

# Mephibosheth

STORY BY THE "HIGHWAY AND BYWAY" PREACHER

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Scripture Authority:—2 Samuel, chapter 9.

## SERMONETTE.

Here in this incident we find another side of David's nature revealed. Here he is the loyal friend keeping faith with the choice companion of his young manhood, Jonathan. Here, after the flight of the years and the multiplying of the burdens and cares resting upon him, we find him taking time and thought to redeem the promise made so long before. Loyalty to the friend of the long ago. Faithfulness in redeeming the promise given.

Such act on the king's part could not have been without much sacrifice of personal comfort, as well as the giving up of the rich possessions of Saul which had come to him in right of his wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul. But these things were as nothing in the eyes of David in comparison to the faithful discharge of that old obligation. This, then, we would emphasize in reference to the keeping of the promises made, seem they ever so small and unimportant: Personal comfort and personal possessions should never outweigh the importance of keeping a fair promise, honestly made.

How perfectly did Jesus exemplify this. He gave up his riches that we through his poverty might be made rich. He suffered that we through his suffering might be redeemed to God, and all because he sought to redeem the promise which God had made to man in the beginning when God said that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent.

Another thought in connection with this incident was the wholehearted way in which David did that which he had determined upon. He might have fulfilled his promise to Jonathan by restoring Mephibosheth to the family possessions, but no, he would do more, this son of his dead friend should be an honored guest at the king's table. Yes, he was a cripple, and certainly could not have added any dignity or beauty to the royal household, but such fact did not cause David to hesitate. In the divine-like spirit he would bring Mephibosheth into his very presence where he could personally attend to his comforts. This is the way God restores us to the lost heritage. He brings us into his very presence, cripples in sin though we are, and he there ministers unto us with unstinted devotion. From the many-sided view of David how we see reflected the divine attributes, even as we hear them breathed forth in the Psalms which he has left us.

## THE STORY.

**A** MESSENGER from King David! The news of his coming spread quickly through the country about Lodebar, and soon the people were eagerly discussing the purpose of the visit. Did he bring good tidings or ill? Was his mission one of peace or did he come with some sinister motive?

## Value of Vacation.

An annual vacation is absolutely necessary to every individual who would do good work.

No matter if the work you are engaged in is pleasant, routine is deadening, and unless one cultivates outside interests they are preparing for a peevish, ugly, tiresome old age. The object of a vacation should be a complete mental and physical relaxation.

An indoor worker should spend all of his time in the open. One whose work takes them about among people a great deal would do well to visit some quiet lake, shore or mountain resort.

One whose life is spent in the country should visit the city. In a couple of weeks they can see enough to color half their years with memories.

If no change is brought into one's life the activity of the mind slackens, the interests grow dull.

The man and woman in the office or behind the counter who work indoors the greater part of the year owe it to themselves to spend their vacations hygienically.

And when it was learned that the messenger had gone straight to the house of Machir, the chief man of the place, in fact, the most powerful shiek in that part of the country, and had inquired after one Mephibosheth, who was said to dwell there, the knowing ones said it boded ill for the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul.

Tidings of the growing power of King David had reached Lodebar from time to time and no more eager listener to the stories could be found than Mephibosheth. Helpless as he was he would always manage to get to the place where the news was being discussed, and though taking no active part in the conversation he interjected brief questions which always brought out all the details of the story.

Although only five years old when the tragic events fell upon the household of Saul they had burned themselves into his tender mind. The consternation of the royal household when the dreadful tidings of the result of the battle were learned, the confusion as preparation was made for flight, and then the mad, panic-stricken rush which followed as the rumor came that the Philistines were almost upon them. All this he remembered and then had come the awful accident. The nurse that was carrying him stumbled and fell near the head of the long flight of stairs leading from the palace, and the next recollection he had was of lying helpless on his couch with his legs bandaged up and pains so intense that it seemed as though he must die. And since that day he had wondered why he had not died, and had often wished as he considered his helplessness that he had.

As we have said, he was always intensely interested in news from the land of his birth, and had followed with special interest the rising fortunes of King David. The old servant who had carried him and cared for him tenderly in his youth had told him of the great friendship which had existed between King David and his father, and much of the gentle, heroic spirit which had characterized his father was possessed by himself. He felt a warm glow in his heart at every mention of King David's name, and he had a longing desire to have him for his friend, too.

When it was suggested to him once that the kingdom of Israel belonged to him by right of inheritance rather than to David, and that had it not been that he was a cripple he might by force of arms have asserted his rights, he had replied with spirit that if his father Jonathan had recognized the divine will and was willing to yield the kingdom to the man whom God had chosen for king surely he was not going to be less a man. He felt he could honor the memory of his noble father in no better way than to cherish the friendship which he had held for David.

And so it was when the messenger came from David seeking him, he did not share the evil forebodings which troubled his friends. They were certain that King David plotted his hurt, and that for him to place himself entirely in David's power was to court disaster of the most distressing kind.

"Be it good or bad which shall befall me," he had replied, quietly, "nevertheless I will go. I would see the face of him who was so great a friend of my father." And quickly gathering his household together, he prepared to leave with the messenger on the following day.

"How came King David to know of me and my whereabouts?" he questioned the messenger as they made their journey.

"One Ziba, a servant of the house of Saul, thy grandfather, told him of thee and he would not rest content until he had sent for thee," the messenger replied.

"But why should the king take thought for one like me, who am least of all my father's house—and a cripple," he added, sadly.

"Ah, but thou knowest not the good-

ness of the king's heart. His thought is toward the least of his people in Israel. Surely thou knowest the great love which he had for thy father Jonathan, and would he not desire to do kindness unto his son?"

"But do not the great burdens of ruling so vast a kingdom press heavy upon him and give him no time to follow the dictates of his own heart?"

"Again thou dost not understand or know the king, for more precious in his sight is loyalty to the friend of former days than all the prestige and honor and glory which the making of new and powerful friends can bring," was the earnest response.

And so as they journeyed the heart of Mephibosheth was cheered by the goodly account which the messenger gave of all the righteous acts of the king, until at last he exclaimed:

"Surely, God hath chosen a man like unto himself to rule over his people."

In this spirit of adoration for King David, Mephibosheth entered Jerusalem and was shown into the royal presence. And Mephibosheth fell upon his face to the ground and did the king reverence. But the latter came forward quickly and placing his hand upon the bowed head, said, affectionately:

"Mephibosheth!"

"Behold thy servant," responded Mephibosheth, earnestly.

"Fear not, Mephibosheth, for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually," said David.

The possessions of the house of Saul and a place at the royal table! Mephibosheth listened as one in a dream. Could it be true? Again he bowed himself before the king, and said:

"What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?"

But the king would hear no more, but forthwith gave orders that Mephibosheth was to become a member of the royal household and calling Ziba, the old servant of Saul, instructed him concerning the management of the estate and affairs of Mephibosheth.

## Cured by a Typewriter.

Constant companionship with a typewriting machine has a soothing and elevating influence on a man. No hard drinker, for instance, can use a typewriter. His nerves must be in good order or he will strike the wrong letters and mangle up his copy. There is a case of this kind which led to the reformation of a man. He was a typewriter and stenographer for a law firm. He was a good, all-around man, but he would go on the spree occasionally. This the head of the firm did not like, so he thought he would teach him a lesson. The stenographer was a methodical man, and he went on the "skate" at stated times in the year. When he returned on one occasion his employer had the machine all fixed for him. He had had the letters changed so that when you struck "h," for instance, it would print "x," and so on. The stenographer came back, feeling rather shaky, anyhow, and when he wrote off his first letter the result was appalling. He began to tremble. The boss kindly sent him to the Adirondacks to brace up. The cure was complete. He never touched liquor again as long as he lived.

## Generous Act Rewarded.

An undertaker named Roberts, at Walthamstow, England, several years ago buried, at his own expense, the bodies of a friendless woman and child who had been murdered, rather than see them laid in a pauper's grave. He has just received \$25,000, bequeathed him by an old gentleman who had admired his act.

## Once Often Enough.

Opportunity knocks but once. Other knockers, please copy.—Hapgood's Opportunities.

## GOOD REASON, TOO.

Notwithstanding Col. Bangs is only a militia colonel and never had a title in his life until a year ago, he does not like to air his colonelcy on all occasions, and for some time he has looked with disfavor upon the cards of his wife, which read: "Mrs. Colonel Bangs." The other day she told him to order her some more cards.

"Certainly, my dear," he responded, for the colonel is as gallant to his wife as most men are to other women, "but if I do I shall have that 'colonel' omitted."

"Oh, no," she protested; "what do you want to do that for?"

"Because it shouldn't be there."

"Why not? It is only a designation of who I am, and you are, Colonel Bangs, aren't you?"

"Then why am I not Mrs. Colonel Bangs?"

The colonel bowed. "For the same reason, my dear," he responded, "that when I was Mr. Bangs you were not Mrs. Mr. Bangs," and the colonel won a victory.

# A LAND OWNING TREE

OAK WHICH HELD DEED TO GROUND ON WHICH IT STOOD.

Admirer of the Noble Tree at Athens, Ga., Insures it Against Ruthless Destruction by Man.

A land owning tree! In a sense all trees are land owning trees in that they possess the ground on which they stand, but probably the only tree in the world possessing a deed to itself is one of the interesting and historic relics of Athens, Ga.

This magnificent oak stands in Cobham, the fashionable residential district of Athens, and it is ranked above the common trees of the world. It stands straighter and holds its head more proudly than the trees around it, seeming to realize that it is a property holder and cannot be touched against its will, that is, if the conditions of the deed are carried out. The tree is tall and symmetrical, its great limbs are shaped as if by the hands of an artist, and under its shade several generations have sheltered themselves from the heat or disported playfully in frolic and amusement, while lovers have found it an inviting spot to enjoy their moonlight strolls.

Recently George Foster Peabody, a New York philanthropist, erected a substantial iron chain fence around the sturdy old oak. He was familiar with its history, and said that he hoped the provisions of the deed would never be violated.

The records at the county courthouse show that in the early part of the eighteenth century Col. W. H. Jackson, a son of Gov. James Jackson, and father of Chief Justice James Jackson of the Georgia supreme court, owned the land upon which this tree stood. From his early childhood Col. Jackson had watched the tree grow, and he grew to love it as much as he would a human being. Its luxuriant foliage had often protected him from the sun and the rain, and from its branches he had taken eggs from the nests of the feathered songsters. In manhood Col. Jackson saw his favorite tree standing in its magnificent proportions, and he was pained to think that after his death it might fall into the hands of those who might destroy it. Believing that the only way to save the tree from the ax of the woodsman was to deed it to himself, he sought legal advice and ascertained that such a deed would be

binding and would prove a safeguard against its destruction. Col. Jackson went to the courthouse and had the deed recorded in the clerk's office. It reads:

"I, W. H. Jackson, of the county of Clarke, of the first part, and the Oak Tree (giving location) of the second part, witnesseth:

"That the said W. H. Jackson, for and in consideration of the great affection which he bears said tree, and his great desire that said tree be protected for all time, has conveyed, and by these presents does hereby convey unto said Oak Tree entire possession of itself and all land within eight feet of it on all sides."

Athens was then a struggling village, and the oak tree was nearly two



Noble Oak Which Owns Land on Which It Stands.

miles from the buildings of the state university, the only buildings of much consequence. Streets had not been laid out to any extent, and when the work of street making for the new educational center began the surveyor ran his lines so as to place the tree in the center of Dearing street. The land around the tree, outside of the eight feet to which it holds title, was sold to different parties, but the wishes of Col. Jackson, as expressed in his deed, were scrupulously respected.

Unmolested in the possession of its landed interests, the old tree has stood for more than a century, and with the best possible care taken of it by the city guardians and citizens, it gives promise to rounding out many years yet.

# HAS FINE NEW HOME

CONSOLIDATED STOCK EXCHANGE OF NEW YORK MAKES A MOVE.

Classical Piece of Architecture Cost with the Ground Over a Million Dollars—A House Warming in Prospect.

New York city has many stock exchanges, namely, the stock exchange, the cotton exchange, the produce exchange, the coffee exchange, the maritime exchange, and the consolidated stock exchange. This last named business organization is the last to get into large and modern quarters, and it is with a good deal of pride that the members of this exchange are looking forward to the coming house warming, when the building will be formally dedicated. The old quarters had been occupied for 20 years, and was far from suitable for the present needs.

The new building is advantageously located in the heart of the financial district within one block of the New York stock, cotton and produce exchanges. The site was purchased at a cost of \$870,000, or \$72.50 a square foot, and is said to have considerably increased in value, owing to other important building operations in the vicinity. It contains 12,000 square feet.

The building has been in process of construction for some months, the corner stone having been laid with appropriate ceremonies last January 21. It was erected at a cost of \$300,000. It is classic in style, the Broad street front showing a row of Ionic columns, and is limestone on a base of granite and surmounted by a dome.

The board room is about five feet above the Broad street level, steps leading from the sidewalk all along that side of the building to three large entrances. Practically the whole of the Broad street front back of the columns is one immense window, giving, with the side windows and a skylight in the dome, an abundance of light.

The trading floor, about 95 by 82 feet, gives increased space so badly needed to accommodate the increasing business and the many new members who are replacing those less

active. There will be 16 trading posts for railroad and industrial stocks, besides a post for loans of call and time money, the mining stock department and the wheat pit.

The system of call numbers, consisting of a set of nearly 500 transparent numbers for the more active members, behind which lights of different colors indicate whenever members are called at their telephones, on the main floor, or Beaver street entrance, is elevated on the southerly wall.

An electric clock of white marble surmounts this annunciator board. The timepiece is unique and said to be the only one of its kind in any exchange. It strikes automatically the opening hour, ten o'clock, and signals again at a quarter after two, the recognized limit of time for the delivery of stocks, and at three o'clock it sounds the closing gong, followed by a vibrating bell, which rings for 15 seconds.

The rostrum for the chairman is of East India Mahogany, and has been greatly admired as an unusually fine specimen of this wood because of its color and graining. The telephone spaces are mainly on the south side of the room. Long distance telephone booths, a smoking room, and a branch office of the clearing house are on the east side. The visitors' gallery is on the same side and on the same floor as the executive officers; while on the fourth floor are the board of governors' room and committee rooms. The clearing house has ample accommodations on the second floor of the office portion of the building.

## According to the Book.

"Would you mind letting your husband accompany me to the train?" queried Mrs. Neighbors. "My husband is laid up with a sprained ankle, you know."

"I would be only too glad to accommodate you," replied Mrs. Homer, "but the Bible forbids it."

"The Bible forbids it!" echoed the astonished Mrs. Neighbors. "Why, what in the world do you mean?"

"Well," answered Mrs. Homer, "you know it says it is not good for a man to be a loan."