

The 5 Women of Matthew Chapter 1
A Study of God's Love and Redemption for Women
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Matthew 1:1-

¹*A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:*

²*Abraham 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, whose mother was Tamar,*

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

⁴*Ram the father of Amminadab (really hard to pronounce name),*

Amminadab (really hard to pronounce name) the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

⁵*Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,*

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

⁶*and Jesse the father of King David.*

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

⁷*Solomon the father of*

....don't worry... I groaned too when I heard someone start out a talk by reading that. Genealogies are one of the things that slow me down when I'm reading in the Bible. Besides the difficult to read names, they often seem pointless. But there is actually a very awesome lesson buried deep within all of those names. I just want to pick out a few: The names of the women who are mentioned. Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and 'the mother who had been Uriah's wife' or Bathsheba. I'm going to use the New Living Translation of the Bible as we look at each woman, so the language is familiar to us.

Tamar: Genesis 38:6-26

Tamar marries Judah's oldest son, Er. He was a wicked man in the LORD's sight, so the LORD took his life. So then Judah had his son Onan marry Tamar as was custom in that day. And also told him to have a child with her as an heir for his brother. Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and marry Tamar, as our law requires of the brother of a man who has died. You must produce an heir for your brother." ⁹ But Onan was not willing to have a child who would not be his own heir. So whenever he had intercourse with his brother's wife, he spilled the semen on the ground. This prevented her from having a child who would belong to his brother. ¹⁰ But the LORD considered it evil for Onan to deny a child to his dead brother. So the LORD took Onan's life, too. ¹¹ Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Go back to your parents' home and remain a widow until my son Shelah is old enough to marry you." (But Judah didn't really intend to do this because he was afraid Shelah would

also die, like his two brothers.) So Tamar went back to live in her father's home. ¹² Some years later Judah's wife died. After the time of mourning was over, Judah and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went up to Timnah to supervise the shearing of his sheep. ¹³ Someone told Tamar, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." ¹⁴ Tamar was aware that Shelah had grown up, but no arrangements had been made for her to come and marry him. So she changed out of her widow's clothing and covered herself with a veil to disguise herself. Then she sat beside the road at the entrance to the village of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. ¹⁵ Judah noticed her and thought she was a prostitute, since she had covered her face. ¹⁶ So he stopped and propositioned her. "Let me have sex with you," he said, not realizing that she was his own daughter-in-law. "How much will you pay to have sex with me?" Tamar asked. ¹⁷ "I'll send you a young goat from my flock," Judah promised. "But what will you give me to guarantee that you will send the goat?" she asked. ¹⁸ "What kind of guarantee do you want?" he replied. She answered, "Leave me your identification seal and its cord and the walking stick you are carrying." So Judah gave them to her. Then he had intercourse with her, and she became pregnant. ¹⁹ Afterward she went back home, took off her veil, and put on her widow's clothing as usual. ²⁰ Later Judah asked his friend Hirah the Adullamite to take the young goat to the woman and to pick up the things he had given her as his guarantee. But Hirah couldn't find her. ²¹ So he asked the men who lived there, "Where can I find the shrine prostitute who was sitting beside the road at the entrance to Enaim?" "We've never had a shrine prostitute here," they replied. ²² So Hirah returned to Judah and told him, "I couldn't find her anywhere, and the men of the village claim they've never had a shrine prostitute there." ²³ "Then let her keep the things I gave her," Judah said. "I sent the young goat as we agreed, but you couldn't find her. We'd be the laughingstock of the village if we went back again to look for her." ²⁴ About three months later, Judah was told, "Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has acted like a prostitute. And now, because of this, she's pregnant." "Bring her out, and let her be burned!" Judah demanded. ²⁵ But as they were taking her out to kill her, she sent this message to her father-in-law: "The man who owns these things made me pregnant. Look closely. Whose seal and cord and walking stick are these?" ²⁶ Judah recognized them immediately and said, "She is more righteous than I am, because I didn't arrange for her to marry my son Shelah." And Judah never slept with Tamar again.

The first woman mentioned doesn't sound like someone you would really be proud to acknowledge when going through your family tree. The next woman mentioned in verse 5 is Rahab. You are probably more familiar with her story.

Rahab: Joshua 2:1-22; 6:15-23

Rahab was the prostitute in Jericho who protected the Israelite spies who had gone into the city before it was destroyed. Remember that the Israelites marched around the town for seven days in a row before the wall fell down. Rahab had a scarlet rope hanging out of her window as she was instructed by the spies. So when the wall fell down her house wasn't damaged even though it was built into the wall. The Israelites then went into Jericho and completely destroyed everything in it with their swords—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, goats, and donkeys. Meanwhile, Joshua said to the two spies, "Keep your promise. Go to the prostitute's house and bring her out, along with all her family." The men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, brothers, and all the other relatives who were with her. They moved her whole family to a safe place near the camp of Israel.

Rahab is also mentioned later in the New Testament in what is called the Faith Chapter. Hebrews 11:30-31

“It was by faith that the people of Israel marched around Jericho for seven days, and the walls came crashing down. It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.”

Now we come to Ruth. After these past two PG-13 stories, you probably wonder why she is mentioned. I mean, she has a book of the Bible named after her and seems upright. Well... let's quick refresh our memories on who she is...

Ruth: Ruth 1:1-6

¹ In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two sons with him. ² The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And when they reached Moab, they settled there. ³ Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. ⁴ The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, ⁵ both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband. ⁶ Then Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had blessed his people in Judah by giving them good crops again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave Moab to return to her homeland.

The key is in verse 4. “The two sons married Moabite women.” One of them was Ruth, so here is where the story takes that twist. Let's see where the Moabites came from....

Genesis 19:23-36

²³ Lot reached the village just as the sun was rising over the horizon. ²⁴ Then the LORD rained down fire and burning sulfur from the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah. ²⁵ He utterly destroyed them, along with the other cities and villages of the plain, wiping out all the people and every bit of vegetation. ²⁶ But Lot's wife looked back as she was following behind him, and she turned into a pillar of salt. ²⁷ Abraham got up early that morning and hurried out to the place where he had stood in the LORD's presence. ²⁸ He looked out across the plain toward Sodom and Gomorrah and watched as columns of smoke rose from the cities like smoke from a furnace. ²⁹ But God had listened to Abraham's request and kept Lot safe, removing him from the disaster that engulfed the cities on the plain. ³⁰ Afterward Lot left Zoar because he was afraid of the people there, and he went to live in a cave in the mountains with his two daughters. ³¹ One day the older daughter said to her sister, “There are no men left anywhere in this entire area, so we can't get married like everyone else. And our father will soon be too old to have children. ³² Come, let's get him drunk with wine, and then we will have sex with him. That way we will preserve our family line through our father.” ³³ So that night they got him drunk with wine, and the older daughter went in and had intercourse with her father. He was unaware of her lying down or getting up again. ³⁴ The next morning the older daughter said to her younger sister, “I had sex with our father last night. Let's get him drunk with wine again tonight, and you go in and have sex with him. That way we will preserve our family line through our father.” ³⁵ So that night they got him drunk with wine again, and the younger daughter went in and had intercourse with him. As before, he was unaware of her lying down or getting up again. ³⁶ As a result, both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their own father. ³⁷ When the older daughter gave birth to a son, she named him Moab.^[b] He became the ancestor of the nation now known as the Moabites. ³⁸ When the younger daughter gave birth to a son, she named him Ben-ammi.^[c] He became the ancestor of the nation now known as the Ammonites.

It's sad that even to this day some people judge others just because of their family history. I guess humans haven't changed much over the past couple thousand years. In verse 6 of Matthew we see that last woman mentioned. She is so rotten her name isn't even recorded.

“whose mother had been Uriah's wife”- Bathsheba: 2 Samuel 11:1-5, 26-27

King David, while walking on the roof of his house, saw Bath-sheba, who was the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and immediately fell in love with her. Hearing that her husband was with the army, David temporarily abducted her; but fearing the consequence of his act, he summoned Uriah from the camp as the bearer of a message. He hoped to hide the consequence of his own responsibility in Bath-sheba's condition, and dismissed Uriah to his wife with a portion from the royal table. But Uriah, being probably unwilling to violate the ancient Israelitish rule applying to warriors in active service, preferred to remain with the palace troops. The king in desperation gave the order to his general, Joab, that Uriah should be abandoned to the enemy in battle. After Uriah's death David was left free to make Bath-sheba his wife. David's action was displeasing to the Lord, who accordingly sent Nathan the prophet to reprove the king. After relating the parable of the rich man who took away the one little ewe lamb of his poor neighbor, and exciting the king's anger against the unrighteous act, the prophet applied the case directly to David's action with regard to Bath-sheba. The king at once confessed his sin and expressed sincere repentance. Bath-sheba's child by David was smitten with a severe illness and soon died, which the king accepted as his punishment. Bath-sheba soon became the favored wife of David and had a second son with him, who was Solomon.

Then we didn't read it but you all know that **Mary** was the mother of Jesus. That was the most recent scandal. A young teenage unwed woman who gets pregnant. I bet that got the people talking down at the local restaurant.

What's the deal with these women? Well... This was **Unusual** for them to be mentioned because in the Jewish custom only males were listed in genealogies. This was also **Ungraceful** because all the four women would not be “acceptable” women to the Jews – three could be regarded as immoral (**Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba**) and one as racially unacceptable (**Ruth**) because of immorality. Also, Ruth and Rahab were Gentiles.

Every religious leader knew this. They had memorized the first 5 books of the Bible by time they were 10 years old. They knew the background of these women. But what they didn't know is that God had redeemed these women and was proud to have them as relatives of Jesus. If you think about the history of the Bible, written over centuries by many different authors who were inspired by God, there is no reason the back stories of these women needed to be there. But God knows His story of redemption, and He wants us to see the stories of murder, incest, prostitution, adultery, and simple humanity. God wants us to see how all of this can be redeemed and how God can be proud of us as part of His family.

I have a point in sharing this with you. Sometimes you may feel that you are unacceptable to God. Maybe you feel there is no way that God could love you for things that you have done in your life. Maybe you think because of things that happen in your family that there is now hope for you. What's the point? “Let's just go to youth group and have fun.... but God would never want me.” I think just this brief glimpse of COUNTLESS Bible stories makes the point that God not only redeems lives but also wants to put these redeemed people in His overall plan of drawing others to Himself. God has been in the business of redeeming people for thousands of years. No sin is bigger than another. A good passage that brings this out is in I Corinthians chapter 6.

⁹Do you not know that the unrighteous and the wrongdoers will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? Do not be misled: neither the impure and immoral, nor those who worship idols, nor those who commit adultery, nor those who participate in homosexuality, ¹⁰Nor cheats (swindlers and thieves), nor greedy graspers, nor drunkards, nor foulmouthed revilers and slanderers, nor extortioners and robbers will inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God.-----

Sounds pretty rough.... so what happens to these people? Well the next verses tell us the very reason that Jesus died on that cross for our sins.

*11*Some of you **were** once like that. But you **were** cleansed; you **were** made holy; you **were** made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

When I read these verses in I Corinthians, I like to think that I'm a "has been." In today's world that isn't a good thing. That means you have reached the pinnacle in your life. You are no longer famous, popular, successful, or useful and now you are a nobody. But for, me I smile when I think of that. I'm a "has been" because I was a sinner destined for hell... but now I have been cleansed, made holy and made right with God. Now I'm destined for heaven instead of hell.

My question for you is... are you a "has been"? Or are you still holding on to your life of sin, not surrendering it to Jesus? Going to church doesn't save us. Being better than your next-door neighbor doesn't save us. Doing good things like helping old ladies across the street doesn't even save us. Only Jesus can save us.

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23a "...The wages of sin is death..."

Romans 6:23b "...But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 5:8, "God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us!"

Romans 10:13 "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved!"

Romans 10:9,10 "...If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

Revelation 3:20a "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..."

So my question: Is Jesus knocking on your heart's door?

God's Story of Redemption from Sin!

Matthew 1:1-7

Tamar: Genesis 38:6-26

Rahab: Joshua 2:1-22; Joshua 6:15-25; Hebrews 11:31

Ruth: Ruth 1:1-6; Genesis 19:23-36

Bathsheba- "whose mother had been Uriah's wife" II Samuel Chapter 11-12

Are you a 'has been'? I Corinthians 6:9-11

If you aren't here is how to take that step:

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23a

Romans 6:23b

Romans 5:8

Romans 10:13

Romans 10:9,10

Revelation 3:20a

These verses do not require you to know more... do better... clean up your life... or in any way try to add to what Jesus has done for us.

If you call upon Jesus to save you from your sin then you can know God's love and forgiveness!!

Pray something like this:

"Dear God, I confess that I am a sinner, and I am sorry. I need a Savior. I know I cannot save myself. I believe by faith that Jesus, your Son, died on the cross to be my Savior. I believe He arose from the grave to live as my Lord. I turn from my sin. I ask You, Lord Jesus, to forgive my sin and come into my heart. I trust you as my Savior and receive you as my Lord. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me."