



LIFE GROUP NOTES

Week Beginning: 26th November 2023



Genesis 38:1-30. Matthew 1:1-7 Tamar

Warm Up

Have you ever been blamed for something that was not your fault? Has someone ever broken a promise to you? Have you done the same?

Background and context

The story of Tamar takes place at the same time as the story of Joseph. Joseph has been betrayed by Judah and his other brothers, and sold into slavery in Egypt. The story of Tamar is significant because it is a link that reveals a great deal about the person of Judah and the way Tamar causes a change in him. This change is vital for the later story of Joseph and the brothers in Egypt. The Tamar story is a tragic one of deception, betrayal and scapegoating; of a powerful man and a vulnerable woman. Yet out of the story comes hope. The line of Christ is established.

Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity



Read: Genesis 38 and Matthew 1:1-7. What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand? This could be a time to discuss and share reflections and ideas on the passage or watch a Bible project type video that helps explain things.

1. **Read ch 37:26-7, ch 38:11, v15-16, v23-24.** What can we learn about the character of Judah?
2. In the ancient near east, women had little status and no power. They relied on men. In what way does Judah (and his son Onan) let Tamar down?
3. **Read v 11.** How does Judah use Tamar as a scapegoat for his son's failures?
4. **Read v 13-14.** Why does Tamar choose to act as she does?
5. **Read v 18.** A man's seal was his sign of integrity, his word or bond. Why do you think Tamar wanted it as a pledge?
6. **Read v24.** What can we learn about the 'human condition'? How does this link with Matthew 7:3 and Hosea 4:14?
7. Where would you place the blame in this story? On Judah? Tamar? Both? Why?
8. What evidence is there in this story and in Genesis 44: 17-34 that Judah is a transformed person? Why is this important for the future line of the Messiah?



Growing in discipleship: Practical application

9. Recognising /not recognising is a key theme in ch 37/8 . Scan through the text. See where it appears. How does this theme play a significant part in the story.
10. How can we apply this to our own lives?



Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.

We want to encourage the development of prayer, to help everyone grow in confidence in praying. There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.