

A. SERMON SLIDES

Slide 1: Title
God Breaking Through The Broken
Genesis 38

Slide 2:
Genesis 38:1-30 (ESV)

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

And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death. 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." 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. And what he did was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death also. 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.

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. And when Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep," 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. When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. 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?" 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—" 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. Then she arose and went away, and taking off her veil she put on the garments of her widowhood.

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. 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." 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.'" 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."

About three months later Judah was told, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has been immoral. Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality." And Judah said, "Bring her out, and let her be burned." 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." 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.

When the time of her labor came, there were twins in her womb. 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." 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. Afterward his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.

Slide 3:

Why this story?

- 1) This is still Jacob's story
- 2) Covers the 22 year span of Joseph in Egypt before the brother's arrive
- 3) Gives insight to Judah's transformation
- 4) When things are messy, God is more clear

Slide 4:

Moral of the story:

All is hopeless until God miraculously breaks out. God must breach our world with Good News!

Slide 5:

What is breaking out in our story?

- 1) Judah: Repentance breaking out of religion
- 2) Tamar: Justice breaking out of injustice
- 3) Perez: God breaking out with miraculous grace

Slide 6:

JUDAH

"I will praise the Lord!"

But he is a sinful mess

Slide 7:

At the heart of religion is "burn the evil" outside. At the heart of the Gospel is "I am the worst of sinners."

Slide 8:

TAMAR

No access to justice

Slide 9:

Genesis 38:8

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."

Slide 10:

Judah does not see what he is NOT doing as an egregious act of sin, but he does see what she IS doing as an egregious act of sin.

Slide 11:

Repentance and Justice Breaking through!

"Then Judah identified them and said, 'She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.'"

Slide 12:

When we are in power do we often over-emphasize immoral acts, and under-emphasize the withholding of moral acts?

Slide 13:

PEREZ

God breaking out!

Slide 14:

Do you recognize the Savior?

B. GROUP DISCUSSION

1) Read Genesis 38. What are your feelings about the main characters in the story? Where does your shock and/or disgust in this story lie? With Judah's refusal to help Tamar, or with Tamar's ploy to entrap Judah? Where do your sympathies most easily lie? With Tamar's inability to have a provider, or with Judah's sexual entrapment?

2) Sin rules but God overrules. How does that concept play out in this story?

3) When things are going well, and our circumstances are pleasant, to what do we most often attribute our success? How do these awful circumstances for Judah (the loss of two sons, sexual relationship with daughter-in-law) actually work in his life to make him a much better person.

4) At the heart of religion is "burn the evil." At the heart of the Gospel is "I am the evil." Why is that the case, and in what ways are people or cultures "religious" even if they don't believe in God?

5) Why was it a greater wrong (or more unjust) for Judah to NOT act on Tamar's behalf, than it was wrong (less unjust) for Tamar to deceive her father-in-law to sleep with her?

6) Why do you think Judah, Tamar, and Perez are all mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1?

7) Prayer and praise