

24.7.22 pm: Kingly Kindness

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Date: 28 July 2022

Preacher: George Barnie

[0 : 00] Our worship this evening is from Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1 at verse 3. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. Our first praise tonight is going to be in Gaelic and it's Psalm 11. Psalm 11, the first four verses. I in the Lord do put my trust. How is it then that you say to my soul, flee as a bird unto your mountain high? And we'll remain seated while we sing and then Angus M. Morrison will lead us in a Gaelic prayer.

O God, who's with me and you, the Lord, my dear, my dear, my dear, my name, my dear, my name,
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[6 : 33] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[9 : 17] Thank you. I'm going to be here. I'm going to be here. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Everybody. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. vaccination Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[11 : 41] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[14 : 11] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[16 : 41] Amen.

We're going to sing again and we're going to sing from the song, I stand amazed in the presence. I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how he could love me, a sinner condemned unclean.

Let's stand and let's stand and let's stand and let's sing, I stand in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene.

How marvelous.

And let's sollest, I will but I stand out. He had no tears for his old peace, but sweat drops of blood for mine.

[18 : 41] How marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be. How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

In pity angels beheld him and came from the world of lies.

To comfort him in the sorrows he tore for my soul at night. How marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be.

How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me. He took my sins and my sorrows, he made them his very own.

He poured the burden to call thee, and suffered a dying alone. How marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be.

[20 : 04] How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me. When the whisper ransomed in glory, his face I last shall see.

It will be my joy through the ages, to sing all this love for me. How marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be.

How marvelous, how marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me. How marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be.

How marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be. David asked, is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?

Now there was a servant of Saul's sake. They summoned him to appear before David, and the king said to him, Are you Ziba? At your service, he replied.

[21 : 45] The king asked, is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness? Ziba answered the king, there is still a son of Jonathan.

He is lame in both feet. Where is he? The king asked. Ziba answered, he is at the house of Machir, son of Amiel, in Lodabar.

So King David had him brought from Lodabar, from the house of Machir, son of Amiel. When Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, Mephibosheth. At your service, he replied. Don't be afraid, David said to him, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan.

I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table. Mephibosheth bowed down and said, What is your servant that you should notice a dead dog like me?

[22 : 52] Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's steward, and said to him, I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family.

You, your sons and your servants, are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops so that your master's grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table.

Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then Ziba said to the king, Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do.

So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons. Mephibosheth had a young son named Micah. And all the members of Ziba's household were servants of Mephibosheth.

And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem because he always ate at the king's table. He was lame in both feet. Amen. We're going to sing again, and we're going to sing from Psalm 145.

[24 : 06] Psalm 145, the first version. I'll thee extol my God, O King. I'll bless thy name always.

Thee will I bless each day. And will thy name forever praise. Let's stand and praise God together. I'll thee extol my God, O King.

I'll bless thy name always. Thee will thy blessing, jay and will, thy name forever praise.

Great is the Lord, must you be praised, his greatness search exceeds.

Raise unto praise, shall praise thy works, and show thy mighty deeds.

[25 : 15] I owe thy glorious majesty, the honor will report.

I'll speak of all thy mighty works, which wondrous are, O Lord.

Men of thy knacks, the might shall show, thy knacks a dreadful heart.

And I thy glory to advance, thy greatness will declare.

The memory of thy goodness great, very large they shall express. With songs of praise, their childless soul, like perfect righteousness.

[26 : 23] The Lord is very gracious, in him compassion's load. In mercy he is very great, and is to anger slow.

I'm delighted to see so many young people here tonight. It's great to have you with us. And I just wanted to say a quick word to you, just before we come to our sermon in a moment or two, directly to you.

I was listening to the car radio, and I heard this song, a song by Tom Walker. I had honestly never heard of him before. And the song was called Leave a Light On.

And the song, one of the verses goes like this. If you look into the distance, there's a house upon the hill, guiding like a lighthouse to a place where you'll be safe.

To feel our grace, because we've all made mistakes. If you've lost your way, I will leave the light on.

[27 : 51] I will leave the light on. I will leave the light on. I will leave the light on. And it made me think that so often, so often, and I'm just talking for myself, but as a young person, that you can just go your own way.

And we, no wonder the Bible calls us sheep, because we can so easily just go off. Now, I'm speaking about sheep as a city dweller most of my life.

But you know far more about sheep than I do. But sheep can so easily just do their own thing. And they need a shepherd.

And often it's like that when we're young, we just go our own way. And perhaps, perhaps we drift from the Christian faith. Or perhaps we have very little interest in it.

And it reminds me of the story Jesus told about the prodigal son, as we call it. The son who asked for his share of the inheritance. And he went off with this huge amount of money.

[29 : 03] And he just squandered that money. Until, eventually, he realized the money had run out. And he had absolutely nothing. And then you realize that when he decided he would come home, he realized he couldn't be a son anymore.

But at least he could get a job on his father's estate. And as he came back, seeing his father, seeing his father, and the father delighted to see him.

It reminded me of this song. I don't know if the chap was a Christian or not who wrote this. But I just like the idea. I will leave the light on. I will leave the light on.

It's not encouraging us to wonder. But if we happen to, to know that our God, as it were, would leave the light on. And he is willing to welcome us back.

Let's pray together. Our father, we are glad that we have such an incredible God. A God who is so forgiving, so full of grace and mercy.

[30 : 18] Lord, like what we're going to read in Mephibosheth, we just feel, why would you even consider a dead dog like me? And yet you do.

Lord, and we thank you that you were willing to send your son to die for us. That is how much you love us. And when we come to you, we are considered by scripture to be your treasured possession.

Lord, how we just pray, especially for those of us tonight who need encouragement. Lord, to see ourselves as you see us. Lord, sometimes we are hard on ourselves.

Or sometimes we are too soft on ourselves. But Lord, to see us. We are sinners, but we are loved beyond imagining. And Lord, we do just thank you that tonight, that you might draw us perhaps to yourself for the first time.

Or back if we have slipped away like these sheep. Or, you know, for those of us who are following you, draw us more close to yourself.

[31 : 27] We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. If you could, if you have your Bibles to hand, and if you could turn back to 2 Samuel chapter 9.

2 Samuel chapter 9. And, of course, it's on the screen as well. I want you to imagine two different scenarios.

The first one is, imagine that you had been born into the royal family. And you had all the privileges of being a member of the royal family.

And you could come and go at Buckingham Palace or any of the other royal residencies. You'll see where this is leading near the end of the sermon. The second scenario, imagine you had been born

recently into an Afghan family in Afghanistan.

And with all that they are going through at the moment, being ruled by the Taliban, and people trying to get out of Afghanistan. But you've not been successful.

[32 : 40] You are stuck in Afghanistan. And it's one of the most awful places to be. So, let's look at our passage with Mephibosheth.

In the first mention of Mephibosheth, we will find just a few chapters back in 2 Samuel chapter 4. In 2 Samuel chapter 4, we hear the first mention of Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth. 2 Samuel chapter 4 and at verse 4. 2 Samuel 4 and 4.

Jonathan, son of Saul, had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled.

But as she hurried to leave, he fell and became disabled. His name was Mephibosheth. That's the first mention of him when he was five.

[33 : 49] News had just come through that his father and grandfather had been killed in battle on the same day. And the nurse, trying to take him away as quickly as possible, dropped him and he became disabled in both feet.

Mephibosheth's life changed in a moment. And we realise, and we've known it in our own experience, or we can know it and possibly will know it, that anything can happen to anyone at any time.

In biblical times, people with disabilities were very much second-class citizens, if they were that at all. Now it's a lot better today for people who have some sort of problem.

Or is it? In our passage today, there are several people. There's Ziba, the servant of Saul's household, his servants, his sons.

But the focus of our whole passage is on two people. King David and Mephibosheth. This was what we're reading about tonight in 2 Samuel chapter 9.

[35 : 03] This is David's initiative. And in verse 7, he says to Mephibosheth, I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan.

I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan. As we remember, there was an incredible friendship between David and Jonathan.

The most incredible friendship. Now some of us may have known or may yet know that kind of friendship, when there's someone that we can just relate to.

We love being with, we love their company. And this was to be a lifelong friendship, and it had obviously continued even after Jonathan's very sad and early death.

David was also showing loyalty to Jonathan's father, Saul. And it was interesting the relationship that David had with Saul.

[36 : 08] There was a lot of blessing in that relationship when he was to become the future king, that he was allowed into the palace at an early age just to learn about palace life.

But also he experienced a lot of hatred from Saul. Saul resenting that this young man had been chosen to be the next king.

And yet David never dreamt of dishonoring Saul, even when he got a chance when Saul had gone into a cave that David was hiding in.

And he had the chance to kill him. But he thought Saul was God's anointed, and he would not ever do that.

And David didn't want to be just a recipient of God's kindness. He wanted to be a conduit. Now in those days, most kings were keen to wipe out all members of their rival's family to prevent them from taking the throne.

[37 : 16] But this was not David's way. Mephibosheth was the only one of Jonathan's family left. And David was very keen to show him kindness, as David had experienced so much kindness from God.

The kindness he had experienced and been protected as a shepherd boy from the wild animals. The experience of living in Saul's palace.

And going from being a shepherd boy to king. And regarded as the apple of God's eye. So he, in turn, as we can see in verse 3, he wanted to show kindness.

The king asked, Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness? What higher motivation in showing kindness was God's kindness?

Verse 6. Mephibosheth is wondering why he's there. Mephibosheth has been sent for.

[38 : 26] And this is what he says. This is what the Bible says. Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David. He bowed down to pay him honor. David said, Mephibosheth, At your service, he replied.

Mephibosheth was living in Lodabar and wondering why on earth had he been summoned. Why on earth was he there?

Why had the king sent for him? Isn't it funny we've had similar scenarios. And the one scenario that came to my mind is when I was about 17, I was in the school library where there was a telephone. I think it was the only telephone in the school. Things have changed. And the telephone rang. And the teacher who picked it up said, Barney, in those days we were all just called by, the boys were all called by their surname.

Barney, the head teacher wants to see you. Now, you know that kind of feeling? Why does he want to see me? And everything that you feel you've done wrong goes straight through your mind.

[39 : 43] And he thinks, How on earth could he have heard any of that? So I walked along the long corridors to get to the headmaster's study.

And knocked. And it was in the days when you would knock at the door and he would say one word. You sometimes hear it in films. Come. So I went in.

He said, Sit. Now, if you've watched films recently, then you often hear that, don't you? And you think, Who would say that today? It's so, We would see it as so impolite.

But that was the way of it. And he said, And he had very much a, what I call, a marble in the mouth, Glasgow accent. He was a Glaswegian, but he had a very posh accent.

And in Glasgow, we used to call this marble in the mouth. Marble in the mouth, translated. So he would say, Barney, you're probably wondering why I've called you here today.

[40 : 50] Not half. Not half. Shaking in my shoes. The reason I've called you here today, I was hearing that you had sat your driving test this morning.

Yes, sir? How did it go? I passed. Oh, congratulations. Thank you, Barney. And I thought, Was that all?

But it got me into the mindset of what Mephibosheth must have been thinking about as he was called from Lodabar to the king.

We read in verse 8 and we see his self-esteem was at an all-time low. Verse 8, Mephibosheth bowed down and said, What is your servant that you should notice?

A dead dog like me. He felt so unworthy. A dead dog was both contemptible and useless.

Mephibosheth realised there was no way he deserved David's kindness.

[41 : 57] For years he had lived in Lodabar. Lodabar in the middle of nowhere. And it didn't have any redeeming feature.

Look at what David gave Mephibosheth. Three things. First of all, a place at the king's table.

A place at the king's table. Now I don't know how many of you have been on cruises. I know especially in slightly older age it's a very popular thing to do.

And many people that you meet on cruises spend most of their retirement cruising. And one of the things everybody loves is when they get an invitation to the captain's table.

People are beside themselves and there will be photographs galore to go back to the family and the friends. And that's all very well but this was such an honour that Mephibosheth had because he was to be at the king's table for the rest of his life.

[43 : 09] So that was the first thing that David gave him. The second thing was all the land that belonged to his grandfather Saul and thirdly people to work his land.

Remember he was lame in both feet so he would have been unable to work the land himself. And this is the exact opposite of what he had experienced up till now.

He had lost his father. He had lost his grandfather. He had lost his ability to walk. He had lost his place in the royal family. And in verse 11 we see the king's kindness.

He would be sitting at the royal table as if he had been adopted into the king's family. David displaying amazing grace to Mephibosheth.

And remember this is just before David commits his greatest sins. The sin of adultery and the sin of organising the death of the woman's husband.

[44 : 24] Soon David would need God's grace and God's forgiveness as we read in Psalm 51. The word kind is in the it's such a weak word isn't it?

It's when somebody says oh that person is very kind. It's a kind of namby-pamby word. So I looked up the Oxford English Dictionary to get a synonym for kind.

And this is what it said generous, agreeable, caring, loving. And then I thought does this describe God's kindness? Does this describe the kindness of almighty God?

And I thought it's far too weak. We need words like extravagant, exuberant, outrageous, totally undeserved, prodigal in its true sense of the word.

And isn't it amazing the kindness of God? He offers us so much forgiveness of sin and a place in heaven if we come to him in repentance and faith.

[45 : 37] And God offers us a far warmer reception than even David offered and far warmer than we could ever imagine.

At the end of the service I'm going to read the blessing, the benediction from Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 20.

But just to be reminded of God's kindness. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church, and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever.

Mephibosheth in the presence of King David is a powerful picture of us being invited into the presence of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

Our King has summoned him, summoned us to his table. As we read in Revelation 19 and verse 9, blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb.

[46 : 55] We're all invited, but what is our response? What is our response? Some people, as soon as they hear that invitation, they are over the moon and they commit immediately.

Then there are other people who just don't want anything to do with that. They just don't want to know. And then the third response is, I will put that off to a later date.

And of course, none of us know if there's going to be a later date. Any one of us might well echo the words of Mephibosheth in verse 8 when he says, what is your servant that you should notice a dead dog like me?

When he was at that table, you can imagine him at that table with the rest of the king's family. And he would be fully aware that he was different.

He was different and he would have been aware from age five that he was lame in both feet. He was different. He would have been very aware that he was different because he was not one of David's family.

[48 : 19] But yet he was regarded as an adopted son. God only had one son but he's ready to adopt any one of us.

Now I just feel that is just absolutely amazing. And any time I think about adoption and hear of people who have adopted or been adopted, it just gets to me that people are willing to take someone in that's not a member of their family.

I was so glad of it because it happened to my mother. She wasn't adopted, she was an abandoned baby, she was just found somewhere or other and a family took her in.

They didn't adopt her as such, it was a long time ago, she was born in 1912. They never knew when her birthday was, they never knew, well they could guess how old she was, but they just gave her a birthday, they decided her birthday was the 6th of August.

And all throughout her life nobody mentioned the fact that she had been brought into this family. She was just seen as a member of that family.

[49 : 32] Now if you're a Christian sitting here tonight, or if you're a Christian listening in or watching in, to know that you too, we've never deserved this, we can't deserve it, we can't work for it, we can't do anything, but you and I have all the privileges of sonship or daughterhood.

And as sons we are to reflect the kindness of God. And because of God's spirit within us, the fruit of the spirit is evident in our lives.

Galatians 5 and verse 22 we read, but the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Let us as Christians express kindness to fellow Christians. And not just to fellow Christians, but to everyone that we come into contact with.

Because everyone, whoever they are, and whatever they have done, they have been made in the image of God. Can kindness convert someone?

[50 : 59] It's a difficult question. I'm not sure I know the answer to that. But it can certainly have quite an influence in people. I'm thinking of Boaz in the book of Ruth, his kindness to that woman, and how it brought a Moabitess into God's family.

I think of Zacchaeus, the taxman, up a tree, and Jesus saying, come down from the tree, you're coming to my house for tea tonight.

We think of so many other stories. kindness. And it happens today. There's kindness that changes people. We've got a young friend in Inverness, and he grew up in Glasgow, and he grew up in a free Presbyterian family.

And he was taken along to the church from a very young age. But when he was about 16, he decided, this is not for me.

This is not for me, and he decided he wasn't going anymore. And it's always a regret. We've got that in our own family, so we know all about that, but it's always a regret to families when sons and daughters and loved ones, that they just decide they are not going to follow on in the Christian way.

[52 : 25] So he went his own way, and when he was about 18 or so, his parents went away, he was a very responsible guy, and the parents went away on holiday, left him at home, he was perfectly able just to look after himself.

But Saturday night, the minister of the Free Presbyterian Church phoned and said, Ian, you're on your own this weekend, would you like to come for lunch tomorrow?

He said, well, that would be very nice. And then he thought, now, is there any way I could dodge the surface and just appear for lunch? And he decided, no, that would not be appropriate.

So it was in the days when we put on a white shirt and a fairly dark tie and a suit, so he put on all of this that he hadn't worn for quite a while, and off he went to the Free Presbyterian Church.

He doesn't remember a word he heard that day, but he was overwhelmed by the kindness of that family looking out for him.

[53 : 34] And he puts that down to one of the reasons that he came back to the Lord. Now, as sons and daughters, because of sanctification that God uses, we become more and more like our brother Jesus, with our kindness, our love, and compassion.

wisdom. And people see the kindness of God in the way that we react and act. Isn't the Christian life a bit like a relay race?

It's a long time since I've been in a relay race, but from what I remember, and that you run, you pass on the baton, and then other people run, and they pass on the baton.

And in many ways, that's exactly like the Christian life, isn't it? We've heard from someone. I wonder if you remember back who you first heard about Jesus from.

I think the first person that I can remember is the chap who is now the moderator of the Church of Scotland, the right reverend Dr. Ian Greenshields.

[54 : 45] He was in my school, and he dragged me along to church, and he started talking to me about God. Now, you will have a story, too, of how come you're a Christian today.

Someone, perhaps a parent, perhaps a member of the family, perhaps a friend, told you about Jesus. Now it's our turn to tell others, just as and when we get the chance.

Isn't it wonderful in the congregation when you have so many young people who are coming around the church, and you have got the chance to tell them about Jesus?

Jesus. At the beginning, I brought to you two scenarios, as if you had been brought up in the royal family, or if you had been brought up in Afghanistan.

And that was exactly Mephibosheth's situation. He had been brought up in the royal family. And then, because of the situation, and because of just his father and grandfather dying, he was then brought up in a place.

[55 : 55] It sounded like a place of no hope. And how very different it would have been for us if we had never heard of Jesus, and we had never come to faith.

When we pass on the message, how very different that other people's lives can become, and that they can have that future that we have. That future that starts now.

When we become, when we come to Jesus in repentance and faith, we become a new creation.

And then with the future to look forward to, that death will not be the end, that we will go to be with our Lord.

And we have an urgency, an urgency to pass on that message. And let's continue to keep knowing Jesus and getting to know him better and better and making Jesus known.

Amen. Amen. Our final song is going to be the song, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross. When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, my riches gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.

[57 : 28] Let's stand and sing to God's praise. Worlds. When I surveyed the wondrous cross, on rich and rich, on glory died, My riches gained, I count but lost, and bore content on all my pride.

And in more that I should boast, same in the death of Christ my God.

All the living things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His love.

Deep from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love promingle down.

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown.

[59 : 19] Where the whole realm of nature fly, That where an awe may far too small.

Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, According to His power that is at work within us, To Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, Throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.