



GENESIS

Grace from the Beginning

23/24 February 2019

Vol. 41, No. 8

A God Sovereign Over Our Shame

Genesis 38

English Services

(8 & 10:30 a.m., & 5:30 p.m.)

Prelude
Call to Worship
Worship through Praise
Worship through Fellowship
Pastoral Prayer
Scripture Reading
Worship in the Word
Pastor Larry Pabiona
Worship through Giving
Response Song
Benediction

Filipino Service

(3 n.h.)

Paghahanda
Tawag sa Pagsamba
Pagsamba sa Pag-aawitan
Pagkilala sa mga Bisita
Panalanging Pastoral
Pagbasa ng Salita ng Diyos
Pakikinig sa Salita ng Diyos
Pastor Dags Miguel
Pagsamba sa Pagbibigay
Tugon na Awit
Bendisyon

See inset inside for the **Traditional Service (Sat., 6 p.m.)** program.



A God Sovereign Over Our Shame

Today's Message (23/24 November 2019) /
Genesis 38

A HALLMARK OF
GOD'S PEOPLE IS
THE WILLINGNESS
TO HONOR
OBLIGATIONS AND
COMMITMENTS,
TO KEEP THEIR
WORD, EVEN IF IT
COSTS THEM.

This story is almost too embarrassing to preach or study. To some the narrative looks more like it belongs to HBO than the Bible. But Genesis chapters 37 to 50 isn't really the story of Joseph only, but the story of Jacob's family. It is also the story of God's messy, imperfect family called the church, which He deals with only by mercy and grace, yet never losing divine control (sovereignty).

So we'll see a whitewashed tomb quick on the draw to condemn another and an aggrieved but scheming "black widow." And all this shows a theme running through the saga of Jacob's family until chapter 50—God can make good come out of evil, according to His divine purposes. Even the worst in man can never derail the best from God. Look at how this happens in our rather sordid story:

1. A FAMILY ASTRAY: LIKE FATHER, LIKE SONS (vv. 1-11).

- Verses 1-5: Judah was on a downward path (*Psalms 1:1*), beginning with his departure from Jacob's community (probably the only one who did), his trip to Canaan, and his marriage to a Canaanite, something we have seen as consistently outside of God's will in Genesis. The lesson is clear: If you marry someone who doesn't share your faith, you may get what you want initially, but it will always have consequences. Only marry guided by God's principles. You will never regret it because you have God on your side.
- Verses 6-11: While society pokes fun at black widows and names spiders after them, the sons of Judah were astray like their dad, and their deaths were not Tamar's fault. Er and Onan were evil, and Onan shows how God regards people who value pleasure without responsibility (a popular motive today). And the fact remains that God will always judge the wicked.

Traditional Service

(February 23, Sat., 6:00 p.m.)

Prelude

Call To Worship

Worship Through Praise

Worship Through Fellowship

Worship Through Giving

Pastoral Prayer

Scripture Reading

Preparatory Hymn

Pastoral Prayer

Worship in the Word

Pastor Larry Pabiona

Response Hymn

Benediction



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Genesis 38

2. A WIDOW **AGGRIEVED**: THE DENIAL OF SHELAH AND THE DECEPTION OF TAMAR (vv. 12-23).

- Verses 12-14: Judah's failure to give Shelah was inexcusable not only because it was unfair to Tamar (widows then, were almost totally helpless), but because he knew God wanted descendants to come from Jacob. A hallmark of God's people is the willingness to honor obligations and commitments, to keep their word, even if it costs them (*Psalms 15:4*).
- Verses 15-23: Judah learns the hard way, a lesson I hope you never have to—sex outside marriage always reaps painful consequences. Always.

Tamar on the other hand almost dies as a consequence of her scheming. This tells us that deception as a means is never acceptable to God. Her Machiavellian scheme is not something we should emulate. The means matter as much to God as the end.

3. GOD'S MISSION **ACCOMPLISHED**: THE BIRTH OF PEREZ AND ZERAH (vv. 24-30).

- Verses 24-26: Like Judah, some can be particularly angry about the sins of others when unaware they are guilty of the same sin themselves. That's the reason for Jesus' words in Matthew 7:1-2: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you."
- Verses 27-30: The only advantage Tamar had over Judah was that it is implied that she was probably more conscious and observant of the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob compared to Judah, and wasn't just looking out for herself. And in the birth of her two innocent twins, the story ends with this note of hope: God's grace ensures that even the undeserving can become the means of fulfilling His sovereign purpose (*Matthew 1:3-16*).

FINAL THOUGHTS

This humbling experience broke Judah and changed the man who had sold his brother as a slave. Years later he would stand before Joseph, not recognizing him, and would sincerely beg to be a hostage in place of Benjamin (*Genesis 44:32-33*). Talk about a changed man!

Isn't it great? Quite often God is not done even with those who have done themselves in, or who may think that God is done with them because they have gone too far. Praise God for the hope His sovereign purposes gives every believer ■

The Shepherd's Voice

by Mina Tanchi, *guest writer*

They say that when you tell one woman, the village comes. And this describes the events in the history of GCF Women's Ministry.

The ministry started in 2007 through the challenge of our late Senior Pastor Luis Pantoja to empower women to grow as a group spiritually. Truly, when God calls, one's busyness can never be an excuse because restlessness sets on.

So, off we went, women empowered by the Holy Spirit to set our mission. A one-on-one mentoring group called "Apples of Gold" was launched which birthed many of our women servant leaders today. JOY, the largest and oldest fellowship, continued to grow. Then we launched CELEBRATE series which featured various speakers and topics close to women. The GCF Women's Ministry was born with a three-core team membership.

We knew that there is a divide among the old generation and the new, and God challenged us to close the gap. When a church women's ministry is mentioned offhand, the younger ones will say, "Isn't that for the older women, Tita?" We knew it shouldn't be. Thus, we formed a second layer core team of younger women. And what a great addition they were to the Core Team with their brilliant, creative ideas. Before we knew it, we were all having fun serving the Lord, joining hands.

This two-layer Core Team marked our activities as a transgenerational events, with attendees spanning from age 21 to age 81. We have mothers registering with their daughters, or simply registering by themselves at young age. God blessed us with linking the age gap.

The GCF Women's Ministry's mission is to "Make GCF women to be disciplined and be disciplers", while its vision is to see "Women whose transformed lives transform others."

We center on two annual major events—Mugs N' Muffins, an annual tea fellowship featuring personal, evangelistic testimonies of Christian celebrities, and 3R's Retreat where participants are able to learn how to grow spiritually and at the same time have fun fellowship.

Knowing also that women come from different backgrounds, we launched focus groups to address their specific spiritual needs. Thus were born: (1) NAOMI, a fellowship for widows, (2) SupaMoms, a fellowship for single mothers, (3) SHE, a fellowship for single women, and (4) JOY, a general fellowship of women from different backgrounds and ages. NAOMI, SupaMoms and SHE have quarterly fellowships bridging the spiritual with the fun, while JOY meets every Tuesday.

Furthermore, all the abovementioned groups have outreach programs because we believe from the start that we need to get out of the building territory and go out there.

So GCF women and friends, we invite you to join and belong to any of our fellowship groups and grow with us. We also have 37 women's Growth Groups that are more than happy to welcome you.

If you are interested please proceed to our booth after the service and sign-up. A surprise awaits you ■

Ministry Opportunities + Announcements



CELEBRATE FRIENDSHIPS

GCF Women, we invite you to celebrate March, which is International Women's Month! We enjoin you to participate in the activities of our different fellowship groups: NAOMI, SupaMoms, SHE, and JOY Women. Please visit our booth and sign-up!



GGEX EXTREME

featuring Discovering What the Future Holds by *Precept Ministries*

All adults without GG are invited.

March 31 (Sun) 9:30-10:30 a.m.

at the Fellowship Hall

Free snack and material will be provided.

Registration is **free** but **limited to first 200**.

Register at the booth at the lobby.



CHURCH PLANTING IN CDO

GCF is intensifying our prayer as we ask God to direct our next steps toward starting a church in Cagayan de Oro. If you have a burden to pray for this disciple-making initiative, please text us the following YES <space> PRAY4CDO <space> your name, and send to 0917 532 7672.



GIVING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Please note that giving envelopes can now be found in Bible pockets in the chairs in front of you. **Green-labelled** envelopes are for general giving, while **black-labelled** are strictly for missions.
- **Do not** leave envelopes with your offering on the Bible pockets.
- When giving a check, please make it payable to "Greenhills Christian Fellowship Inc." or "GCF Inc." only.

The flowers this week are given with praise and thanksgiving to God by the Basilad family and the Messiah College.

The flowers are also given by Bingle Bravo Gutierrez as thanksgiving for her retirement. Please call 632 1354 to 56 for inquiries on how to participate in this ministry.

Join a DISCIPLE-MAKING GROUP

Growth Group Express

How to Make Decisions You Won't Regret (Lessons on David's Life)

Adults without GGs are invited!

Sundays, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Fellowship Hall

God's Grace GG (G4)

Group for Couples

Fridays, 7:30-10:00 p.m.

Rm. B124

Life in Technicolor

support group for cancer patients and survivors

Every 3rd Sunday of the month
12:00-3:00 p.m., Seniors' Rm.

Overcomers

support group for those under any kind of addiction

Thursdays, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

If you are interested in joining any of the small groups above, fill out the tear-off form of this bulletin, drop it in the offering bag, or submit it at the Growth Group booth at the lobby. For more information, you can text or call us at 0917 532 1921.

DMG Leaders' Assembly

Agenda: Oikos Workshop

February 24 (Sun), 12:00-3:00 p.m.
at the Fellowship hall

STEWARDSHIP REPORT / February 2019

FEBRUARY	Projected	Rcvd., Feb. 1-19	YEAR-TO-DATE	Projected	Rcvd., as of Feb. 19
General Funds	7,333,268	6,025,251	General Funds	16,943,674	14,596,747
Mission Support Fund	1,317,698	420,511	Mission Support Fund	2,635,395	1,575,211
Others (Designated, etc.)	859,845	126,659	Others (Designated, etc.)	1,558,394	873,535
TOTAL	9,510,811	6,572,421	TOTAL	21,137,463	17,045,493

"No one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the wine would burst the wineskins, and the wine and the skins would both be lost. New wine calls for new wineskins."

— Mark 2:22 (NLT)

Jesus challenged the faithfulness of the Pharisees. He healed a paralytic by proclaiming forgiveness of sins is a no-no, for only God can forgive sins. He called a tax collector to be His disciple, and He even dined with a bunch, which was considered connivance with such national traitors. And then He went about His discipleship program far different from that of the Pharisees'—they did not fast.

To be fair, the Pharisees held on to tradition that is rooted deeply in Scripture and was tested by their history as a Jewish nation. With all the tragedies in their history which their prophets warned them about, it was high time that they took obeying God seriously. This resulted to following the Law to the letter, even making additional laws so as not to be exiled again. But what went wrong is that these laws did not revolve around loyalty to God, but to their national identity.

Such worldview birthed a devotion that exclude people they consider hindrances to their religious faithfulness. But the point of faithfulness to God should be welcoming people in and not excluding people out of His presence. So when Jesus came into the picture, forgiving sins, welcoming and dining with 'sinners', the Pharisees saw Him as a threat both to their religious status and their national security.

What are the old ways that we need to let go for us to see and follow His will?

Going back to Jesus' gospel narrative, "The time is now, the reign of God is here; change your mind about God and walk in His Good News." The Law is but a shadow and a witness to the Good News exemplified in Jesus' life and person. The challenge to the faithfulness of the Pharisees is a challenge to let go of their traditions and embrace the reality that God is doing something new. They are challenged to see that the security they seek is found only in Jesus, in His way of including in the kingdom of God who they deem excluded.

God is still doing something new in our time. What are the old ways that we need to let go for us to see and follow His will? ■

GCF PRAYER GATHERINGS *at the Chapel*

The GCF Hour of Prayer
Tuesdays, 6-7 a.m.

Midweek Prayer Service
Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

ON THE COVER: "And what will you give me to sleep with you?" she asked. "I'll send you a young goat from my flock," he said.—Gen. 38:16-17 (photo of playful young goats from pixabay.com). That Jesus came from the sinful line of Judah shows how God can work His plan even through depravity.



Greenhills Christian Fellowship
Know Christ and Make Him Known

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Tel. Nos. 632 1354 to 56, 635 0078 to 80, 635 0082 to 83 | Fax No. 632 1357
Mobile No. 0920 961 2964, Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
E-mail: email@gcf.org.ph • Website: www.gcf.org.ph

How may we SERVE YOU BETTER?

Fill-out this tear off form and drop it in an offering bag/box or at the Ministry Information Booth. Please check all that is applicable:

- ☐ I am a first-time guest.
- ☐ I prayed to receive Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord today.
- ☐ I would like to know how to become a Christian.
- ☐ I am interested in becoming a member of this church.
- ☐ **I want to join a Growth Group.**
(Specify age group: _____)
(Specify group composition: _____)
- ☐ I want to start a Growth Group.
- ☐ I want to host a Growth Group.

Please share with us some information about yourself:

Name: _____

Age: ____ Landline no.: _____

Mobile no.: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Year of membership: _____

Name of Growth Group (if you already have one): _____

*Today is **23/24 February 2019**, and I attended the 8 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 3:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. (Sat) (encircle the time).*

Write below *any* inquiry or prayer item that you want to ask or share.

For hospital or house visitation, dedication service, or funeral service requests, please call or text 0917 532 7794.

God's Way to Heaven

THE GOSPEL

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God is holy and righteous: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory" (*Isaiah 6:3*). **He requires holiness of us as well:** "Be holy, for I am holy" (*1 Peter 1:16*).

THE TRUTH ABOUT MAN

Man is sinful: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (*Romans 3:23*).
Sin demands a penalty: "For the wages of sin is death" (*Romans 6:23*).

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST

Christ is the expression of God's love for us: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (*Romans 5:8*). **Christ paid the penalty of our sins and died for sinners:** "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (*1 Peter 3:18*). **Through Christ, God offers man reconciliation:** "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (*2 Corinthians 5:18*).

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (*Romans 10:9*).

PRAYER: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. I believe that you died on the cross in my place, to save me from my sins, and I accept you as my Savior, and the Master of my life forever. Amen.*

Need someone to talk to?

Visit the Emmaus Road Counseling Center at the GCF Mezzanine floor or contact 632 1354 to 56, 635 0078 to 80 or 0917 532 7794 for inquiries.