

# Sermon Discussion Questions

**Speaker:** Dr. Stephen Burrell

**Topic:** Genesis

**Scripture:** Gen 38:1-30

## Opening:

Begin with prayer, seeking to see God's grace clearly in this story and trusting Him to work in and through even the messiest parts of our lives.

## Give Background & Context:

Genesis 38 interrupts the story of Joseph, but it's not random—it shows how Judah, one of Joseph's betrayers, also faces personal failure. Tamar is wronged, but God uses her courage to continue His covenant line. The story is messy, but so is grace—and Perez, Tamar's son, becomes part of the line that leads to Jesus (Matthew 1:3).

- Read Genesis 38:1–11
  - Judah leaves his family, marries a Canaanite, and starts to drift spiritually.
    - What does this reveal about his heart?
    - Where do we see similar spiritual compromise today, especially when believers blend in with the world?
  - Judah's sons are wicked, and Tamar is left dishonored and forgotten.
    - What responsibility did Judah have for Tamar, and how did he fail her?
    - Where have you seen leadership or community fail to protect the vulnerable?
  - Despite the sin and dysfunction, God is still present and working in this story.
    - What does this show about God's patience and faithfulness to His covenant people?
    - How does that encourage you personally?
- Read Genesis 38:12–23
  - Tamar takes a risky and bold step to expose injustice.
    - Do you see her actions as wrong, brave, or both? Why?
    - What do her choices reveal about the desperation and powerlessness she faced?
- Judah is quick to sleep with a “prostitute” and then just as quick to condemn Tamar.
  - What does this reveal about self-righteousness and hypocrisy?
  - Why are religious people sometimes the harshest judges of others' sins? (See Matthew 7:3–5.)
- The sermon noted, “Self-righteous people are cruel, and self-righteous Christians are the cruelest.”