

THE BEAUTY OF HIS CREATION

The

*My Father
Lily*

TAMAR

Tamar

facts from the Bible



Genesis 38

- Tamar is the daughter-in-law of Judah
- She marries his two eldest son's, but they both die before giving her a child.
- Both men are wicked in the sight of the Lord.
- Judah blames Tamar for their death's and refuses to give her his third son to marry (which, according to the Levirate marriage custom he must do.
- Tamar is sent back to her father's house.
- Shamed and unable to marry another, Tamar comes up with a plan to secure her future in Judah's household.
- She dresses as a prostitute, vailing her face. And sleeps with Judah and becomes pregnant.
- Judah is going to have her put to death for prostitution, until she proves he is the father to her unborn child.
- Judah see's his mistake and accepts her.
- She gives birth to twins in Judah's household.
- One of the twins, Perez, will be the founder of Judah's Kings, including King David and the Messiah.

Surey the Lord is Compassion

BY SHELLY HENDERSON



The world fell silent as she passed through the dusty streets. Whispers echoed from alleyways as the town began to condemn her; this was Tamar, and she was alone. Now Tamar hadn't always been alone; in fact, twice she had hoped to make a family for herself and twice that hope was taken away. She looked at her feet as she shuffled down the stone streets; she could feel the reproof from onlookers as they hurried to the other side of the alley. They treated her like a leper although the only plague she had was a poor choice in husbands. She had already outlived two of them and now she was pregnant by a third man whose name she kept only to herself. This is her story.

The world turned beneath me and I felt the hot wind of morning caress my face. The door to the tent floated on the wind gusts as I fixed my dress around me. The day dawned clear and dry in Canaan as I made preparations for my journey into town; the day would not be easy, but it had to be faced. I walked through the market vendors to purchase the days food, I had been living at my parents estate after I was widowed for the second time and running the house had become second nature to me. Today felt different however, the stares from both venders and onlookers told me they knew of my condition; this might be my last visit to the market for a while.

I thought back to where this had all started. It was a market day similar to this, and I had come into town with my father. I had just moved home following the death of my second husband, and the promise from my father-in-law Judah that when Shelah was older, I would once again be a wife and have the protection of a home. In my culture it was the responsibility of the brother-in-law to provide for his late-brother's wife by marrying her and hopefully giving her a son. That son would be her protection from the world and her provider in her old age. As I had made a poor choice in my first husband (I had married a man who strayed from the Lord's law), I had ended up as a bride to his brother who suffered the same fate (both men were struck down by the Lord for their wickedness). In my father-in-law's eyes, I was the common factor in both deaths; so while I waited for another marriage, my father-in-law hoped to find another way to handle me. It was through this turn of events that I ended up back in my father's house and without hope of another marriage outside of Judah's family.

As we strolled through the market that day, my father suddenly collapsed from the heat, and I was hit with the reality of my situation. Back at home I asked my father what sort of hope I had, if he were to pass away. His face grew solemn and his eyes fell to the floor.

"If you don't marry before my passing, I have nothing to leave you." His voice grew thick with worry, "All of this belongs to your cousin and, as you've been married before, he won't have you. He's already warned me that your life would be one of the streets." These last words came out in a whisper as he clutched my hand.

"Don't worry about me father," I tried my most convincing smile, "I'll find a way." I kissed the back of his hand and left him to rest. I knew what I had to do, I had to find Judah.

The time for sheering sheep was just a few days away, and I knew where Judah would be; what I didn't know was how I was ever going to convince him to give me another son. He was wary of me, and I knew whatever I did, it needed to be soon. I looked out over the hill surrounding our home and thought of Judah. I knew his wife had passed away some time ago, and that all he had left were his sons. Sons. If only I had one son I wouldn't be in this situation. Slowly a light dawned on me, I didn't need a marriage to one of Judah's sons if he could give me one of my own. It wasn't a righteous decision by any means; it was a desperate act, but one that I couldn't see a way around.

Now here I am. Back in the market, but instead of my father fainting and causing a commotions; it's my pregnant figure that is drawing remarks. It won't be long until the word reaches Judah, now all I can do is wait and pray the Lord will let me keep this child.

When I first discovered him, I was filled with joy, and then suddenly I was filled with fear. I knew that tricking Judah into fathering him was deceit. I knew the Lord hated deceit, but surely the Lord knew what my life was. Surely He recognized that without this child I was destitute. I sank to my knees and clutched at my robe, "Please Lord, don't take him away from me. Please." My body shook as I wept, "You've taken so much from me already, please don't take him too." My voice was a hoarse whisper and tears slid down my face. As I sat trembling on my knees I heard a voice behind me.

"Oh child, what has happened?" Gentle hands wrapped around my shoulders as my mother sank to the floor beside me.

"Mother... I..." The words deserted me and as my hand slid to the new life. I felt my mother's hand atop mine.

“I know my love.” Her other hand gently stroked my hair as I raised my eyes to face her.

“But how? I just found out.” My voice was still a whisper, and fear clung to my throat.

“I know things, my daughter, and I have lived many years. But why are you weeping? Isn’t this what you waited so many years for?” I nodded through my tears, and she continued on, “I know this isn’t how you would have wanted it, but now you will have love. A love that does not fade with the years.” She took my hand in hers and gently stroked the back of my thumb. “You know why the Lord gives children to women?”

I looked up through blurry eyes and shook my head no. “He gives us children to teach us how He loves us. Men have their temples, and their readings and gatherings. We women—We have our homes and our children. Through their gentle laughter and curious eyes we learn to see the world again. And we learn to love people as the Lord loves us. We learn to correct our children for their own good, but we also learn to understand who they are and why they act as they do.” Her voice grew quieter as she held my face and looked into my eyes. “The Lord knows your heart Tamar. He will not judge you unfairly. He has seen your tears and He knows your trials. The Lord will have mercy on you because you are His long-awaited child. The love you have for this new life is nothing compared to the love the Lord has for you.”

I crumbled into my mother’s arms, and she held me to her chest. Whatever the outcome, I knew the Lord would love this child as He continued to love me.

A few days after the market there was a knock on the door. Judah’s messenger stood before me, and he filled the air with accusations. I stood motionless as the tears

gathered in my eyes, but none fell, I had waited for this. Judah was accusing me of prostitution and wanted me executed for my crimes. I waited for the messenger to finish.

“Give these to Judah and tell him the man who owns these is the father of my child.” The messenger’s eyes widened as he recognized Judah’s staff and seal; things that had been left with me the night I had deceived Judah. The messenger took them and slunk off into the alley, only to return a few short hours later; this time Judah was with him.

He looked tired and worn from the hasty journey but a certain peace was in his eyes. He slid from his saddle and, handing the reins to the messenger, he cautiously approached the doorway. I turned to my mother who retreated into the house, leaving us alone for a moment.

“Forgive me Tamar.” His voice was quiet but sincere as he approached. I nodded slowly, and he held out his hand toward me, his signet ring resting in his palm.

“Forgive me for driving you to such lengths. This ring is yours.” His eyes fell to his hand as I took the ring.

“You are more righteous than I, but today, today I ask you to be my wife and to raise this child with me. You will want for nothing, and you will have a home to the end of your days.” He lifted his eyes to mine for the first time since his approach; worry and reassurance mixed in his gaze.

I looked at the ring in my hands and slid it onto my finger. “I accept your proposition on one condition.” I paused, and he reached forward and grasped my hands.

“Whatever it is, I will agree.” His eyes searched mine, puzzled, but anticipating.

“We must always remember the Lord for this child. He must be their salvation, and His love must be their life.”

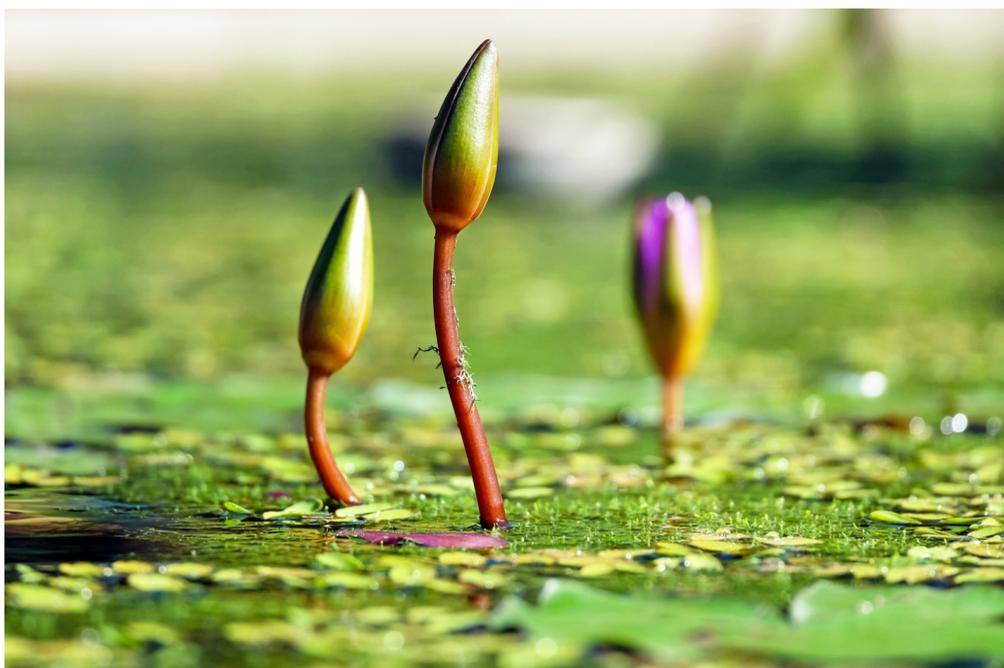
Judah nodded, “Of course, the law of the Lord is the center of our practice.” A slight laugh escaped as I shook my head.

“No, Judah. Not the law of the Lord as the center, but the love of the Lord.” Puzzlement played across his face once more. “The love of the Lord is what spared this child. It was the Lord’s compassion that provided me a home once more.” I gripped his hands once more, “The compassion of the Lord is what I wish for our child, for our life.”

I released his hands and stood waiting for his response. He nodded slowly and stepped closer to the doorway which was my refuge.

“Compassion is something I have not often shown in my life,” he paused as if searching for the right words, “but, if you are willing, I hope I can learn it for the sake of this child, and you.”

I nodded my consent and stepped aside to let him pass into the house. We had several things to sort out, legally, but as I watched him pass inside I said a silent prayer to my Father. He had watched over me through so much and through His grace, I was gifted a new life.



Petals

THE FRAGILE BEAUTY OF THE SITUATION

LOVE

Of God

AWAKEN

your hearts desire

Now Water Lily

*it's our
Nature*

**Ready to become
transplanted?**

**P
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Plant

Petals



THE FRAGILE BEAUTY OF THE SITUATION

Study Portion of Tamar is by Paulie Rogers and Barbara Henderson

The Water Lily floats gracefully atop its aqua pool
Unveiling its center beauty to the morning rays.
Rooted deeply in the soil beneath,
It emerges strong and full of life
above the murky depths.

*"I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like
the lily; he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon;"*

Hosea 14:5

Tamar was given a pretty harsh start, married into a family of selfish ambition. The second brother was unwilling to give her a son to inherit the oldest brother's birthright. This put Tamar in a bad way without a home or family name.

But we do have a name and a home, a kingdom of inheritance!

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom."

Luke 12:32

Plant

Love

OF CHRIST THROUGH THE SITUATION



*"He gives the barren woman a home,
making her the joyous mother of children.*

Praise the LORD!

Psalm 113:9

Motherhood is a desire for many women
To give life to a precious little soul
Implanted in her heart by the creator Himself.
To love and cherish and grow in family
But when this aspiration is unfulfilled
a yearning, discontent,
sets one's heart on mission, to accomplish
the most precious gift God has given; life to another.

For Tamar, a child not only would fulfill her desire to be a
mother but would also give her security in home and family.
It meant that she would not be cast out and alone.

*"The Lord will keep you from all harm - he will watch over
your coming and going both now and forevermore."*

Psalm 121:7-8

Plant

Awaken



THE HEARTS DESIRE

Tamar saw an opportunity to improve her life, and she took it

Can you imagine going through with her plan to disguise herself and "offering" herself to Judah? That took courage! There are so many women in the Bible who showed extreme courage in the face of either danger or a difficult situation

Think of Deborah, Ruth, or Esther.

When you could use some courage, read the stories of these women in the Bible. Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you." Deuteronomy 31:6

Take Advantage of Opportunities. Sometimes we are called to wait, and sometimes, we are called to act.

That's called wisdom.

"Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding."

Proverbs 4: 6-7

Plant

Nature

OF WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST



Women can be a powerful influence and help to our spouses

Don't let the men in your life avoid or hide from their responsibilities. God calls us to be "ezers" (helpmeet) to our husbands. An "ezer" is more than a helper, she can be a rescuer, and on occasion, we need to rescue our men from themselves. We don't do this by nagging or usurping their place in the home but rather by encouraging them in their responsibility and authority.

As women of God, we need to help the men in our lives become the men God created them to be. Use wisdom and use prayer. Love them and be encouraging, helping them along in their responsibilities, as men who serve a just God.

"Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct."

1 Peter 3: 1-2

Plant Transplant

WITHIN

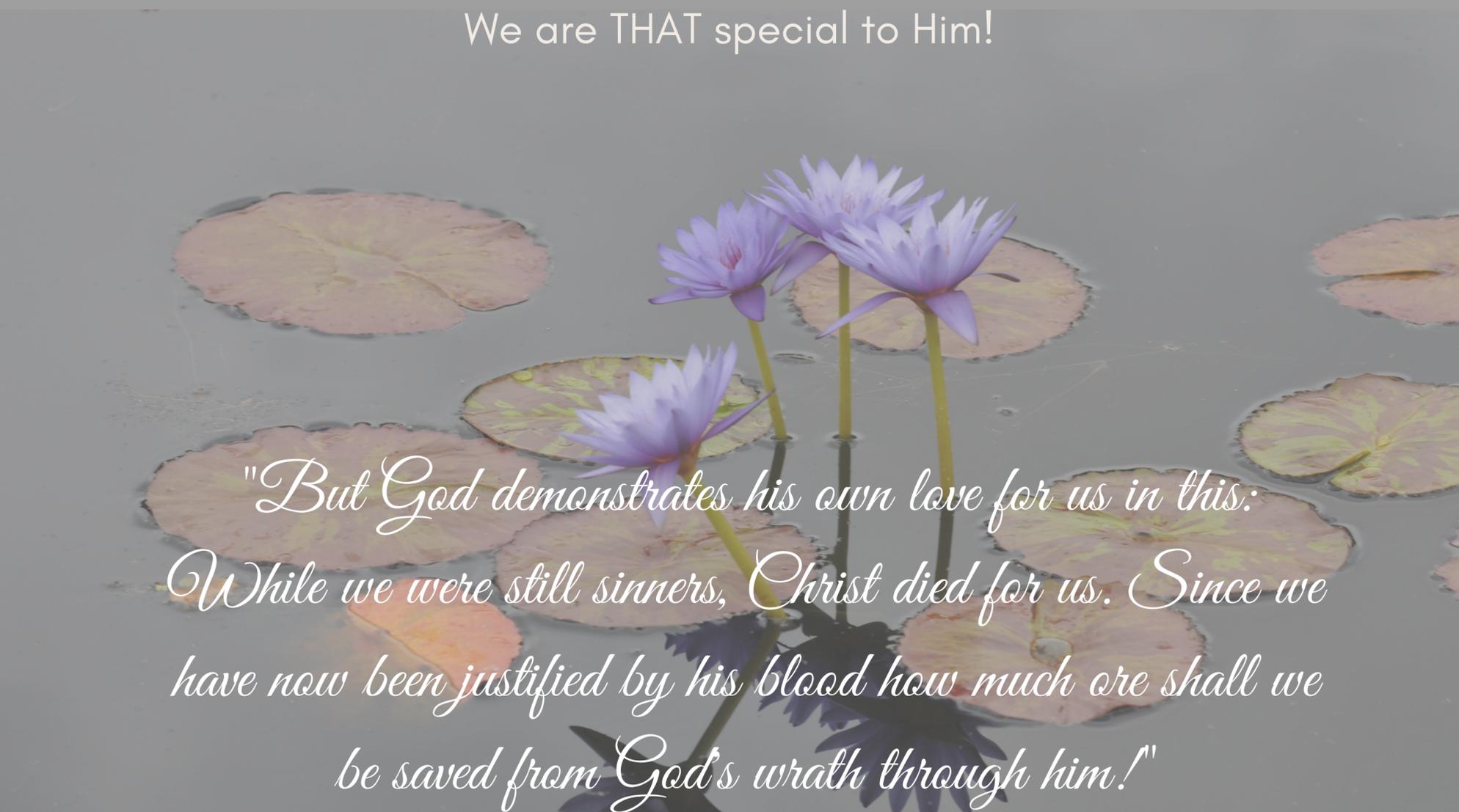


Don't hide the uncomfortable or ugly truth of life stories. The story of Tamar is somewhat shocking and a bit uncomfortable if we are being honest.

But it is in these uncomfortable situations we see reality for guidance and help in our own lives. It's in these examples and living we can grow the most in God. It's in these moments we witness who God is (perfect) through who we are (sinners)

I love that God chose Tamar to be lineage to King David and ultimately Jesus, our Lord and Savior, the Christ.

We are THAT special to Him!



"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!"

Romans 5:8

