person, I'm a gentle person? The Lord Jesus said those that were in contact with him recognized right away this is a person that in his presence you felt comfortable.

He was kind, he was gentle. And so we see displayed in the life of a man that very characteristic. And he wanted to show kindness toward someone that in the normal course of doing business he would have already been dead.

And so he seeks after someone in Jonathan's household. I suppose when you think about how you would receive news if someone were to come and say, The King wants to see you. If you were akin to someone that had already been displaced, you'd say, Well, this is my death warrant, I know it was coming.

And he wants to see me for the express purpose of just making an open display of finally doing away with all of those that were even associated in the remotest sort of way with King Saul. But David would quieten any thought when he would say to this man, You fear not, I don't want you to have any fear in your heart. And certainly David had had that spirit quietened within him.

I think we see a display of the grace of God in this man's life and the way he reacted to others that perhaps he held a tremendous advantage over. There's no question about that. This man held within his hand the matter of life or death for a man like Mephibosheth.

Because I'll take you back to the 23rd Psalm again, and I'll remind you that David is that man that could say, Even though he walked through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, because I'll it with me. And God had indeed assured his heart that he was there. He was with David throughout all of his experiences in this life.

And this expression of kindness, this endeavor to alleviate any thought of fear concerning what he was going to do to him, was something that David wanted to hasten to alleviate at once. Fear not, Mephibosheth, you haven't got anything to be afraid of. But when I tell people about the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I tell them the Lord Jesus loves you, and some say he doesn't love me, he doesn't care anything about me, and all the while they're thinking about life and what life has dealt them.

So many circumstances that are unpleasant. How could God love me? How could Christ love me? With all of the circumstances that are so unpleasant that just swirl around my life. No, God doesn't love me.

Christ doesn't love me. But God in his word says that he does love me, and he's a God of love. And when John tells us that Christ came not into the world to condemn or judge the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

Listen, he came to bring salvation. The God of this world is the one that brings so much hurt, inflicts so much hurt upon mankind. You think about Job, and you think of all that Satan was able to do to inflict hurt upon that man.

Took away all of his possessions, took away his children, then inflicted bodily harm upon him to the extent that his own wife would say, Why don't you curse God and die? And that's what Satan's trying to convince men and women to do today. God is not kind to you. God is not gracious to you.

Look at what life has dealt you. And many believe that. They throw up their hands in despair and say, Life is just too much for me.

But the word of God assures us that God loves us. There are so many areas of life that we never give credit to Satan for the kind of power that he wields over circumstances. The physical sickness that he is able to inflict upon an individual, as he did Job, with God's permission, of course.

So many other instances in the word of God. Those that suffered so much at the hands of Satan. And he is the accuser of the brethren.

And he would do all that he could to discourage and to destroy any concept of a loving, gracious, merciful God to you and me. And I think we see, as we read in this passage, David's feelings with a man like Mephibosheth that, indeed, that principle is woven throughout the word of God. Here he is, someone that you could say, in a sense, he doesn't deserve this kindness.

No, neither do we deserve the grace of God and God's love, in that sense. I can't earn it. I'm not deserving of it.

It's something that he sovereignly disposes to give to me. Something that he dispenses with an open hand. And you have to sit back in awe and wonder and say, Why? I don't know why.

He does it. He does it. And you see out of this gracious spirit of David, I think, just a little cameo, a picture of the grace and the kindness of God in dealing with mankind.

Fear not, Mephibosheth, I haven't called you here that I might embarrass you and put you to death because of a covenant promise that was made between you, between me and your father, Jonathan. I want to do something for you. You've been living in that place called Lodibah.

No pasture, no refreshment there. And I suppose, as he dwelt there, and as Saul's servant, Ziba, had more or less taken care of his basic needs, I don't ever believe for a moment that he was really comfortable with that situation. He thought for sure one day a messenger will come, just as he has come, and I'm going to be called to give an account of my relationship with Saul.

I read a story not long ago, a true story, in a newspaper that told of a man that one day he received a notice to appear at the courthouse in the city that he lived in. And he ignored it, and so it was. And then one day a sheriff's deputy came to his house and told him, this is a summons, we don't know if you received the first notice or not, but this is, in a sense, a summons to appear at the courthouse at a given time and had him sign the piece of paper.

He didn't tell him what it was for. He said he didn't know. This man, because of receiving that notice, supposing that it had something to do with a past criminal record that he had and an escape that he had made from a prison some 25 or 30 years ago, he went into his bedroom and he killed himself.

Later, when they investigated, he had simply been summoned to serve as a juror. You see, in his own mind, this feeling of guilt, this feeling of finally the day of reckoning had come, was so great and so destructive because he took his life. And in a sense, you can, I think, relate to the experience of Mephibosheth because certainly there were some mixed emotions there.

I don't know what's going to happen. I don't know if he'd ever even met David. He had heard about King David, but he didn't know what kind of man he was, and certainly he didn't expect this kind of kindness and this show of grace toward him.

I've often wondered why it is that they put that statement in there that he was lame on both of his feet. And until you examine it in the light of the presentation of the gospel, you perhaps don't fully understand this. But I am reminded that each one of us, in a sense, we are lame, we are sick.

In fact, we are dead in the sight of God. He very accurately characterized himself as saying, I'm a dead dog, and of what value is a dead dog? Do we see ourselves before God as those that have a need that God and God alone can meet? That need must be met by God. The Lord Jesus could say, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man can come to the Father but by me.

This certainly narrows the matter of salvation down just as narrow as it can possibly be. There is only one way, and it's through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. A man lame on his feet, an admission there is something physically wrong with this man, and that's not going to make one iota of difference as far as this man sitting at the King's table.

You know, I'm persuaded that when they brought him in, and no doubt he had to have some help, and you sat him down at the King's table and you tucked his feet up under the King's table, you couldn't see those lame feet. And you know, when we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, in the sight of God, all of our lameness, all of our infirmities, and the things that we associate with this life, you know, God no longer sees them. We become new creatures in Christ Jesus.

We become perfectly acceptable for the presence of God. Why? Because of a divine relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord. Why could Mephibosheth sit at that table? Why could this man, who really had no place there, this man that was lame on both of his feet, this man that was dependent upon someone else for everything in this life, he couldn't go out and till the field, he couldn't tend sheep, there wasn't much he could do.

It was because of his relationship to David and the way David felt toward him. In kindness, in grace, David, in his eagerness to bestow upon someone who wasn't because of any merit in himself, wasn't because of anything that he deserved personally, David, out of the goodness of his own heart, wanted to show this kindness. And to convince men and women in the world today that God loves you, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I could just close my eyes as those brethren sang that hymn. And I could visualize Calvary's cross. And I could see the Son of God, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, hanging there upon that tree.

And was he kind, was he benevolent? He could look out around the cross and those that had crucified him, those that had abused him, he could say, Father, forgive them because they don't know what they're doing. Now, beloved, that's pure, unadulterated grace and mercy and kindness. Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing.

And that man that hears the gospel of Jesus Christ and doesn't accept the Savior, he doesn't know what he's doing. The God of this world, indeed, has helped him to believe that lie. God does not love you and God is not a God of grace.

And he's out to punish you, he's out to judge you. And how many there are in this world today that believe that lie, I don't really know. But I'm convinced that there are many, many, that they stand in that position

before God, a fearfulness, fearfulness of a God that is so angry and filled with so much wrath towards them that all he wants to do is destroy them and commit them to eternal punishment in hell.

We have a solemn responsibility to tell the whole world about the Lord Jesus and let them know that he loved them, he shed his blood, he came into the world not to pass judgment, but to provide eternal life. The Apostle Paul, who would call himself the chiefest of all sinners, the one that persecuted believers, the one that was such a strict disciplinarian of himself, one that concerning the law could say, I am blameless, this man, broken, broken before the person of the Lord Jesus would say, Lord, what would you have me to do? The change that can be wrought in the life once we see through the clouds, once we see God's plans and purposes clearly as revealed in his words, it dispels all of those foolish notions about God being a God that is out to get us. And to punish us.

And so often scurrying away and seeking to hide from God. This passage that we read in John's gospel tells us that all that is in the world that would keep men's hearts in darkness and all in this world that keeps man separated from God is his sin. Men hide from God because their deeds are evil.

And light has come into the world, but men love darkness more than the light. Poor Mephibosheth. It was a day of rejoicing for him.

He could say, I never expected this day to turn out this way. Here I was expecting to be brought into the presence of the King, and certainly there would be judgment. No, there's blessing.

Mephibosheth, don't let your hand tremble anymore. Don't be fearful. Don't be fearful.

Your father and I, we had a wonderful relationship. We loved each other. And I promised your father one day I would do whatever I could when I was king to favor those of his household.

For those are the words of John 3. That's the promise to the world today. Because the Son of God is coming to the world, we can announce the glorious gospel message to this world and offer to them God's kindness, God's love, God's grace as found in the person of the Lord Jesus. The thing just goes over and beyond anything that he ever expected because he's told that there will be restored all of the land.

And no doubt someone had taken advantage of that situation and there had been some changing of land ownership. And I don't picture Mephibosheth as having anything. Ziba, no doubt, was a man of some importance.

When you have that many servants in your household, certainly you have some means. And yet Ziba and his whole household are made in a sense that is subservient to the needs of Mephibosheth. They're going to make sure that in the killing of the land, everything that is needed, it will take care of Mephibosheth and those of his family.

But David insists upon one thing. As far as Mephibosheth is concerned, my table is his table. This provision that I'm making, I'm making it as long as he lives.

And the story closes with a reaffirmation of that statement in that Mephibosheth could dine every day at the king's table. And he was lame on both of his feet. You can't raise in your mind, you can't conjure up in your mind anything in the way of a physical disability, anything in the way of a lack of mental capacity.

You cannot think of anything that will stand up before a God of righteousness and justice as a valid excuse for not coming and accepting the divine invitation that God extends to one and all. Come unto me, all ye that are burdened and heavy laden, I will give you rest. For the Christian to enjoy what we enjoy.

God has not given to us a spirit of fear. That's what Paul told Timothy. We don't go around fearful, anxious.

The word of God says be anxious for nothing. We know in the experience of salvation, ours is a gracious God who loves us and he provides everything that we need, for our souls, for this life. He sustains and keeps us in every possible way.

Paul could say, I'm persuaded that he's able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day. There is no valid excuse that any individual can make for not accepting the grace and the mercy and the kindness and the goodness of God. If we were to read in this story that Mephibosheth came into the king's court and he said, I don't want it.

I won't have it. I don't feel worthy of it. I'm lame on both of my feet.

After all, I remember how my grandfather saw how he pursued you like an animal. All of the hard things that he said against you. Well, if that's what Mephibosheth had said and that would have been the way he responded and the king took and kicked him out and said, do away with him, he'd say, he's got just what he deserves.

But that acknowledgment, I'm like a dead dog in your presence. Listen, men and women, without the Lord Jesus Christ in this world, they are dead in trespasses and sins. And if they die that way, they're going to spend eternity in hell experiencing the judgment and the wrath of God.

There ain't but one way out of this dilemma to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. They that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. O God, have mercy upon me a sinner.

O God, be merciful to me. God is merciful. God is just.

God is righteous. God is a God of grace. God loves you.

And we can praise God today that he has made known through his word, through his word. Jesus loves me, this I know, because the Bible tells me so. Don't ever doubt God's love for you and God's grace and his kindness towards you.

If you believe anything contrary to that, you believe Satan's lie. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved. Shall we pray? Oh, Father in heaven, with thou my presence, and we're grateful to thee for your wonderful grace and love to us.

We thank thee that we live in a land that affords us these privileges, that we could assemble together in this room today with an open Bible, that we could pray unmolested by the authorities that be. And O our God, we pray for the free course of the glorious gospel of Christ around the world. We believe we live in those last days.

And indeed, these are perilous times. We just thank thee for the experience of salvation and all that we have within our souls, being a witness of the Spirit of God that lives within us and makes so real to us the beauty and the wonder of the unspeakable gift of God, which is our Lord Jesus Christ. In his wonderful name, we give thee our thanks.

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