

# STORY

Study Guide

POST SUNDAY CONTENT



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>3</b>	INTRODUCTION	<b>57</b>	WEEK 7   SARAI/SARAH
<b>4</b>	Why Story?		
<b>8</b>	How to Use This Booklet	<b>65</b>	WEEK 8   JOSEPH
<b>9</b>	WEEK 1   RAHAB	<b>75</b>	WEEK 9   ESTHER
<b>17</b>	WEEK 2   SAMSON	<b>83</b>	WEEK 10   DANIEL
<b>25</b>	WEEK 3   RUTH	<b>91</b>	WEEK 11   TAMAR
<b>33</b>	WEEK 4   ELIJAH	<b>99</b>	WEEK 12   JOSHUA
<b>41</b>	WEEK 5   NAOMI	<b>108</b>	RECOMMENDED RESOURCES
<b>49</b>	WEEK 6   DAVID		

# GET PLUGGED IN

## WESTSIDE COMMUNITY GROUPS

Jesus' Church has been commanded to gather (like we do on Sundays) but also to scatter into the city and live as a single body on mission for the glory of God! Here at Westside, we do this through Community Groups.

Community Groups are groups of 10-20 people who live life together on mission in a specific neighborhood. Every Community Group meets regularly throughout the week to eat, learn, pray, unpack Sunday's sermon, and do life together with gospel intentionality.

**Don't miss the blessing of living in gospel centered community.**

**Get plugged into the life of the Church at [wchurch.ca](http://wchurch.ca)**

“ People have always made sense of their lives through story. Stories are everywhere. They’re woven through every part of our lives.

*introduction*

## WHY STORY?

People have always made sense of their lives through story. Stories are everywhere. They're woven through every part of our lives. Children grow up learning stories that have been passed down for generations, in the form of bedtime stories, stories shared around a campfire, etc. The first lessons we learn about who we are and the world we live in come from the stories we love—and the stories we hate! Nothing draws emotion out of us like a story. Stories introduce us early on to elements of life that we will become familiar with as we grow older. In stories we learn who to trust and how to smell deception. We learn about cowardice and heroism. We learn about what's worth letting go of and what's worth dying for. Ultimately, we learn who we are and who we want to become. Every person has a story, every person believes a story, and every man, woman, and child is telling their story by the way they live their life. The only question is, what story are you telling?

## THE CHRISTIAN STORY

The Christian story revealed in the pages of the Bible is the foundation for all other stories. It has altered political landscapes, redirected the course of history, and changed countless lives. It has been more widely translated, copied, and read than any other story in human history. Nowhere do we see the power and feel the importance of story like we do in the pages of Holy Scripture.

But God's story isn't one among many. The bold claim of God's Word is that it is the story; the grand narrative, which every other story is a part of. God hasn't given us this overarching narrative to simply lead people to believe that He exists, or that He created us, or even that He cares; no, the story of Scripture is bigger than that! This story is a call—a call for every man, woman, and child to see themselves as a part of God's story,

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and to respond by giving their life to play their part in the divine drama unfolding around them. God is telling humanity a story and He's inviting each of us to meet Him in it!

## GOD'S STORY

### What is God's story?

The story of the Bible is the story of the universe. In it we learn that God is the Creator of everything. We learn that the pinnacle of His creation was the moment when He made men and women in His own image and likeness. We see great care being taken in the creation of human beings, and we also see that God was intensely interested not only in their survival, but in their enjoyment of the lives that He created them for! In creation we see that God designed human beings to worship—but not to worship just anything. They were to worship God Himself, the one who is the standard and source of all beauty, truth, and life. And it was in this worship of God that man and woman were meant to find the fullness of life that they were created for!

Yet the story continues by detailing the fall of creation from this intended state of blessing to one of discord, disharmony, and destruction. What has come to be known as “the fall” is the most tragic moment in human history. This is a dark part in the story. A divine act of treason takes place, and with it, a rejection of the one who created us for Himself. The result is a broken world full of broken people whose lives seem to be little more than a tragic joke. As the ancient preacher lamented, *“I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.”* (Ecclesiastes 1:14) Through the fall and because of the division between human beings and their Creator, human beings have been introduced to their arch enemy—death.

But thankfully, the story doesn't end there. God's story continues by outlining the promise God has made to all people—the promise to send a saviour; someone who would come and save us from our slavery to corruption.

The entire Old Testament is the story of God pursuing a family through whom He would bring this promised saviour into the world. The story of a small nation called Israel points forward to Jesus the Messiah, until, at the appointed time, the words of Matthew 1:18 could finally be penned, *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way...”* What seem like loose ends throughout God’s story all begin to be tied together in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus was sent by God, because His love for people goes far beyond what we deserve. The life that Jesus lived was lived on behalf of all those who place their faith in Him. Jesus’ broken body and shed blood was the price paid for the sin of His people.

But that’s not the end of the story either. On the third day Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven where He is now ruling and reigning as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. King Jesus is the beginning, middle, and end of God’s story. He is the one for whom and through whom the story is being written!

...But the final chapter is yet to be penned. That’s where we come in!

## OUR STORIES

One of the most amazing things about the God revealed in the pages of Scripture is His love of involving us in what He is doing. Though the end is as sure as the beginning, God’s story is still being written—and He’s writing it with our lives. His story engulfs every person on planet earth. It is the context in which we live and move and have our being. We are either aware of this or not, but regardless we are playing our parts. One of the blessings in coming to see our place in God’s story is the gift of finally knowing the answers to universal human questions like: Where did I come from? Why I am here? Where am I going? Faith in Jesus isn’t one more part of our lives. Faith in Jesus changes everything. It is a complete reorientation of our lives. It’s what gives meaning to every aspect of life. It is the thing that finally makes sense of all that we are!

## YOUR STORY

God's story. Our stories. Your story. What is your story? What has this life shown you about the world, people, and yourself? The joy. The pain. The loss. The anger. The love. The hatred. The abuse. The neglect. The amazing gifts. All of these things make up the substance of your story. Your story matters because it's the one God's given you; but what's more than that, it's one that God is weaving into the tapestry of His own grand story!

## OUR 12 WEEK SERIES: 'STORY'

As we set out to examine the theme of story over these twelve weeks, we'll be zooming in on twelve well-known Old Testament characters. In these real life, historical stories we will see the way God takes lives filled with small successes and great failures and, as a master craftsman, turns them into a grand masterpiece of divine origin.

We will also see that all of our stories and all the stories that make up our city are no less a part of God's story than any other. Throughout this series we'll examine our own stories and look for God's redemptive thread being pulled through each of them. We'll hear individual testimonies on Sundays as we gather, and we'll share our own stories in our Community Groups.

We'll make much of our stories—not because in them we see our own greatness, but because in them we see the greatness and glory of a God who makes beautiful things out of mere dust.



## HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

- Character introductions are meant to give some basic context surrounding a given story.
- The week of daily readings are given ahead of each Sunday's sermon in order to have the entire story in mind. (Many of these readings are short and are seen as supplementary to your other daily Bible reading.)
- A section is provided to take sermon notes and for Community Group Leaders to write some of their own questions.
- The Post Sunday Content is to guide you in your Community Group discussions.
- The Family Discussion questions are to help parents talk through these stories with their children. Feel free to go through the questions all at once, or periodically throughout the week.

*\* Westside Kids in grades K-6 will be going through the same stories as the sermon each week in their kids classes on Sundays, with the exception of the story of Tamar. (See page 97.)*

“ The king sent men to Rahab who demanded that she hand the Israelites over. Rahab, however, had heard stories of how the Lord had helped the Israelite nation by parting the Red Sea and laying waste to their enemies, and she feared standing in the way of such a powerful God.

*rahab*

## WEEK 1 | RAHAB

TEXT: JOSHUA 2 & 6

THEME: REDEMPTION

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

After forty years of wandering in the desert, the nation of Israel was almost ready to take possession of the land promised to them by God. Now under the leadership of Joshua, Israel needed to breach the mighty walls of a city called Jericho in order to conquer Canaan. Joshua sent two spies into Jericho instructing them to, *“Go, view the land, especially Jericho.”* (Jos 2:1)

When the spies reached the fortified city they found a place to stay with a prostitute named Rahab.

Unfortunately, The Israelite spies were spotted and their location reported to the king of Jericho. The king sent men to Rahab who demanded that she hand the Israelites over. Rahab, however, had heard stories of how the Lord had helped the Israelite nation by parting the Red Sea and laying waste to their enemies, and she feared standing in the way of such a powerful God. Rahab expressed great faith when she declared to the Israelite spies, *“I know that the Lord has given you the land.”* (Jos. 2:9) Instead of handing the men over she decided to hide them, and once the king’s men had left she helped them escape.

Wisely, however, she did this only after striking a deal with the Israelite spies that her life and the lives of her family members would be spared when Israel came and took the city. After the Jewish conquest of Jericho, Rahab and her family were welcomed into the nation. In the first chapter of Matthew’s gospel (Matt. 1:5) Rahab is listed in the family tree of Jesus Himself.

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) Read Joshua 2:1-21. What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

**CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.**

2) \_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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**OTHER QUESTIONS:**

4) What elements of Rahab's story surprise you?

- 5) What do we learn about God when He uses and ultimately redeems someone like Rahab?  
How does this encourage you personally?
- 6) How has God used difficult elements of your story to bring redemption to you or others?
- 7) In what aspects of the brokenness of our city can you imagine God bringing redemption?
- 8) How do you see people currently pursuing redemption in those areas?

- 9)** Take some time to pray for each other and for those in our city who desperately need their stories redeemed by Jesus.

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1)** Read Joshua 2:1-7. What mission did the spies have? What danger could they have gotten into? How did they escape?
- 2)** Read Joshua 2:8-11. Why were Rahab and the people in Jericho afraid of God? Did Rahab believe in God? How do you know?



**3)** Read Joshua 2:12-21. What deal did Rahab and the spies make? Do you think it was a good deal?

**4)** Even though Rahab wasn't part of God's people (the Israelites) God used her and saved her.  
What does this tell us about God and his family?

**5)** Read Matthew 1:5. Who is Rahab's great, great, great...great grandson?

“

He was a man whose vices were overshadowed only by his pride, a man who passionately pursued physical pleasure and had no problem taking what he desired by force. And yet in spite of all of Samson's flaws there is an unmistakable redemptive thread pulled through his entire life story.

*Samson*

## WEEK 2 | SAMSON

**TEXT: JUDGES 13-16**

**THEME: PRIDE**

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Of all those raised up by God to judge Israel, Samson was among the most unlikely. He was a man whose vices were overshadowed only by his pride, a man who passionately pursued physical pleasure and had no problem taking what he desired by force. And yet in spite of all of Samson's flaws there is an unmistakable redemptive thread pulled through his entire life story.

Samson was announced before his birth by an angel of the Lord who declared that he was to be a Nazarite from his first day. Those who took the Nazarite vows as Samson did stood out among the Hebrew population as the most rigid and strict when it came to their piety, holiness, and discipline. Samson, however, would stand out in this group as he managed to break every one of his vows in very public ways.

In his lust for foreign women, Samson managed to exacerbate political tensions between Philistia and Israel. God, in turn, used this to keep His people from assimilating into a pagan culture. But the ends never justify the means when it comes to disobeying the commands of God. Samson's strength was renowned and greatly feared, and his ability to kill thousands with his own two hands increased his power, prestige, and especially his pride.

Samson's lust for beautiful woman, his incredible self-centredness, and his arrogance would eventually lead to his own downfall and what would seem like an untimely death. But not before one last humble and revenge-

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST | SERMON NOTES:

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) Read Judges 16:1-31. What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

**CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.**

2) \_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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### **OTHER QUESTIONS:**

4) Why does Samson seem like an unlikely choice on God's part in raising up a Judge for His people?  
How does this impact your understanding of the story God is writing?

5) What was Samson's primary sin? Why do you think God would choose someone like this?

6) How does Samson's story give you hope for yourself?

In what ways does Samson's story give you hope for our city?

7) What are some of your vices? How does the story of Samson lead us to handle our vices?

8) Why is there no tension between the reality that we're called to repent of sin and the truth that God uses everything in our lives for His ultimate glory?

- 9) How can we as a Community Group encourage each other practically even when the stories of our lives reveal our great shortcomings?

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Read Judges 15:14. Where did Samson's great strength really come from?
- 2) Who were the enemies of God's people at the time?



**3)** Samson had been given great gifts from God, but he was often full of pride. What is pride?

Why is it hard for prideful people to obey God?

**4)** In what ways are you prideful? What should you do about it? (Read James 4:6-10)

**5)** How does a humble person act, feel, and think? Why is it impossible to follow Jesus if you are proud?

“ The great grandmother of King David  
was a loyal, soft-spoken, and ferociously  
bold woman.

*ruth*

## WEEK 3 | RUTH

TEXT: RUTH 1-4

THEME: LOYALTY

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

The great grandmother of King David was a loyal, soft-spoken, and ferociously bold woman. Ruth was not a Hebrew, but a foreigner from Moab. She lived with her mother-in-law, Naomi, and her sister-in-law, Orpah after all three of them had their husbands die within a ten year span. Orpah left to pursue a new life, but Ruth traveled back to Bethlehem with her Mother-in-law, despite the fact that the future was not bright for them together. As a widow in ancient Israel her plight was destitute, and yet her values and convictions remained as strong as her will. *“Ruth clung to Naomi.”* (Ruth 1:14)

When they finally reached Bethlehem no one offered to take the two widows in and provide for them, so Ruth began gleaning from the edges of a field. When she came home and told Naomi the owner of the field was a relative of theirs, they hatched a plan to make this man notice Ruth. The plan was not safe as Ruth would need to boldly risk her own personal safety. At the end of a long day, Ruth broke many cultural norms by laying down next to the owner of the barley field, Boaz, uncovering his feet, and asking him to *“Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.”* (Ruth 3:9)

Ruth’s risk was greatly rewarded as Boaz would step up as the widow’s kinsmen redeemer. He would take Ruth as his wife, take Naomi in, and together they would have a son, Obed, the Father of Jesse, the father of King David.

Ruth’s amazing loyalty to Naomi was used by God to raise up a King and ultimately to raise up a saviour for the entire world!

## Ruth 4:13-22

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

**CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.**

2) \_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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### **OTHER QUESTIONS:**

4) Read Ruth 1:1-18. Why is Ruth's loyalty to Naomi so impressive given the cultural circumstances they lived with? What do we learn about the kind of woman Ruth was through this act of loyalty?

- 5) Read Ruth 2:1-13. How does God use Ruth's loyalty to reward her immediately? Read Ruth 4:18-22. How does God use Ruth's loyalty to reward her in the long-term?
- 6) How does God use Ruth's story in the larger story of Redemptive History?
- 7) How does it make you feel to know that the loyal action of this ancient Moabite widow has been used to impact your life and eternity through Jesus? How does that affect the way you view small acts of obedience in your own life?
- 8) Read Matthew 25:23. How does the commendation of the master in this parable enforce the way we see God use Ruth's story? What are the "small things" God has called you to be faithful with?

- 9)** Take some time to pray for each other and ask God to strengthen us to be faithful in the lives and ministries He's called us to.

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1)** Who was Ruth? Was she a part of God's people? What happened to her family?
- 2)** What does it mean to be loyal? How was Ruth loyal? Why was it surprising that Ruth was so loyal?



- 3)** Read Ruth 2:8-12. How does Ruth get food for her and Naomi? What can you do to work hard for your family?
- 4)** How did God take care of Ruth in the long-term? Why was it so important for her to get married?  
Who was her great grandson? (Read Ruth 4:7)
- 5)** What people are in your life that you should be loyal to? What would that look like?

“ Elijah was a man who carried a great burden. His burden was for God’s people to be single-minded in their worship of Him; for the twelve tribes of Israel to be reunited in the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

*elijah*

## WEEK 4 | ELIJAH

**TEXT: 1 KINGS 17-19, 2 KINGS 1-2**

**THEME: FAITH**

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

The prophet Elijah was probably born shortly before 900 B.C. and would grow to become the first great prophet of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. We're first introduced to Elijah in 1 Kings 17 somewhere in his mid-thirties, when he brings a judgment against King Ahab for attempting to worship the false god Baal alongside the one true God of Israel.

Much of the writing that normally surrounds Old Testament prophets has to do with the message they brought to the people. In the case of Elijah (and Elisha), however, much more is said about the miraculous works they performed than the actual message they heralded. Elijah is known for predicting and calling off famines. He's known for calling down fire from God on Mount Carmel, and slaughtering hundreds of prophets of Baal when they could not do the same. We read of God providing meat and bread for Elijah through the use of ravens. We read of him predicting the deaths of Kings and defending himself from a hundred soldiers by calling fire down from heaven to consume them.

Elijah was a man who carried a great burden. His burden was for God's people to be single-minded in their worship of Him; for the twelve tribes of Israel to be reunited in the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

At times Elijah was overwrought with despair and thought himself completely alone in his zeal for God.

## bible-reading plan

**Monday, September 29th**

1 Kings 17:1-16

**Tuesday, September 30th**

1 Kings 17:17-24

**Wednesday, October 1st**

1 Kings 18:1-46

**Thursday, October 2nd**

1 Kings 19:1-21

**Friday, October 3rd**

2 Kings 1:1-18

**Saturday, October 4th**

2 Kings 2:1-14

We read of a time when God met Elijah in his despair and comforted him. Elijah would also be used by God in raising up a prophet named Elisha to come after him.

The final scene in the story of Elijah is when he is taken to heaven by God in a chariot of fire. However, because Elijah did not taste death, he continued to play a role in the prophetic hopes of the nation of Israel. The final prophecies of the Old Testament found in the book of Malachi speak of God sending Elijah to once again restore His people before *“the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.”* (Mal. 4:5) John the Baptist was said to *“act in the spirit and power of Elijah”* (Lk. 1:17) and in the gospels we read that some people thought that Jesus was Elijah restored to life on earth (Matt. 6:14).

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5TH | SERMON NOTES:

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

**CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.**

2) \_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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### **OTHER QUESTIONS:**

4) Elijah was a man who longed for people in a pluralistic society to worship the one true God.

In what ways does the zeal and passion he lived with encourage you? In what ways does it convict you?

- 5) What do you think zeal for God looks like in our city and culture?
- 6) Do you think there's a difference in the kind of faith that Elijah had and the kind that we're called to?  
Why or why not?
- 7) If we recognize a lack of burden in ourselves for people to passionately worship the one true God  
how can we develop one?
- 8) How can we as a Community Group encourage each other in the exercising of our faith?

- 9) Take some time to pray for God to increase the faith and worship of all those who are His for His own glory and the sake of our city.

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Who is Elijah? What job did God give him?
- 2) Read 1 Kings 18:20-21. Who did Elijah think was God? Who did King Ahab and the other priests think was God?



- 3) Read 1 Kings 18:22-29. What test did Elijah make up? What happened when the priests of Baal tried to get him to respond? Why didn't Baal do anything?
- 4) Read 1 Kings 18:30-39. What happened when Elijah called on God? What was the response from the people?
- 5) Elijah had great faith in God. What does it mean to have faith? Can we have faith like that today? What would having faith look like for you?

“

In those days to be elderly, widowed, and left without sons was the most destitute situation a woman could find herself in. Naomi was left with no future, no security, and no hope.

*naomi*

## WEEK 5 | NAOMI

TEXT: RUTH 1-4

THEME: BITTERNESS

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Naomi was a Hebrew woman who lived in Bethlehem during the period of the judges. Naomi was married to a man named Elimelech and had two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Because of a famine the family was forced to leave their home and travel to Moab, east of the Dead Sea. Over the next ten years both of Naomi's sons would marry Moabite women (Ruth and Orpah), and all three men in the family would die.

In those days to be elderly, widowed, and left without sons was the most destitute situation a woman could find herself in. Naomi was left with no future, no security, and no hope. Because she knew they would have no future with her, Naomi instructed her widowed daughters-in-law to leave her and re-marry. Orpah did *"but Ruth clung to her."* (Ruth 1:14b)

Naomi and Ruth then traveled back to Judah together, after hearing that the famine that had originally forced Naomi and Elimelech to leave had ended. When Naomi returned home she instructed people to no longer call her Naomi (pleasant one). *She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"* (Ruth 1:20-21)

The rest of Naomi's story and the redemption that God would bring into her life is centered around Ruth pursuing, marrying, and bearing a child with Boaz, named Obed. Obed was the grandfather of King David, a

bible-reading  
plan

**Monday, October 6th**

Ruth 1:1-18

**Tuesday, October 7th**

Ruth 1:19-22

**Wednesday, October 8th**

Ruth 2:1-23

**Thursday, October 9th**

Ruth 3:1-18

**Friday, October 10th**

Ruth 4:1-12

**Saturday, October 11th**

Ruth 4:13-22

marker pointing forward to the great King Jesus; redemption not only for the human race but also a poor, destitute, embittered, and ultimately blessed widow named Naomi.

*\*Naomi's story covers the same portion of Scripture as Ruth's. This week's readings, however, narrow our focus specifically on the circumstances of hardship and blessing that Naomi experienced.*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12TH | SERMON NOTES:

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

**CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.**

2) \_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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### **OTHER QUESTIONS:**

4) Can you relate to Naomi when she asked people to call her Mara instead? Share some stories with each other of times that you have felt abandoned or let down in some way by God.

- 5) Based on what we know through the gospel of Jesus, how do you think God would have viewed Naomi's name change? (Hint: How does God handle human suffering in Jesus?)
- 6) Do you think Naomi would have been better off hiding her bitterness? Why or why not?
- 7) How does the birth of Obed to Ruth point to grand scale redemption and redemption for Naomi?
- 8) What parts of the gospel do we need to remind each other of when we are feeling bitter?

- 9)** Take some time to pray for those in your group and our city who are wrestling with bitterness and who need to find ultimate redemption in Jesus.

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1)** Who is Naomi? How is she related to Ruth? What tough things happened to her?
- 2)** Read Ruth 1:20-21. What is Naomi's attitude? What does it mean to be bitter?



- 3) Are you ever bitter? What do you get bitter about? How do you think, feel and act when you are bitter?
- 4) Read Hebrews 12:14-15. Why is being bitter such a bad thing? What are you saying to God when you have a bitter attitude?
- 5) What hope do we have even in the worst of times? (Hint - Heb 12:14) How can that help people to move past their bitterness?

“ Shepherd, musician, war-lord,  
leader, adulterer, outlaw, faithful  
friend, failed-father, king of Israel,  
and man after God’s own heart.

*dauid*

## WEEK 6 | DAVID

**TEXT: 1 SAMUEL 16-31, 2 SAMUEL 1-24, 1 KINGS 1-2**

**THEME: FAILURE**

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Shepherd, musician, war-lord, leader, adulterer, outlaw, faithful friend, failed-father, king of Israel, and man after God's own heart. Of Old Testament biblical characters, no one fills more roles than David. The amount of detail we have on his life and the prominence of his role in redemptive history is unparalleled. David's name appears more than a thousand times throughout the Bible. He was not only an important leader in the political and military history of the nation of Israel, but also in their theology, in their worship of God, and in their hopes for the fulfillment of God's promises to them.

David's story began when the prophet Samuel was being called by God to anoint a new king in Israel to take the place of Saul, who had broken covenant with the Lord. All Samuel knew was that the new king would be one of the sons of a man named Jesse. Of all the boys, David wasn't even considered because as the youngest and a shepherd boy, he was the most unlikely to be chosen by God in the eyes of men. And yet he was the only one that Samuel was free to anoint. The theme of God empowering weakness continues throughout David's story. Despite his insufficiencies, David was called upon to do amazing things for God's glory and God's kingdom. David's great victories, however, were surpassed only by his great failures; moral failures, relational failures, and familial failures. And so goes the story of the Bible—God using weak, broken men and woman to do incredible things. David's life was so full of God's Spirit that at times he is mistakenly considered to be the hero

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19TH | SERMON NOTES:

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

**CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.**

2) \_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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**OTHER QUESTIONS:**

4) What aspects of David's life do you find the most compelling and relatable? Why?

- 5) Why do you think we have such a tendency to make heroes out of the characters in the Bible? How do we know that David isn't meant to be the hero of the story?
- 6) What are some of the failings of your life before God? How does David's example encourage us to deal with those failings?
- 7) How does God deal with you in your weakness? What is the difference between worldly sorrow and godly grief? (2 Cor. 7:10)
- 8) Why are we as people and the people of our city so afraid of failure? How does the gospel free us up as Christians to fail?

- 9) Take some time to pray for those in your lives who need to be released from the pressure to be perfect and instead need to depend on Jesus who is perfect in their place.

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What do you know about King David? Was he the obvious choice to be king? Why was he chosen then?
- 2) Was David a good king? How was he faithful to God? (1 Sam 17:36) How was he unfaithful to God? (2 Sam 11:27)



3) What kind of people does God use? Do you have to be perfect to be used by God?

4) Read 2 Corinthians 12:9. Why do you think God's power is shown more when we are weak?

5) What do you learn about God from the life of King David?

“ Nearly a decade and a half later when Sarah was 90 and Abraham nearly 100, the Lord again promised them that within a year they would have a son. This promise was repeated to Abraham by two heavenly messengers in Genesis 18. When Sarah overheard the reaffirmed promise, her doubt was again exposed in her laughter.

*sarai / sarah*

## WEEK 7 | SARAI/SARAH

**TEXT: GENESIS 12-23**

**THEME: DOUBT**

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Sarah is introduced in Genesis as Sarai, the barren wife of Abram (Abraham). She was the first matriarch of what would become the Jewish nation. Her story is intertwined with her husband's and is heavily marked by God's promise that Abraham would be the father of a great nation and through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:2-3).

The fact that Abraham and Sarah were unable to have children appeared to be the primary obstacle to God's promise being fulfilled. It's through this difficulty that we see Sarah's doubt rear its head. She struggled to believe that God could do what was necessary to accomplish what He had promised.

When Sarah was in her mid-70's she attempted to help God with His promise by permitting Abraham to sleep with her maidservant, Hagar. Hagar gave birth to Ishmael. This disobedience gave rise to all kinds of problems. Nearly a decade and a half later when Sarah was 90 and Abraham nearly 100, the Lord again promised them that within a year they would have a son. This promise was repeated to Abraham by two heavenly messengers in Genesis 18. When Sarah overheard the reaffirmed promise, her doubt was again exposed in her laughter.

However, at the age of 91, Sarah bore a son and they named him Isaac (laughter). This promised son born to Sarah, despite her doubt and disobedience, would be the father of Jacob and the line through which the Messiah, Jesus, would be born. Sarah died when she was 127 and was buried by her husband, Abraham.

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

**CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.**

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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### **OTHER QUESTIONS:**

4) What do you think about Sarah's doubt? In what ways was it warranted and in what ways was it inappropriate?

- 5) What do you notice about God's response to Sarah's doubt?
- 6) In what areas of your life are you tempted to doubt God? How do you handle these doubts?  
Have you ever felt condemned for doubts that you've expressed?
- 7) Why do you think that so many people feel ashamed because of doubts that they experience?  
Why don't we talk about our doubts more?
- 8) How can we support a brother or sister in Jesus who is wrestling with doubt?  
What's an example of a bad way to help someone deal with doubt?

**9) How do the specific sins in your life reveal your doubt in who Jesus is and the work he did?**

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**1) Read Genesis 18:9-15. What did God promise Sarah and Abraham? What doubting response did Sarah give?**

**2) What does it mean to doubt? Have you ever doubted something that a friend has told you?  
What causes us to doubt someone?**



**3)** Read John 20:24-29. Why did Thomas doubt that Jesus had risen from the dead?

What was Jesus' response to Thomas?

**4)** Do Christians sometimes have doubts about God? Do you ever doubt what the Bible says?

What should we do when we doubt? (Jude 1:20-22) How can we help a friend who is doubting?

**5)** Why is it wrong to doubt God? Does God always tell the truth? Does God always keep his promises?

Should we have faith in him?

“ When we are first introduced to Joseph he was seventeen years old. He lived with his family in the land of Canaan and was spoiled rotten by his father, because he was the first son born to his father’s greatly loved wife, Rachel.

*joseph*

## WEEK 8 | JOSEPH

**TEXT: GENESIS 37, 39, 40-47**

**THEME: FORGOTTEN**

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Jacob (the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham) was the father of Joseph. Joseph's story began when God visited Jacob's second wife and first love, Rachel, in her barrenness by granting her a son, Joseph. This baby boy was preceded by ten half-brothers and would be followed by a full brother named Benjamin. These twelve would be used by God as the framework for the twelve nations of Israel.

When we are first introduced to Joseph he was seventeen years old. He lived with his family in the land of Canaan and was spoiled rotten by his father, because he was the first son born to his father's greatly loved wife, Rachel. Not surprisingly, one brother finding more love in the eyes of their father than ten others created a very tense and embittered environment in the home.

However, from the outset Joseph seemed quite content in this situation. From the story it is very clear that Joseph tended to exacerbate the situation. He did this once by bringing a bad report of his brothers to his father. The tension again was elevated when Jacob decided to give Joseph the lavish gift of a colorful coat even while the other brothers would have worn plain shepherds garments. The situation is once again worsened when we read of Joseph brashly revealing dreams to his family that predict he would rule over them all one day.

This was all a bit too much for the older brothers to take, and so one day when Joseph was sent out to the fields to report back to Jacob on their activities, the brothers saw him approaching and decided to kill him. Reuben,

Joseph's oldest brother objected to the plan to kill him and instead suggested they throw him in a pit and leave him for dead. However, when Reuben returned later to the pit he found that the other nine brothers had sold him to a passing group of Midianite traders. *Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard* (Genesis 37:36).

Now in Egypt, Joseph's story continued as he found great favor in Potiphar's house and was set as overseer of all his possessions. At this point in the story we also learn that Joseph was very handsome and that this fact had not escaped the notice of Potiphar's wife. After refusing her sexual advances day after day the tension culminated in one final episode when Potiphar's wife grabbed him by his clothes and attempted to force him to lay with her. Joseph ran away leaving Potiphar's wife hanging onto his garment. Angry and probably mortified, she called to the other men in the house and told them that Joseph had assaulted her and ran away when she cried out. Such a crime was punishable by death, but Potiphar decided to merely throw Joseph in prison where he would spend the next several years.

After rising to favor in the eyes of those in charge of him in prison and interpreting the dreams of two inmates who served Pharaoh directly, Joseph was called upon to interpret two troubling dreams of Pharaoh himself. After giving all glory for the interpretations to God, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams and was then placed in a position to manage the nation's agricultural resources in order to prepare them for seven years of famine which would follow seven years of abundance.

During the time of the famine Joseph had risen to a place of prominence in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. Joseph's brothers were sent to Egypt to buy food because the famine was so widespread. Joseph, wearing the Pharaoh's signet ring, the gold chain of office, and otherwise luxuriously dressed as an Egyptian official was not recognized by his brothers. He, however, knew them immediately and began to put them

through a series of difficult situations. Or, as Reuben put it, *"So now there comes a reckoning for his [Joseph's] blood."* (Gen. 42:22) After making the trip back to Canaan and eventually returning to Egypt for more food, this time with Joseph's younger brother Benjamin, the brothers were greeted with a great feast in the governor's house where Joseph continued to disguise himself. After sending them on their way, framing them, and hauling them back in front of the Egyptian governor for sentencing, Joseph could not continue the charade any longer and revealed to them the true nature of his identity. He explained that all they had done had been overseen by God and was all apart of His divine plan.

Joseph's whole family ended up in Egypt, including his father Jacob. While they were on their way to Egypt God met them on the road and said, *"I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."* (Gen. 46:3-4)

After a story filled with hardship, slavery, and many blessings, Joseph died at the age of 110.

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

**CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.**

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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### **OTHER QUESTIONS:**

4) What aspects of Joseph's story resonate the most with you and which ones do you find the hardest to relate to? Why?



**5)** What theme did you notice in Joseph's story? (Hint: Gen. 39:2-6, 21-23, Gen. 41:37-45).

Why do you think this was the case?

**6)** Describe a time when you have felt forgotten by God or by others in your life. How do Joseph's words in Genesis 45:7-8 comfort you?

**7)** Why do you think feeling forgotten is such a big problem in our culture? How can the Christian Church do a better job of shining the light of the gospel on the issues of loneliness, abandonment, and isolation?

- 8)** Take some time to pray for each other and those in our city who feel alone and rejected by those around them.

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1)** Retell the story of Joseph (or parts of it) in your own words.
- 2)** At what points did it seem like Joseph was forgotten by everyone?

**3)** How do we know that God never forgot about Joseph? Read Genesis 45:4-8.

**4)** How do we know that God will never forget about us? Read Matthew 6:25-26.

**5)** What would you share with a friend that was feeling lonely or forgotten? What could you tell them about God? What could you do for them?

“

We see Esther's great courage displayed when she risked her own life to stand in for the lives of her Jewish brothers and sisters living in this foreign land.

*esther*

## WEEK 9 | ESTHER

THEME: COURAGE

TEXT: ESTHER 1-10

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Esther's story, found in the book of the Bible that bears her name, is considered to be a masterpiece of storytelling in ancient world literature.

Esther was born in Susa, the former capital of Elam, which at the time of her birth had been absorbed by Persia. She was orphaned at an early age and brought up by her older cousin, Mordecai. They lived as foreigners under the reign of King Ahasuerus.

One day the King's wife, Vashti, embarrassed him by refusing to obey his command to appear at a banquet. Infuriated, Ahasuerus ordered a search for a new Queen to replace her. Esther, beautiful and lovely (Est. 2:7), was among the young women brought into the harem to be prepared to stand in front of the King. After a year of training she made her first appearance before the King where we read that *He loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti* (Est. 2:17).

Esther's story continued with Mordecai overhearing a plot being hatched to kill the queen. He told Esther about the plot and quickly gained even more favor in the King's eyes by exposing the plan to him.

## *bible-reading plan*

**Monday, November 3rd**

Esther 1-2

**Tuesday, November 4th**

Esther 3-4

**Wednesday, November 5th**

Esther 5-6

**Thursday, November 6th**

Esther 7-8

**Friday, November 7th**

Esther 9

**Saturday, November 8th**

Esther 10

We see Esther's great courage displayed when she risked her own life to stand in for the lives of her Jewish brothers and sisters living in this foreign land.

The trouble began with a powerful official of the king named Haman. Haman was power hungry, and hated Mordecai ever since he refused to bow down to him despite being ordered to. This angered him so greatly that he decided not only to kill Esther's cousin but the entire Jewish population in the region.

Through a series of brilliant and dangerous steps, Esther used her position of influence before the King to stand in for her people. This easily could have cost her her life, but instead she was rewarded with the death of Haman and all the enemies of the Jewish people in that land, the salvation of the Jews, great wealth, and the elevation of her cousin Mordecai into a powerful position in King Ahasuerus' kingdom!

Esther's story reminds us that the gifts we are given by God are to be courageously offered up for the sake of others and not merely hoarded for ourselves.

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

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### OTHER QUESTIONS:

4) Make a list of the things in Esther's story that were given to her that she had no control over.

What do you notice about the way she handled these gifts?



- 5) What things have you been given in life that are clearly outside of your control? Do you tend to view the good things you've been given as deserved or as gifts? Why?
- 6) Read 1 Corinthians 4:7. How does the gospel inform the way we should view the good things we are given in life?
- 7) In what ways do you see humility expressed through the story of Esther? In what ways might Esther have responded differently if she saw herself as entitled to the good things she had been given?
- 8) What would change practically in your life if you viewed everything you possess as not your own but belonging to God and given to you for the sake of others? What message would this send to the people of our city?

- 9)** Take some time to pray for each other to be given the courage to humble ourselves and give all we have for God's glory and the sake of others.

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1)** Why were the Jewish people in danger? What evil thing did Haman do? (Look at Esther 3:13)
- 2)** What did Mordecai want Esther to do? (Read Esther 4:12-14)

**3)** What was Esther's response? Why was this courageous? (Read Esther 4:15-16)

**4)** How do you think Esther felt? Where did Esther find her strength and courage?

**5)** Why do you think Esther didn't just stay in her palace and pray for the Jewish people instead of risking her life? Do you think it would have been wrong for her to do that?

“ Daniel’s story begins with King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon finally conquering Jerusalem and exiling its people in 597 B.C.

*daniel*

## WEEK 10 | DANIEL

TEXT: DANIEL 1-12

THEME: TRUST

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Daniel's story begins with King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon finally conquering Jerusalem and exiling its people in 597 B.C. As was practiced regularly in those days when a kingdom was overthrown, the conquering king would take all the skilled, educated, and otherwise advanced people with him into captivity, usually leaving only the poor behind. Daniel was in an elite class even among those who were taken. King Nebuchadnezzar commanded an office of his court to pick out *"youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the chaldeans."* (Dan. 1:4) Daniel was among them.

Daniel's story and the biblical book that bears his name can be broken down into several parts: First, we have Daniel and his companions refusing to take part in the rich food of this new land, and instead, risking their privileged position to keep themselves pure before the God of their fathers. Second, we have Daniel as the wise interpreter of dreams who gives all the glory to God and causes this foreign king to declare that the God of the Jews was *"God of gods and Lord of Kings."* (Dan. 2:47) The third section of Daniel's story actually involves Daniel's companions: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as they refuse to worship any god but their own, and are subsequently thrown into a blazing furnace, where God intervenes supernaturally and rescues them.

## *bible-reading plan*

**Monday, November 10th**

Daniel 1-2

**Tuesday, November 11th**

Daniel 3-4

**Wednesday, November 12th**

Daniel 5-6

**Thursday, November 13th**

Daniel 7-8

**Friday, November 14th**

Daniel 9-10

**Saturday, November 15th**

Daniel 11-12

The fourth and fifth sections are stories of Daniel again interpreting dreams and bringing an interpretation to the new king Belshazzar after a hand had appeared to write on the wall in front of him at a party.

Of course, the most well known of all Daniel's stories is when he was thrown into the lion's den. At this point in his life, Daniel would have been about 80 years old and serving as a high ranking official under the new king Darius. Daniel's contemporaries were jealous of the favour he had with the king and so they hatched a plan to use his own faith and trust in God against him. A decree was set up that anyone who prayed to or petitioned any god but king Darius for 30 days would be thrown into the lion's den. Daniel's profound trust in God meant that he was a man of prayer. He prayed three times every day in front of an open window facing Jerusalem. His trust in God was so strong that even the threat of death wasn't enough for him to stop praying. Regretfully, King Darius threw him into the pit, but amazingly, God closed the mouths of the lions so that they caused him no harm.

The remainder of the book that bears Daniel's name is prophetic in nature and contains a series of visions that Daniel saw. All the way through his story we see a man who lived with uncompromising faith in the one true God, even when everything in the world was stacked against him.

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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**OTHER QUESTIONS:**

4) What aspects of Daniel's story do you most easily relate to? Why?



- 5) Where do you think Daniel's great trust in God came from?
- 6) How has your own story evidenced trust in God? In what ways do you think your story might show a lack of trust?
- 7) What do you think is the takeaway for modern day Christians reading Daniel's story?  
What is God using this narrative to tell us?
- 8) Daniel had a lot of spiritual disciplines (diet, prayer, etc.). What was the overarching principle behind all of these? In other words, why did Daniel practice these things even when his life was threatened by them?  
How would that change the way we view spiritual disciplines like prayer and Bible study?

- 9)** Take some time to pray for each other, especially in the areas of life where a lack of trust in God is recognizable.

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1)** Read Daniel 6:1-9. Who wanted to get rid of Daniel? What was their plan?
- 2)** Read Daniel 6:10-18. Why do you think Daniel didn't just pray in secret? Why wasn't Daniel upset that God didn't step in earlier to keep him from being thrown in the Lions' Den? (After all, Daniel was always faithful to God.) Did Daniel know for sure he would be saved?

**3)** Read Daniel 6:19-27. How was God glorified through this story? Why do you think God allows his people to go through such scary situations?

**4)** What does it mean to trust in something or someone? How do you know who is trustworthy?

**5)** In what areas of your life do you find it hard to trust God?

“ Tamar’s heart-wrenching story of neglect begins in Genesis 38 where the actions of Jacob’s son, Judah, are described. Judah took a foreign wife for himself and had three sons with her. The names of his sons were Er, Onan, and Shelah.

*Tamar*

## WEEK 11 | TAMAR

**TEXT: GENESIS 38**

**THEME: NEGLECT**

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Tamar's heart-wrenching story of neglect begins in Genesis 38 where the actions of Jacob's son, Judah, are described. Judah took a foreign wife for himself and had three sons with her. The names of his sons were Er, Onan, and Shelah. Tamar was given as a wife to the oldest son, Er. Er was wicked in the eyes of God and Genesis 38:7 tells us that the Lord put him to death for his actions. This left Tamar widowed, and sadly, in that culture that meant she had no security and little value. According to custom Tamar was to be taken in by the next brother in line who would raise up offspring for his brother through her. Onan, Judah's next oldest son, took full advantage of the sexual rights of a husband, but because he didn't want to raise up offspring for his brother he would waste his semen on the ground. This was wicked in the eyes of God and Genesis 38:10 tells us that God put him to death for it.

Tamar was still left without a husband and security, but Judah feared giving his youngest son, Shelah, to Tamar as a husband, so he asked her to wait until Shelah grew up instead. Shelah eventually grew up and Tamar still had not been given to him as a wife.

Husband-less and childless, Tamar donned the clothes of a prostitute. She was then hired by her father-in-law, Judah himself (although he had no idea who she was). In exchange for sex he promised a young goat would be delivered to her. Not having a goat with him, she took his signet, cord, and staff from him as collateral.

## bible-reading plan

**Monday, November 17th**

Genesis 38:1-5

**Tuesday, November 18th**

Genesis 38:6-11

**Wednesday, November 19th**

Genesis 38:12-19

**Thursday, November 20th**

Genesis 38:20-23

**Friday, November 21st**

Genesis 38:24-26

**Saturday, November 22nd**

Genesis 38:27-30

When Judah sent the goat to the prostitute no one could find her or knew who she was.

Three months later a report was brought to Judah that his daughter-in-law, Tamar, had been found to be with child outside of wedlock. Instantly Judah commanded that she be brought out and burned for her immorality. When Tamar arrived she brought the signet, cord, and staff of the man who had gotten her pregnant. When Judah saw that they were his and that she was the prostitute he had slept with he declared, *"She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah."* (Genesis 38: 26)

Tamar bore twins, Perez and Zerah. Judah, Tamar, and both the twins are mentioned in Jesus' genealogy in the first chapter of Matthew's gospel.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD | SERMON NOTES:

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

**CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.**

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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### **OTHER QUESTIONS:**

4) Sadly, Tamar's story of neglect could have been written by many people throughout history.

Do you relate to any aspects of it? If so, which ones?



- 5) What was the root problem in the men who treated Tamar with such abuse and neglect? How do these same root issues manifest themselves in our culture today?
- 6) Describe a time when you have felt alone or neglected? How did you handle that?
- 7) Read Genesis 38:24. What strikes you as 'off' in the death sentence that Judah so quickly passes on to Tamar?
- 8) How can we as Christians stand in for and help those in our city who are most neglected? How does the gospel council us in times when we are abused by others?

9) How does the gospel counsel us in times when we are abused by others?

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Because of the adult content and nature of the story of Tamar, Westside Kids will be studying Joshua for two weeks instead.**

- 1) Read Joshua 1:5-6. What does God promise Joshua? What land is Joshua supposed to lead God's people into?
  
- 2) Read Joshua 1:7-8. What is the essential thing for being a good leader according to God? What should fill Joshua's mind and heart? Why is this so important?

**3)** Read Joshua 1:9. What is the basis for God's command to be courageous? What do you find encouraging in God's word?

**4)** Read Joshua 3:14-17. What amazing thing did God just do? Has he done that before? When? How did this fulfill God's promise to Joshua?

**5)** Read Joshua 4:1-7. Why did God command Joshua to build a pile of 12 stones? How can we remember the great things God has done in our lives?

“ When Moses was nearing death and it was time to raise up a new leader for the nation of Israel, God chose Joshua to lead His people. Of course, Joshua’s leadership was not perfect but it was marked by courage, fearlessness, and above all else the law of God.

*joshua*

## WEEK 12 | JOSHUA

TEXT: JOSHUA 1-24

THEME: LEADERSHIP

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

We're first introduced to Joshua, the son of Nun, during the account of Israel's exodus from Egypt. After the Israelites had crossed over the Red Sea they faced the attack of Amalekites. In order to defend themselves Moses designated Joshua to lead the nation in its defense. *Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.* (Ex. 17:13) The next time we hear about Joshua is when he is mentioned as Moses's assistant who alone went up with him into the mountain of God. (Ex. 24:13) Joshua was also one of the twelve spies who were sent to spy out the land of Canaan which God had promised to give to them. After seeing the formidable opponents that the Canaanites would be, only he and Caleb had enough faith in God's word to encourage the Israelite nation to attack instead of flee. Because of the doubt of the nation of Israel, God commanded that they would wander in the desert for 40 years and that no one in that nation, other than Joshua and Caleb, would enter the promised land.

When Moses was nearing death and it was time to raise up a new leader for the nation of Israel, God chose Joshua to lead His people. Of course, Joshua's leadership was not perfect but it was marked by courage, fearlessness, and above all else the law of God. This was God's mandate for him which we read in the opening chapter of the book that bears his name. God promised him that *"No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give*

## bible-reading plan

**Monday, November 24th**

Exodus 17:8-16;  
Deuteronomy 31, 34

**Tuesday, November 25th**

Joshua 1

**Wednesday, November 26th**

Joshua 5

**Thursday, November 27th**

Joshua 6

**Friday, November 28th**

Joshua 8

**Saturday, November 29th**

Joshua 23-24

*them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” (Josh. 1:5-9)*

Joshua’s final act before his death was exhorting God’s people again to choose this day whom they would serve. He commanded the leaders and everyone to remember the past works of God on their behalf and the promises that were yet to be fulfilled. He commanded them to be single minded in their pursuit of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Joshua died at the age of 110 and his life and legacy is that *“Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that the LORD did for Israel.” (Josh. 24:31)*

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## COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

**CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.**

2) \_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

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**OTHER QUESTIONS:**

4) What makes a good leader? What stands out to you about the leadership of Joshua?



- 5) In what ways are all Christians called to be leaders? How does the call to make disciples infer leadership?
- 6) How does your own leadership compare to Joshua's? In what ways do you lead as he did?  
In what ways don't you?
- 7) What kind of leaders are Christians called to be? How does the example of Jesus inform your answer?  
What does it mean to abide in Jesus?
- 8) Why do people tend to be so anti-authoritarian today? How would a Christian model of leadership help  
with those impulses?

- 9)** Take some time to pray for each to lead well in the areas that God has called each of us to?

#### FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1)** Read Joshua 5:13-15. Who came to visit Joshua? Why was the ground in that place Holy?
- 2)** What was God's plan to defeat Jericho? (Joshua 6) Whose strength and power did this plan highlight?  
How was Joshua a faithful leader?

- 3) How do you think Joshua and his army felt just walking around the city? Does God sometimes call us to do things that seem strange to the people around us? Like what?
- 4) Is it more important to do things that are right in our eyes, or God's eyes? Why is this sometimes hard?
- 5) What is Joshua's final challenge? (Read Joshua 24:14-15) What other gods are you tempted to serve? What is your answer to Joshua and God?

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## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- Freedman, David Noel. Dictionary of the Bible. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000.
- Hill, Andrew, and John Walton. A Survey of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.



*This booklet has been prepared for the body of Westside Church as a supplement to our fall 2014 series called Story.*

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