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September 9 & 10, 2017
Week 4 – Joseph, Judah and Jesus

Genesis 38: A Disturbing Interlude...

Meet Judah

- Our first introduction is Judah lusting over a Canaanite woman
- They have sexual relations and have three sons
- Their firstborn son is named Er, and marries a girl named Tamar
- Er dies at a young age, leaving Tamar widowed
- Er's brother Onan is obligated to give Tamar a son
- Er's motives are impure, Tamar doesn't conceive, Onan dies as well
- Years later, Judah has sex with someone he believes is a prostitute, but is actually Tamar. From that relationship come Perez and Zerah...

Personal Notes / Life Application

Matthew 1:1-3

What's going on here? One would think that Joseph would get to be in the direct lineage of Jesus. But Judah?

The Big Idea:

There are a thousand good reasons to live a godly life, but earning God's approval isn't one of them. We desire to live godly lives because we ARE righteous, not because we're trying to BECOME righteous.

SMALL GROUP Q'S

Personal Life:

1. Why do you think the Bible is filled with so many stories of God showing grace and mercy to guilty people? Why isn't God afraid that telling such stories will make people feel like they have a license to sin?

Ponderings:

2. In your own words, describe the practical, personal differences between relating to God on the basis of Law (rules, regulations and rituals) and relating to Him on the basis of grace (redemption and relationship).
3. Joseph obeyed God because He understood His identity as God's child. Judah's life was filled with anger and shame, which led to a very scandalous and immoral life. Yet, God blessed both of them tremendously in different ways. Is your own personal sense of fairness or justice offended by the fact that Judah, not Joseph, got to be part of Jesus' human ancestry? Explain...
4. Think about a situation in your life that you believe to be unfair. Maybe it's related to a person getting special treatment. Maybe it's a trial you're facing that you know you don't "deserve." Whatever the case, how does the story of Joseph speak into your own faith journey? Share as honestly as possible...
5. Toward the end of the weekend message, the question was raised, "How would the course of your daily life look different if you chose to actually believe that God is crazy about you?" How would that reality impact your choices? Emotions? Confidence? Humility? Peace of mind? Discuss...

Promptings:

6. Christian theologians and psychologists agree that the root of many sins and addictions is shame. The more people live according to a shame-based identity, the more they are caught in sinful and destructive behavior. Have you found this to be true in your own life? If so, what is your plan to walk away from shame and into the freedom of Christ? If not, who do you know in your life that needs freedom from shame and how might God use you to help lead them out?