

**Study Questions for the November 29, 2020 Sermon:
“When Family Hurts, God’s Grace Heals”
Genesis 38, Matthew 1:1-6**

1. There are some religions that claim they have credibility and authenticity because of their ethnic heritage. For example, they say their members are the “true Hebrews” or that they are descendants of one of the tribes of Israel.
 - a. How might you use Matthew 1: 1-6 to show that ethnicity is not a factor in spiritual justifications individual members?
 - b. State one Old Testament passage or story that disassociates ethnicity from spiritual justification.
 - c. State one New Testament passage (besides Matthew 1) or story that disassociates ethnicity from spiritual justification.

2. In Genesis 37 and 38 we see Judah engaging in monstrous hypocrisy and ruthlessness: Selling Joseph as a slave, lying to his father about Joseph being dead, breaking his promises to Tamar, and calling for her to be burned to death for sexual immorality when he consorted with prostitutes. In Chapter 44, we see Judah behaving with honor and courage – offering to remain as a prisoner in Egypt so that Benjamin may return. What event that occurred in Genesis, chapter 38 may have initiated Judah's reformation of character?

3. Pastor Paul encouraged us by teaching that one person's redemption may impact other family members. If God used a family member to bring you to Him, or if God used you as His instrument in saving a family member, please briefly share the story.

4. Tamar's life might have appeared to her as a series of unconnected and evil experiences: Married to an evil man, then married to a man who held her in such contempt that he would not permit her to bear his children, then being both a victim and perpetrator of deceit. It would not have been apparent to her that God was using these events so that she might continue the family line that would bring forth the Messiah.
 - a. State another Bible story in which God brings good out of what appeared at the time to nothing but evil or chaotic.
 - b. Share a personal story in which you observed a good ending to a situation that seemed at the time to not include God's grace.

5. Tamar's son, Perez, was the product of prostitution and incest. He was also in the line that ultimately produced Jesus the Messiah. Can we infer any teaching from this regarding the difference between our temporal and spiritual heritage?