

Commitment: Are You All In?
The Family on a Mission
2 Samuel 9:1-13
2/5/17

- Let me ask you a question – what is the purpose statement or the mission statement for our church?
 - o I was hoping people would know this or at least be able to read it from this banner! It's on everything we put out – every bulletin, every letterhead, every invitation, every newsletter...everything.
 - o There was a group of leaders that worked for a while and prayed for a while to develop our purpose statement. Then, we rolled it out to the congregation during a business meeting years ago and got their input.
 - o Then, we got even deeper a couple of years ago to get even more specific. Over the years, we have tweaked how we would carry out our purpose statement as we have learned together, particularly through 24 to Double and other resources. It has been a process.
 - o In a couple of months, as part of our Commitment series, we are going to look at our purposes as a church, as the Family of God and go into some detail about why and what and how we live out our purpose statement.

- It's important to have a purpose statement for the church. A purpose statement keeps you moving in line with a purpose instead of doing just anything for any reason. If you don't know where you are going and what you are trying to accomplish, you will end up doing things that may be good, but don't fulfill a purpose.
 - o But, have you ever thought about having a purpose statement for your family? A purpose statement can also be called a mission statement. Have you ever thought about having a mission statement for your family?

- At some point in life, we all ask the question, "Why am I here? Is there a purpose for my life?" I think that can be extended to families as well. Why has God placed you in the family where He has placed you? Why are you part of your particular family? What is the reason your family exists?
 - o The purpose for your family has to go beyond raising kids to be decent people, getting a decent job to live a comfortable lifestyle, being a decent, law-abiding family. I think most families are just trying to be decent – decent lifestyle, decent people, decent income, decent house with a decent amount of stuff. There's got to be more for people created in the image of God than decent.
 - o I believe God has an individual purpose for each of us, but I also believe He has a purpose for our families as units. Today, we are going to use the story of King David and a guy with an interesting name, Mephibosheth, to show you how you might investigate and discover your family's purpose and mission.

- If you want you can start to turn in your Bibles to 2 Samuel 9.
- Let me give you some background information first. David was the second king of Israel. He is probably the most famous king of the whole Old Testament. Before he was king, he had a best friend, Jonathan. Jonathan happened to be King Saul's son.
 - King Saul, at one time, loved David. David spent a lot of time in the palace. Then, King Saul became very jealous of David and his increasing popularity. On top of that, David had already been anointed to be the next king by the prophet Samuel and Saul had been told his descendants would not inherit the throne. Saul, who was a bit on the ego-maniacal side, was incensed and went after David.
 - In fact, David lived on the run most of his life as a young adult because Saul was constantly trying to kill him. In spite of that difficult situation, David and Saul's son, Jonathan, remained best friends and they made a pact of sorts, a covenant.
- Jonathan promised to look out for David and to warn him of his father's intentions and plans to kill David so that David could escape whenever necessary. In exchange, Jonathan asked for David to always be kind to his descendants because Jonathan knew David would become Israel's next king and David would have resources to help care for his family.
 - The covenant is found in I Samuel 20:14-17 where Jonathan says "And may you treat me with the faithful love of the LORD as long as I live. But if I die, treat my family with this faithful love, even when the LORD destroys all your enemies from the face of the earth." And Jonathan made David reaffirm his vow of friendship again, for Jonathan loved David as he loved himself.
- So, fast forward years and years to 2 Samuel 9. During that time, Saul and his sons had been killed in a battle against the attacking Philistines and David had become king. But, David remembers his sworn covenant with his friend, Jonathan. Let's read what happens in **2 Samuel 9:1-13**.
 - We find David inquiring if any of Saul's descendants, which means any of Jonathan's descendants, were still alive. He didn't know if any were. The practice in that day was if the king was conquered, every single one of his family was killed – wives, children, grandchildren – everyone. The Philistines would have seen to that.
 - But, David had to find out if there just might be anyone. And, he finds one – Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the grandson of Saul.
- Looking at this passage, we can find some missional actions and attitudes that might be good for the mission of our own families. Let's look at some actions and attitudes that King David's family would include if they were writing a mission statement about the purpose of their family.
- First, the House of David keeps its word to others. What does your word mean? When you give your word, does it hold any weight?

- Promises, perhaps, don't mean what they used to mean. I'm not sure our society values a person's word or puts much hope in a person's word like we once did. It's unfortunate.
 - We have developed this cynical "wait and see" attitude. For good reason because it has been proven over and over that words can be used to manipulate people and circumstances in the moment, and then can be discarded when the moment has gained the person what they were seeking. Promises can be made as a form of escape to get someone off your back or to lead them to believe you are someone different from who you really are.
 - Words used to be a person's bond. You used to be able to do business with a handshake and your word. Now, often they are just words used to tell someone what they want to hear in an effort to escape an unpleasant situation. Truly, actions speak louder than words.
- Yet, as believers, we know that God has called us to love others. Part of loving others is keeping our word. When we don't keep our word to them, we are disrespecting them which displeases God. Promises are easy to make, but keeping them is a different story.
 - When we promise to pray for people, when we promise to keep something confidential, when we tell someone we are sorry and promise never to do the same thing again, when we promise we will do what someone is asking, and we don't make good on our promise, we aren't showing love and respect the way God desires for us to.
- Keeping covenants, keeping promises is essential in our homes if we are going to live as Christians and if we are going to be witnesses to the world around us. The fact that King David was remembering his promise and was also going to some trouble to search for any possible relatives in order to keep his promise set a wonderful example for his own family and is a wonderful example for us to follow.
 - Husbands and wives, you made some promises to each other. There was something about "to love and to cherish, forsaking all others, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, for better or for worse 'til death do you part." Let me remind you of those vows!
 - One of the challenges in today's culture is that the institution of marriage has been mocked and downgraded to a social contract, one that can be simply cancelled, torn up, and disposed of.
 - Marriage isn't a contract. That is a big pet peeve of mine – when people say, "It's just a piece of paper." Usually, that is said to justify doing some things outside of marriage that you know you shouldn't be doing. Let's keep in real. Please don't tell me the relationship between my husband and I can be summed up in a piece of paper!
 - Marriage isn't a contract or a piece of paper or something that can be legislated by sinful humans. It is a holy covenant that was designed by God himself to join two people into one. It is a covenant that is made and sealed before God and His church. We must not take the covenant lightly.

- Parents, if we make promises to our children, we need to seek to fulfill them with intention and effort. Follow-through as parents is so important if we want them to trust us and share their lives with us.
 - o I was a freshman in high school when my dad was considering leaving the pastorate in Greentown, OH to pastor in Eaton, OH. It would move us from one corner of the state to another. Ohio is a big state. We were going to move four hours away from everything and everyone I knew. I was devastated.
 - o I knew after we went for the candidating weekend at the church in Eaton that we were moving. I was crying. My parents, knowing that I had also been begging to get a puppy for a while, promised that if we moved to Eaton, they would get me a puppy.
 - o Do you think I got that puppy? NO! When they first made that promise, they intended to keep it and they wanted me to feel better about the move. Afterwards, they started thinking, “Angela is going to be leaving for college in a three years and we’re going to be stuck with a dog that we don’t want!”
 - o Now, when I look at it as an adult, they had OK reasoning. But, do you note that I remember that broken promise made decades ago? Broken promises stay with your children, even if you have a good reason for breaking them. Count the cost before making a promise. You need to keep your word.

- And young people, if you make promises to your parents to do better in school, to clean your room, to be more responsible in some area of your life, you need to follow through. The keeping of our promises shows love and respect.
 - o And, parents, if your child makes a promise to someone or makes a commitment to something and then decides they don’t want to do it, you’ve got to step in! We have too many kids who don’t understand commitment because parents allow them to take the easy road and quit. Don’t let them do that!

- Keeping our word honors the Lord. When you give your word to someone else, you are giving it before God as well. Deuteronomy 23:21-23 says if you make a vow to others, you make it to the Lord and breaking it is a sin. Jesus simply said, “Let your yes be yes and your no be no.
 - o God takes our word very seriously, and so should we.

- Next, the House of David shows kindness to others.
 - o So, Mephibosheth is located and brought to the palace. I bet Mephibosheth was scared to death. He knew what happened to the decedents of overthrown kings.
 - o But, when he gets there, he hears these words in verse 7: 7 “Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan.

- Now, we read that Mephibosheth had a physical disability. But, that wasn’t the reason for David’s kindness toward him. David extended kindness to Mephibosheth “for the sake of

his father Jonathan.” It was out of respect for his relationship with Jonathan and the covenant they had made that David would assist Mephibosheth. The emphasis in this verse isn’t on Mephibosheth’s need for assistance.

- The emphasis is on the fact that David had made a vow – before the Lord - and had determined to be kind to Jonathan’s descendants. David didn’t decide to be kind because Mephibosheth was unable to walk. David had simply decided to be kind.
- Kindness is something that has become unexpected. Instead, we expect that people will not be kind and will not help. Maybe you’ve seen undercover videos where people bypass someone without a coat or look right past a need. I’ve seen videos where people will walk right past children who are lost or crying.
 - When we go out and do kindness outreach projects, I can’t tell you how often people are completely surprised, even shocked, that we are passing out candy or water. Shocked! Sometimes, when we approach someone with a bag of candy, they are stand-offish, thinking we want something. Then, when they find out we want to give them something, they are surprised. Sometimes, because we have become unaccustomed to kindness, people don’t even want to receive the act of kindness. They’re still suspicious.
 - One year, at the church in Eaton, we decided to pass out free soda to cars stopped at red lights in the center of town. We had signs that said “Free Ice Cold Pop!” In the Midwest, we call soda, pop. It was a warm day. People had their windows down.
 - Do you know how many people saw us and rolled up their window?? I was standing at the side of the road and a driver right next to me rolled up their window and locked their door! Do I look like someone who would carjack someone?? They didn’t know what to do with our kindness! We learned that wasn’t the best kindness outreach project to do.
- The fact is, we have all needed the kindness of strangers. Whether it has been a pair of jumper cables we needed to borrow, someone providing the extra five dollars behind us in the check-out line because we had gone a little over. We have all needed special kindness.
 - As people of God who have experienced the great kindness of Jesus sacrificing himself for us and saving us, we, of all people, should be finding ways to bestow kindness on others and teaching the value of kindness to our children.
 - That’s why my kids have attended nearly every kindness outreach project we have done. They need to learn kindness!
- I want us to note something else - David extended kindness not just one time, not just on one occasion, not just every now and then, but he extended kindness to Mephibosheth for the rest of his life. Kindness was a way of life for David in his relationship to Mephibosheth. He took him in as part of his own family.
 - Verse 8 tells us that Mephibosheth didn’t think very highly of himself. He called himself a “dead dog.” I’m thinking Mephibosheth was struggling with depression and low self-esteem. I’m guessing he was a real fun guy at parties!

- Sometimes we distance ourselves from Debby Downers and Franky Frowners because they can suck the life out of us. They can be difficult to spend time with.
 - David could have given him a wing in the palace and sent servants to care for him without personally interacting with him and investing time in him, but in kindness, he reached out and drew Mephibosheth in. As people and families of kindness, we must do the same. Real kindness reaches out and draws people in.
- Next, the House of David assists others with support and restoration.
- David told Mephibosheth in verse 7 that he would restore to him the land that had once been his grandfather's. He explained to his own servant, Ziba, in verse 9 that he was giving everything to Mephibosheth that had once belonged to King Saul. He told his servant that he was to make sure that the land he was restoring to Mephibosheth would be worked and harvested in order that Mephibosheth would be provided for.
 - Now, why would Mephibosheth need the land? He was going to live in the King's palace. Why would he need the food from the land? He was going to eat at the King's table. He would be taken care of.
 - But, if we look at verse 12, there's one little sentence. Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. Why did we hear about Mephibosheth's little boy in that verse?
- Isn't it every parent's dream to be able to leave a legacy, to leave an inheritance, to pass something on to their children? In ancient times, it was all about land. Land was your inheritance.
- In this story, we see David helping to bring restoration to Mephibosheth's life so that he would have something to pass on to his young son, so that his son would be able to have a life and care for himself one day. When God restores, he restores completely. Isn't that awesome?
- When you reach out in kindness to others, know that it has the potential to go beyond that one individual and can impact future generations. When you help make life better for a parent, you are helping to make life better for a child!
- For every single mother we help with rent, as some have done, it affects the children. For every person we support as they go through finding freedom from addiction, it affects future generations.
 - For every person who comes here broken and in bondage to sin, patiently helping them grow in Christ is breaking generational curses and providing generational blessings. Children and grandchildren will be different because of the impact God will make on our collective kindness in providing for needs, supporting and pointing others to Jesus. That's what we should be about doing in our families and in the Family of God.
- And it leads me to my final point: The House of David provides a safe place for others.

- Instead of killing Saul's descendants, David took them in and cared for them. Mephibosheth would live in safety for the rest of his life. He didn't have to hide anymore.
 - We are told that Mephibosheth was unable to walk and the story of how that happened is found in II Samuel 4.
 - When his nurse heard that Saul and his sons had been killed in battle, which means she heard that Jonathan, Mephibosheth's dad had been killed, she was afraid someone would come after Mephibosheth and kill him, too. In panic and fear, she scooped him up and tried to make a run to safety with him. However, somehow, she fell while holding him or he simply fell out of her arms, and he became injured and unable to walk.
- The safe place she found for Mephibosheth was in a place called Lo-debar. Lo-debar actually means, "without pasture" "without hope." That is exactly how Mephibosheth was living – without hope, in hiding, even calling himself a dead dog.
 - Yet, because of the way David and his family chose to live, he was able to bring Mephibosheth from a place of hiding to a place of dining, from a place of desolation to a place of peace, from obscurity to the King's table. What an incredible and profound transformation in Mephibosheth's life.
 - No one wants to live in "Lo-debar." No one wants to live in fear, in hiding, and without options for change. What if each of our families, asked God to give us an opportunity to make a difference for one other family, by showing them kindness, by assisting them with restoration and support, and by helping them come out of hiding and into a safe place.
- Yes, we are to keep our word. Yes, we are to show people kindness. Yes, need to reach out to support other people as they seek a better life for themselves and their families, but listen, ultimately, our job as believers, is to help people get to the King's Table! We are to get people to Jesus!
 - Why? Because once people are brought to the King of Kings, once they know Jesus, they will live with the hope they need to face all of life's challenges. Physical safety is important, but spiritual safety is paramount.
- If I were to write a mission statement for King David's family based on this story, it would read something like this: The King David family exists to live out our word before God and others by showing kindness and support to others so that they might find hope and healing through Jesus.
 - If someone was to write a mission statement for your family based on the current way in which you live, what would it say? Do you want more than someone saying, "They were a good, decent family?"
 - What would you like for it to say?

- I believe God strategically placed us in the families we are in for a reason. He is not haphazard in anything he does. I also believe God has strategically placed our families in the time and place where we are for a reason.
 - I've been thinking about this a lot for our family and our family situation. You know, I grew up as a PK – a preacher's kid. As a PK, there was a lot of pressure to be "perfect." It was growing up in a fishbowl with people watching and having certain expectations of you. I've been told how I should act or how I should look and present myself. Thankfully, my parents never put those expectations on me. It could be exhausting and left me with a negative view of God that I had to learn wasn't right or true. It's probably one of the reasons why my biggest fear is failure.
 - It's probably also why I strive so hard to just be real now that I know that God calls us to be real, not be perfect.
 - And, I've been thinking about our family and our boys being PK2s – meaning preachers kids where both parents are preachers. I don't want them to feel like they have to be perfect. But, I do want them to know the perfect love of Jesus. I want our family to exemplify that you don't have to be perfect to know Jesus and to be changed by him. I want our boys to love God with every fiber of their being and to love other people as Jesus loves us.
 - So, more than anything, I want the testimony of our family to be, *"The Sagesse family is made up of imperfect people who found a perfect love in Jesus and who want to love Jesus with everything in us as we share that love through words, action and example to point others to the perfect love of Jesus as well."*

- How about you? The mission statement for your family doesn't have to be the same as ours. I haven't even talked to Wil and the boys about this statement yet. It might change. But, it's important to have a mission for your family or you will end up just being decent when God has more for you! So, what do we do?
 - How many here, like me, will forget something if you haven't written it down? Putting pen to paper makes something a priority and it guards from you forgetting it.
 - That's why we ask people to sign a membership covenant at our church. If you are in leadership, you sign a leadership covenant. It's because it gives what you do here worth and importance. We aren't playing church here. We are changing the world and our community by sharing the peace of Christ!
 - Your family is serious and you are doing important work that needs to be written down. If not, you will go from important work to just being decent.

- Let me share some other benefits of having a written family mission statement.
 - A family mission statement will free you from the tyranny of other people and life's circumstances. If you don't have a clearly-defined direction as a family, someone or something else will tend to set direction for you. You will find yourself the slave of other people and circumstances.

- For example, the kids get involved in too many sports and clubs and mom and dad begin to feel like the taxi service family. But, with a family mission statement, the family learns to say, “No! That does not contribute to our mission.”
- A good mission statement will define and motivate. It will be God’s means to create a unique household. Words have the power to motivate, to bring growth, change, and realization of a vision.
 - The reason most families split up is because they do not share a common vision. Since each of the family members participate in the creation of the mission statement, the process of making a mission statement will draw your family together. “This is our vision. We share it. This is why we exist as a family.”
 - Society is tearing the family apart. We must confront division with “NO! We have a unique purpose for being together!”
- Mission statements don’t have to be long and wordy. In fact, they shouldn’t be because then they are too easy to forget. The one I shared for our family is probably too wordy and we need to work on it. Make them simple.
 - You can also list some ways you are going to carry out that mission statement. For example, in ours, the priority of going to church as a family is most definitely a way that we will carry out our mission statement. Being involved in service together as a family is going to be in there. As the kids get older, going on mission trips together is definitely going to be in there.
- Here are some more ideas. A family mission statement should be:
 - Realistic – on the one hand, reach for high ideals and lofty goals, but BE realistic. This should be a practical dream – one that can be achieved.
 - Personal – reflecting your family values, intent, character, goals. This should NOT be a copy of someone else’s statement.
 - Measurable – so you can evaluate your progress and effectiveness.
 - Christ-centered – If we are Christ followers, then our goals and plans should be Christ-oriented.
 - Organic and flexible. It should have room for additions, subtractions, corrections. How we carry out our family mission statement now will be different than how we carry it out in a few years. Children grow up and change. Families change. You don’t want your statement to become stagnant.
 - Bigger than your family. We serve a BIG God who has big dreams and a big mission for your family. Dream big. If a mission statement is ONLY about your own family, it is way short of what a mission statement should be. When a mission statement is big, it will affect the generations now and in the future.
- In your bulletin, there is an insert with more information on guidelines for forming a mission statement and how to get the most benefit from a family mission statement. This is all to help you form your own mission statement for your family.

- Obviously, I'm going to encourage you to do what we are going to do – to create a mission statement together with your family. Ask the question, “why do we exist as a family?” Invite everyone to give their input. Pray about it. Create a plan for how to carry out that mission statement.
 - Again, we are all in a family. You don't have to be husband, wife and kids to make a family mission statement. Your family, whatever form it is in currently, still has a God-given purpose. What is it?
- This morning, may we ask some questions and seek God's wisdom so we can be more than good, decent, church-going families. Instead, may we be families on a mission.