

Sermon Topic : Transforming Society: God's Kindness by Rev Dr William Wan  
 Sermon Text: 2 Samuel 9:1-12

### David and Mephibosheth

<sup>1</sup> David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" <sup>2</sup> Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They summoned him to appear before David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" "At your service," he replied. <sup>3</sup> 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." <sup>4</sup> "Where is he?" the king asked. Ziba answered, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar." <sup>5</sup> So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> "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." <sup>8</sup> Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?" <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> You and 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.) <sup>11</sup> 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 <sup>[a]</sup> table like one of the king's sons. <sup>12</sup> Mephibosheth had a young son named Mika, and all the members of Ziba's household were servants of Mephibosheth.

### Introduction

- Kindness is other-centredness. (Former head of civil service Lim Siong Guan recently spoke about Singapore needing to have a society of graciousness)
- Kindness and graciousness are siblings, they always go together. Graciousness is when we bestow unto someone something that is undeserved.
- Without kindness, there can be no graciousness.
- Kindness transforms our society. The concept and act of kindness is something everyone can instinctively recognize and appreciate.
- Kindness is a trait of God, more easily understood, recognize and appreciate, compared to other concepts like omniscience.
- Introducing our God as a God who is kind is a possible topic for a pre-evangelistic conversation.
- Kindness writes large in the Bible because God is kind. Examples include:
  - ➔ Ruth 2: Ruth showed kindness to Naomi, her mother-in-law, in choosing to stay with her when Naomi had no more sons. Boaz was kind to Ruth in turn.
  - ➔ Luke 10: 30-37: The Good Samaritan showed kindness to a Jew by stopping and making time for him in his hour of need. The Good Samaritan even went to the extent of paying for his shelter and medical expenses, showing the Jew extreme kindness.
  - ➔ John 8: Jesus showed the woman caught in immoral conduct kindness. While he did not condone her sin, he addressed it in a gentle, tender and kind manner. Forgiveness is a manifestation of kindness.

**I. Kindness is a reflection of God (2 Sam 9:3)**

- We reflect the kindness of God when we show kindness to others. The presence of sin does not diminish the fact that we are made in the image of God and are capable of kindness. [cf. attributes of God – omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence...omnikind! See Eph 2:7; Titus 3:4 and Rom 11:22]
- Kindness is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). Perhaps it is found right in the middle because it is the headstone of all the other fruits and it holds all the other fruits together (<sup>22</sup> *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* <sup>23</sup> *gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law - Gal 5:22-23*)
- Kindness is love in action (1 Cor 13:4). Since we are called to love, we should be kind! While there are many teachings on love, kindness may not always be manifested in our words and actions to each other in church or to the people around us. We should be kind not only to the people in our work or social circles, but also to our neighbours around us. We never know when that could open the door for them to know God.

**II. Kindness is a debt to be paid forward (2 Sam 9:7)**

- David showed kindness to the house of Jonathan because of his friendship with Jonathan [cf. 1 Sam 18:1-4; 19-20; 1 Sam 23:16-18, 1 Sam 20:42]
- The self-made man or woman is a myth. God puts people around us to help us to get to where we are. “Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree long time ago” – Warren Buffet.
- Kind people live in gratitude. Let us not forget to help and be kind to those behind us, just as others have helped us to go forward.

**III. Kindness is a way of life (2 Sam 9:10)**

- David gave instructions to Ziba to farm the land so that Mephibosheth and his family would be provided for.
- Is kindness a tap (once-off/can be turned on or off) or a stream (flowing continuously)? We should look to help people in sustainable ways or sustain interactions with them where we can. For example, we should try to build a friendship with our neighbours and not limit our interactions with them to festive periods. A friendship can be an open door to lead their hearts and minds to God and the rest of the Christian community.
- Jesus Christ/The Gospel is God’s manifestation of kindness to us (Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you - Eph 4:32, see also 2 Pet 1:17) Let us exercise kindness to others. Knowledge puffs up unless you practice the things you know (cf. what we know -1 Thess 5:15, 2 Tim 2:24)

## Conclusion

- The Singapore Kindness Movement aims to make friends out of strangers. We are neighbours by chance, but friends by choice. To use the analogy of GST, may we infuse kindness into what we do (100%) and not as a half measure or afterthought (7%).
- Kindness is a common platform for human interaction. It is a golden thread that binds people together – from all walks of life and from all faiths. It is also a bridge to God. Love God and love your neighbour.
- Look for connectors to exemplify the kindness of God - For example, we could greet service staff by name and give them a compliment amidst our interactions with them. Be kind to all. As simple as GST.

## Discussion Questions

1. If godliness means to be more like God or to reflect God's character, how can we take the lead in showing kindness to others as a lifestyle choice?
2. What are your bias or stereotypes that prevent you from extending kindness and graciousness?
3. How can we use/support a secular platform like the Singapore Kindness Movement to engage our society for God? Check out [www.kindness.sg](http://www.kindness.sg).