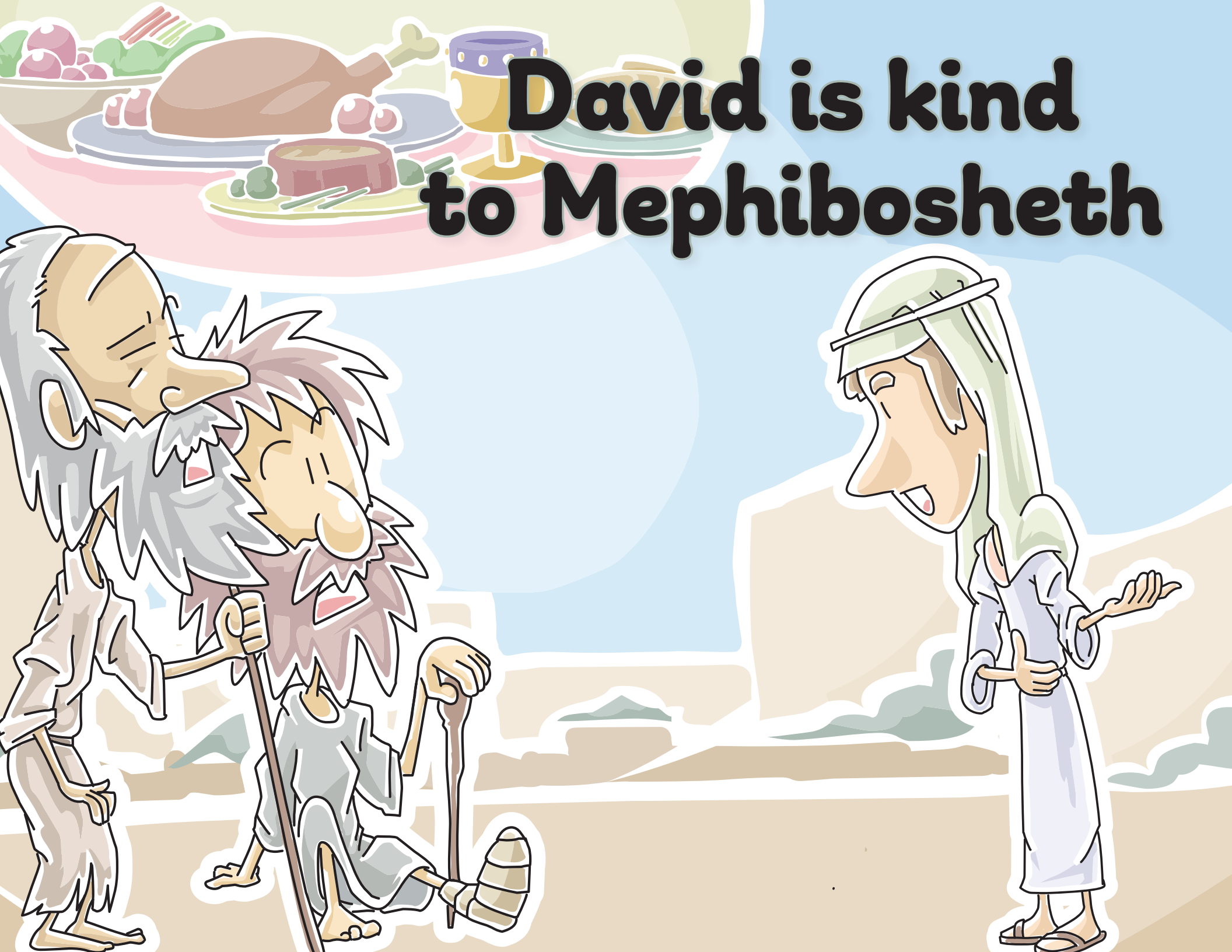
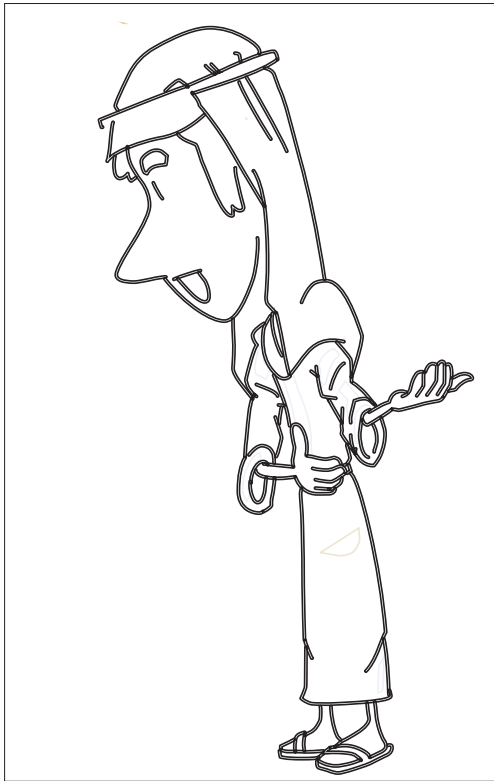


David is kind to Mephibosheth



Colour me!



2 Samuel 9

After Saul and his son Jonathan (David's best friend) died during a war, David became king of Israel.

One day, David thought, "I wonder if any of Saul's family are still alive. If they are, I will be kind to them, because I made a promise to Jonathan." David called in Ziba, one of the servants of Saul's family. David said, "So you are Ziba." "Yes, Your Majesty, I am."

David asked, "Are any of Saul's family still alive? If there are, I want to be kind to them." Ziba answered, "One of Jonathan's sons is still alive, but he can't walk." "Where is he?" David asked. Ziba replied, "He lives in Lo-Debar with Machir the son of Ammiel." David sent some servants to bring Jonathan's son from Lo-Debar. His name was Mephibosheth, and he was the grandson of Saul. He came to David and knelt down. David asked, "Are you Mephibosheth?" "Yes, I am, Your Majesty."

David said, "Don't be afraid. I'll be kind to you because Jonathan was your father. I'm going to give you back the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul. Besides that, you will always eat with me at my table." Mephibosheth knelt down again and said, "Why should you care about me? I'm worth no more than a dead dog."

David called in Ziba, Saul's chief servant, and told him, "Since Mephibosheth is Saul's grandson, I've given him back everything that belonged to your master Saul and his family. You and your fifteen sons and twenty servants will work for Mephibosheth. You will farm his land and bring in his crops, so that Saul's family and servants will have food. But Mephibosheth will always eat with me at my table." Ziba replied, "Your Majesty, I will do exactly what you tell me to do." So Ziba's family and servants worked for Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth was lame, but he lived in Jerusalem and ate at David's table, just like one of David's own sons. And he had a young son of his own, named Mica.

Commentary

Before he became king, David had been best friends with Jonathan, King Saul's son. It had broken his heart when he learned that Jonathan had been killed in battle along with his father. As friends, they had promised to look after each other whatever happened, so now that David was king he made good that promise by seeking out any surviving members of Jonathan's family.

Mephibosheth was Jonathan's son, disabled from the time when his nurse had dropped him on hearing the news of Jonathan's death. In those days, people didn't bother much with those who were disabled and couldn't earn a living, so David's kindness was a cultural surprise as well as an act of compassion by a family friend. David's actions on behalf of this disabled man are an example of the way things are in the kingdom of God, where all are welcome and all are valuable.

Questions

- ▶ What do you think Mephibosheth thought about David, who had once been hated by his grandfather Saul? Might he perhaps have dreaded meeting David?
- ▶ What prompted David to make good his promise to Jonathan?
- ▶ Do you know anybody who is differently able? What sort of help do they need and in what ways can they help you?
- ▶ What difference did David's kindness make in Mephibosheth's life?
- ▶ What might Mephibosheth have done for David in return?



Visual aid

Use a pair of crutches – either real ones, if there are any around the house, or use a couple of brooms – to experience what it's like to have to get around when one foot can't touch the ground.



Activity idea

Talk about what it must be like to have a disability, such as not being able to walk, to use your hands, to see or to hear. Maybe you know someone you could talk to about this, or perhaps there's someone in the family who could share what it's like. Challenge each other to navigate around the room blindfolded, or to work out what people are saying when your ears are blocked, or to be carried when you want to move about, or to be helped to eat because you can't use your hands. Be sensitive, as this is an everyday experience for many people. What do you think is the best way to show concern for those who face challenges like these?



Prayer idea

Losing the use of a limb can often make people more grateful for the other abilities and senses that God has given them. Touch or wave different parts of your body in turn and thank God that you can see... hear... smell... taste... touch... walk. Then wave and move your whole body in one great shake of praise to God.

Key verse

"I will be kind... because I made a promise." (2 Samuel 9:1).

New Testament story link

Acts 3:1-10: Peter and John show kindness to a man who is lame.



