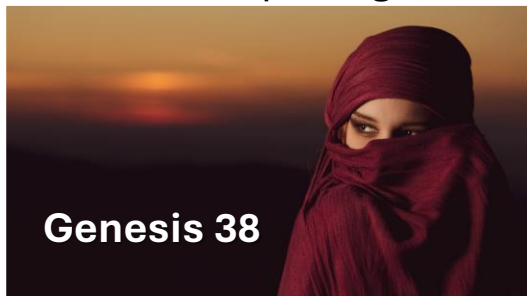


I had considered skipping over chapter 38 in an attempt to finish the book of Genesis by the end of September.

But I realized.... the Spirit of God, who directed Moses in the writing of the book of Genesis... had him include the details of this story.

What that means is that God would have us both hear this story and ponder its implications.

Let's read the passage.

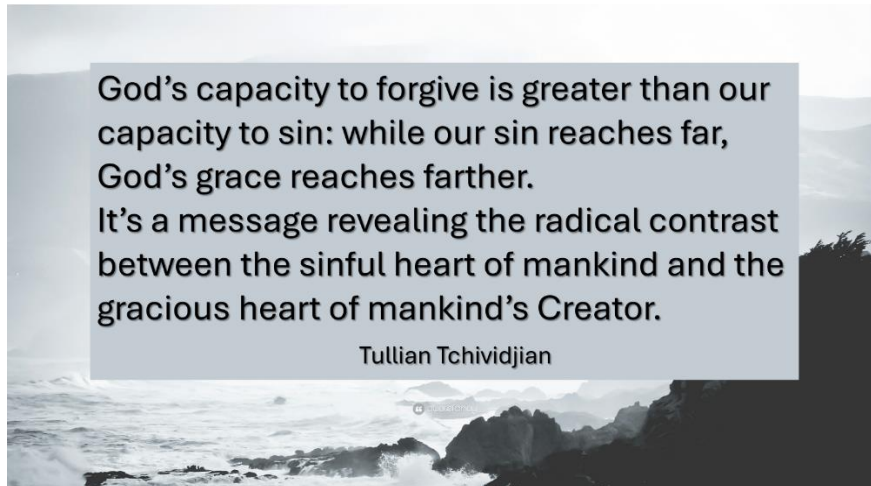


Like the story of Dinah in Genesis 34, this is a disturbing story.

But the triune God would not have us fixate on ... and be shocked by the sin of Judah and Tamar, but rather, be shocked by his super-abounding grace, which turned things intended for evil into a good that neither Judah nor Tamar could have ever imagined.

We have all heard this statement: God's grace is greater than our sin.

Tullian Tchividjian wrote:



The triune God would have his followers, not just intellectually assent to the veracity of his great grace, but that we would live in it and glory in it.

Because of God's grace... all peoples on the earth are blessed... through Judah and Tamar.

This is what we will discover in today's teaching.

Did you realize the descendants of Judah... were the kings of Israel, the greatest being David?

Did you realize Tamar, along with Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah... became a matriarch of Abraham's family?

What was a cause for blushing shame... was turned by God... through faith... into a blessing.

How do we know this?



On the wedding day of Boaz and Ruth this was the blessing spoken over them.



The memory of Tamar’s life... was not her sin, but the grace given to her by the LORD.

Tamar along with Ruth was one of only four women... mentioned by name... in Jesus’ genealogy.

Matthew 1:1-6

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: ²Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, **whose mother was Tamar**, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵Salmon the father of Boaz, **whose mother was Rahab**, Boaz the father of Obed, **whose mother was Ruth**, Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, **whose mother had been Uriah’s wife...**

In that day and time, genealogies recorded the names of a man and his first born son, and then his son’s son and so on.

No one would have been surprised if the genealogy of Jesus had followed that pattern.

If it had it would have read...

Matthew 1:1-6

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: ²Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³**Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram,** ⁴Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵**Salmon the father of Boaz, Boaz the father of Obed, Obed the father of Jesse,** ⁶and Jesse the father of King David.
David was the father of Solomon...

But God intentionally and with great purpose included the names of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba.

Why did he do this?

The lives of all of them were messy.

But the Rescuer didn't come into the world to save perfect people. He rescues those whose lives have been damaged and ruined by sin, and then through them he brings about his good purposes.

Brent Kercheville

Judah and Tamar both were on a trajectory that would have seen their lives and its outcome be described as "wasted."

But by God's grace ... through faith... their lives and the outcome of their lives were redeemed.

God used Tamar... and Judah's shameful treatment of her... sending her away as a widow; ordering her to be burned to death when it was found that she was pregnant... as a mirror... to show Judah how spiritually barren his heart was.

God used Tamar's statement – "I am pregnant by the man who owns these...." to bring about repentance in Judah.

Judah acknowledged to the townspeople his own unrighteousness and claimed the twin boys which Tamar was carrying as his sons, even though, in doing so, his sin was public knowledge.

In Genesis 38 Judah's fellowship with God was renewed and resulted in him coming home to his father and his brothers.

In the rest of the book, Judah takes on the role of family leader.

When famine gripped the land of Canaan, Judah with the rest of the brothers went down to Egypt to purchase grain.

There, unknowingly... they met Joseph, who recognized them, though, they didn't know him.

After selling them grain, Joseph insisted, if they returned to Egypt for more grain, they must bring with them the younger brother they had spoken of to prove they weren't spies.

When the grain they had purchased was almost gone, and they knew they had to return to buy more, it was Judah, who assured Jacob ... that he would assume personal responsibility for Benjamin.

Genesis 43:9

"I will be a pledge of his safety.
From my hand you shall require him.
If I do not bring him back to you
and set him before you,
then let me bear the blame forever."

Upon their return, Joseph tested them by secretly having his divination cup placed in the sack of grain entrusted to Benjamin. When the brothers set out for home, Joseph sent his men after them and accused them of theft.

The brothers denied the charge vehemently, even going so far as to say, “If any one of us is found to have the cup, he will die and the rest of us will become your slaves.”

When the brothers were brought back and stood before Joseph it was Judah who spoke.

Genesis 44:16
“What can we say to my lord?
What can we say?
How can we prove our innocence?
God has uncovered your servants’ guilt.
We are now my lord’s slaves –
we ourselves and the one
who was found to have the cup.”

Joseph answered him.

Genesis 44:17
“Far be it from me
to do such a thing!
Only the man
who was found
to have the cup
will become my slave.
The rest of you,
go back to your father
in peace.”

At that point Judah approached Joseph and pleaded with him.

Genesis 44:32-34

“Your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame all my life.’

Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a slave to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers.”

Genesis 44:32-34

“For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? Do not let me see the misery that would come upon my father.”

I want to jump ahead in the story 17 years.

Jacob near the end of his life, called his sons to come to him that he might bless them.

It was Judah who was confirmed by Jacob to take his place... to be the head of the covenant family, a role that he had been fulfilling for some time.

We know this because of Jesus’ genealogy.

Matthew 1:1-6

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah
the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah,
whose mother was Tamar,

Perez the father of Hezron,

But Jacob said more to Judah.

He prophetically spoke of the One who would come through Judah's family line.

Genesis 49:8-12

"Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. ⁹You are a lion's cub, Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?

¹⁰The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.

¹¹He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

¹²His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.

God's Rescuer would be a descendant of Judah.

He would not just rule the great family of Abraham that would be as numerous as the stars in the sky, but he would rule the nations.

He is Just.

He will vanquish injustice and evil and make all things right.

All that was taken and broken, he will restore and make new.

He is the hope of the world.

John the Baptist identified God's Rescuer as the Lamb of God, who is described in Revelation 5, not as the Lion of Reuben, or the Lion of Simeon, or the Lion of Joseph.

A mighty angel proclaimed that God's Rescuer...



He is Mighty to save sinners.

The story of Judah and Tamar, along with many others whose stories are told in the Bible all testify... that no sinner is too far gone, too broken, too messed up, too confirmed in their evil for God to redeem.

The Lion of Judah pursues sinners.

Those who are found by him, who repent of their sin and who turn in faith to Christ ... are forgiven, and welcomed as his friends and family and are transformed by grace day after week after month after year.

This is the story of so many of you who are here this morning.

We who have experienced the power of God's grace are reminded and encouraged to not lose hope as God works in us – he will finish what he has started...

We don't rely upon ourselves but on the God who ...

2 Corinthians 1:9
... we rely
not on ourselves
but on God
who raises the dead.

The triune God mediates resurrection power to us... to enable us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions... and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present time.

Remember Judah and Tamar.