

Scandalous Names In The Messiah's Family

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Preacher: Bill Story

[0 : 00] So have you ever been surprised by what you've read?

You know, you read something and you kind of go, did they intend to write it that way? Did they ever edit or review? Especially when it comes in actual headlines of newspapers, you know, that have editors and reviewers and you see some of the things that are written in the headline, not just in the little print, but the big, bold type.

You wonder, did they mean to say that? It's a bit surprising. So let me give you a few headlines, actual headlines from real newspapers.

Worker suffers leg pain after crane drops 800-pound ball on his head. That's just odd. Here's another one.

Homicide victims rarely talk to police. I mean, rarely. So when do they, I wonder? Barbershop singers bring joy to school for the death.

[1 : 18] Okay. Miracle cure kills fifth patient. It's quite a cure. Bridges help people cross rivers. That's a stunner.

That's news. City unsure why the sewer smells. I haven't figured it out. These are actual headlines. 17 remain dead in morgue shooting spree.

They're in the morgue, and they're still dead. This is a good health one. We're in health things. Starvation can lead to health hazards.

Just in case you didn't know. Man accused of killing lawyer receives a new lawyer. Wouldn't want to be that guy. This is kind of relevant to today.

Parents keep kids home to protest school closure. That'll show them. Hospitals resort to hiring doctors.

[2 : 23] I mean, what were they doing before that? Federal agents raid gun shop. Find weapons.

Shocking. Total lunar eclipse will be broadcast live on Northwood's public radio. You can listen to the whole thing.

Diana, Princess Diana, was still alive hours before she died. They're just finding that out. Meeting on open meetings is closed.

Statistics show that teen pregnancy drops off significantly after age 25. Now there's some education. Who's looking at these headlines?

Who's reviewing this? New sick policy requires two-day notice. And bugs flying around with wings are flying bugs. Just to clarify.

[3 : 30] So, you know, this is silly, I know. Silly, funny, odd. Our world. Our world. You know, once we come across those things, you kind of go, did they intend to say it that way?

Did they know what they're doing? Were they paying attention? So it's surprising to see it. Well, the book of Ruth has some surprising revelations, too.

In the form of names. Scandalous names. Names like Moab. Tamar. Judah. David.

David is a scandalous name. Why scandalous? Because these are notorious sinners. Who are included.

- Careful, Bill. Who are included in Jesus' family tree. These names have a history of incest.
- [4 : 37] Treachery. Prostitution. Adultery. Skeletons in the closet. Which are revealed.
- These are in the lines of the most holy and righteous Messiah. Jesus. So here at the end of Ruth, we have a list of names.
- Some of them are shocking. And the Bible does not attempt to hide these names. In fact, the Bible intends to show these names for a reason.
- You read them and you go, oh, did somebody review that? Did somebody, you know, when whoever wrote this down, did somebody check that? Did he really mean to put that name in there? The elders of Jerusalem, or excuse me, the elders of Bethlehem, when they sang that blessing, be like Tamar.
- Did they know what they're, did they remember who Tamar was? And even if they said it, did the author forget who she was when he included it in this?
- [5 : 53] So, there's a reason. It's intended. Now we've seen this story of Ruth is a story really about Naomi.
- Naomi's the one who goes from bitterness to blessing. It's a story of restoration. She, in act one, chapter one, we discover her ruin.
- As quickly in the first five verses, we're told of famine in the land and forced relocation to a foreign place. There she suffers the loss of her husband.
- Then she suffers the loss of her two sons. And now she is bereft of a husband and sons and grandchildren. And she comes back to Bethlehem and says, the hand of Yahweh has gone out against me.
- She's a believer in Yahweh, but it is Yahweh who has caused this. He took me out full. He brought me back empty. He has dealt bitterly with me.
- [6 : 56] He is against me. I am empty. This is what she's convinced of. She's a believer, but she's an angry believer. She takes God seriously.
- God is behind all of this. He's the almighty. Not the some mighty. He's the almighty. Then we come to act two.
- Meanwhile, while Naomi is in her pain and in her depression and wrapped up and can't see any good, that's just how it is, Ruth takes the initiative as they get back to Bethlehem to go out and glean.
- She says, perhaps I'll find favor. I'll find grace in some field. And the writer tells us that she just happened, by chance, stars are aligned, lucky stars.
- She just happens to come to the field of Boaz. Didn't intend to, didn't know, just happened to come to the field of Boaz. And so humility meets grace. And as she's there, she's humble.
- [7 : 59] She can't believe how he has been so gracious to her and treated her so kindly. In fact, he over, you know, he's like pull out extra stuff for her. She's that woman that came with Naomi.
- She's a remarkable woman. Let us help her. And when she comes and falls before Boaz saying, why me?
- I'm a nobody. Why would you? And he says, I know who you are. I've heard what you've done, how you left everything for Naomi. And then he interprets what she really did.
- He says, yeah, you love Naomi, but you're really, what you're really doing is seeking refuge under the wings of Yahweh. That's what you're really doing. Yeah, you love that mother-in-law, but you've come to serve a new God.

You've converted. You've left everything. You've left your people. You've left your gods. You've come to Naomi's God. And even though Naomi's God has caused Naomi pain, you still want that God.

[9 : 04] Because he's all mighty. And he does keep his promises. And she has heard the stories over 10 years of how God conquered Egypt, Canaanites, place after place.

This is a God she wants, even if there's suffering involved. Then we come to the third act. And when she comes home with a bag full of grain and barley, 30 pounds worth, Naomi, who had three words in the morning, okay, go ahead, dear, turns all of a sudden to 67 words when Ruth comes home.

She wakes up. Now she can see what she couldn't see before. There is kindness in God. God hasn't forgotten. God has given.

There's still loving kindness. And she hears the name Boaz. Boaz totally forgot. He's one of our kinsmen. She begins to see God is working behind the scenes.

And all of this darkness and all of this ruin that she experiences, all the loss she experiences, she can't see beyond herself. And then God through Ruth shows grace and goodness.

[10 : 25] And Naomi begins to see again. So in chapter three, act three, Naomi starts to take initiative again. And now that she's kind of out of her bubble where she can only think of herself, having seen the kindness of God, now she begins to think of others.

And her first thought is Ruth. Ruth, we need to get you secure. How can I? I'm your mother-in-law.

I need to take care of you. Here's what we're going to do. And she makes a daring plan. Boaz has been so kind. Boaz is this wonderful person.

Boaz isn't married. And Boaz can be our redeemer. Give us security. And principally you, Ruth, give you security.

So let's make a plan. And it's a daring plan. It's even a shady plan. It's go down at midnight and uncover his feet and he'll know what to do.

[11 : 35] And Ruth does it. And he gets it. Nothing untoward happened. It was all with integrity. But he gets the message.

She proposes. And Boaz, true to form, as a gracious man that he is, is humbled by that, that she, a younger woman, would propose to him who's not a younger man apparently.

And he makes a promise. He says, yes, I am one of your redeemers. And as Yahweh lives, I will redeem you. He promises. He makes a pledge. And he will take care of it by morning, which sets up the stage for Act 4.

Now Boaz doesn't even go home, comes back from the field after that night and comes right to the gate of the city and takes care of business. There is a closer redeemer.

He talks to the closer redeemer. He seems to word it favorably for himself. There's land to sell. You want the land? Yeah, I want the land. Oh, by the way, Ruth comes with it.

[12 : 47] I can't do it. Then I'll do it. So he pledges to do it. He redeems Ruth and thereby Naomi and their family line.

And the women, after the new son is born, interesting, they do not reflect on Ruth, they reflect on Naomi. The women of the city who when Naomi came back in Act 1 and said, don't call me Naomi, call me Marah, call me bitter, God has made my life bitter.

The same women now at the end of the story interpret what's going on. And they say to her with this baby now on her lap, God, Yahweh has not left you.

Yahweh has not abandoned you. Yahweh has not forgotten you. Yahweh has not brought you back empty. He's brought you back with Ruth who's worth more than seven of your sons.

So that's a good deal. You lose two, you get seven. Still lost. Understand. But what God gave in return. Incredible person.

[14:04] And now a son. A son's been born to Naomi. Wait a minute. No, a son was born to Ruth. They're mixed up. What are they talking about? They're not being legal.

They're being personal. No, God has put this baby back in her lap. She becomes the nurse. She becomes the amen. She becomes the foundation.

The yes, sir. The trust and the belief. She becomes a believer again in God's grace.

And so that is the story. From ruin to restoration. From bitterness to blessing. How does God bring us out of bitterness? And I love this story because I've been in that Naomi place.

I've been in the bitter place. And this story, after 12 years of depression, was one of the things that helped me see what I needed to see.

[15:07] Because I'm all wrapped up, right? And you're in depression. You're all, I can't see anything. I'm just swirling down into pain and frustration and despair.

And I can't see any good. And this story helps me see, has God brought a Ruth kind of person into my life? Has God shown up just in time for something that just happened to happen?

And, you know, to begin to see, oh, he is still in my life. He hasn't abandoned me. He begins to help you take a step out toward restoration.

So the end of Ruth, we see it's a story of restoration, but it also includes a shocking revelation. There's scandal in the Savior's family tree.

Scandalous names in Jesus' family tree reveal a stunning historical significance. There's a past significance that are linked with Ruth, where there are names that are linked with Ruth by the elders.

[16:19] And then there's another significance where the women speak, and then the timeline is, or the genealogy is given, where we see another significance after the time of Ruth.

And in all of it, both include some names that are scandalous, some names that are just shocking. Did they mean to reveal these skeletons in the closet?

And so I want to look at those two things. First, we see in verses 10 to 12, the first significance, which is a bit of an irony. Because we're talking about Jesus' family tree, we're talking about the Savior's family tree, the one who would be the Savior.

So in his family tree, the Savior's family line is saved by sinners. Here's the irony.

The one who came to save sinners before he came was first saved in his line by sinners. And not just any sinners.

[17:30] Sinners. Sinners. Scandalous. So it's skinner. Scandal. I got it. Yeah. Like I intended it, right? It wasn't an unedited headline.

Sin. Scandal. I still can't say it. So we got three names here. 10 in verse 10, 11 and 12. Verse 10. A Moabite. Explain that in a minute.

Verse 11. Rachel and Leah, which brings the name Jacob into the picture. And then verse 12, the name Tamar.

Three scandalous names connected to Ruth. So first of all, Ruth's family. Verse 10, she's called Ruth the Moabite. And by the way, she's titled that seven times in this book.

It's like the author doesn't want you to forget that aspect. She's a Moabite. She's a Moabite. She's a Moabite. She's a Moabite. She's a Moabite. What's a Moabite? Well, Ruth's family tree began with incest.

[18 : 41] Go back to the story in Genesis 19 where Sodom and Gomorrah is destroyed. And remember the righteous man that lived in Sodom and Gomorrah? I don't know why he lived there, but he lived there.

Tormented, the New Testament tells us. His name was Lot. He was the nephew of the great Abraham. Remember, they were too big and they split up and so Lot went to choose the good land, the really fertile land, the really beautiful valley at that time, green, Sodom.

So remember when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah? You know, the angel came and rescued Lot and his family. And remember, the wife didn't make it.

Right? Remember? Flee. Don't turn around. Don't look. Lot's wife turned and looked, became the salt pillar. And you still see images of salt pillars in that area at the Dead Sea, by the way.

None have been identified to be Lot's wife, but... So Lot is saved with his two daughters. So they're living somewhere. They're kind of on their own.

[19 : 53] Their life's been disrupted and destroyed. And as far as the daughters are concerned, there's no one to marry. As if in Sodom and Gomorrah, they had lots of choices, by the way.

So the older sister, daughter, makes a plan. Let's get daddy drunk. And then we'll get pregnant. Which is what they did.

And the older daughters, after she became pregnant and conceived, she named her son Moab. Mo from Ab father.

From daddy. So the name is scandalous. And here's the thing. God uses a Moabite.

One with a scandalous beginning. Not her fault, but still has that reputation. She's a Moabite. She's tainted. God uses a Moabite to save the line of the Messiah because without Ruth, there would have been an end to the line.

[21 : 06] Elimelech had two sons. The sons are gone. No children. That's it. No Ruth. No Obed.

No Jesse. No David. No David. So on. So second name. We see in verse 11. They want to bless this woman.

They want to bless Ruth. We are witnesses, they say, and may the Lord make this woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah. Which, interesting, they reverse the order because it's Leah and Rachel.

Leah is the first wife and then Rachel. But they put it the other way because that's the way Jacob wanted it was Rachel and Leah. Well, he didn't want Leah but wanted Rachel who together built up the house of Israel.

In other words, they're the matriarchs. But the scandalous name isn't Rachel and Leah. The scandalous name is Jacob. Jacob.

[22 : 07] Remember who Jacob was? You got Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. When Jacob was born, right, the brother was coming out. The other brother was coming out and Jacob's holding on to the heel coming out.

He was a fighter from the beginning. He's a heel grabber. He's a deceiver. He's a trickster. He's a liar. He's a selfish, one person thinking kind of guy. And he proves to be that way until God proves his faithfulness to Jacob.

After 20 years of suffering, he comes back to the land, meets a man in the middle of the night. He wrestles him, right? He attains a new name.

He's no longer Jacob. He's called Yisrael, which means wrestler with God. Because he wrestled all night with a man who in the morning said, okay, enough, touch the hip, we're done.

Broken. Jacob gets broken. That's when he becomes a believer. That's when he becomes, right? So all those years before, he's not.

[23 : 12] He's for himself. He kind of said to God before he left the land, hey, if you prove faithful, and if you do all this, then I will tithe, then I will commit to you.

You got to prove yourself first. He made a bargain with God. God proved himself. He came back. Had the little wrestling match. Hey, remember what we said? Calling you on it.

Yes, Lord. Okay, that's Jacob. Not a real righteous man the first part of his life. Okay? Kind of surprising this is going to be the forefather of the nation.

This is going to be the father of the 12 tribes. Jacob. Israel gets his name changed. Israel. Wrestler with God. That's a fitting name for the nation.

Wrestler with God. So we see back in Genesis 29, we see the story. It would be a little quicker for me just to read the story here.

[24 : 09] I can find it. I hadn't marked it. There we go. So, Jacob goes and here's how he finds Rachel and wants to marry Rachel.

He goes to his father-in-law in a land far away, comes to Laban. Laban said to Jacob, because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall be your wages? What do you want?

Now, Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak. We don't know what that means.

Somehow, weak. Unfavorable. But Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. Jacob loved Rachel.

Jacob loved Rachel and he said, I will serve you seven years for your daughter, your younger daughter, Rachel. Laban said, it's better that I give her to you than I should give her to any other man.

[25 : 12] Stay with me. So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love that he had for her. Real romance going on here. Then Jacob said to Laban, give me my wife that I may go into her for my time has been completed.

So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob in the middle of the night when he and he went into her.

Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant. And in the morning behold it was Leah not Rachel.

And Jacob said to Laban what is this you have done to me? Did I not serve you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me? The deceiver gets deceived.

He reaps what he sowed. Comes back to Ram. Why then have you deceived me? Laban said it is not done in our country to give the younger before the firstborn.

[26 : 15] Didn't say that earlier just so you know. Kind of holding that back. Got to get Leah married first. How can I do that? Well it'll be late.

He'll be a little tipsy. Too late then. So complete the week for this one and we will give you the other in return for serving another seven years.

Jacob did so completed the week seven more years. Laban gave to him his daughter Rachel to be his why? Here are Rachel and Leah the matriarchs of the twelve tribes but what's fascinating about this is that Jacob is involved.

Jacob the deceiver who gets deceived and through all of that comes the twelve tribes and eventually David and eventually Christ.

God uses this treachery that goes on. Finally third name we have Tamar in verse 12. The Savior's family line was saved by scandalous sinners including an act of prostitution.

[27 : 26] In Genesis 38 Judah the fourth son of Jacob the son who would be the line of the Messiah Judah gives to his firstborn son Tamar.

The problem is his firstborn son Er was ra'ah evil and so God slew him.

Tamar was married now widow. So Judah turns to his second son. We have a law.

Actually this is before the law was written down but this is the law. You're a kinsman. You're a kinsman redeemer. Go be a redeemer for your brother who has died and raise up a name for him through Tamar.

Second son refuses to do so. So God slew him. One down. Two down. Go to son number three. He's still younger.

[28 : 34] Judah says to Tamar wait till he's old enough and I'll give him to you and he'll be your redeemer. Didn't happen.

Didn't happen. Tamar figures it out. The boy's grown. Wasn't given to her. She takes action into her own hands. And here's how it's described in Genesis 38 13.

When Tamar was told your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear the sheep. He's on a business trip. She took off her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil wrapping herself up and sat at the entrance to Anan which is on the road to Timnah.

For she saw that Shelah the third son was grown up and she had not been given to him in marriage. When Judah saw her he thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face.

He turned to her at the roadside and said come let me come into you for he did not know that she was in fact his daughter-in-law. She said what will you give me that you may come in to me?

[29 : 43] He answered I will send you a young goat from the flock. And she said if you give me a pledge until you send it. He said what pledge shall I give you?

She replied your signet ring, your cord and your staff that is in your hand. So he gave them to her and went into her and she conceived by him. Then she arose and went away and taking off her veil she put her other garments on of her widowhood.

A little trickery going on here. When Judah sent the young goat by his friend to Dulamite to take back the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her. He asked the men of the place, where is the cult prostitute who was at Aeneum at the roadside?

They said, cult prostitute? What cult prostitute? There's no cult prostitute here. So he returned to Judah and said, I've not found her. Also, the men of the place said, there's no cult prostitute had been there.

And Judah replied, let her keep the things as her own or we will be laughed at. You see, I sent the young goat and you did not find her. I tried. About three months later, Judah was told, Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has been immoral.

[30 : 58] Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality. And Judah said, bring her out, let her be burned. He's about to get a conscience strike.

Huh? as she was being brought out, fortunately she had thought ahead. She knew this man. She knew she could not only deceive him but tempt him.

She knew this man. As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, by the man to whom these belong, are the people.

I am pregnant. And she said, please identify whose these are, the signet ring and the cord and the staff. Judah identified them, mine.

She's more righteous than I. She's in the right. Not her means, but the outcome.

[32 : 12] since I did not give her to my son Sheila, and he did not know her again. When the time of her labor came, there were twins in her womb.

How many times do twins come in the and when she was in labor, one put out a hand. That sounds familiar. And the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, this one came out first.

But as he drew back his hand, behold, the brother came out. Sounds familiar? And she said, what a breach you have made for yourself.

Therefore, his name was called Breach or Perez. Afterward, his brother came out with the scarlet thread in his hand. His name was called Zerah.

Here we have another situation where there's a scandal. There's an act of prostitution. And yet, this Tamar, who is both right and wrong, is preserved and included in the line that saves the Savior's family tree.

[33 : 26] Without Tamar, there would be no Perez. Without Perez, there would eventually be no Boaz. No David.

like Ruth, Tamar comes in to save the line. But Ruth, of course, we know, acting somewhat similarly, but toward a different man.

And when she goes to the late night encounter, sleeps at his feet, he's a man of integrity. He knows what to do.

he keeps her integrity. He keeps both of their integrity intact. And then, before light, let's get you out of here. Let's protect your reputation unless somebody think something wrong happened.

different, but similar. You can't read Ruth without knowing the story of Tamar and knowing, oh, there's a lot of similarities there.

[34 : 28] But there's some key differences. Why does God do this? Why does he include this? Why wouldn't his line of Christ be spotless?

Why would he allow? Allow? No! Put! scandalous names in his line. Well, consider what God said to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob and to Judah over and over again renewing his promise to them that a Savior would come through their line.

He said to Abraham, I will surely bless you. I will surely multiply your offspring, your singular seed, as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea, and your offspring, shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your seed, singular, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

All the what? Nations. Another translation for that word? Gentiles. From the beginning, God intended to bless Gentiles through the Jewish.

Why? To Isaac, I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and give your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring, all the again, nations, all the Gentiles of the earth shall be blessed.

[35 : 52] Then to Jacob, your offspring shall be the dust of the earth. You shall spread abroad the west and the east and north and south and in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

to Judah next in line. The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler staff from between his feet.

Now we find out that it's the fourth son of Jacob, Judah, who becomes the line of the Messiah. The scepter, the ruler staff, the obedience to the people, that's through Judah.

Judah. We've already heard about Judah. Not a stand-up guy. Not a man of integrity. But as we read at the end of Genesis, the man redeems himself because he humbles himself before Joseph.

Remember, Joseph's kind of getting back at the brothers. Yeah, you're not getting Benjamin. You're not getting Benjamin. Dad's going to die. Jacob's going to die.

[37 : 02] You're not getting Benjamin. What does Judah do? Judah says, take me. Let me be the substitute for him.

So though Judah, yeah, though Judah has got a bad past, he makes a moment of true faith, true humility, true sacrifice, like the Savior that would be born from him many centuries later.

He acts selflessly as a substitute see, even scandalous guys can turn around.

Yeah. Even ones with really bad pasts, when they're humbled before the Lord, can be transformed.

Not perfect, but transformed. Then God makes the promise to David, it's to you. I will raise up your offspring after you, the one that shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom, and he shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

[38 : 10] So who's that offspring that comes from your body, and who's the wife through whom that will come? Yeah, turn the page. The point is that the Savior's family tree is ironically saved by sinners and Gentiles, and without them there would be no line of Jesus.

And God intended it that way. There's a second historical significance that comes in another set of names we see later in the book. We see this genealogy that is included at the end of the book, verses 18 through 22.

And so here's another surprise. Here's another significance. Not only does the Savior's family line get saved by scandalous sinners, but Jesus' lineage openly declares the inclusion of scandalous sinners.

Openly declares the inclusion of scandal! Skinners! Scandalous sinners.

Not just sinners, scandalous sinners. sinners. How do we know? Well, the clues are in Ruth, but the stamp is in Matthew 1, the first six verses.

[39 : 37] Matthew gives the lineage of Jesus, the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Matthew says, the son of David, the son of Abraham. He goes back to David, he goes back to Abraham.

Well, how did that work out? Well, here it is. Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah, and his brothers. Judah the father of Perez, and Zerah by Tamar.

By Tamar. And Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nashon, Nashon the father of Solomon, and Solomon the father of Boaz by Rahab.

Hmm, that wasn't in Ruth. By Rahab. Hmm, who's Rahab? And Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth. We knew that.

Obed, father of Jesse. Jesse the father of David the king. Yeah. Oh, there's more to the story. David was the father of Solomon by the one who shall not be named.

[40 : 47] We're not given her name, we're given her relationship. Solomon by the wife of Uriah.

Hmm, what's going on there? Or is one more name. There are names that are included in Matthew, obviously intentionally, openly declaring something.

And women's names are mentioned. Women's names that are attached to scandal. What is going on?

Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, wife of Uriah, and then Jacob the father, verse 16 in Matthew 1, Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ.

Notice how it changes, he doesn't say Jacob the father of Joseph, who is the father of Jesus, he doesn't say that. No, he's not the father of Jesus, he's the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ, the Messiah.

[42 : 03] So I want you to notice three more names that are connected with Ruth here, though they're not all mentioned in Ruth, but in verse 21, back in Ruth, we have, where'd Ruth go?

verse 21, we have the name Solomon, who fathered Boaz. And in Matthew, we're told that Solomon fathered Boaz by Rahab.

Who's Rahab? Her name comes up in Joshua chapter 2. Remember the Israelites going into the land?

And they come up to a city called Jericho. huge wall. How are we going to defeat this indefeatable place?

Well, the spies are sent in the land. The spies are sent to kind of look out the land. Who do they get to know? Who welcomes them and shows them hospitality and even hides them from the guards who are looking for them?

[43 : 10] Rahab, the city prostitute. Rahab, the prostitute. No wonder Boaz had no trouble taking in Ruth because his mother or his grandmother more likely was a prostitute.

Might have changed his view a little bit, don't you think? Toward folks who maybe have a reputation but can change. They can change.

They can be changed. Anyway, so we have the prostitute. She welcomed and helped the spies. She was saved by faith. She's transformed. Even in the book of Hebrews 11, she's mentioned by faith.

She had faith. She was converted and transformed and God included her in the list of the Messiah. Scandalous name.

There are some people that don't want her name in there. God does. Jesus is not ashamed of that. He's not ashamed of his sinful brothers, those who come to him.

[44 : 24] There's another one. There's a history of adultery. Just the mention of the name David. Verse 17 and verse 22. David. And we learn from 2 Samuel 11.

That David who was supposed to be out at war stayed home. And was what did he do? He had nothing to do.

And Bathsheba for whatever reason is bathing on the roof and he noticed her and he took her. He committed adultery with her then he covered it up with murder.

By having Uriah killed. Put him in the front of the line. By the way, Uriah was one of his 30 mighty men. That was a big loss. Uriah was dealt the team.

So to speak. And yet the child born of sin, his name was Solomon.

[45 : 41] Solomon. And these names are included in Jesus' line. There's one more name.

It's not in Ruth, it's in Matthew. It's the last name before Jesus in Matthew 1 in the genealogy. It's the name Mary. Mary, remember Mary?

Of course you do. We hear of her every Christmas. But remember, now we look at her favorably because she should be looked at favorably.

She was a bondservant of the Lord. She was humble. But remember the circumstances in which she became pregnant. A questionable pregnancy at best.

I don't know if that's at best. And notice how Matthew puts it. Jacob was the father of Joseph. Joseph, not the father of Jesus, but the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born.

[46 : 45] So he's putting that in there. Here's another scandal. Though we know the scriptures tell us that Mary was pregnant by means of the Holy Spirit, we know that.

That's the explanation. But how many people believe that? How many people did she explain it to? Oh, well, you know, no, there was no immorality. It was a miracle. Uh-huh.

No, it was a miracle. Really, what? Uh-huh. Even Joseph intended to divorce her, remember? Now, he was a righteous man, so he wasn't going to make her shame.

He was going to do it quietly. He was going to try to preserve what he could for her. But he had to have revealed in a dream that this was a child of the Holy Spirit, not immorality.

And yet, for their whole lives, that hung as a cloud over them. The suspicion, the rumors, we forget that. How many really believed? Yeah, virgin birth, right. Even today, how many really believe that?

[47 : 53] Yeah, virgin birth, right. So there's an appearance of immorality to the skeptics.

Jesus' family tree openly proclaims the inclusion of sinners, names included by Matthew, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, the wife of Uriah and Mary.

Why openly proclaim the Messiah's line involves scandalous names? Sinners? Gentiles? Might as well throw some Samaritans in there while you're at it.

Maybe some Californians and Coloradans. Sorry. Sorry. Does that step on? I said Californians first and that's where I Okay. Because nobody has trouble making fun of Californians.

Yeah. Talk about Sodom and Gomorrah. Okay. So why do that? Would this not tarnish his reputation?

[49 : 10] Doesn't it not make it look like there's skeletons in the closet or something? And yet the scriptures do not hide that. In fact, the scriptures make it known. Matthew's got it right there.

He didn't have to say by Tamar by Rahab. He put it in there for a reason. What kind of Messiah is this?

God obviously intended this. God planned it. God rescues the line of the Messiah through scandalous sinners. Why? Because this Messiah came for sinners.

He came for the outsiders. He came for the failures. He came for the disgraced. He came for those who had a life of shame. He came for those who lived under the darkness of scandal.

No matter what shape that takes. Here's why God did this. it does not matter what your background is. It does not matter how great your sin has been.

[50 : 21] It doesn't matter how deep your shame. It doesn't matter how dark your past. Jesus is a Savior of all sinners.

All. Every kind of rebel. Every transgressor. everyone even the ones who commit iniquity which in Hebrew means twisted perverted.

Oh no don't go that far. Yeah. Yeah. I mean we read some of those stories we blush a little bit.

It's kind of like one of the things I consider when I read those is do you read those in public? Yeah. They're in the scripture. It's there black and white.

No matter. And so we're going to sing next a song which I discovered. I didn't discover it. I found it.

[51 : 32] It was out there. I have no credit for that but I found it and when I first heard it it's like that resonates. That resonates because it speaks the words of the gospel.

It talks about come as you are. Come out of sadness from wherever you've been. Come broken hearted. Let the rescue begin. Come find your mercy oh sinner come kneel.

Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't heal. Lay down your burdens. Lay down your shame. all who are broken lift up your face.

Oh wanderer come home. You're not too far. So lay down your hurt. Lay down your heart. Come as you are.

There's hope for the hopeless and for all those who've strayed. Not some who've strayed. Come sit at the table.

[52 : 40] Come taste the grace. There's rest for the weary. Rest that endures. Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't cure.

There's only one unforgivable sin Jesus says and that sin is rejecting him forever. not rejecting him initially.

Rejecting him forever. So if there's on your heart the desire to turn to him you have not committed the unforgivable! No way!

Because all who call on him will be saved. All who humble themselves will be hurt.

so we pray and then we'll sing and we'll prepare for communion. Father we thank you for these words that you intended.

[53 : 44] We thank you that you put these names in there. These surprising shocking names part of us Lord who have been Christians for a while might begin to think we're okay because we've been cleaned up a bit and look down on others who come from another past.

Forgive us for that Lord. Who are we? Who are we? We thank you that you're a God who is not partial is just and yet merciful to all.

thank you Father that you would take a scandalous sinner like me and be merciful and gracious and include me in your family.

We thank you in Christ's name. Amen.