

## Hidden Figures – Week 1: Tamar – 5-1-24

Tamar, a Caananite. Different culture, woven into tapestry of God’s plan.  
Tamar is 1 of few women mentioned in the lineage of Jesus.

**Matt. 1** – “Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, <sup>3</sup>Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,” Judah, the 4<sup>th</sup> of 12 sons

So what is her story, and what can we learn from it? 4 things.

**Gen. 38** – Judah leaves home. Marries, has 3 sons: **Er, Onan, and Shelah.**

“Judah got a wife for Er - Tamar. Wicked, Er dies.

Judah tells Onan – it’s your duty to marry Tamar & have an heir.

Law of Moses – Deut. 25 – “<sup>5</sup>If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband’s brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. <sup>6</sup>The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

<sup>7</sup>However, if a man does not want to marry his brother’s wife, she shall go to the elders at the town gate and say, “My husband’s brother refuses to carry on his brother’s name in Israel. He will not fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to me.” <sup>8</sup>Then the elders of his town shall summon him and talk to him. If he persists in saying, “I do not want to marry her,” <sup>9</sup>his brother’s widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, “This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother’s family line.” <sup>10</sup>That man’s line shall be known in Israel as The Family of the Unsandaled.”

Onan marries Tamar, but doesn’t want child that won’t be considered his. Spilled semen/ground. He dies, too.

Tamar has had 2 bad marriages. Er is wicked, Onan uses her.

Shelah is young & Judah is afraid. Judah sends Tamar to “live as a widow.”

Tamar is discarded. Widow – no legal, economic, or social status. No home either  
Tamar is sent to her Father; but dowry is paid so she could be supported.

Tamar’s own father likely had no duty to care for her. Not a great beginning.

**①** Sad, difficult days in the beginning don’t define our ending. Change happens

**God will bless us, even though our families don’t.**

MESSAGE – Eph. 2:20-21 – “God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.”

Time passes. Judah's wife dies, he grieves, goes to Timnah to shear sheep. Tamar is told. Also learns Shelah has grown up, but no marriage arrangement

**The plot:** Tamar takes off widow's clothes, puts on a veil, sits at town gate.

Judah doesn't recognize her; propositions her as prostitute.

What will you give me? Young goat. Pledge? Seal/cord & staff.

They have sex; Tamar gets pregnant.

Judah sends Hirah to take her the goat/get pledge back. No prostitute? Nope.

3 months later, Judah is told that Tamar was a prostitute, & pregnant.

**Judah says – drag her out of town & burn her.**

Judah does what many do – focuses on acts of others. Ignores his own sin.

*If a man commits adultery w/ another's wife, both put to death. Lev. 20:10*

Points at prostitute, not at himself. He's been **going thru life w/eyes closed.**

Some people live with "a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear." – **Rom. 11:8**

**2** **God uses our mistakes to open our eyes;** get on the right path.

Paul was wrong in persecuting Christians/prison. His eyes were opened

Peter was wrong in denying Jesus. Thomas was wrong in doubting.

**Tamar sends word** to Judah – I'm pregnant by the man who owns these.

**Flashback** – when Judah & bros faked Joseph's death – found this coat

**Judah is confronted with his own failure.** It's turning point for Judah and Tamar.

Judah: "She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn't give her to my son Shelah."

**Our mistakes aren't the end...** they are **new beginnings.**

**No mistakes is too great...** they don't stop God from using us.

God can use our imperfect choices for his perfect plan.

Judah sacrifices his honor to save Tamar's life. Tamar has twins: Perez & Zerah.

Perez is lineage. 6 generations to Boaz, 10 to David. (Isaac-twins: Jacob/Esau)

**Both Judah & Tamar are living in fear;** trying to find their place & live w/ dignity.

Judah – afraid for his son, Shelah. Avoid being unsandaled.

Tamar is wearing "Widow" label; on the fringe of society. Dependent.

**God has a special place in His heart for the vulnerable.**

■ God is "a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows." **Psm. 68:5**

God directs: "you must not mistreat any widow or orphan. If you do, and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear them. My anger will be kindled, and I will

kill you with the sword so that your wife becomes a widow and your children orphans.” – **Ex. 22:22-24.**

And **God can take care of our fear** in life. **Psalm 34:4** – “I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”

All of us have struggles.

**3** Our **struggles** don’t mean we’re **second place** with God.

God still has a plan for our life. It may be Difficult, – but have a destiny.

God never promised easy; Promise: **bring beauty from brokenness.**

**Is. 61:3** – God “will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning”

Tamar had courage. Chutzpah. Resourceful. Shame of barren was intense. Less dishonor in being an unwed mother than being childless.

Having children meant a home; sons would provide for her.

Even so . . . **Tamar disguised** herself to sleep with her **father-in-law.**

You’d **think Jesus’ family line would be perfect.** But no family is perfect.

No person is perfect. **God works through imperfect people. God accepts...**

**4** **Despite our sins & failures, God works in all things for His good purpose.**

**And God completely accepts us.** God allows us to make mistakes & learn; have our eyes opened & move forward. Not hidden closet. Grace/undeserve

Tamar: 1<sup>st</sup> woman called “righteous.” Ruth 4:12: named in honor: Boaz/Ruth

Judah became a man of courage, fiercely protective. He spoke up to Joseph.

Jacob’s last words – Gen. 49 “Judah, your brothers will praise you.

You will grasp your enemies by the neck. All your relatives will bow before you.

<sup>9</sup> Judah, my son, is a young lion that has finished eating its prey.

Like a lion he crouches and lies down; like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?

<sup>10</sup> The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from his descendants, until the coming of the one to whom it belongs, the one whom all nations will honor.

**Rev. 5:5** – “Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed to open the scroll and its seven seals.” **Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah**

Song of the week – “Never Too Far Gone” – Jordan Feliz