

January 12, 2020

Be a Blessing
Genesis 38:1-30
Pastor Kirk Gambrell

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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



Philippians 2:4-5 Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interest of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

In chapter 38 of Genesis we get a brief interruption in the Joseph story. Here we see Judah leave his brothers and settle with a Canannite women. Judah had become the leader of his brothers when they sold Joseph into slavery. Now we see him continue to falter and make bad decisions. Judah's selfishness and disregard for his daughter-in-law lead him to a series of bad decisions. Since we know that the Messiah will come from the line of Judah it is troubling to see him make these mistakes that impact his decedents. However, in the end we also see him recognize his lack of righteousness. Join us this week as we talk about how selfishness can prevent us from being the blessing to others that God has called us to be.

Judah and Tamar

38 And it came about at that time, that Judah departed from his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. ² Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her and went in to her. ³ So she conceived and bore a son and he named him Er. ⁴ Then she conceived again and bore a son and named him Onan. ⁵ She bore still another son and named him Shelah; and it was at Chezib that she bore him.

⁶ Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. ⁷ But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD took his life. ⁸ Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother." ⁹ Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother. ¹⁰ But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD; so He took his life also. ¹¹ Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up"; for he thought, "*I am afraid* that he too may die like his brothers." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

¹² Now after a considerable time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and when the time of mourning was ended, Judah went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. ¹³ It was told to Tamar, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." ¹⁴ So she removed her widow's garments and covered *herself* with a veil, and wrapped herself,

and sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife. ¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, for she had covered her face. ¹⁶ So he turned aside to her by the road, and said, "Here now, let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?" ¹⁷ He said, therefore, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." She said, moreover, "Will you give a pledge until you send *it*?" ¹⁸ He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" And she said, "Your seal 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 departed, and removed her veil and put on her widow's garments.

²⁰ When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her. ²¹ He asked the men of her place, saying, "Where is the temple prostitute who was by the road at Enaim?" But they said, "There has been no temple prostitute here." ²² So he returned to Judah, and said, "I did not find her; and furthermore, the men of the place said, 'There has been no temple prostitute here.'" ²³ Then Judah said, "Let her keep them, otherwise we will become a laughingstock. After all, I sent this young goat, but you did not find her."

²⁴ Now it was about three months later that Judah was informed, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and behold, she is also with child by harlotry." Then Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!" ²⁵ It was while she was being brought out that she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "I am with child by the man to whom these things belong." And she said, "Please examine and

see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?"²⁶ Judah recognized *them*, and said, "She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not have relations with her again.

²⁷ It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb. ²⁸ Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, 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 it came about as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was named Perez. ³⁰ Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand; and he was named Zerah.

● **EXAMINE His Word (Observation)** (For personal preparation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the foregoing passage.

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.
2. Where and when is this taking place? Geography and timeline.
3. What actions are carried out or commanded? Look for the verbs.
4. Is there anything repeated?
5. What is emphasized?

6. Is there anything in these passages that is related to other areas of scripture?

7. Are there things to be noted that are alike or unlike such as similes and metaphors?

② EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation) (For Community Group discussion)
What does God MEAN?

8. Why would Judah give his 2nd son to his 1st son's widow?

9. Why did Judah withhold his 3rd son?

10. Why did Tamar seek out Judah after his wife passed?

11. Why does Judah declare Tamar more righteous than himself in verse 26?

12. Are there any good things that Judah did in this passage?

13. Other than chapter 38 where do we see Tamar listed in Scripture?

③ EMBRACE His Word (Application) (For Community Group discussion)
Why does this MATTER to me?

13. Judah's selfishness keeps him from honoring God in this passage. When do you think selfishness can keep you from doing what God has called you to do?

14. How can selfishness keep you from being a blessing to others?

15. What are some practical ways that we can strive to overcome our selfishness in order to be a blessing to others?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage

Write about what God wants you to KNOW, to FEEL, and to DO...

Sermon Notes