



Welcome

SERIES: THE MATRIARCHS OF CHRISTMAS

Message: She Would Not Be Erased

Dr. Lance Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: O Lord, as we begin this season of Advent, we thank you for the remarkable faith and resilience of the women you chose to include in the lineage of your Son, Jesus Christ. We honor the tenacity of Tamar, the courage of Rahab, the loyalty of Ruth, the wisdom of Bathsheba, and the “yes” of Mary, all who navigated complex circumstances to play their part in your divine plan. May we draw strength from their stories of courage and perseverance as we await the arrival of the promised King. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

ICEBREAKER: Who is a woman in your life currently or in the past who has been a model for you to follow?

INTRODUCTION: Ancient people were much more aware of the importance of family history than modern westerners. In the ancient Jewish world, genealogies were very important because it was a way of saying “this is us.” These ancient genealogies were not exhaustive because the purpose was not simply to state facts about their past. The purpose was to tell the story of a family and of a tribe or nation. Therefore, genealogies usually listed the ancestors who were most worth remembering.

In the ancient world in general, and ancient Jewish world in particular, men were regarded as inherently more important than women. You don’t typically find women in ancient genealogies yet, we do find them in Matthew’s genealogy. Tamar is a classic example of a woman trampled by a corrupt system in a culture shaped by misogyny. She is also a heroine who uses her creativity and resilience to seize justice on the other side of the game.

BIBLE STUDY: Read Matthew 1:1-3, 16 (NIV): An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, 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 Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **What was your biggest takeaway from the message?** What’s one thing you learned? What questions came to mind as you listened to the message? What points did you find most insightful?
2. Tamar's pivotal action in scripture (Genesis 38) is dressing as a veiled prostitute to compel Judah (her father-in-law) to fulfill his obligation, leading to her pregnancy. She takes a significant risk to secure her future and lineage. What does Tamar’s decision to adopt a deceptive disguise reveal about the limits of agency for women operating within a patriarchal

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system? How do these ancient pressures to be both virtuous and strategic resonate with the ways contemporary African American women must navigate expectations about their appearance, respectability, and sexuality in professional, social, or public spaces to achieve their goals?

3. Judah initially condemns Tamar to be burned for perceived promiscuity, only to declare, "She is more righteous than I" once he realizes she acted to uphold the familial obligation he had neglected. Discuss the concept of justice in this story. When African Americans are failed by formal institutions or systems (like the broken promise of a *levirate marriage* in the text), what unique pressures exist for us to seek alternative or extra-legal paths to secure our rights, economic stability, or the future of our families? How does the community often judge women who take these assertive actions versus men who shirk their responsibilities?
4. Tamar's actions ensured that the lineage of Judah, which would eventually lead to King David and, according to tradition, Jesus, continued. She inserted herself into sacred history despite her vulnerable status. African American women have often been the silent, foundational figures who have preserved family structures, economic stability, and cultural heritage across generations, often receiving little credit. How does Tamar's successful, determined effort to secure her place in the family narrative parallel the essential, yet often overlooked, role of Black women in preserving lineage and legacy in the diaspora, often against tremendous social and historical odds?

CHALLENGE: What do you sense the Spirit speaking to you through this sermon and/or discussion? What is God calling you to do in response?

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Church wide and campus specific announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also "find, follow and like" our Facebook page at facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications.

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g. answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

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We Care!

NOTICE: As a small group leader, we depend on you to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472

EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000

EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR:

CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial By Name Directory

EMAIL:

- Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams: Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org
- SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org
- Dreamchasers (20-29): Juan Shackelford: juan.shackelford@myspbc.org
- Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr.: lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org
- Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend: michelle.townsend@myspbc.org
- Encore (50-59): Lisa Johnson: lisa.johnson@myspbc.org.
- Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman: maceo.freeman@myspbc.org
- Refiners (70+): Roscoe Jones: roscoe.jones@myspbc.org

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Small Group Leader Guide

Would you like to START or JOIN a Small Group at Saint Paul's?

Most existing groups are open to new group members, and new groups begin on a regular basis. If you have friends in a small group, ask about joining their group. If you are new to Saint Paul's and are looking for a place to connect, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to help you find the right group.

Leader Tips:

The GPS document is a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you must use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through while others will be over in a few seconds!

1. Don't teach the lesson. The lesson was taught on the weekend. Just ask questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our small groups. So, have fun with the people in your group.

Agenda for a Small Group Gathering

Gathering Time

Take 5-10 minutes to welcome everyone, catch up and if planned, share some food!

Discussion Time

Here's a suggested format:

1. **Ice Breaker** – Lighthearted icebreaker question (5-10 min.)
2. **Discussion** - Discussion time, Bible study, application challenge (30-40 min.)
3. **Prayer** – Prayer requests and praying for one another (10-20 min.)
4. **Planning** – Remind the group of how we serve together (e.g. usher, sing, greet, pray, etc.)