

Five Unusual Women God Used

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 May 2023

Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0:00] Good morning. Our scripture reading is taken from Matthew chapter 1. Matthew chapter 1, verses 1 through 16.

! Matthew chapter 1, verses 1 through 16. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nashon, and Nashon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king, and David was father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jeconiah, and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon, and after the deportation to Babylon,

Jeconiah was the father of Sheolitel, and Sheolitel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abahud, and Abahud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eliezer, and Eliezer the father of Mathan, and Mathan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

Thank you very much, Faye.

[3:12] For this morning, my primary aim is to encourage mothers. But I especially want to encourage mothers who, for whatever reason, may feel that they are disqualified from God using them because of something in their past or perhaps something they did or something done to them, some circumstance that they see as disqualifying.

But I'm aware that not only mothers sometimes feel this way, sometimes we all can feel that there's some circumstance, something we did, something done to us, something in our lives that disqualifies us from God using us.

And the truth is, none of us, even the best of us, in and of ourselves, is qualified for God to use us.

But none of us, whatever our circumstance, is disqualified from God using us.

And there's a difference. We cannot be qualified for God to use us, but none of us is so disqualified that God will not use us.

And so this morning, I want us to consider this. And although I have mothers primarily in view, by the grace of God, all of us would find ourselves in view of this sermon this morning.

[5:03] So let me pray for us as we begin. Lord, thank you for your faithfulness in all of our lives. Lord, it doesn't matter who we are, where we're from.

None of us is outside of your gaze. And Lord, I pray that you would speak in particular to mothers this morning and encourage them. And Lord, I pray that you would also speak broadly to all of us and encourage us to know that you can and do use those who in their own eyes see themselves as disqualified.

I pray, Lord, that you would in this moment speak above my voice to every heart. And I pray that you above all else will be glorified.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. One of the Mother's Day gifts I always try to give to the mothers is a short sermon. And I hope I keep my tradition this morning.

I think all of you would agree if you've ever set out on a Bible reading plan that things tend to go well until you get to the genealogies. Genealogies, most of us get knocked off track and we kind of pick up when the genealogies are over.

[6:39] And so you probably were wondering what in the world are we reading Matthew chapter 1 with these strange names for on Mother's Day.

But I learned a lesson a number of years ago that you can learn a lot from genealogies. You can learn a lot of interesting things from them.

I remembered I was reading in Numbers 13 and I must confess that I'm one of those that I really get off track when you come to the genealogies.

When you get in First Chronicles and they start to give you the table of all the families, I get out of sorts with that. But I'm reading through Numbers this one occasion and I stumbled across this verse that says that Joshua's name was not always Joshua.

It was Hosea. And Moses changed it to something else. And I thought that's pretty interesting. And I realized if I had skipped over the genealogy at that point I would not have realized that Joshua's name was not his given name.

[7:47] That was the name that Moses actually gave him and changed. But this genealogy in front of us this morning in Matthew chapter 1 is more than just interesting.

And it's more than just interesting because this is the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the list of people from whom Jesus is descended in the flesh.

I didn't include some people who are not the kind of people who are celebrated in this world.

They're not the kind of people who those who like to name drop.

You know, when they like to say this one. You don't call some of these names that are in this list.

You actually go silent when those names are mentioned.

And five of the ancestors listed in Matthew chapter 1 verses 1 to 16 are women. And they're unusual women.

[8:48] They're all mothers as well. But they are unusual women. And this morning I want us to consider these five unusual women that God used in bringing the Savior into the world.

God and again while I pray that mothers are especially encouraged I pray that we are all encouraged from this passage. And what I hope that we are able to see is that it doesn't matter who you are or what you have done.

God can use your story in his story. And he's able to do that because he is God. He's able to do that because nothing is too hard for him to do.

There's a dear preacher to me in my early years of ministry and he's dead now but he said something to me that I didn't grasp the first time and he had to repeat it.

He said the garbage truck never pulls up to God's workshop. And I didn't understand what he was saying and then he explained it to me he said God wastes nothing because he is God he's able to use everything.

[10:00] And that's what I hope that we see this morning that it doesn't matter who we are it doesn't matter what we have done it doesn't matter what is in our past God is able to use our story in his story and his story is the gospel.

And let's consider these five unusual women listed in the genealogy of Christ and the first woman is Tamar a deceiver. She's mentioned in verse 3 of Matthew chapter 1 and we can't tell from Matthew chapter 1 that Tamar was a deceiver but we can when we read a story in Genesis 38.

Tamar was the daughter of Judah one of the sons of Jacob and Judah had three sons. The first was Er the second was Onan and the third was Shelah and Er married Tamar and what the Bible records of Er is that he was a wicked man and so the Lord killed him and since Er and Tamar didn't have any children the rules the rules of custom in those days required that the eldest brother would then raise up offspring to his deceased brother and the child the male child the first male child will carry on the lineage of the deceased brother he would carry the deceased brother's name he would stand in the deceased brother's stead he would receive any inheritance that was going to come to

that line of the family and so this duty fell to

Er's brother Onan he was the oldest brother who survived Er and something interesting happened since Onan knew that if his brother didn't have any children by Tamar then it was going to cause more inheritance to come to him and so he had no genuine interest in raising up offspring for his brother-in-law through his sister-in-law and so what he did was he took advantage of Tamar he conducted himself in a selfish way and a wicked manner towards Tamar he pursued selfish pleasure with Tamar but ensured that she didn't get pregnant and in doing so Onan dishonored his brother and he dishonored his brother's wife by refusing to perform the duty of a brother-in-law to his brother and so the Lord put him to death and so

Judah's left with one son his last son Shelah and Judah's kind of thinking Tamar is not good news every son I give to Tamar dies and so he tells Tamar he says look Shelah is a bit young so why don't you wait stay in your father's house as a widow and when Shelah is older I will let him raise a offspring to his brother well in the course of time Judah's wife died and the scripture tells us that Judah went down to some sheep sharers in another part of the country and Tamar was told that he went to these sheep sharers and so what Tamar did was she dressed up as a prostitute she put a veil over her face and she started the entrance of this town where he was going and Judah solicited her and he had no money and so he said to her look credit me she says no he says look

[14:19] I'll send you a goat I'll send you a goat from the flock and so she said that's fine but what I want is I need you to give me a pledge that you're going to do that and she asked him for his cord and his staff and these were identification documents back then these were instruments that identified who you were because the signet was how you would sign a signature and we're able to see just how desperate and how dark a place that Judah was in that he would expose himself in this particular way and so he gives her these things he sleeps with her and interesting thing about that is Judah treated Tamar the way men treat prostitutes that he had no interest in what she looked like he had no idea that he was sleeping with his own daughter-in-law because he had no interest in what her face looked like his only interest was self-gratification and so after he ratified himself he went his way and Tamar went her way she took off her prostitutes clothing she took off the veil and she returned to her father's house as a widow and then

Judah later sends his friend to the place where Tamar was with the goat and shows up and finds out nobody's there so the friend inquires with the men around said where's the prostitute who sat at the gate and they said there's no prostitute around here and he goes back and tells Judah and they realize that you know we just have to leave this because this could really become a big scandal and so they leave it off well what happened was Tamar actually got pregnant and in three months time word gets out that she is pregnant and Judah hears it that his daughter-in-law who is supposed to be living in the father's house as a widow is pregnant and what was Judah's response Judah's response was bring her out let her be burned that was the penalty for sexual immorality in those days but listen to what it says in

Genesis 38 25 to 26 this is the continuation after Judah said let her be burned it reads as she was being brought out she sent word to her father-in-law and this is what she said by the man to whom these belong I am pregnant and she said please identify whose these are the signet and the court and the staff then Judah identified them and said she is more righteous than I since I did not give her to my son Sheila and he did not know her again so Judah was stuck he couldn't disown the property because the signet uniquely identified him and when the time came for Tamar to give birth she gave birth to twins and one of the twins was named Perez and he's listed in this genealogy of Christ now think about that story think about that story it was no accident or chance event that Perez was born of Tamar a woman who was deceived by her brother-in-law and used by him a woman who was used by her father-in-law and a woman who in turn herself became a deceiver and humiliated her father-in-law none of this was any accident the sovereign

Lord determined that a child named Perez from whom Christ would descend would be born of a woman named Tamar a woman who was used and abused and who herself was a deceiver God used her despite who she was and God has included her story in his story the gospel which is the story of God's son coming into this world but the second unusual woman mentioned in this

genealogy of Christ in Matthew chapter 1 is Rahab a prostitute she's mentioned in verse 5 and Rahab's story is found in the book of Joshua in Joshua chapters 2 and 6 the children of Israel were about to enter the promised land and they sent spies into

Jericho to spy out the land and they said to the house of this prostitute by the name of Rahab and word came to the king of Jericho that spies had come into the land and they were staying with Rahab and so they go to Rahab's house they approach her and they ask about these men and Rahab had taken the two men and she hid them on and said yes they did come to me but they have gone and I don't know which direction they went in they left before dark and so the king's man ran off in search of the spies let's turn to Joshua chapter 2 if you have your Bible if you're using one of the church Bibles it's on page 178 but Joshua chapter 2 I want to read verses 8 to 14 Joshua chapter 2 8 to 14

[20:31] I'm not hearing any pages turned so that means that people must be sliding things I see here pages turned and now I don't hear anything verse 8 before the man lay down she referring to Rahab came up to them on the roof and said to them I know that the Lord has given you the land and the fear of you has fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of you for we have heard how the Lord dried of the water of the sea before you when you came out of Egypt and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to Sion and Og whom you devoted to destruction and as soon as we heard it our hearts melted and there was no spirit left in any man because of you for the

Lord your God he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath now then please swear to me by the Lord that as I have dealt kindly with you you also will deal kindly with my father's house and give me a sure sign that you will save alive my father and mother my brothers and sisters and all who belong to them and deliver our lives from death and the man said to her our life for yours even to death if you do not tell this business of ours then when the Lord gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you and so this account is in essence what you may call Rahab's conversion and we shouldn't miss it's easy to read over this but we shouldn't miss that the sovereign

Lord gave sovereign grace in this situation of all the people in Jericho of all the people in Jericho the Lord chose Rahab and moved on her heart in such a way that she forsook her people in ordinary terms they would call this treason but the Lord had already pronounced judgment over them and he moved on her heart in such a way that she joined the people of God and she helped them to defeat Jericho and to possess the land and the rest of the story is that the men told Rahab that Rahab let the men down through the window they escaped And they instructed her to tie a scarlet cord in the window so that they would know that's where she is and they would protect her and keep her safe when they came back to invade

We don't read about Rahab anymore in Joshua until chapter 6 when the Israelites returned and they invaded and overthrew the city and they spared Rahab and her family And after Joshua 6 we don't hear anything else about Rahab she is not mentioned again until we come to the book of Matthew in this passage that we are looking at and here we see this woman who was exploited by men who was no doubt looked down upon in society but she was looked upon by God and he so moved in her heart he opened her eyes to see him as the all powerful God of Israel who was giving Israel all that they were achieving and she aligned herself with the people of God against her own people and God spared her life and brothers and sisters this is a beautiful picture of how through the gospel enemies of

God become children of God through Jesus Christ how he brings them out of darkness and brings them into light joins them to himself and they forsake the world and they cling to Christ what happened to Rahab in the Old Testament is a picture of what has happened to us through the gospel some of us our friends would consider us to have betrayed them because we've turned away from the world and them and we have turned to Christ and so we see in verse five that Rahab gives birth to Boaz fathered by salmon and so again we have another account of an unattractive story this woman who has an unattractive past and I think we all know that one of the reputations that would be hard to shake is the one that

[25:54] Rahab had but God used her unattractive story as part of his story and this should encourage all of us this morning if we are weighed

down by our past if we're thinking our past disqualifies us from being used by God the good news is that God chooses and uses whom he wills and he does so despite anything in our past that we might consider disqualifying well the third woman is Ruth a foreigner and Ruth is mentioned in verse 5 as well her story is found in the book of Ruth Ruth married one of the sons of an Israelite man a man by the name of Elimelech from Judah from Bethlehem in Judah Elimelech and his wife left Bethlehem during a time of famine they relocated to Moab and while there his two sons married two women from

Moab and these two women were Ruth and Orpah and tragically Elimelech and his two sons died and Elimelech's wife Naomi decided she would leave Moab and she would go back to Bethlehem because at that time they were told that there was now the famine had broken there was now food in Bethlehem and so her daughters in law decide they're going to go with her and she just pleads with them she urges them no don't do that live your life I'm an old woman you go and you live your life and Orpah listens and says okay I'm not going and Orpah stays in Moab but Ruth insists in this beautiful speech of commitment to her mother-in-law she refuses to leave and she decides that she would leave Moab and she would return to Bethlehem and long story short they get back to Bethlehem the Lord takes care of Ruth and Naomi and this wealthy older man by the name of Boaz marries Ruth and provides extravagantly for her and for her mother-in-law and so God moves on the heart of this older man to take an interest in this foreigner Ruth a Moab but more importantly and I trust we don't miss this God moved on Ruth's heart to forsake her people in Moab and to join God's people in Bethlehem and now the story of this foreigner Ruth is in God's story one of the interesting features of this story about Ruth in the book of Ruth is that we know that ultimately it's the

Lord who moved on the heart of Boaz to show mercy to Ruth ultimately the Lord is at work but humanly speaking it would not have been difficult for Boaz to be compassionate towards Ruth and to marry her other than for her beauty separate and apart from her beauty and the reason is that we're told right here in Matthew 1 and verse 5 that Rahab was the mother of Boaz and Boaz would have known first hand what foreigners go through because even when foreigners are accepted in another country often times prejudices remain in the hearts of many and he would have experienced that first hand through his mother who was not a Jew and from this we're able to see that

Jesus Christ himself was not a pure Jew because here in Matthew 1 we have two foreign women who are in his genealogy and I think some of us this morning may find ourselves realizing that some of the realities of our lives are pretty much like Ruth's when you study Ruth's life Ruth was born into circumstances that she had no control over she didn't choose to be born in Moab she didn't naturally choose to move to Bethlehem circumstances brought her there and she found herself living among Jews who generally hated all foreigners and all these difficult circumstances came about though under the sovereignty of God and none of them disqualified

[31:17] Ruth from being used of the Lord she gave birth to Obed who was the father of Jesse who was the father of King David and so this morning if like Ruth you find yourself in difficult circumstances that you did not choose for yourself circumstances that you may think are disqualifying God knows where you are he knows your address and God uses whomever he chooses with a fourth unusual woman in the genealogy that we have here in Matthew 1 is such a famous woman that her name isn't even mentioned she's simply described in verse 6 she's referred to as the wife of Uriah and most of us if not all of us would know that this is

Bathsheba she's the fourth unusual woman in this genealogy of Christ Bathsheba was an adulteress her story is found in 2 Samuel chapter 11 one day David was on the roof of his house he should have been in battle but he was on the roof of his house I don't know what he was doing but the text tells us that he saw this beautiful woman who was bathing inquired about her and found out that she was the wife of one of his choice men she was one of their wives and David pressed beyond that and told his men to go and bring her which they did David slept with her she got pregnant and when David got word that she was he tried to frame her husband by calling him off the battlefield and sending him home to his wife so that

Uriah would think the child was his after several attempts including trying to get Uriah drunk David was unsuccessful in getting this man to go home to be with his wife because he said I cannot do that while the armies of God are on the battlefield and as has been said time and time again Uriah had more character when he was drunk than David had when he was sober and so David decided he was going to kill Uriah he told Joab his commander to take Uriah and place him at the fiercest point of the battle and then to withdraw from him which Joab did and Uriah was killed and David took Bathsheba to be his wife but God was not pleased with what David did and he confronted David through the prophet Nathan the Lord took the child the Lord disciplined David but God was kind and gave Bathsheba another child by David Solomon who succeeded David as king and so here we have this account of this woman whose husband is fighting for his country and although she did not take the initiative to start this adulterous relationship with David and although David was a powerful king and no doubt used his position of power as leverage over her Bathsheba could have resisted she could have resisted she may have been dead but she could have resisted and since she didn't resist she is guilty of adultery in her own right but despite her adultery God used Bathsheba and her story of adultery in his story of redemption salvation and again it reminds us that no matter who we are or what we have done God is able to redeem us and use our story in his story and he's able to do that because not only is he gracious he is all powerful you see God could be gracious but not powerful enough to bring to pass what he graciously wants to do but he is both a God of unending mercy and grace and he's a God of limitless power and so he's able to bring his purposes to pass for the fifth and the final unusual woman that we find in this genealogy of Christ is in verse 16 and she's Mary a virgin and there's one obvious way that

[36:34] Mary is different from all these other women all the other women were previously mentioned in the Old Testament so we had their histories but we at this point have no history of Mary at this point we don't even know that she is a virgin in verse 16 we learn that later in the gospel we learn from Luke's gospel that Mary was from an obscure town with a bad reputation called Nazareth Nazareth had such a reputation that when one of the disciples of Jesus heard that Jesus was from Nazareth he said can any good thing come out of Nazareth so Mary was a poor peasant girl and we look at Mary's view of herself seen in the Magnificat in Luke 1 46 to 49 this is the way Mary saw herself she said my soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked on the humblest state of his servant behold from now on all generations will call me blessed for he who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name brothers and sisters

God is able to use those who are not on the top of the list of this world and he's able to include them and their story in his story and it matters not to God he knows our address he knows where we are when the world seems not to forget but to never have known and he chooses this young peasant girl from a town of no reputation to be the mother of the Savior of the world God the Son God incarnate brothers and sisters God is sovereign and he sovereignly uses those whom he sovereignly chooses despite what they are despite what they or the world my view as disqualifying as I conclude this one let me say that the point of the sermon is not for mothers or anyone else to compare yourself to see which of these five unusual women you may have more or less in common with the point is that none of these women are the kind of people whom this world celebrates and yet they were not overlooked by God he placed them in his story of redemption one of the one of the most comforting and assuring truths is to know that no matter what's going on no matter what it looks like you are not hidden from God you are not hidden from God doesn't matter what it feels like doesn't matter what it looks like none of us escapes the gaze of God in

Hebrews chapter 2 verses 10 to 12 we read these encouraging words for he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin that is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers saying I will tell of your name to my brothers in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise and again I will put my trust in him and again behold I and the children God has given to me these are prophetic words of the Lord Jesus Christ calling us his brothers not being ashamed to identify with us and own us as his brothers whatever our past is whatever our circumstances are he's not ashamed to call us brothers Jesus was not ashamed of these five women in his genealogy and he's not ashamed of any of the children whom

God has given to him and if you've put your trust in Jesus Christ this morning you are among those children not ashamed of you and he knows everything about you he knows everything about me not ashamed to call us brothers and if you have not put your trust in Jesus this morning as your only savior before a holy God if you have not done that Jesus invites you to come he says come to me all who are weary!

and heavy laden and I will give you rest it's an invitation and a promise from God the son who cannot lie and who will not disappoint and he says this he says and all who come to me I will never turn you away I will take you in and never ever will you be ever turned away you will never be turned out I will hold on to you to the very end and what that means is no matter what we meet in life we have the assurance that we will never ever be turned away from the Lord Jesus Christ and so if you don't know Christ this morning I implore you come to Jesus and what you will find is a Savior who is quick to pardon all of your sins whatever they might be that's one

[43:09] I pray that all of us mothers primarily but all of us would leave this place with the assurance of heart that whatever our circumstances might be God is able to use our story in his story in a way that he sovereignly chooses and he do it all for his own glory let's pray oh father thank you for your unbounding grace and mercy and power that nothing about us past or present things we have done or things done to us will disqualify us to be used by you God I pray that you would give us that assurance that you are able to use our story whatever it is in your big story of redemption we pray this in

Jesus name amen this time for closing song to to