

Skeletons in the Family Closet: A Lesson on Grace

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[0 : 00] I want to preach a message that is, well, it's focused on this subject of motherhood.

! I'll put it that way. You know, it's always difficult for a pastor to preach on Mother's Day. And I'm challenged every time Mother's Day rolls around.

And the reason is because I'm not a mother. You knew that, didn't you? I never will be. And I'm not even a woman. All right? Just want to make sure. You know that. And hopefully you already knew that.

You could tell. And so that in itself makes it somewhat of a challenge. Really, every Mother's Day, when Mother's Day rolls around to preach on the subject of motherhood.

I mean, I'm not an expert. And not only that, but I would add to that that there are really, when you look at it, a limited number of biblical texts specifically on motherhood.

[1 : 10] Very limited. And so, you know, unlike Christmas, for example. I mean, I can go to, you know, dozens and dozens of different passages in the Bible and preach on the subject of Christmas.

But there are fewer when it comes to motherhood. And, you know, you can look at particular characters, particular mothers that are mentioned in the Bible.

And there are not a lot of those. That is, not a lot of those that get copy in Scripture. And not only that, but many of those mothers that are mentioned in the Bible, you know, have some issues.

And that's kind of a clue as to where we might be going this morning. And so when you put it all together, you know, there are not a lot of passages in the Bible that could be brought together and delivered as a sermon that really serve to praise moms and to encourage moms.

And this is the time to do that. I mean, this is not a day for scriptural rebukes. All right. And certainly this man up here feels uncomfortable rebuking moms out here in the congregation.

[2 : 28] So it's not a time for that. It's also not really even, in my opinion, a time for some in-depth instruction in womanhood and motherhood and so forth.

It's a time to honor mothers and to praise them. And that's very difficult. You know, I have the idea that the last thing any mother here wants to do this morning is to go away from this service feeling like a failure.

You know, because of some really strong passage that deals with issues that should be important to you, maybe are not as important as they ought to be, or things that you should be doing that maybe you're not doing.

And so I don't want to do that this morning. And so I can't change, by the way, the fact that Scripture always challenges us.

So we're going to be challenged this morning, not just mothers, but all of us. I mean, you can't preach from God's Word without there being that nature of Scripture that challenges us and instructs us.

[3 : 34] God wants us to be better people. God wants us to be better mothers.

The focus of hard, strong instruction on how to live and how to be a mother. And so what I've done is selected five mothers mentioned in the Bible.

And if you've looked at the bulletin, you know the text that I'm going to. But there are five mothers in this particular passage. And there are five mothers that I would think should not make any of our mothers here feel like a failure.

In fact, really quite the opposite. And in fact, and here's the point, when we consider what their lives reveal about the grace of God, then all mothers, and really every single one of us, ought to be encouraged, greatly encouraged.

Now, where in the Bible do we find these five mothers? And, well, actually, each of these mothers are found in multiple places in Scripture. But there is one place, one passage, where all five of them appear.

[5 : 09] And it is in the genealogical listing of Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Messiah, found in Matthew chapter 1, verses 1 through 17.

Now, you don't really have to turn to him. You can turn to it. I'm not going to read the genealogy this morning. And that's part of the problem, isn't it, with Matthew 1 through 17, verses 1 through 17. Because, you know, this is not one of those scriptures that we tend to study very often, if ever. And it tends to be, rather, one of those passages of scriptures that is overlooked.

It's overlooked by us. I mean, it's not a scripture that we would expect to read publicly as part of our worship. You know, I doubt very seriously we'll ever have Jonathan inserting a portion of Matthew 1 to 17 in between some of the verses of our music.

It just doesn't usually, it's not usually done that way. In fact, I would say that we don't even read it privately, do we? Unless, of course, you're reading through one of those read through the Bible in one year kind of programs.

[6 : 21] And if you're honest, you probably skip Matthew chapter 1, don't you? Well, maybe you don't. And so, you know, it's just one of those kind of passages.

And I have never really met anyone who has memorized these verses. I'm sure there's someone out there who has. And I've even heard of some who have memorized the entire New Testament. But I've never met anybody who memorized this passage. And you can't go to Lifeway or Mardell and find some pretty plaque or a wall hanging or maybe even a coffee mug that has a portion of this passage embossed on it or painted on it.

You're not going to find it. And to my knowledge, this text has never been put to music, has it? That you know of. Jonathan's the authority. And so I don't think we've had any praise and worship music, you know, that comes out of this particular passage.

And it just kind of seems like a long list of names. Right? Honestly? All right. Thank you. I think we're all in agreement. Just this long list of names.

[7 : 28] Starts with Abraham and then moves to David and then ends with Jesus. And so-and-so begat so-and-so. So-and-so begat so-and-so. And who begat so-and-so.

Who begat so-and-so. And it just goes on and on and on like that. Ad nauseum. At least that's kind of the way we feel about it. Kind of like the student that was asked to write a review on the phone book.

And in his summary, he said, great cast of characters, but a weak plot. And that's kind of how we feel about the genealogy. But I think you know that the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus, one Jesus of Nazareth, is an extremely valuable portion of Scripture in the Bible.

At the very least, it proves that Jesus was an historical person. Because we have his genealogy. It also establishes Jesus as a part of the royal line of King David.

A descendant of King David, which is very important. Because therefore, the genealogy validates the claim of Scripture that Jesus is the Messiah. He cannot make such a claim if he did not have a genealogy that would be traced all the way back to King David.

[8 : 50] The Old Testament prophets said that the Messiah must come out of the lineage of David. And all of that is very important. But this genealogy in Matthew chapter 1 is important for another reason.

A reason that I want to focus on this morning. Because it reveals the divine plot in the story of redemption. It is kind of the...

We could even consider it as the framework for God's moving the world toward the coming of his Messiah.

And therefore, the provision of redemption. And so this genealogy reveals the divine mover of that plot. And so it's valuable for that reason.

And all you have to do is study the biblical histories of some of the key characters, key names here in this genealogical list.

[9 : 45] And when you do that, then you'll see that God has done some pretty amazing and incredible things to preserve his line. The very lineage of his Messiah.

And that's incredible. We see the preservation of God, of his people. We see the provision of God to make sure that that line is never broken along the way until Jesus comes.

And we see the power of God. And God did some incredibly miraculous things to preserve the line of our Messiah. And we see the providence of God. Now, all that to say that this figures into our understanding and the significance of the five mothers that are listed in the genealogy.

And they are Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, though she's not mentioned by name, but she's mentioned in the genealogy.

And Mary. Five women. Five mothers. Five mothers. Now, understand that the very presence of these names of women in this legal genealogy.

[11:10] That in itself is pretty amazing. I mean, that would have been very unusual from the perspective of the Jews. And this is even more unusual, even perhaps scandalous, when you begin to consider some of the particulars about each of these women, which we're going to do this morning.

For one thing, the nationality of some of them. Three of them were Gentiles. That's significant. And when you go a little bit deeper, two of them were Canaanites.

The enemies of Israel. And one of them was a Moabite despised by Israel. And then for another thing, the morality of these women.

Most of them. Some of them. One of them was a professional prostitute. One of them was one who pretended to be a prostitute.

One of them was an adulteress. A proven adulteress. And one of them was thought to be an adulteress.

[12:16] And we'll get to that as we go along. But all five made the list. Here in the lineage, the genealogical listing of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah.

And why did they make the list? I mean, why did the Holy Spirit... Have you ever asked this question? Why did the Holy Spirit inspire Matthew to include these five mothers' names in the official genealogy of the Messiah?

Why did he do that? I mean, for every father listed here, there is a mother. Right? Just as many mothers as there are fathers in the genealogy.

This listing of the genealogy. Though these other mothers are not mentioned. Only five of them are. And why? Why are they mentioned? Well, I would suggest four reasons. And before I give them to you, I want us to hear the stories of these five mothers.

Kind of reacquaint ourselves with their stories. And the reason is because their respective stories provide kind of a backlight that we need to fully appreciate God's reasons for adding their names in the genealogy.

[13:26] They kind of bring that out in bold relief. The movement of God and the prerogative of God in the history of the line of Jesus.

All right. The first mother. Tamar. Tamar. Matthew 1.3 says Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar.

Perez begot Hezron and Hezron begot Ram. And then it goes on from there. All right. All right. So Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, had two sons by woman named Tamar.

And one of them, Perez, one of the two sons, was in direct line ultimately to the Messiah, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, Genesis chapter 38 tells Tamar's story. We're not going to turn to it. I mean, turn to it if you want to. But, and I'll read a portion of it here in a minute. But it's all right there.

[14:31] This is the only place that we find out about Tamar other than that she's listed in a few of the genealogies. And we find her story here. And I should mention at this point that chapter 38 of Genesis is an interesting kind of interruption to the story of Joseph.

Judah is one of Jacob's younger brothers. And so chapter 37 ends with Joseph being sold into slavery in Egypt, sold to Potiphar.

And Judah and his brothers had a hand in that. You know the story. And then we have chapter 38, Tamar's story. And then chapter 39 takes up the story again of Judah, Judah, excuse me, Joseph in Egypt.

All right. So between these two chapters, 37 and 39, we have the story of Tamar inserted there.

And it tells us that, first of all, Judah departed from his brothers.

And we're not told why. And he goes into the land of Canaan. And he marries a Canaanite woman by the name of Shua. All right. We're not really told how, why all this happened.

[15 : 35] But this is the course of the story. He marries a Canaanite woman, Shua. And she conceives three sons, Ur, Oman, and Shelah.

She conceives, gives birth to three sons. Then Judah, the Bible says, took a wife for Ur, his older son.

Took a wife for her. He arranged a wife for her. And her name was Tamar. She too, the Canaanite woman, a Canaanite. All right. Now, the Bible says that Ur was wicked in the sight of the Lord.

And the Lord killed him. It's pretty severe. So you better be a good husband, guys. The Lord killed him. Doesn't say what he did. Doesn't say anything about his wickedness.

But the Lord took him out. All right. That leaves Tamar a widow, right? And so according to the levered laws designed to preserve the lineage, Judah then takes his second son, Oman, and gives Tamar to him to be his wife.

[16 : 45] And the reason is to raise up an heir for Ur. And really, to raise up an heir for Judah so that the line would continue. But Oman was not too keen on this, on preserving his brother's line.

And so he made it so, and you can read this for yourself, but he made it so that Tamar could never conceive any of his children. And so she did not.

Well, that displeased the Lord. Guess what? He killed him. He took him out. And it's quite, you know, interesting story. Sorted story.

And it gets a lot worse. So Judah is now running out of sons to carry on his line, his name. And so Judah does have a third son, Shelah.

But he is reluctant to give Shelah to Tamar, he says, because he's not old enough yet. And so he sends Tamar to live as a widow in her father's house until Shelah is old enough to marry.

[17 : 51] But that really is not the reason. Because Judah was afraid that Shelah, too, would die. And Judah didn't understand that this was the judgment of God. That his sons died under his judgment of God.

This was God's doing. He simply suspected that there's something wrong with Tamar. Maybe she's responsible for his sons being killed. And I think probably any father would have a suspicion about that.

So he's not willing to do that. So here's Tamar. She's childless. And Tamar knows that Judah will never, ever give her to Shelah, his third son.

And so Tamar hatches a plan. All right? And this is where we get to the story. And so let me just read to you Genesis chapter 38 starting with verse 12.

Now in the process of time, the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died. And Judah was comforted and went up to his sheep shearers at Timnah.

[18 : 53] He and his friend Hira, the Adulamite. He's a Canaanite. And when it says they went to the sheep shearers, they really went to a big party. It was a big celebration. So he's wanting to be comforted from this time of grieving.

And it was told Tamar, saying, look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.

And so she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah.

For she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. So she knew she was never going to get Shelah. And so she dresses up like a harlot.

All right? And this would be the dress of the harlot. She sits by the road, waits for Judah. And when Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot. That's exactly what she wanted him to think.

Because she had covered her face. Then he turned to her, by the way, and said, please let me come into you. For he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law.

[19 : 59] So she said, what will you give me that you may come into me? I mean, there's a price for this. And he said, I will send a young goat from the flock. Pretty good payment, huh?

So she said, will you give me a pledge till you send it? Then he said, what pledge shall I give you? So she said, your signet and cord.

It would be a signet that would have his name or family name. It was usually a little cylinder. And it would be rolled over clay and other material to certify, to seal documents and other things.

And he would wear that around his neck on a cord. So she should give that to me just until I get the goat. And not only that, but she said, give me your staff.

The staff that is in your hand. And that too would have some identifying mark on it that it belonged to Judah. And then he gave them to her and went into her and she conceived by him.

[21 : 00] So she arose and went away and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend, the Dulamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand.

But he did not find her. Then he asked the men at that place, saying, where is the harlot who was openly by the roadside? And they said, there was no harlot in this place.

So he returned to Judah and said, I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said, there was no harlot in this place. Then Judah said, let her take them for herself, lest we be ashamed, for I sent this young goat and you have not found her.

So I guess I've lost my seal and such and she's not to be found. And it came to pass about three months after that Judah was told, saying, Tamar, your daughter-in-law has played the harlot.

Furthermore, she is with child by harlotry. So Judah said, bring her out and let her be burned. And he still doesn't know that it was her that he had, you know.

[22 : 07] But he's just assuming, everybody's assuming that she had been an adulteress. And so now she's going to be brought out to be burned. And when she was brought out, she's sent to her father-in-law saying, by the man to whom these belong, I am with child.

And she said, please determine whose these are, the signet and cord and staff. So Judah's caught it. So Judah acknowledged them and said, she has been more righteous than I because I did not give her to Shelah, my son.

And he never, never knew her again. Now it came to pass at the time, forgiving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb.

All right, so there's a story of Tamar. Interesting. What a story. I mean, this is a mother in the genealogy of Jesus.

Tamar was a Canaanite. Tamar was deceptive. Wouldn't you agree? Tamar was playing the harlot. No doubt about that.

[23 : 15] She was immoral. This is an immoral thing to do. I mean, no matter how you cut it. She was deceptive and immoral. And by the way, by Judah's own words, she was more righteous than he.

All right, so. But she was wicked. And their stories, you see, are the testimony of the human condition. I mean, it's the moral condition of the human heart and the sin's pollution of the human soul.

And yet, both of them made the list in the genealogy of the Messiah, the Holy Messiah. That's Tamar. Our second mother, Rahab.

Rahab. The story's not going to get much better with her. A little bit. And you know her story, I think. You know, in Matthew 1, 5, Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab.

So Rahab is listed there. And, by the way, according to the genealogy, Rahab was the great-great-grandfather, mother, not father, of King David. Right? So, close proximity there.

[24 : 21] Even though she was a Canaanite. Rahab was a Canaanite. And not only that. Though many have tried to explain it otherwise. She was an immoral woman by profession.

By profession. And you can't escape that from Scripture. She's mentioned two other times in the New Testament. In Hebrews 11 and verse 31 and James chapter 2 verse 25.

And each time she's referred to as Rahab the what? The harlot. Rahab the harlot. And three out of the five times she is named in the Old Testament.

Recorded in the Old Testament. It is always connected with the word harlot. So, there are five clear, clear references to Rahab the harlot.

Now, her story is found in Joshua chapters 2 and 6. Let me just give you the highlights. Rahab's story, of course, is part of the larger story of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land.

[25 : 27] Beginning with the conquering of Jericho. The very first city in the Promised Land. And you know the story about that. And you perhaps also remember that Joshua sent out spies into the city.

Into the city of Jericho. Jericho. And the spies hid in Rahab's house. Or she hid them there. And in exchange for safe passage.

The spies safe passage out of the city without being discovered. Then she is promised. Or they give a proposition to her. That if she would agree to it.

That she would be spared. And all of her household would be spared. And all she had to do. Would be to hang a scarlet cord. On the window.

Window. Her house apparently part of the city wall of Jericho. And that scarlet thread would then save her. Israel would see it.

[26 : 26] And she would be spared. Well, she agreed to this. And hid the spies. And when the king of Jericho. Found out about the spies in her home.

And he demanded that they be produced. She lies about it. She lies. She said that they've already left. They went that way. Even though she knew that she had hidden them on the roof of her house. And it's a thrilling story, isn't it? It's one of my favorites. And the whole story of Jericho. But we must not miss the troubling facts here.

Rahab was a Canaanite, first of all. And she couldn't help that. But she was a Canaanite. Therefore, by virtue of her ethnicity, she was an enemy of Israel.

And she was of a civilization of people so wicked and so perverse that God had commanded that they be completely annihilated.

[27 : 27] Even though they were not completely annihilated. Rahab was a harlot, as I've already said. That was her profession. The spies hid out in her house. Most likely because it would not have been a strange thing for people to see.

People coming and going at all times of the night. And so she was a harlot. And she was a liar. I mean, you can't justify that. Even though her faith in Yahweh as the one true God was apparently the motivation for her to lie.

Even though it's really not justified. And in spite of all of this, God graciously saved her, didn't he? And we know that from Hebrews chapter 11, verse 31.

By faith, the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe. The implication being she did believe. When she had received the spies with peace.

Now notice it didn't say Rahab, by faith Rahab lied. Alright, so you're not justifying the lie. God's not doing that. But listen, the point today is Rahab made the list in Matthew chapter 1.

[28 : 34] Rahab was placed in the lineage of the Messiah. And that's the significant thing here. Alright, so Tamar, Rahab, the third mother, Ruth.

Ruth, her story is a little bit better. A lot better actually. At least as far as her character is concerned. Matthew 1, 5 says, Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, like I mentioned a moment ago.

Boaz begot Obed by Ruth. Obed begot Jesse, that's David's father. Alright, so it's kind of interesting, the close proximity here.

Ruth was Rahab's daughter-in-law. It just kind of shortens down what we kind of perceive as this vast, long history. And Ruth's story is found, of course, in the Old Testament book that goes by her name.

Her name. And so she's the principal character of what book? Ruth, of course. Alright. And you know the story, don't you, about Ruth. I've even preached through the book of Ruth here in this church.

[29 : 44] And you know the story, because of a famine in Israel, Elimelech, with his wife Naomi. They leave Bethlehem, they leave their land, and they move to Moab to escape the famine.

And shortly after that, Elimelech dies, tragically, and leaving Naomi and her two sons all alone, Malon and Kelion. And shortly after that, her two sons marry a couple of Moabite women.

And shortly after this, both sons die. So it's a tragic story there. And that leaves Naomi and her two daughter-in-laws all alone. Destitute, really. And so Naomi does the only smart thing.

She decides then to move back to Israel, back to the land of her people. And to make the story short, Ruth decides to return with her. Ruth, remember, says, your people shall be my people.

Your God will be my God. And so then Ruth meets Boaz. I mean, I'm really making the story short. She meets Boaz, who is a near of kin to Elimelech.

[30 : 52] And Boaz agrees, according to the Levirate laws, agrees to redeem the family property, estate. But also to redeem Ruth.

To marry Ruth. To have children carry on the line of Elimelech. So that it wouldn't come to an end there. And all of that, again, according to the Levirate law.

And, you know, it is a beautiful picture of Christ, right? The book of Ruth. Picture of our kinsman-redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, you probably are familiar with that part of Ruth's story.

But perhaps you don't know all the implications, significance of her ethnicity as a Moabitess. The Jews absolutely despised the Moabitess.

They hated them. And so we could imagine that Ruth's marriage to Boaz would have been scandalous. And you have to go back to Genesis chapter 19 to understand the reason for this. [31 : 54] It goes back to Lot, remember? Lot and his family were fleeing from Sodom as God was destroying that wicked, wicked city.

And Lot's wife, we don't even have her name, she turns back. Her heart is still in Sodom. She turns back and God turns her into a pillar of salt, remember?

So now Lot is alone with his two daughters. And they finally find refuge in a cave. And I think because Lot's daughters had grown up in the wicked and perverse culture of Sodom, they conspired to lure their father Lot to get drunk.

And then each one slept with her father. And as a result, they both became pregnant. And had two sons.

One was named Ammon and the other named Moab. Moab. And these two sons, born out of incest, became the fathers and founders of two great nations, the Ammonites and the Moabites.

[33 : 05] And both of these nations, these people were incredibly wicked and perverted and evil. And they were despised by the Israelites.

Despised by them. Right? Ruth then was a Gentile. She was worse than that. In the eyes of the Jews, she was a Moabitess.

A Moabite. And she made the list. She made the list in the lineage of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our fourth mother, Bathsheba.

Bathsheba. I mean, this is kind of a female rogues gallery so far. Other than Ruth, of course. And then our fifth one will certainly not match that.

But Bathsheba. Think about Bathsheba. What do you know about her? By the way, she's not even mentioned by name here. And that's significant. That's significant because that was the way Matthew would convey Bathsheba's sin.

[34 : 15] With David. Matthew 1.6 says, And Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

That's how she's identified. And we know that's Bathsheba. And actually, the words who had been the wife are in italics in many translations.

Which means they're not in the original text. And so it literally reads, David the king begot Solomon by her of Uriah. That means the one belonging to Uriah.

The wife of Uriah. And so, clearly, you get it, don't you? This is a reference to the adultery of David and Bathsheba.

And the story is so well known, we really don't need to tell it here this morning. But suffice it to say that adultery was only the beginning of the problem. It was kind of what set everything into motion.

[35 : 17] Because, you know, the story includes lying. It includes murder. Murder of Bathsheba's husband Uriah.

It includes the death of the child conceived out of this adulterous union. Which was a part of the judgment of God. And only a part of it because it also leads to strife in David's family.

Among his sons. And the near crumbling of his empire. All because of sin. There's no way around it. But don't miss the main point.

Again. Bathsheba made the list. In the lineage of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the lineage of the Messiah. Alright, now our fifth and final mother.

Mary. Ah, bright spot in this group of ladies. Matthew 1.16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary.

[36 : 15] Which, by the way, is a reference to the virgin birth. Because he goes on to say, Of whom, of Mary, was born Jesus who is called Christ. And you notice the break in the kind of the pattern here that we're used to all the way through the lineage.

It does not say that Joseph begot Jesus. Because he didn't. He was born of a virgin. That's another story. Now, I know you know the story of Mary.

So we don't need to tell that. But what can we say about her? When we cut through all of the greatness that we know about Mary. And the mother of Jesus. All that.

Then you really come down to this. Mary was just a poor, ordinary, unknown, insignificant, peasant girl. And that's just it.

And yet, contrary to what some religions claim, Mary was just as much a sinner as all other human beings who've ever lived. And we need to remember that.

[37 : 16] And in that sense, Mary was just as much a sinner as Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. Though she didn't sin, of course, in the same way as they did.

Just as much a sinner. And the fact is that many of the Jews of Jesus' day claimed that Jesus was the illegitimate son of Joseph. Remember? And so, therefore, saying that Mary was an adulteress with someone.

She had a child and the child didn't belong to Joseph. So she must be an adulteress. Right? That's what they thought of her. And so, isn't it interesting when you put all that together, all five of these mothers were connected in some way to immorality.

I mean, three of them directly. Tamar and Rahab and Bathsheba. One of them by ancestry. That would be Ruth the Moabitess.

And then one of them by accusation. Mary, the mother of Jesus. But all five of them were sinners in need of a Savior.

[38 : 29] All five of them. And listed here in the genealogy of Christ. All right. Now, to wrap this up this morning.

To answer that question that I posed at the beginning. Why did the Holy Spirit inspire Matthew to include these five mothers, these five women, in the official genealogy of Jesus, which would have been a complete break of protocol in that day and culture?

Why did he do it? I think there are four reasons. Probably more. But here are four. Two of these reasons pertain to man and two pertain to God.

All right. Here's number one. To discourage self-righteousness. God included these five women here to discourage self-righteousness.

Moms. I'm getting on shaky ground here. But the only people on this good earth who think you are perfect are your children.

[39 : 41] And some of them even know the truth. Now, you're near perfect, but you're not perfect. I'm glad we don't have any stones anywhere around here.

But here's my point. No one expects you to be perfect. No one expects moms to never fail. Or make mistakes.

Or not measure up to the ideal standard of motherhood as we understand it from Scripture. You're not perfect.

And even the genealogy of the perfect Lord and Savior was populated with imperfect, failing, weak people. Which includes all of us.

Now, by the grace of God, some of them learned that about themselves. And here is really the deeper point. They learned that about themselves. And some of them then stopped trusting in their own goodness.

[40 : 45] And placed their trust in the goodness of God. The goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Number two.

Not only to discourage self-righteousness. But to disclose sinfulness. Yes, that's part of it. To disclose the sinfulness of man. Which includes every one of us.

See, the genealogy of Christ is full of sinners. I mean, every one of them. Except for the last name mentioned. Which, of course, is Jesus. And these five mothers were sinners.

Yes, even Mary was a sinner. Now, moms, listen. And really, every one of us. Listen. We need a Savior.

We need a Savior from sin. Not just when we were converted. When we were regenerated. Not just when we were born again. But everyday sins. That includes every mother here.

[41 : 51] And every father. Every single person. Every man, woman, and child in this place. We continue to need a Savior from sin. Not to be saved over and over again.

But we need a Savior from the sin. That we face every single day of our lives. Moms, you know. If your children are in here.

And they're not in children's churches. Put your hands over their ears for just a moment. Okay? You ready? Moms sin every day.

Hoo. So to fathers. Probably more than moms. No. Definitely more than moms.

You need a Savior every day. Don't you? Yes, you do. Number three. To discover saving grace.

[42 : 52] He put these five names in here. And really we could go beyond the five names of these ladies. And we could pick out a number of the other names of the men in there.

That we know quite a bit about. And all of them reveal God's grace. And they are listed here for us to discover his saving grace.

I mean just think about the grace of God. That is revealed in the lives of these five mothers. In spite of their sin. In spite of their weaknesses.

And their failings. And their dubious backgrounds. And in spite of their uncontrollable circumstances. They had those two. You see, we see God's grace applied to the unworthy lives of these mothers.

And it is the same for every one of us. Every single one of us. Mothers, fathers, all of us. So have you discovered the amazing grace of God?

[43 : 54] Have you? One more. To display sovereignty. The sovereignty of God. The sovereign purpose and power of God.

These mothers. These five mothers. They didn't even know it. They didn't even know it. But they were part of something very significant. Hugely significant, right?

They're part of that. In the line of the Messiah. Giving birth to men who would marry and have children. And have children. And eventually Jesus would come.

Significant. Highly significant. Did they know it? They had no idea about that. And it's something that they could not have chosen to be a part of.

I mean, you don't choose to be in the lineage of someone who's not yet born. And in many cases, hundreds of years before he would be born.

[44 : 59] They could not have chosen it for themselves. And these mothers were part of something that was beyond their ability to be a part of. It was the sovereign prerogative and predestination and preordination and providence and purpose of God.

That's what it was all a part of. And yet, in closing, I would say this. All motherhood is connected to the sovereign purpose of God.

You're part of something that you cannot see. You don't know.

You can't learn. You can't read about. Part of some specific purpose of God. That he is working through you.

That's true of every mother. You don't know it all. You can't know it all. You can't discover it all. But it's all there. And you must assume that it is. And so, what can you do?

[46 : 09] You can parent your child. In some cases, your grandchild. Because a lot of grandparents are raising their grandkids these days. And great grandmas.

You can parent those children entrusted to you. And you can parent them as though everything you do is part of and contributes to the purpose of God.

And the instruction book for that is God's Word. And the wisdom and power to do that is in prayer. Amen.