

## A Tale of 4 Women and God's Grace Matthew 1:1-6

### INTRODUCTION

**Mother's Day is a special day for special people.** It's appropriate that we honor moms for they are part of an important God-ordained institution called the family. We need to recognize that families are part of God's plan. God instituted the family; it is the vehicle through which spiritual truth is passed from one generation to another. It is the vehicle through which our values, beliefs and customs are passed from one generation to another. No wonder Satan desires to destroy the family.

Someone wrote the following (it's funny but appropriate) and entitled it: ***"Things my momma taught me."***

- My mother taught me \_\_\_\_\_. She said, ***"If you fall off that swing and break your neck, you can't go to the store with me."***
- My mother taught me \_\_\_\_\_. She said, ***"If you don't stop crossing your eyes, they're going to freeze that way."***
- My mother taught me \_\_\_\_\_. She said, ***"Put your sweater on; don't you think that I know when you're cold?"***
- My mother taught me \_\_\_\_\_. She said, ***"When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me."***
- My mother taught me about \_\_\_\_\_. She said, ***"How do you think you got here?"***
- My mother taught me about \_\_\_\_\_. She said, ***"Just wait until your father gets home."***

- My mother taught me about \_\_\_\_\_. She said, ***"You are going to get it when we get home."***
- My mother taught me about \_\_\_\_\_. She said, ***"You are just like your father!"***
- And my all-time favorite thing—\_\_\_\_\_. She said, ***"One day you will have kids, and I hope they turn out just like YOU!"***

On a much more serious note, **Mother's Day** is difficult for many people. Women who long for marriage and children often find the day difficult. Women who struggle with infertility or who have experienced the loss of new life to miscarriage or stillbirth often privately confess the pain associated with the day. There are individuals who barely speak to their estranged mother. Many people approach Mother's Day with ambivalence.

**Unlike the unrealistic and sentimental feminine images dished out by retailers, the Bible records the real stories of real women's lives.** We are reminded Ruth, left widowed at a young age. The Bible records the infertility of Rachel, Hannah and Sarah, and reminds us that both Eve and Mary lost sons under terrible circumstances.

And not only mothers but women in general can also feel like they fall so short of the ideal woman that they're not. We begin to ask ourselves questions like, ***"What if I don't quite measure up to the Proverbs 31 woman?"*** ***Is there any hope for me? Can God use me? Is there any hope for me? Can God take me with all of my flaws, my sin, my sometimes lack of faith, my past, my pain, and use me?"***

**The Bible provides the answer.** Please turn with me to **Matthew 1:1-6. Family trees can be interesting, right?** The truth is that all of our family trees have some shady characters. But **Matthew** goes out of his way to include shady characters in this list. On one hand, you have kings on this list. That's pretty cool. **Matthew** is saying that the story of Jesus includes those who have power and prestige and position.

But **Matthew** gives us the other side as well. It's clear in reading this list that **Matthew** has been selective in terms of the people he includes. He leaves some in, and he leaves some out as well. So, it's striking that he included some people that most would have left out. Most ancient genealogies didn't include women, unless they were famous great women. But **Matthew lists four women who are prominent and anything but great.**

This list includes a broad spectrum of people. Some we know about, but others we know only by their names here. There are kings and commoners. Oddly for the patriarchal Jews, there are some women on the list. Also, oddly for a Jewish genealogy, **three of those women were Gentiles and were notorious for immorality.** The list is obviously not fabricated, because no religious Jew would have put together a list like this if he were trying to impress his readers with the pedigree of the Messiah. But everyone on the list shares something in **common: *whether they were relatively good people or notoriously bad, they all were sinners who needed a Savior.***

Let's look at the four other women in the list and see how each of them teaches us something important about God's salvation as provided in Jesus Christ. What we see here is a display of God's grace.

*We begin with...*

## I. \_\_\_\_\_

Her story—unknown to most of us—is found in **Genesis 38**. Tamar was the daughter-in-law of Judah who was the son of Jacob, grandson of Abraham. All you need to know is that Judah had a son named Er who married a Gentile woman named...Tamar. There really isn't a happy ending to this story. She's just a footnote in biblical history—and an unsavory one at that.

## II. \_\_\_\_\_

**Her story is tied in with the larger story of Joshua's conquest of the walled city of Jericho.** When Joshua sent spies into the city, Rahab hid them in her house. In exchange for safe passage out of the city, they promised to spare her and her household when the invasion took place. All she had to do was to hang a scarlet cord from her window so the Israelites could identify her house. She agreed, hid the spies, and when the king of Jericho sent messengers asking her to bring out the men, she lied and said they had already left the city (they were hiding on the roof). She let them out of a window with a rope, whereupon they returned to Joshua.

## III. \_\_\_\_\_

The book which bears her name tells of the romance that blossomed between Ruth the Moabitess and Boaz the Israelite. They were a very unlikely couple but in God's providence they were brought together in marriage. They had a son named Obed who had a son named Jesse who had a son named David, making Ruth David's great-grandmother. And that's how a person from the hated nation of Moab entered the line of the Messiah.

#### **IV. Bathsheba**

**The last woman is not mentioned by name.** She is however clearly identified as the woman “*who had been Uriah’s wife.*” Her name isn’t there, but she is mentioned, nonetheless.

#### **CONCLUSION**

What can we take with us this morning? So how do we respond to these truths? Properly understood, the message of the gospel confronts before it comforts, it disturbs before it delights.

***Two responses this morning.***

***First, be \_\_\_\_\_.***

***Second, \_\_\_\_\_ the story.***

These four women illustrate from different angles the great news that God saves sinners. In Christ, God sent a Savior for sinners. A painful past is no excuse for refusing salvation. There's hope for the hurting...

#### ***3 Practical Truths about these four women in Matthew 1:1-6***

- **Stop \_\_\_\_\_ yourself to others.**
- **Stop \_\_\_\_\_ your past to \_\_\_\_\_ your future.**
- **By God’s grace and with His help, \_\_\_\_\_ the person God has called you to be.**

**So, there you have it.** Matthew, inspired by the Holy Spirit, pens the genealogical record of Jesus. In the record—four women—all outsiders, three of the four have what we would categorize as pretty checkered pasts. What do we learn?

Conclusion: **There is \_\_\_\_\_ for me and you in Christ.**