

CHRISTMAS HOPE: TAMAR

Matthew 1:1-3

Genesis 38

Romans 8:35-39

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- How do you feel about this Advent season? What do you expect of Christmas this year?
- Do you ever feel far away from God? Why?

There are many reasons we might feel far away from God, some of them are the result of our own sin, while others are caused by things that have happened to us. This feeling can steal our joy and our desire to celebrate at Christmastime. That's when we need to remember the story of Tamar, the first woman named in Jesus' family tree. In Tamar, we see an outsider deeply hurt by the sins of her father-in-law, Judah. But we also witness God mercifully draw her in and give her an important place in his covenant family. Tamar's story reminds us of God's love and grace, and it provides us hope, even in the darkest of Christmas seasons. Join us as we explore Tamar's story—a painful, yet important reminder of why we so desperately need Jesus to come.

Listen: [*Christmas Hope: Tamar*](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- In segment 1, hosts Darrell Delaney and Scott Hoezee make three points about why it's significant that Matthew opens his gospel with Jesus' genealogy: 1) it confirms Jesus as Messiah by demonstrating that Jesus descended from the line of David, 2) it traces Jesus' lineage further back to Abram and God's promise that all nations of the earth would be blessed through Abram, and 3) it includes four foreign women showing that Jesus' bloodline was not "pure" or "perfect," but rather a beautiful mosaic of different people joining God's family. Were any of these new points to you? Have you considered them before? Which one challenges or encourages your faith most?
- In segment 2, Scott says "You cannot even tell Jesus' story without telling sinful stories, and that is why Jesus came." Why is this significant? Are there any scandals or shameful stories in your past or from your family that help remind you WHY Jesus needed to come? Give thanks to God that he does not ignore or shy away from the messy things in our lives. Pray for God to use the messy things in your life for his glory and kingdom, as he did with Tamar's story.
- Seeing Tamar's name in Jesus' genealogy reminds us that she belongs to God's covenant family—tawdry stories and all. How does this truth encourage your faith even if you feel far from God or unworthy of his love?
- How does the story of Judah and Tamar offer hope both to those who sin and those who are victims of

other people's sins?

Related Passages

- **Genesis 12:1-3**
- **John 3:16-18**

Conclusion

Reflect on this quote from Scott in segment 3.

“Jesus’ birth at Christmas, and all of our Advent expectations, it is all about dealing with the raw reality of our human sin. And Tamar’s story reminds us of that, but it also reminds us that the real message of Christmas is that because of what Jesus has done, none of our sinfulness will have the last word in our lives, only God’s grace has the last word.”

What assurance and hope does that truth provide even if you feel far from God?

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/christmas-hope-tamar>

Printed on May 3, 2024