

00-03-13a

As we continue our worship this morning, turn with me for our scripture reading to Job chapter 7. Job chapter 7. As we begin in earnest our study of Joseph, we have seen his enslavement at the hands of his brothers. We've seen the interrupting chapter where the story of Judah and Tamar is communicated to us. And this morning after we review and summarize some of that, we're going to be moving forward into Joseph's imprisonment experiences.

And there's two levels of connection between our scripture reading this morning and that story. The first I think you can imagine where Job, of course, is the emblem of suffering in the Old Testament. And Joseph is certainly going to undergo his share of suffering.

And both of these serve to foreshadow the ultimate suffering that the Lord Jesus Christ underwent on our behalf. But there is another level, and after our scripture reading we will address that. And interestingly, there are connections to the passage or the chapter that we have just finished with Judah and Tamar.

It's quite fascinating. But Job is speaking here. This is after the arrival, of course, of his three friends.

There will actually be a total of four friends who speak. And you'll recall that in our brief summary study of the book of Job, there is a theme that underlies the book. And that is the necessity for a mediator.

This is the conclusion. The great advance, Job was probably as far along, if not farther, than any believer you'd care to mention in the Old Testament. Because in his righteousness, in his worship life with God, his fellowship with God, he came to understand many things that come out in his conversations.

And he kept company with friends who also had an enthusiasm for the things of God. And the observations and the doctrines and the principles and the promises that these men mention in their conversation are all true. And they're all worthy.

Even when God comes in at the end of Job and issues a rebuke, it is not for doctrinal misstatements. Job is such a wonderful book, as you may recall, because it is a classic, close-up look at seeking the better things. It's one thing to identify sin and to say, well, this is the sinful thing.

This needs to be avoided. This is the sin, and so this is the wrong. It's something else when you are trying to apply the Word of God and you're on the narrow road.

You are asking and seeking and knocking and wanting to please God. And we have this stew in our own souls. We have the things that we've learned.

We have the circumstances of our lives. And the exercise of finding the connection between what we have learned and the situation in which we find ourselves in our life, that is the challenge. And with these voices of the four friends of Job and Job himself, this is a wonderful device that God uses to show us how the interplay and the different tentative applications of the Word of God take place within our own soul.

And we think, well, perhaps it's this principle or this doctrine that applies in this situation. And then there's a counter. Well, but what about this? This doesn't qualify for that application because this particular condition is not true.

And we think, well, as an example, that all sounds pretty abstract, but we hit a bad patch of circumstances where everything seems to kind of be going against us. And our first thought, if we are alive at all to our spiritual life, is we think, well, I wonder am I out of fellowship? Have I sinned? Have I made an error? And this is God's discipline. And so we begin to examine ourselves and apply those truths from the Word of God.

And we look and we say, you know, I really don't seem to be able to discover an area where God would be spanking me or encouraging me to come back into line. I don't find that. I'm honestly searched.

And I want to be able to acknowledge before God and recover, but that doesn't seem to fit here. So then we go into a second stage of application. We say, well, what are the different reasons for suffering for believers? Only one of them is for discipline, and there are several others that accomplish other goals.

The trial of our faith works patience. And so we begin to think, well, perhaps I'm going to develop a new area of the fruit of the Spirit here that I have not exercised recently. But as we do this in our souls, we have a picture of that in Job, because Job is suffering, and it is not for discipline.

And so his friends advance different theories or different applications. And the doctrines that they mention when they say, well, Job, it must be this, because here's how God acts. God rebukes those who are unrighteous, and they bring up the suffering for discipline view.

And Job says, well, I'm sorry, but that just doesn't fit. I will cling to my righteousness. And so they say, well, maybe it's a hidden righteousness.

We've gone through the argument of the book, and you understand the dialogue that takes place. But in summary, Job realizes that this opaqueness, this inability to really know what God is up to, he seems to be inscrutable. His ways seem to be past finding out, and he says, I wish I had a representative.

I can't stand before God. I wish I had a representative. I wish there were a mediator who could sit down with God on the one hand and me on the other and resolve whatever this

is.

And this is exactly what God is bringing Job to an understanding of. Because once Job realizes that, and you have the resolution at the end of the book, then God restores everything that Job had before and doubles it. And he receives the double portion, the double blessing.

And he has the additional strengthening of his faith, enhancing of his patience, and appreciation for the glory and the character and the all-knowing God whom he serves. And you get a little bit of that questioning and the need to discover what's going on in chapter 7 here. And we can imagine that this is what's going on in Joseph's mind.

Joseph is not guilty of any great fault. You've seen his brothers err in various ways and do some horrible things. But Joseph is the favored son.

One of the reasons that Jacob loves him is because he's responsible and squared away and loves the things of God. But here Job is talking about that there's no comfort in his suffering. He says, Is there not a time of hard service for man on earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hired man, like a servant who earnestly desires the shade, and like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages? So I have been allotted months of futility, and wearisome nights have been appointed to me.

When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise and the night be ended? For I have had my fill of tossing until dawn. My flesh is caked with worms and dust. My skin is cracked and breaks out afresh.

My days are swifter than a weaver's shovel, and are spent without hope. Oh, remember, my life is but a breath. My eye will never again see good.

The eye of him who sees me will see me no more. While your eyes are upon me, I shall no longer be. As the cloud disappears and vanishes away, so he who goes down to the grave does not come up.

He shall never return to his house, nor shall his place know him any more. Therefore I will not restrain my mouth. I will speak in the anguish of my spirit.

I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea or a sea serpent that you set a guard over me? When I say, my bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint, then you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions so that my soul chooses strangling and death rather than my body. I loathe my life.

I would not live forever. Let me alone, for my days are but a breath. What is man that you should exalt him, that you should set your heart on him, that you should visit him every morning and test him every moment? How long? Will you not look away from me and let me alone till I swallow my saliva? Have I sinned? What have I done to you, O

watcher of men? Why have you set me as your target so that I am a burden to myself? Why then do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now I will lie down in the dust and you will seek me diligently, but I will no longer be.

We are given a glimpse in a more objective way by looking at Job and hearing his words of what can often take place in our own souls to a greater or lesser degree. We don't always reach this stage of thinking that life is futile, but we often come to this questioning where we have looked around. We've tried to examine ourselves to see if we're in the faith.

We've acknowledged our known sins, and yet it seems like things are just going from bad to worse. There is trouble on every hand. Like the old gospel song says, trial is dark on every hand, and we cannot understand how God is going to lead us to that blessed promised land.

It seems so far away in the midst of our trials. And you can imagine Joseph in his situation. What has he done to deserve this maltreatment? Being dragged away from everything he knows and loves.

Where is God in this time of trial? But you'll notice a couple of very interesting things that Job says. He says, My eye, in verse 7, will never again see good. He says that his life is without hope.

That his days, in verse 3, he has months of futility and worrisome nights have been appointed to him. And that's the first thing to go to undermine our faith, is loss of hope. And in this extremis, and it's certainly understandable, but why is it that Job is having such difficulty with his faith in this circumstance? Because he doesn't have that future hope that he does have in other passages in Job.

You remember when he says, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that I will stand on the last day and see Him from my flesh. He knows about the resurrection. He knows that he has a Redeemer.

But at this particular point in the conversation, this particular point in his thought process, everything seems hopeless. And we sometimes wrestle with our faith, and we know that there are promises. We know that there are doctrines and principles.

We know the character of God. We know that we should be resting in faith. But we just can't seem to get our faith to go.

And I would submit to you that the reason for this, and the place really to turn our attention, is to our hope rather than our faith. Because hope is the motivation. Hope is what gives life and strength to our faith.

Faith without hope winds up being an academic exercise, because it doesn't seem real to

us. How can you endure the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune if you don't really have a confidence that there is a purpose, and that it's a worthwhile purpose, that the glory of God is going to be revealed and going to be reflected in this circumstance? If that's not a reality to us, and that is hope, then trying to be faithful, and trying to be a good steward of the things of God, and to carry on in a Christ-like way is going to be impossible to us. So rather than trying to... Because inevitably what we end up doing is trying to use our human strength to accomplish our faith.

And the solution to this problem, and this is where Job is going to end up when you go on through this conversation and get toward the end, is God resurrects Job's hope. When God appears and says, Where were you when I created the earth? And he goes on and gives all of these illustrations, and you think, what is God talking about? God is sort of rambling here at the end of Job. He's talking about the animals giving birth.

What's that got to do with Job sitting there scraping his flesh? What does that do? It gives Job a perspective. It sets his life in the context of the great sweep of creation and God's purpose and plan for human history. And it reminds Job and it restores Job's hope.

Job remembers that, yes, there is a Redeemer. I am going to stand on the last day. God does have a purpose and a plan.

And I have confidence that he sees, that he knows, that he will justify. And he says, Lord, I'm sorry I even opened my mouth. I realize now that I don't need to be having this attitude of chapter 7. You do know what you're doing, and all things do work together for good, to paraphrase that last speech.

It's also quite interesting, just as a side note, that when talking about the view of death in the Old Testament and talking about death as a status, people say, what is the status of the soul? Is it a disembodied presence up with God waiting for the issuing of a resurrection body and so forth? There's a lot you can say about that. But an interesting passage here is verse 21. Because Job here is talking to God.

And he says, why then do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now I will lie down in the dust, this is death, and you will seek me diligently, but I will no longer be. Who is the you that will seek him? It's God. Job says, when I lay down in the dust and die, you'll seek me and not find me.

He doesn't say, when I lay down in the dust and die, I will be in your presence forevermore. He's looking at the immediate consequence of death, which is, in his perception, as it is throughout the Old Testament. Going to Sheol and the abode of the dead is a place of forgetfulness, a place of no knowledge, the dust cannot praise you, David says, and so forth.

And the view from the earth is that when you look for this person there not to be found,

God, looking in the human race and looking about him, will look for this person and he's not found. And so some people have taken this and developed a doctrine of soul sleep, that you go into some sort of catatonic state until the resurrection. But the realization that God is not bounded by space and time and that we can have a continuous existence that doesn't necessarily thread itself through all of human history means that from a time-bound perspective, yes, this person seems to be no more and are not to be found, but you basically exit the merry-go-round of human history and step off into the beginning of eternity at the point of our resurrection.

And it isn't an annihilation of the soul or a soul sleep. It is simply not having to stick around and float someplace for all of the rest of human history. And this is another passage that supports the idea that from a time-bound perspective, when someone dies, they have exited the stage of human history.

They've exited the timeline. They don't have to be anywhere. The Bible doesn't speak of them being anywhere except in terms of a picture.

What it does talk about is to be absent from the body is to be face-to-face with the Lord. When are believers said in the Bible to be face-to-face with the Lord? It is at the resurrection. And you have many, many pictures of the resurrection in Scripture.

And so at the point that Job did in fact die, well after the events recorded here, his next experience is going to be the resurrection of the Old Testament saints that takes place when the Lord Jesus Christ returns at the second advent. And you say, well, does Job exist now? Well, it's the wrong question to ask. From our point of view, he's not around.

The dead are not floating around looking down on us. It is much easier probably in the scientific age to understand the fact that you can exist continuously and yet not be around for a portion of time because obviously there is a universe and there are creatures and an entire creation that's outside of time and outside of the material universe. That's where God and the angels live.

So, just as an aside, you can chew on that in your spare time. The other thing that's interesting is when he says, Am I the sea that you set a guard over me? In verse 12. Or a sea serpent.

We know that the Old Testament symbolism for evil, the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked. The earth is the Lord and the fullness thereof, the worlds in they that dwell therein.

And that passage ends with He has established his throne upon the sea. And if you think in literal terms, you think, how are you going to... The sea is an unstable, uncontrollable force in which there are denizens that cannot be managed. You can't hem them in.

You can't fence them. You can't control them. And yet God has established his throne upon the sea.

And Job knows that imagery. He's basically saying, Am I in the realm of evil? Or am I a representative of evil? Am I the sea or a sea serpent that you set a guard over me? And he asks this question because he can't find where the wrong is. And in fact, there isn't any wrong, but he's in that questioning phase.

But if we turn back now to Genesis, chapter 39, this is where we will resume this morning after a short excursus back into chapter 38. But Joseph, when we last saw him, had been thrown into a pit, had been extracted by his brothers, and sold for 20 pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites, who we know are also Midianites or Midianites. And both of those spellings are given, I think because of the repetition, they are probably Midianites, but there's a little tongue-in-cheek play on words at the end of chapter 37 and verse 36 when it says the Midianites.

In the Masoretic text, it actually says Midianites. And Midan in Hebrew is the word for strife. And we went over the Proverbs last time and saw where Proverbs says that these six things that the Lord hate, yea seven, are an abomination to him.

And it goes through the proud look and the lying tongue. And the last one is, he that sows discord among brethren. And the word for discord is Midan.

And so there's a suggestion there that this discord among brethren, it may even be the origin of that term going back in the same way that we have words in English like Machiavellian. And we say, well, we're caught between Scylla and Charybdis because we're between a rock and a hard place, so to speak. Many of these things go back to people and this is possible.

But here's Joseph sold into slavery completely unjustly, sold into the hands of non-Israelites, if you will. That's a fairly small group at this point. The Israelites aren't just the family of Jacob.

But these cousins, the Ishmaelites, carry him off and take him down and sell him in Egypt. But sandwiched between them, you could easily go from the end of chapter 37 straight to chapter 39. The Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

Joseph had been taken down to Egypt and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. And yet, inserted in here, we have the chapter we looked at last week, Judah and Tamar. Why is that? Well, we have at first just the literary idea that you can introduce some dramatic tension.

You cut away to another scene as they often do in movies or in TV series, even in plays

and novels and things. You're following a thread and when you get to a crisis point, the author will purposely cut away to something else and leave you hanging, wondering what's going to be the resolution of this problem. But God would not do that just for its own sake.

There are more important reasons why we have this. One reason is this is chronologically where the story fits. Judah has been single up to this point all the way up until Joseph is sold.

And by the time you finish the Joseph story, it's going to be very anticlimactic to go back and tell the story of Judah and Tamar, which is essential in the word of God because these are the roots of the lineage of David and ultimately of the Lord Jesus Christ. And to understand how the sons of Judah came to be is critical in that story. So it needs to be in Genesis somewhere.

And so your option is either put it where it belongs chronologically or insert it earlier when it's out of sequence because Judah has no family at the point that Joseph is sold or try to tack it on at the end. So in one sense, this is really where it belongs. It also suggests to us the time that passes from when Joseph is sold until his brothers go down to Egypt and they are reintroduced to one another.

And there's time here for Judah to get married, to have children, to have sons who get old enough to be married themselves. And this is an indication to us that a great deal of time has passed or will pass. But there's an even more interesting connection here than that.

And that's what I would like to point out here this morning because as you recall the details of this story, Judah goes to a region in Canaan up near Adullam. Adullam is northwest of Hebron. It's southwest of Bethlehem.

And he gets acquainted with Hira, the Adullamite. And he sees a daughter of a Canaanite whose name is Shua and he marries her and goes into her. What has been the pattern of marriage in the patriarchs thus far? Abraham is married within his own people.

Sarah is his half-sister apparently. You get down to Isaac and Abraham arranges for Isaac's marriage. When you get down to Jacob, Isaac and Rebekah send him to the household of their people to find himself a wife.

And he does them better than that. He comes back with two wives and two handmaids. But they all come from his own people.

And it is at the behest of the parents to marry within the clan. And every time we've seen a departure from that, when Ishmael marries an Egyptian, when Esau marries the Hittite woman and the Ishmaelite woman, this is sort of an accompanying clue that this person is not really in the center of the line of faith. And here Judah just goes out and

grabs a Canaanite woman and marries her.

And there doesn't seem to be any indication that Jacob had anything to do with it, that he consulted with his father or had any ideas about the importance of this principle that had been observed through the previous generations. And of course later on, when you get to the law of Moses, intermarrying with the Canaanites is prohibited. And in a much later generation, remember when Ezra and Nehemiah, you get down to that time, people that have intermarried, they have to basically divorce those wives and send them away because it is against the will of God.

But Judah just doesn't seem to care about that at all. He goes in and marries her and goes into her. She conceived and bore a son and called his name Ur.

There's been speculation about what this name might mean. It is interesting that it's a very short name. You have an Aleph and a Resh there for Ur.

And all you have to do is reverse that. His name spelled backwards is Evil or Ra. It's not exact.

There's a difference in the consonant. But it's interesting that Ra, which is evil, is what is said of him when you get down to verse 7. Ur, Judah's firstborn, was Ra in the sight of the Lord. And the Lord killed him.

This is quite a statement to make. There's no real explanation. It doesn't say what his evil was or what his sin was.

But you think about it, in the entire book of Genesis that we've studied up to this point, when is the last time God killed someone for being evil? Not since the flood. Has God struck someone down because they were evil? It's Sodom and Gomorrah. Well, that's a point.

Sodom and Gomorrah is not far after that time. But as far as an individual goes, this is the first time that God has taken an individual and ended his life because he was evil. Only the great cataclysms, and that's a good point, you do have Sodom and Gomorrah and you have the flood where God did corporate discipline on mankind in general or on that region in particular.

But the worst mistakes that people have made, you have old two wives back there that Lamech, when he says to Ada and Zillah, he says, I've wounded a man for messing with me and so forth. And if Cain be avenged seven times, then I seventy times seven. God doesn't strike him down.

But here, her, the son of Judah, is killed expressly for being evil. And this should have been a wake-up call that all is not well. Judah marries a Canaanite woman and here's the result.

The offspring from that marriage is extinguished without issue. So then, the second son that she conceived and bore is Onan. You also notice a little interplay here because when Judah has his firstborn, she conceived and bore a son.

Who names him? In verse 3, it says, he called his name Ur. So Judah names him. She conceived and bore a second son and she called his name Onan.

So the Canaanite woman, the daughter of, you could probably call her Bat-shua, she names Onan. Then she conceived yet again and bore a son and she called his name Shelah. He, Judah, was at Kezib when she bore him.

Then in verse 6, you'll notice Judah doesn't let his son pick his own wife. He's back to the old patriarchal model where he's going to select the wife for his son. So he took a wife for Ur, his firstborn.

Her name was Tamar. And she, of course, is also going to be a Canaanite. Almost by necessity, he would have to go back up to Laban's territory to find someone within the family.

So Tamar is a Canaanite. But Judah selects her for his son. Ur was wicked in the sight of the Lord.

The Lord killed him. So Judah, there's no indication of mourning or disappointment or anything. Judah seems very businesslike here.

Judah said to Onan, go into your brother's wife and marry her and raise up an heir to your brother. This is the early form of the Levirate Law. Levir, L-E-V-I-R in Latin, means brother-in-law.

And this is the brother-in-law rule especially in the earlier days when it was important for family ownership of land and inheritance and so forth to be perpetuated. If a brother died without any sons, his brother had the option of actually two options. One is he could simply father a child with the widow and not marry her.

Or he could actually marry her and have her as a wife. But the responsibility there was that she would at a minimum have a son so that that branch of the family could continue. And the marriage portion was optional.

So this is what Onan is supposed to do. Judah says, go into your brother's wife and marry her to raise up an heir to your brother. But Onan knew that the heir would not be his.

If you look in the later Law of Moses and wade through all that, you discover that if a man died with no sons, his inheritance would pass to his daughters if he had any. You remember they had to iron that out in Israel because that situation came up and the daughters went to Moses and said, look, or maybe it was Joshua they went to. Anyhow,

they secured the inheritance.

But if there were no daughters either, then that brother's inheritance would revert to his brother's. It would go back into his father's household and his brothers would divide it up. So Onan says, if I raise up an heir to my brother, then his stuff is going to go that direction.

And he's the older brother, so he gets the double portion and all the rest of this. And that's going to go to this... I'm going to be giving away a big chunk of Judah's holdings and things if I actually father a child with Tamar. If I don't, then all of that stuff will come to me.

Well, that's fine. And that's his option, if the rules are the same here as they are codified later on in the Law of Moses. But, he tries to have his cake and eat it too because he does go in to her.

He says, well, I would assume that Tamar was not unattractive. She's certainly able to entice Judah in from the roadside. So she must have been appealing or an example of feminine pulchritude of some sort.

And so Onan says, well, I can kind of burn the candle at both ends here. I can have a good time with Tamar, but I can keep from fathering a child with her, so I'll get the woman and I'll also get all the stuff. I'll keep the inheritance.

And this is evil in God's sight. He legitimately has the option of saying, no, I'd rather not do the fathering the child thing, but he doesn't do that. It's a very dishonorable thing that he does.

So when he went in to his brother's wife, he admitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother. The thing which he did displeased the Lord, therefore he killed him also. Well, Judah's line is not off to a very auspicious start here because the first two sons get killed for being too wicked for God to leave them on the earth.

So Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown. For he said, lest he also die like his brothers. Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house and she's wearing widow's weeds all this time.

And she can't be married by anyone else, which is an option for a widow in later Israel. If she's a widow, she can remarry. And it doesn't necessarily have to be.

The levirate is only one option. It's not required. It's just an option.

But he says, no, you stay. And so he basically betrothed her to his youngest son. And this betrothal status is just like what existed between Joseph and Mary, the human family of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And to violate this betrothal status is the equivalent of adultery. So Judah doesn't release her to marry someone else. He ties her to his youngest son.

But then he does not ever let them actually get married. So in the process of time, Bathsheba here dies, Judah's wife. Judah was comforted, unlike Jacob who was not comforted when Joseph appeared to be dead.

So he went up to his sheep shearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hira the Adlamite. He was told, Tamar, saying, look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep. Well, this says a lot because it's not just going up to shear the sheep.

There is a celebration involved. It's a feast day. People typically eat, drink and be merry.

This is the bringing in of the wool. It's like harvest time. You know all the harvest festivals that have been traditional.

Well, sheep shearing produced its own little festival. There was wine, women and song at these things. So she knows that there's going to be revelry and people are going to be anticipating revelry at this event.

This, in fact, if you think back, is why Jacob thought it would be a good time to bug out from Haran when Laban goes up to shear the sheep because he figures not only are they busy and off the campus, so to speak, but they're also going to be a little groggy trying to rouse themselves and come down to chase him. So this is her thinking. Notice verse 14.

She took off her widow's garments, which she is still wearing. Remember, there's been a period of time that has passed here, perhaps measured in years. She covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah.

And when it says she wrapped herself in verse 14, this is an interpretive translation because what it literally says is she opened the eyes or she placed herself at the opening of the eyes. And you have *anim* here, which is the Hebrew word for eyes, and you have the word for opening, *patak*. In fact, that's a vowel point in Hebrew, *patak*, and it means opening.

It's ah. It's a long a. In Hebrew, a long a is an ah sound, and *patak* looks like a little t underneath a Hebrew letter, and it means open. Your mouth is open when you make that noise.

So literally, she covered herself with a veil and placed herself at the opening of the eyes. Now, some people have thought that this might actually be a place name, Aenim, at the opening or the gate of Aenim or something. Others have thought, but if you think about it, there's an expression in Hebrew that says to cover the eyes is to atone or make

amends.

We had this when Jacob was approaching his brother Esau, and he said, I want this to be an atonement, a covering of the eyes. Well, this is just the opposite. She's about to do something which is going to probably need atonement, and so this is the opening of the eyes.

She's putting herself out there where he's going to see her. The prostitutes in ancient days would often wear a veil so that they couldn't be identified when they're going to market and circulating in the town, but their eyes were visible, so they would paint their eyes and try to make themselves as alluring as they could, but there were still standards of modesty, so really all they could do was they could show a little bit of ankle and they could really paint their eyes. And so when she puts on this veil and then this reference to the opening of the eyes, whatever that refers to, it means that she's set her cap to allure and to entice Judas specifically.

So when she wrapped herself, it literally means in the opening of the eyes, and sat in an open place on the way to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah was grown and she was not given to him as wife. Judas saw her, thought she was a harlot because she had covered her face. The veil, the eye makeup and so forth.

So he turned to her by the way and said, this is the direct approach. Please let me come in to you. I want to come inside your tent here and we'll make hay and have a good time.

He did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. So she says, what will you give me so that you may come in to me? He said, I will send a young kid from the flock. She said, will you give me a pledge till you send it? He said, what pledge shall I give you? She says, you'll notice she lets him set the price.

She doesn't say, well, that'll be 15 shekels or that'll be two chickens and a lamb. She says, what will you give me? He sets the price. And you have to wonder, well, how does Judas know what the going rate is for this kind of thing anyway? He's obviously a man of the world.

He says, I will send a young goat from the flock. She says, well, I don't see any young goat with you. You say you're going to send it.

How do I know you're going to make good on this? She says, what pledge? Will you give me a pledge? He says, what pledge do you want? She gets to decide what the pledge is. She says, I want your ID card. I want your driver's license, which is the signet.

This is a clay seal with which business is transacted. It's Judas' signature. And the cord that he, these were typically worn around the neck.

It was either a signet ring, which typically came a little bit later than this. But in the

earlier days, it would be a cylinder seal. And to keep it in, sew pockets onto their robes, you've noticed.

So how would they keep track of this? Well, they would hang it on a cord around the neck. And you don't know at what stage of the negotiations they are. These things may already be laying on the bedside table there, so to speak.

But she says, well, you just leave these things here. And this is your ID card, your driver's license, your check signature. And that will be the pledge.

And also his staff that's in his hand. Of course, these staffs were unique. It's kind of like men who are known for their, their car might be their signature.

They drive a Jaguar or they drive something. Some men, it's their pipe. They'll have a meerschaum or a corncob like Douglas MacArthur or something.

And that's sort of their signature. Well, in the ancient days, clothing all looked pretty much alike and so on, unless you had a multicolored robe. But you could show your style by the kind of staff that you carried.

You might find a stick that had a particularly interesting looking root at the top that had carving in it. Or you might set gems or whatever. So this is his, he's known by this.

You can see this thing. You walk into the hat room there. You say, well, Judah's here.

There's his staff. So she leaves. She gets all these things from him.

And he gave them to her. She went into him. She conceived by him.

Apparently she is aware of this almost right away because she figures her work is done. She doesn't have to wait and waylay him on the way back. She arose and went away and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood, which she is still wearing.

She's still wearing the weeds there. So then in verse 20, Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend, the Adolamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand. But he did not find her.

And of course she's packed up and left. And they ask around. She's not there.

This is already kind of being noised about more than Judah wants. So Judah tells Ahura, well, let's just, you know, I'll get me another cylinder seal made. I'll have to find a new stick.

I don't want to, you know, make a federal case out of this because it's going to be embarrassing. So, I sent the young goat and you've not found her. This goat gets mentioned several times in the story.

But it came to pass in verse 24, three months after. Of course, this is when somebody that's pregnant is going to start to show. And Judah was told, saying, Tamar, your daughter-in-law has played the harlot.

Furthermore, she is with child by harlotry. This is a very interesting verse. Because, you remember, we just saw Joseph going out looking for his brothers and could not find them.

And out of nowhere, this mysterious man appears and says, Oh, I heard they were going to Dothan. And if it isn't for this mystery man with this critical piece of information, the Joseph story would not have happened the way it happened. This is a critical juncture where he is scared into the trap there.

And you get the idea that God has ordained that this individual be there with that information. Well, isn't it interesting? Some anonymous whisperer here finds out Tamar, we don't know how this took place. But in some form or fashion, someone comes.

It says Judah was told, and we don't have any idea who did it. But they have a lot to say. She has played the harlot.

And furthermore, she is with child by harlotry. This is not just hearsay, which would require two or three witnesses to come and give testimony for. There is physical evidence because she's pregnant.

So this unnamed, unknown person doesn't have to appear because all they have to do is say, well, turn sideways and let's see your profile. Ha! You're guilty. So that's what happens.

Judah says, bring her out and let her be burned. Summary judgment as the patriarch of his branch of the family. Well, what is going on here? Bring her out and let her be burned.

This is pretty serious. And it looks like Tamar is about to literally be on the hot seat. Well, as we pause here to take our break, the thing to remember is God is aware.

God is watching. There is a lot of shabbiness. There is a lot of tacky tawdryness.

There is a lot of bad judgment and faithlessness being exhibited within the family of Jacob at this point. And even people who are in the right seem to be doing wrong things. Is it the right thing to go dress up as a harlot and waylay someone? And yet, from this, as we know, David will come.

And David's greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And God is going to work these things together for good. However much sin and however much wrong you find here, it does not go outside God's control.

It doesn't go outside God's oversight. And God can take this mess and work it together for good, how much more so our own lives, regardless of where our difficult circumstances have come from, if it's our own failure or someone else's. If we have confidence in God, if we don't lose our hope, if we can see that future light and bring it into the present reality of our thinking, it will sustain our faith.

And we can glorify God even in the midst of a fallen world, even in the midst of an evil generation, and even in the midst of our own failures and bad judgment. We can have confidence that God's power to heal is greater than our power to wound. God's power to forgive, to cleanse, and to work things together for good is greater than our ability to fail.

And if there's one thing we learn from looking at this chapter, it's you cannot fail so greatly that God cannot turn it and work it together for good. Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll see how this all works out.