

Real expectations

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Preacher: Chris Lowe

[0 : 00] A question this morning, like most weeks, when you're caught and exposed and you're guilty, is there any way back for you?

! A couple of weeks ago the Philip Schofield story was everywhere, it was all over the news for about three weeks a month. I don't know if you cottoned on to it. Philip Schofield's been around on TV since the late 1980s.

He was squeaky clean and easy going and perfect for daytime TV and he and Holly Willoughby spent coming on 15 years co-hosting This Morning on ITV.

You tracked with the story? In 2020, Philip Schofield made a surprise announcement. Although he'd been married for 27 years with two daughters, Schofield came out and announced he was gay and was leaving his wife because he had to be true to his authentic self.

And at the time everyone applauded because following your feelings is a good in 21st century Britain, it's not a sin. And Holly, his co-host, threw her arms around him and she said, Phil, I'll be by your side forever.

[1 : 08] Fast forward to today though and it's all changed. On May the 26th, Phil finally revealed that whilst married and before publicly coming out, he'd had a secret relationship with a male ITV employee, a man who was younger than his daughters.

Philip Schofield had met the then 15-year-old when he was 50 and he was giving a talk at a drama school. And then he arranged a job interview and the lad got a job under him, for him, on This Morning.

And the affair began when the boy was 20. Philip was in his mid-50s and covering things up, he lied about the relationship to management and colleagues and everyone.

And so on May the 26th, with this truth now out in the open, Phil went from hero to zero overnight and announced his resignation from ITV. Why did he have to go?

Was it the lies that he told? Was it the age difference? Was it the suspicion that here was an older celebrity man abusing his power by grooming a teenager?

[2 : 20] Whatever the mix of reasons, Phil had sinned in the eyes of 21st century Britain and he'd offended and we disapprove and we've been let down and so now he's gone for good.

And he had to go. Two weeks ago, Monday morning, Holly Willoughby, dressed in white, started the show with an announcement.

And we're just going to watch 90 seconds of it. Right. Do you both. Firstly, are you okay?

I hope so. Phil's very strange indeed sitting here without Phil. And I imagine you might be feeling a lot like I have. Shaken, troubled, let down, worried for the well-being and people on all sides of what's been going on and full of questions.

You, me and all of us this morning gave our love and support to someone who was not having the choice, who acted in a way that they themselves felt that they had to resign from ITV and step down from a career that they loved. That is a lot to process and it's equally hard to see the toll that it's taken on their own mental health. I think what unites us all now is a desire to heal for the health and wellbeing of everyone. I hope that as we start this new chapter, we get back to a place of warmth and magic that this show holds for all of us, we can find strength in each other. And from my heart, can I just say thank you for all of your kind messages and thank you for being here this morning.

Myself, Josie, Dermot, Alison, Craig and every single person that works on the show will continue to work hard at every single day to bring in the show that we love. So on that note, don't we?

[4 : 12] Well, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Well, we can ask you about the show. Exactly.

married man dies without children a brother of his is obliged to marry the dead man's widow and provide children who will carry forward the dead man's name and inherit land and care for their mother it's strange to say but back then it was a compassionate rule for family life and Tamar a powerless unprotected widow would have expected these family men to take responsibility but Onan didn't he knew the child wouldn't be his so whenever he slept with his brother's wife he spilled his semen on the ground to avoid providing offspring for his brother do you think that's good do you think that's average or bad what he did was wicked in the Lord's sight so the Lord put him to death also so Judah the backsliding father with two wicked sons now dead makes a decision she's the poisonous one he thinks harming my fine sons blame the woman and refusing to care for her he sends her back to her father live as a widow in your father's household until my son Shelah grows up for he thought he may die too just like his brothers if she stays here and so Tamar went to live in her father's household abusing his power Judah basically condemns Tamar to a life of suspended widowhood duty bound to wait for a marriage that is honestly never ever going to happen and what do you make of Judah at this point truth is he's a rotten ungodly man who's raised rotten ungodly sons and Tamar the defenseless woman has borne the brunt of his sin at the hands of these men until verse 12 onwards when well after a long time Judah's wife the daughter of Shua died and when Judah had recovered from his grief he went up to Timnar to the men who were shearing his sheep and his friend

Hira the Adullamite went with him and now Tamar sees her opportunity I don't know what you think about this I'd love to hear what you think I don't think you're meant to see Tamar as terribly wicked here the truth is she's a desperate woman who's been desperately wronged and she knows her rights and she will fight for her place and her future in Judah and Ur's family line and she will fight and do whatever it takes and so she acts sharply decisively look verse 13 when Tamar was told your father-in-law's on the way to Timna to shear his sheep she took off her widow's clothes covered herself with a veil and sat down at the entrance to Enayim on the road to Timna because she saw that though Shailah had now grown up she had not been given to him as his wife this is her only way now to secure children and she knows what her father-in-law is like when Judah saw her he thought she was a prostitute for she'd covered her face recently widowed but with his sex drive still intact and not realising that she was his daughter-in-law he went over to her by the roadside and said come now let me sleep with you and she on the roadside quickly conducts business what will you give me to sleep with you

I'll send you a young goat from my flock he said will you give me something as a pledge until you send it she asked he said what pledge should I give you your seal and its cord and the staff in your hand she answered the seal on a cord around the neck was an important man's insignia was his identity tag and the staff had a mark of ownership on it this belongs to Judah and Tamar knows that he says give me your ID give me your credit cards he does the deal he gave them to her and entered her and she became pregnant by him after she left she took off her veil and put on her widow's clothes again it's done now at this point in the story you know what Judah's done and Tamar knows what Judah's done but Judah thinks I'm okay no one will know and so verse 20 he sent the young goat by his friend the Adulamite in order to get his pledge back from the woman give me my credit cards to tie everything up and close the story off but he didn't find her he asked the men who lived there where's the shrine prostitute who was beside the road at Enayim there hasn't been any shrine prostitute here they say gulp so he went back to Judah and said didn't find her besides the men who lived there said there hasn't even been a shrine prostitute here then Judah said let her keep what she has or we will become a laughing stock if we keep searching for the missing prostitute after all

I did send her this young goat but you didn't find her end of story maybe everything covered over but no about three months later Judah was told your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of prostitution and as a result she is now pregnant and moral outrage rises within Judah prostitution my daughter-in-law what a whore she is how shameful and exercising his power he passes sentence brutally Judah said bring her out and let her be burned to death because she has sinned that is utterly wicked cruel hypocrisy isn't it you imagine if he gets away with it as she was being brought out she sent a message to her father-in-law

I am pregnant by the man who owns these she said and she added see if you recognise whose seal and cord and staff these are you imagine what that feels like when you can't cover things up anymore when your secrets are revealed at the climax of chapter 37 Judah and his brothers

deceived Jacob with a robe dipped in blood do you recognise this?

[17 : 56] at the climax of chapter 38 vicious irony Judah the deceiver is uncovered do you recognise these? and I guess as he stands there in that moment with people gathered round and his daughter-in-law before him Judah has absolutely nowhere to hide he sees his own seal and cord and staff in her hands and he's caught and exposed and guilty and I guess in that moment the cogs turn in his head desperately and he sees what's happened and in an instant he grasps how cruelly abusive he'd been towards her all these years and how desperate she'd become that she would sleep with her father-in-law and in front of everyone Judah's sins are laid bare for all to see and unmasked and undone in the presence of everyone he said Tamar is more righteous than I since I wouldn't give her to my son

Shela she is more righteous than I or she is righteous not I and he didn't sleep with her again asked at the beginning when you're caught and exposed and you're guilty is there any way back for Philip Schofield with ITV there isn't don't even use his name anymore he's removed he's gone he's outside the family he's done do you want me to die well you're gone some of us may have carefully hidden away sins we may because in some way like Judah we have been wicked or we have abused our power or we've made someone's life a misery or we have done something shameful that ought not to be done and we don't want to be a laughing stock and we fear that if people found out we'd be done our names would be removed we'd be cast off kicked out and cancelled out of our own family or our church family and that's a real fear because the truth is for all of us there really will come a day in the future the Bible says when God judges people's secrets and everything is laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we give account and so with that day in mind you might think well that's it then because when my secrets are laid bare before a holy God like Judah's surely there could be nothing for me but blackness and sadness away from him and outside his family but one of the reasons

Genesis 38 is here in the scriptures is this the wonderful gospel news which grows out of this chapter for you and for me and for Philip Schofield is that there is a way back does not have to be that we are thrust away from God forever and forgotten because well this is not the end of Judah's story do you know what happens for him as life moves on do you know what happens for backsliding wicked cruelly abusive Judah his name is not removed and he is not cast off in the last few verses of Genesis 38 you see the birth Tamar gives birth and out come twin boys Perez and Zerah they're a double blessing from God and as

Genesis 37 to 50 rolls forward and the Bible rolls forward from these twins come the tribe of Judah and as the Bible story rolls forward more from the tribe of Judah will come a royal descendant King David and finally from the royal line of Judah will come the son of David the Lord Jesus Christ himself you think surely Judah must go he must be blotted out his name gone forever but it's not at the very beginning of his gospel at the start of the New Testament Matthew the gospel writer lists the family tree of Jesus he lists the people who are in the family the people from whom Jesus came look at this on the screen it's so striking Matthew 1 verses 1 to 3 first pages of the New Testament this is the genealogy the family line of Jesus the Messiah the son of David the son of Abraham Abraham was the father of

Isaac Isaac the father of Jacob Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah whose mother was Tamar look it's Judah it's wicked Judah and his name hasn't been blotted out he's part of the family of God and look on purpose there is Tamar she's mentioned specifically she who desperately concocted a plan to trick her father-in-law into sex and they're here and they're named and they are part of the family of Jesus Christ forever and this is where I've wanted us to get to the reason that they are in God's family forever and the reason that you and I can be in God's family forever is because we have a God of overwhelming and overflowing grace and mercy he does not treat

[23 : 57] Judah and he does not treat us as our sins deserve seeing and knowing everything we have done seeing and knowing everything that Judah did in his forgiving love God sent his son into the world for us and for our salvation in Matthew 1 21 just a few verses on the angel appears to Joseph and says of Mary she will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus you'll give him the name Jesus because he will create a place of warmth no he will save his people from their sins you see to Judah back then to anyone today whatever we have done as we turn to Jesus Christ in humble faith I am not righteous Lord Jesus have mercy on me this promise of salvation becomes ours for growing up

Jesus Christ he is unashamed to call people like us his brothers and sisters and the Lord Jesus Christ endures the darkness that we deserve and tastes the death we deserve so that people like us people like Judah sinful though we have been might enjoy forgiveness and life in his family forever do you know what we live in a society where there is so little forgiveness and so little grace and once you're out and you've sinned in 21st century Britain you're gone it's done and it makes life so hard and so fragile Philip Schofield may have no future in the ITV family but if you were listening we'd say Philip there is a place for you in God's family if you turn away from your sins if you say I am not righteous and I need the

Lord Jesus Christ there is a place for you in this family and as there is for Philip Schofield so there is for you and for me and for every single person we know and that is because the church is not a place of magic and warmth warmth it's not a place of magic and warmth for the pure who have not yet been caught we are a bunch of Judas and we're a bunch of Judas who've discovered a saviour who loves us let me lead us in a prayer and then we're going to sing together Almighty God and Father thank you that our Lord is named Jesus because he will save his people from their sins and we see the actions of Judah the cruelty the abuse of power and it's wrong and wicked and there is in us

Father not exactly the same things but we too have sinned and fallen short of your glory and in you Father from your Son there is salvation and grace and mercy and there is a way back thank you that's true for us thank you that this offer of salvation from sin and a place in your family is open to all people everywhere whatever they have done thank you that through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ even a Judah and even us might be named in your family forever we thank you in Jesus name Amen who who