

God Is Greater Than Our Immorality

Genesis 38

Judah (Gen 38)	Joseph (Gen 39)
Judah responds to seduction from Tamar	Joseph rejects seduction from Potiphar's wife
Results in family expansion	Results in prison
Tamar keeps his cloak, seal and staff	Potiphar's wife keeps his cloak

I. We Put Our Families At Risk When We _____ God's Righteousness (1-5)

- Wanting To Go Where We Want To Go In Defiance Of God (1)
- Wanting To Do What We Want To Do In Defiance Of God (2-5)

II. We Place Ourselves In _____ When We Rebel In Sin (6-11)

III. We Become Susceptible To Immorality When We _____ Sin Instead Of Forsaking It (12-23)

IV. We Hinder Our Effectiveness To Be Used Of God With _____ (24-26)

V. God Takes Our Sinful Failures And _____ Them To His Beautiful Purposes (27-30; cf. Mt 1:1-6)

Conclusion:

1. Take responsibilities for our sinful choices. Confess and be forgiven.
2. Life and ministry is not over after a big sin. God is so great, He can use broken vessels.
3. Realize that God is greater than our immorality.

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Introduction:

- Politics, Entertainment & Sports sex scandals – Roy Moore, Harvey Weinstein, Jameis Winston
- We have our own struggles with sexual sins
- Genesis 38 is

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Judah responds to seduction from Tamar	Joseph rejects seduction from Potiphar's wife
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I. We Put Our Families At Risk When We Defy God's Righteousness (1-5)

1 It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and turned aside to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. 2 There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. He took her and went in to her, 3 and she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. 4 She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. 5 Yet again she bore a son, and she called his name Shelah. Judah was in Chezib when she bore him.

A. Wanting To Go Where We Want To Go In Defiance Of God (1)

- V. 1 – Judah left the land of Promise and his brothers

B. Wanting To Do What We Want To Do In Defiance Of God (2-5)

- V. 2 Judah sought a Canaanite wife and ended up marrying the daughter of Shua (she's not even mentioned)
 - Gen 24:3 – Abraham made sure his servant would not find a wife for Isaac among the Canaanites
- V. 3-5 – Judah stayed in Canaan for at 2.5 – 3 years with Shua bearing him 3 sons there – Er, Onan and Shelah
- Isn't Judah putting his place in the Covenant at risk?
- Isn't King David a Lion from the Tribe of Judah?
- Doesn't Jesus end up being a descendant of Judah?

- Moses, the author of Genesis, is demonstrating to the nation of Israel how far Judah has fallen
- Judah has fallen into deep sin because of his own making
- Because the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree, Judah

II. We Place Ourselves In Judgment When We Rebel In Sin (6-11)

6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. 7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord put him to death. 8 Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother." 9 But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. So whenever he went in to his brother's wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother. 10 And what he did was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and he put him to death also. 11 Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up"—for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and remained in her father's house.

- **Er**, son #1, was wicked – God puts him to death
- It was a custom at that time for a brother to marry his brother's widow – so Judah sought to observe that custom called a **levirate marriage**
 - This custom would be defined in Deuteronomy 25
 - The purpose of the levirate marriage was to make sure the family lineage and inheritance would continue
- **Onan**, son #2, was wicked – God puts him to death too
 - Onan would have sex with his brother's widow but would stop at the point where she could become pregnant
 - Allen P. Ross: "Here, then, was another wicked member of the family, one who would use the law to gratify the flesh and, rather than take the responsibility bound up in the custom, would destroy the seed. This attitude of gratification without responsibility has been repeated from generation to generation in immoral people." (*Creation & Blessing*, p. 616)
 - Masturbation or falling short of the act of impregnation was called "Onanism" because of this incident
 - Some will look to use this passage to claim masturbation is a sin
 - That would be to take it out of context – the context was that Onan would enjoy sex but not fulfill the responsibility of continuing the seed or lineage
 - There would be better texts to help a person deal with this issue in the N.T. – verses on lust
- **Shelah** was promised to Tamar when he would grow up
 - But Judah was hesitant because he already lost his 2 sons
 - Maybe Tamar was a jinx
- So Tamar waits at her father's house, not Judah's house

III. We Become Susceptible To Immorality When We Justify Sin Instead Of Forsaking It (12-23)

12 In the course of time the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died. When Judah was comforted, he went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. 13 And when Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep," 14 she took off her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage. 15 When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. 16 He turned to her at the roadside and said, "Come, let me come in to you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?" 17 He answered, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." And she said, "If you give me a pledge, until you send it—" 18 He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" She replied, "Your signet and your cord and your staff that is in your hand." So he gave them to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him. 19 Then she arose and went away, and taking off her veil she put on the garments of her widowhood. 20 When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite to take back the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her. 21 And he asked the men of the place, "Where is the cult prostitute who was at Enaim at the roadside?" And they said, "No cult prostitute has been here." 22 So he returned to Judah and said, "I have not found her. Also, the men of the place said, 'No cult prostitute has been here.'" 23 And Judah replied, "Let her keep the things as her own, or we shall be laughed at. You see, I sent this young goat, and you did not find her."

- Judah's mourning and perhaps feeling sorry for himself (v. 12 – his wife dies)
- Judah's may reason – my wife is dead, I'm a man, I've got needs
- So he goes to a cult prostitute to meet his needs instead of trusting God to meet his needs
- A cult prostitute was used by a fertility cult to excite the fertility god by watching someone have sex with the cult prostitute so that person can find favor with the fertility god
- Judah abandoned his religious values and moral guidance

IV. We Hinder Our Effectiveness To Be Used Of God With Hypocrisy (24-26)

24 About three months later Judah was told, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has been immoral. Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality." 25 And Judah said, "Bring her out, and let her be burned." 26 As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant." And she said, "Please identify whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff." 26 Then Judah identified them and said, "She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not know her again.

- How could Judah be in the place of a judge over Tamar
- He was the one who impregnated her
- She proved it by producing his possessions
- Hypocrisy is forgivable but is disqualifying

- Was Tamar really more righteous than Judah
- They were both involved in immorality
- But in a weird way, Tamar was able to continue Judah's line
- But this doesn't make her a saint
- Judah continued to defy God's will willfully
- Tamar was desperate – though wrong

Ruth 4:12 and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the Lord will give you by this young woman."

V. God Takes Our Sinful Failures And Transforms Them To His Beautiful Purposes (27-30; cf. Mt 1:1-6)

27 When the time of her labor came, there were twins in her womb. 28 And when she was in labor, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." 29 But as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" Therefore his name was called Perez. 30 Afterward his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.

- Zerah poked his arm out first
- The midwife marks this potential first born with a scarlet thread tied to arm
- "Perez" means "break through"

Matthew 1:1-6 1 The book of the genealogy of **Jesus Christ**, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and **Judah** the father of **Perez** and Zerah by **Tamar**, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, 4 and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of **Boaz** by **Rahab**, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of **David** the king.

Conclusion:

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