

CHRISTMAS: THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE OVER DISGRACE Matthew 1:1-16

Our message today is PG-13. So if you have little ones beside you, you may need to do some explaining during and after this message. Because today we are going to talk about four ladies of ill-repute. Women whom even today society would look down upon because of their situations. And it may surprise you that they are all in one sense, the “mothers” of Jesus. But that is Christmas – it is the triumph of God’s Grace over our disgrace. Sometimes that grace triumphs during your lifetime, sometimes long after. But it always triumphs!

Here are their stories:

1. TAMAR – THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE OVER FAMILY DYSFUNCTION (Genesis ch. 38).

- She represents those who come from dysfunctional families. Her situation was so desperate she had to victimize people through deception and deceit. But such situations are never an excuse for sin. They simply show that God can use people, good or not, to accomplish His purposes.
- Many Christians think that God’s purposes can only be achieved if we are faithful and obedient. What can they possibly say about this story then? And who of us would want to believe that God’s purposes were contingent upon our commitment and consistency? Nothing could be further from the truth than thinking that God is somehow limited by man’s sinfulness.
- God’s grace is greater than the disgrace of your family – come to Jesus for healing.

2. RAHAB – THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE OVER A SHAMEFUL PAST (Joshua ch. 2).

- She represents those who have made wrong choices, career-wise, morality-wise. And now the same people have nothing but shame about something they cannot change.
- Rahab is the only woman besides Sarah who’s chosen an example of faith in the great cloud of witnesses of Hebrews 11 (Heb.11:31). What a manifestation of grace to find a former prostitute ranked along with Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses and David!

Once we come to Christ, our pasts no longer matter. The slate is wiped clean for all who believe and accept the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross on our behalf.

- God’s grace is greater than the disgrace of a sinful past – turn to Jesus for forgiveness.

3. BATHSHEBA – THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE OVER THE SINS OF OTHERS (2 Sam. Ch. 11).

- She represents those who are victimized by the sins of others. While that doesn't give any excuse to stay in a bad situation or drown in self-pity, the grace of God would ensure that out of that dysfunctional family, and out of a deeply flawed man of God called David, the Messiah came.
- Do you know why Matthew leaves off the name "Bathsheba"? It is not a slight of Bathsheba—it is a slam of David.
- God's grace is greater than the failures of others – look to Jesus and Him alone for strength.

4. MARY – THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE OVER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES (Mat. Ch. 1)

- She represents those who suffer because of situations beyond their control. While we cannot survive life with a "victim" mentality, there are times when things can blindside us, even when we have done nothing wrong.
- Mary's strong steady faith would carry her through, as we see in her humble submission to the Angel's announcement (Luke 1:38; 1 Pet. 4:12-19).
- God's grace is greater than the hardest situations of our life – walk faithfully with Jesus.

Final Thoughts:

Christmas is all about the grace of God: the grace that made four women of ill-repute, be used by God during and after their lifetimes to lead to the greatest demonstration of grace in history (Phil. 2:6-8).

Let this very same grace be your assurance that once you belong to Christ, His sustaining grace will always be with you. It doesn't matter what people say, think, or even do against you. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" God's grace, is greater than the sum of all our disgrace!