

Read **Matthew 1:1-16**- the **genealogy of Jesus Christ**

There are five women in the genealogy of Jesus. The first is Tamar (Genesis 38:6-30) whose husband died and ends up giving birth to twins by her father-in-law. The second is Rahab the prostitute (Joshua 2:1-24) who saved the spies that Joshua sent to Jericho and who married Salmon and had a son called Boaz. The third woman is Ruth (Ruth 1:1-4:22) who left her own country to care for her mother-in-law despite being an outcast and a foreigner. Ruth Married Boaz, Rahab's son and gives birth to Obed, the grandfather of King David. King David then sleeps with Uriah's wife, known as Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:1-27) and they have a son called Solomon. And finally we have Mary (Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-56). Mary, pregnant and not married, could have been killed or at least publicly disgraced but is supported by her fiance and gives birth to Jesus.

It is very natural for Matthew to begin his account of Jesus' life with his family tree, as it was important for Jewish people to be able to trace back their history and thus gave them identity. Jewish people would have been impressed that Jesus could be traced as far back as Abraham, because this would also show that Jesus is truly in the line of the promise.

Matthew includes saints and sinners in Jesus' genealogy and even more intriguing is the inclusion of 5 women. It is not normal to find any women's names in Jewish pedigrees at all as women were *regarded not as a person but as a thing*. And when we look at who these women were it's even more amazing that they have been included in Jesus' genealogy- prostitutes, foreigners and sinners. All of these women were a part of Jesus' family tree. God had a plan for their lives.

So what can we learning from these women?

1. **We are all included in God's plan.** Male, female, Jew, foreigner, loving like Ruth or sinner like Rahab- we are all included.

The Bible is littered with scripture of what good plans he has for us, plans for a hope and a future- the Bible says are steps are ordered by Him- he has a plan for our lives.

2. **God is gracious to use us in his plan.** By including these women whom some were known to be outcasts, others sinners and other victims of sin, Matthew is preaching the gospel of grace in a family tree! He is showing that God can overcome any and all sin and can use the most soiled of human souls to accomplish his greatest purposes in history
3. **God can accomplish great things through the everyday.** All of these women were part of God's divine purpose. God accomplished the most amazing thing in Human history- God becoming a person through Jesus Christ- through a plan that involved these seemingly ordinary women. Those who think of themselves as unusable are often the most likely candidates for God's plan.
4. **God plan is always to save people from their sins.** The ultimate message of the genealogy is found in Matt. 1:21 - it is Jesus who saves his people from their sins: whether deception, adultery, incest, or even murder.

Questions

1. What stood out for you most about these five women's stories?
2. In what way should your understanding of God's purpose in these five women's lives affect the way you respond to people who you meet?
3. Do you have any examples of where you feel God has used you for His plans and purposes?
4. How is God using you now in your everyday life?