

Text: 2 Samuel 8-9

Title: "David – God's Christlike Warrior"

Time: 11/9/2025 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Our church has prayed in recent days for my brother who has joined the Navy at the age of 57 to serve sailors as their chaplain. It is the first time I have seen first-hand some of the sacrifice that military personnel and their families go through to serve our country. We have veterans with us this morning who remember what that is like more than I will ever know. Our church thanks you for your service as we anticipate Veterans' Day this Tuesday.

William Nathaniel Thomas was the Chief of Chaplains for the Navy in the early part of the 20th century. In 1938, while the Command Chaplain at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Thomas authored "The Midshipmen's Prayer," which resides today on a bronze plaque at the Academy's chapel. The prayer prays the following:

"Almighty Father, whose way is in the sea, whose paths are in the great waters, whose command is over all and whose love never faileth; let me be aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will. Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and in deed, and helping me so to live that I can stand unashamed and unafraid before my shipmates, my loved ones, and thee. Protect those in whose love I live. Give me the will to do my best and to accept my share of responsibilities with a strong heart and a cheerful mind. Make me considerate of those entrusted to my leadership and faithful to the duties my country has entrusted in me. Let my uniform remind me daily of the traditions of the service of which I am a part. If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith; if I am tempted, make me strong to resist; if I should miss the mark, give me courage to try

again. Guide me with the light of truth and keep before me the life of Him by whose example and help I trust to obtain the answer to my prayer, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Thomas believed the prayer encapsulated the ideal of a US naval officer. Our text this morning is a narrative about the warrior-like qualities of the Old Testament's ideal warrior-king, King David. The Lord presents David with the Davidic covenant in chapter 7. In chapter 8, we see the ferocity of this warrior-king, who destroys the enemies of his nation. In chapter 9, we see the faithful compassion of this warrior-king, who meets the needs of a poor lame subject. That both ferocity and compassion are commendable qualities in David is clear from the text:

8:6, 14: "And the Lord preserved David [gave David victory] whithersoever he went"; 8:15, "David executed judgment and justice unto all his people."

It is the work of naval officers and warrior-kings to both strike with ferocity and care with compassion. With the example of David before us, and the desire to honor military veterans on our hearts, I would like us to consider two truths from the text this morning as we look at David, the Christ-like warrior: (1) David was a warrior-king who defeated the enemies of his people; and (2) David was a compassionate king, who cared for the needs of Mephibosheth.

I. David was a warrior king who defeated the enemies of his people (2 Samuel 8).

Application: Now as we read chapter eight, those of us who have not been to basic training to learn how to kill the enemy find it more difficult to relate to David the warrior-king than to David the sweet-psalmist or the loving shepherd of a flock of sheep. We may even have trouble commending

David's actions the way the Lord does. But whenever we find that we are having trouble commending something that God commends in Scripture, God's Word is exposing a difference between our nature and His. And whenever there is a difference between God's nature and our own, God's nature is the one that is holy, and our nature is the one that is sinful and in need of correction.

There are at least two things God understands better than we often do about David when we read chapter 8:

(1) God understands that war is a reality of a sinful world, which a nation must address with her warriors.

Illustration: Trey Gowdy served our nation as a representative from South Carolina from 2011-2019. He was asked by a reporter once this question: "How can President Trump claim to represent all U.S citizens, regardless of sexual orientation, when he banned transgenders from joining the military? Isn't that discrimination?"

Gowdy's response was a reminder that war is a reality of a sinful world that a nation must address with her warriors: "Nobody has a right to serve in the military. Nobody! What makes you people think the military is an equal opportunity employer? It is very far from it - and for good reasons - let me cite a few.

""The military uses prejudice regularly and consistently to deny citizens from joining for being too old or too young, too fat or too skinny, too tall or too short. Citizens are denied for having flat feet, or for missing or additional fingers. . . poor eyesight will disqualify you, as well as bad teeth. Malnourished? Drug addiction? Bad back? Criminal history? Low IQ? Anxiety? Phobias? Hearing damage? Six arms? Hear voices in your head? Self-identification as a Unicorn?

Need a special access ramp for your wheelchair? Can't run the required course in the required time? Can't do the required number of push-ups? Not really a morning person? Refuse to get out of bed before noon? All can be legitimate reasons for denial.

“The military has one job: winning war. Anything else is a distraction and a liability. Did someone just scream, ‘That isn't Fair!’? War is very unfair; there are no exceptions made for being special or challenged or socially wonderful. You must change yourself to meet Military standards and not the other way around. I say again: You don't change the military - you must change yourself. The military is not about being fair, it is about taking advantage of others and about winning.

“The military doesn't need to accommodate anyone with special issues. The military needs to win wars and keep our country safe - Period! If any of your personal issues are a liability that detract from readiness or lethality... Thank you for applying and good luck in [your other] future endeavors.”

Application: In his answer, Gowdy explains for us the ferocity that is necessary to defend a free nation like ours from our enemies. David understood this need as well, and God understands it too, having called David to execute this kind of ferocity at times. In spite of the brutality of their duty, soldiers are always viewed honorably in the NT Scriptures.

Unlike the soldiers of the nation of Israel, we local church members wrestle not against flesh and blood in this day and age, but we must recognize our need to do spiritual battle as good soldiers of Jesus Christ metaphorically (2 Tim. 2:3-4), and we also need to be citizens who pray for and support our military families and veterans, who have provided the warriors our nation's safety has needed in a sinful world.

(2) God understands that the sin of sinners must be judged.

Application: Often those critical of David's campaigns in this passage will point to his treatment of Moab as especially cruel. David would have likely explained that his treatment of Moab was more merciful than his treatment of the other enemies he faced. In the case of Moab alone, he spared 1/3rd of the army that opposed him rather than killing them all on the battlefield as he had done to the other nations.

This entire chapter is filled with a brutal judgment of God on the enemies of Israel through David's military success, but the brutality of the chapter pales in comparison to what we read about the coming judgments of God on the sinful nations of our world. Revelation speaks of the brutality of the Great Tribulation period and of the Great White Throne judgment and its lake of fire. The horror of God's just judgment on sin is no greater than the measure of the horror of sin itself. As sinners, we are horrified by God's judgments, but not by our sin. As holy, God is horrified by our sin, not by His just judgment on sin.

Of the five works of God: creation, providence, revelation, salvation, and judgment, judgment is the work He calls His strange or foreign work (Isa. 28:21). Judgment is God's strange work because it is the one work in which He takes no pleasure: "Say unto them, 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?'" (Ezek. 33:11).

Despite this lack of pleasure, God understands that the sin of sinners must be judged, for He is holy. So what hope is there for a sinful man before a holy God? That answer is illustrated for us by David's example as a compassionate-king.

II. David was also a compassionate king, who cared for the needs of Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9).

Illustration: The Book of Revelation is a book about the coming judgments of God on this sinful world, but a careful reading of that prophecy will show that the One who is executing the judgments of God on sinners is always the Lamb of God (Greek: not a sheep, but a little lamb). When in chapter 5 John turns to see the One worthy to break the seals of the scroll of these world-ending judgments, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, he sees “a Lamb standing as though it had been slain” (Rev. 5:6). That chapter also calls this Lamb the Root of David, which, with its reference to 2 Samuel 7, is very important to our interpretation of the events of David’s life in chapters 8-9. The Lamb is just like David. He fulfills the Davidic covenant as David’s Son, the Messiah.

Application: In David’s successful campaigns of chapter 8, we see the Lion’s judgments typified, and in David’s compassionate care for Mephibosheth, we see the Lamb’s compassion for a helpless sinner pictured. The Lion who devours sinners in judgment is first the Lamb who was slain to save them from this judgment, if only they would repent and believe. Note some specifics about this picture of compassion for sinners with me from verse 1 of chapter 9:

1. David’s compassion for Mephibosheth was compassion for his rightful enemy (v. 1, Mephibosheth was part of “the house of Saul”). The house of Saul, David’s predecessor, had busied itself with efforts to murder David for many years.

When the Lamb died for the sin of sinners, He did so to save those who crucified Him. He prayed from the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). Jesus died to save sinners, who are His rightful enemies. Rom. 5:10, “For if while we were enemies we were recon-

ciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.”

2. David’s compassion for Mephibosheth was a one-way street (v. 1, “that I may show him kindness”). The kindness here is *hesed*, a word that refers to covenantal-love. Mephibosheth was going to be loved by David, not because Mephibosheth had earned that love, but only because David had promised to love him. It was all of grace. It was completely unearned and undeserved. Mephibosheth was lame in his feet. He calls himself a dead dog, for he has nothing to offer anyone, let alone the king of Israel. And still David gives him the royal lands of his grandfather’s house, and guarantees him a seat at his own royal banquet table.

This is what the Lamb does in dying for helpless sinners. Jesus’s saving love is a one-way street. Rom. 5:6-8, “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person— though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

3. David’s compassion for Mephibosheth was for the sake of another (v. 1, “for Jonathan’s sake”). Jonathan, son of Saul, is the one major figure in the history of Israel about whom the text has nothing negative to say. It tells us about the sins of Adam, of Noah, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of Judah, of Moses, of Aaron, of Samuel, and even of David. But Jonathan did nothing wrong, and yet Jonathan lost everything. It was for his sake that kindness was shown to Mephibosheth.

Our Lamb lost everything after having done nothing wrong. He was slain for us. His sacrifice meant that God would extend His kindness to us as a gift to be received by faith.

Rom. 5:9, "Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God."

Conclusion: The free offer of the king's kindness was accepted by Mephibosheth. He humbled himself before his king and became his king's servant. The record of the nations whom David defeated are accounts of what happened when his kindness was rejected in pride and unbelief (see 10:1-5).

What have we done with the kindness extended to us as a gift from the Lamb? Jesus is the slain Lamb of salvation first, and the slaying Lion of God's judgment only after that offer of salvation is rejected. Have you humbly received His offer of salvation with thanksgiving, becoming His servant? Or have you made a mockery of His kindness with your pride and unbelief? Do you see yours response to Christ in Mephibosheth's humble faith, or in the refusal of these enemy nations? Like David, Jesus is a warrior-king who graciously offers His kind salvation to each of us this morning.

"A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction—the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*