

Intervention #7
The End of Mother Guilt
Matthew 1:1-7; 16
5/8/16

- Today is Mother's Day when we honor mothers. In looking for Mother's Day inspiration, I read some interesting quotes and stories about mothers.
 - o Spanish Proverb: "An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy." After reading that, I wondered how much I'm worth as a mother and a clergy?
 - o George Washington once said, "My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her."
 - o President John Quincy Adams stated, "All that I am my mother made me."

- There's not much in this world better than a mother. And, there is nothing much better in this world than being a mother. It certainly has changed my life completely.
 - o If there is anything better, it might be a grandmother. There is something special about grandmothers, right? My boys don't get to see their grandmothers often, but they still talk about them and never forget them. They are always asking when they are going to see Grandma again.

- A third grader was tasked to explain ***What is a Grandmother?*** This is what he wrote:
 - o A grandmother is a lady who has no children of her own. She likes other people's little girls and boys. A grandfather is a man grandmother. He goes for walks with boys, and they talk about fishing and stuff like that.
 - o Grandmothers don't have to do anything except be there. They're old so they shouldn't play hard or run. It is enough if they drive us to the market where the pretend horse is, and have a lot of dimes ready. Or if they take us for walk, they should slow down past things like pretty leaves and caterpillars. They should never say, "Hurry up!"
 - o Usually grandmothers are fat, but not too fat to tie your shoes. They wear glasses and funny underwear. They can take their teeth and gums out. (As a side note, that was always one of the most fun things we would want our Grandma to do!)
 - o Grandmothers don't have to be smart, only answer questions like, "Why isn't God married?" and "How come dogs chase cats?" Grandmothers don't talk baby talk like visitors do, because it is hard to understand. When they read to us they don't skip or mind if it is the same story over again.
 - o Everybody should try to have a grandmother, especially if you don't have television, because they are the only grown-ups who have time.

- You know, I have heard some men complaining that mothers get it so much better than fathers. Father's Day is not as big of a deal as Mother's Day. Now, my husband would never complain about such things...but, I've heard the complaint!
 - More money is spent on Mother's Day than Father's Day, nearly twice as much. Maybe more money is spent on Mother's Day because of this idea of time spent. Overall, mothers probably spend more time with their children which then translates into more money spent on them. Just a suggestion. 😊
 - Or is twice as much spent because mothers do twice as much as fathers? That could be debatable. Although, overall, I think it might be safe to say that the responsibility for child-rearing does fall disproportionately on mothers. Let's face it, mothers do tend to naturally take on more in child-rearing.
 - I realize that isn't always the case. There are poor mothers, completely disconnected mothers, abusive mothers.

- Yet, for most mothers, there is this very real thing called mother guilt that propels us to do more, more, more. This mother guilt is when mothers never think they did enough or were enough and so they end up trying to overcompensate and do more, more, more. Mother's guilt is real! It's kind of like this picture I found.
 - Some attribute this idea of mother guilt to the fact that counseling, starting with Freud, began to trace mental health issues back to the mother / child relationship. In effect, the premise is that mothers are messing up their children!
 - So, as mothers, we become so worried about messing up our kids that we work so hard to do everything right, which is an impossibility. And, deep down, we know that, but we still try!

- This isn't just a thing for mothers. You know, one of the battles every woman faces is the temptation to compare yourself – to compare yourself to others, to compare your husband to other husbands, to compare what you are doing with what others appear to be doing, to compare your children with the children of others, etc.
 - The problem is, ladies, is that this is so detrimental to yourself and it undermines what God wants you to focus on. He wants you to focus on how he sees you. He wants you to give up control so that he can have control of your life and your children's lives.
 - Because the fact of the matter is that God's plan for intervention is to take our limitations and redeem them for his glory. Instead of that first picture, this picture shows us what God wants to do.

- God's intervention is to bring redemption – redemption. Over the last several weeks, we've been looking at the various aspects of God's intervention and how he wants to intervene in our lives.

- The greatest intervention in human history was when God sent his Son, Jesus to redeem us from sin. It was when, on that first Easter, Jesus burst forth from the tomb in complete victory. This victory was then extended to us through salvation and the forgiveness of sin which then gives us power and victory over sin and death and the grave. This victory gives us eternal life.
 - We've looked at how even when God seems far, he is still intervening on our behalf, how to have a mindset that is looking for God's intervention and how our level of trust in God directly correlates to how much God can intervene in our lives.
- Today, we're going to look at the truth of that last picture – even when we are inadequate, in spite of our sin or shortcomings, God can still intervene through us and his intervention can reach beyond us.
- We're going to look at the stories of four different mothers to see the truth of this. These mothers all are part of the lineage of Jesus. Each of them show how even though these women were inadequate, unworthy and even guilty of great sin, God still intervened through them to bring Jesus, the greatest redemption for humanity.
 - Let's read about these four women in **Matthew 1:1-6; 16** as they are listed in Jesus' genealogy.

Now, the first thing we should know in reading this is that the fact that Matthew recorded these women at all was scandalous. Now, the holy mother, Mary, she should be included. I mean, Mary, she was the one who was found to have such a heart for God that he chose her to bear and raise his only Son. Mary was special.

- But, the inclusion of some of these other women would have made the average Jewish reader to choke and spit out their coffee as they were reading or hearing it!
 - First of all, they were women. You didn't record women in a genealogy. Only the fathers were recorded. The mothers weren't important – as if only the father could bring a child into the world!
 - But, three of them were Gentile women. They weren't even Jewish. They weren't even from God's original chosen people. Three of them committed great sexual sin. Two of them conceived children found in this genealogy as a result of their sexual sin.
 - The inclusion of these women tainted Jesus' genealogy. Why in the world would Matthew include them?
- Maybe because Matthew had been around Jesus long enough as an original disciple that he knew the heart of Jesus was to intervene. Jesus intervenes by redeeming our past, no matter how bad it might be!
- Oh, Matthew knew that well because Jesus intervened in his life and redeemed his past. Matthew was a tax collector. He was so hated because

he stole from people by taxing them more than what they owed and pocketing the rest.

- Then, Jesus intervened and took his past and redeemed it so that he could be a disciple of Jesus and a leader of the Christian church.
 - Matthew knew well this redemption and he knew the heart of Jesus toward women. He saw Jesus with the women at the well as we saw last week. He saw how Jesus spoke to women, how he accepted women as his disciples, how Jesus respected women in a way no one else did. He saw how Jesus even reached out to Gentile women.
 - I think Matthew figured out what God was doing with this genealogy and who he used to bring about Jesus, the Messiah. Matthew figured out that God could redeem anyone and any circumstance in order to bring about his best, Jesus.
- Now, the appearance of names DOES NOT validate or condone what any of these women did, but only that God's Son is linked to them and that because of Jesus being linked to them, he redeemed them!
- Listen, your past may include things that cannot be condoned, but they can be redeemed. These four women listed before Mary show that God does some amazing things with some pretty messed up people. He can redeem even the most tainted past and make it into something beautiful.
- So, let's take a look at these mothers and see what they can teach us about God's intervention and motherhood or parenthood.
- The first woman in the genealogy is Tamar. The story of Tamar shows us that leaving God's plan will cost you. Her story is in Genesis 38.
 - Tamar's father-in-law is Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, one of the fathers of the tribes of Israel. Judah started out good and then he disobeyed God.
 - He disobeyed God and married the wrong person. He went off and married a Canaanite woman.
 - Then, he disobeyed God in the way he treated his daughter-in-law, Tamar. He arranged for his son to marry Tamar. But, his son died. What happens next probably isn't even appropriate for a day-time soap opera!
- Here's the gist of the account: Judah's gentile daughter-in-law, Tamar, is left as a widow with no son (no heir) when her husband dies. This basically makes her husbandless, homeless, and broke because women can do nothing without a husband or a son.
- Under their customs, she is permitted to have a son by her father-in-law or one of her brothers-in-law. They are not willing to take her in or help her have a son, but they are willing to use/abuse her sexually.
 - Eventually, she poses as a prostitute and deceives Judah into sleeping with her which resulted in her becoming pregnant with twins. He never knows

- the prostitute was his daughter-in-law until she is found to be pregnant and he's about to have her stoned. Then she produces proof that the child is his.
- Now, believe it or not, that's the cleanest version of that story that I can tell you. Look it up for yourself in Genesis 38.
- Can you see why any Jewish reader, who would have known this story, would have choked on their coffee when reading that Tamar's name was included in the genealogy of Jesus? "What can a story like that tell us?"
 - First, all of this chaos happened because a man decided to leave God's plan for his future and do his own thing.
 - It ALWAYS costs you (your family) when you leave God's plan. Always.
 - But, the second thing we can learn is that even through the most ungodly situations, God is preparing a way of INTERVENTION.
 - In this story, God's was preparing a way of intervention for all of humanity even through this mess. In your life, God is preparing a way of intervention for someone and it might just be for your children.
 - You may have messed up royally. You may have sinned greatly. You may have done the exact opposite of what you know God wanted you to do. But, God can still redeem that as you return to him.
 - You may have been the victim of some horrible things that have happened to you. Maybe others used and abused you. Still God can intervene and redeem it and even redeem others through it.
 - What we have to do is to return to his plan of hope, blessing and future for us. We have to listen to his voice and return to his ways.
 - Isaiah 30:20-21 says Though the Lord gave you adversity for food and suffering for drink, he will still be with you to teach you.
You will see your teacher with your own eyes.
²¹Your own ears will hear him.
Right behind you a voice will say,
"This is the way you should go,"
whether to the right or to the left.
 - Mothers, and everyone, if we want to bring redemption to our households, we need to listen to his voice and obey it. Don't listen to the voices of the past, but listen to God's voice for your future.
 - The next woman's name in Jesus' lineage is Rahab. In her story, we learn that God's arm is longer than our sin or inadequacies. His intervention is able to reach farther than our sin, no matter how great.
 - Isaiah 59:1 says Listen! The LORD's arm is not too weak to save you, nor is his ear too deaf to hear you call.

- Rahab's story shows this like no other. Her story is one of the greatest pictures of Redemption in the whole bible. See, Rahab was born outside any chance of grace.
 - o She lived in the Canaanite city of Jericho. This city was destined for JUDGMENT. It would be the first city to fall as the Israelites came in to conquer the Promised Land.
 - o Not only was she a Gentile who lived on the walls of a city that was about to fall down flat, she was also a prostitute.

- Yet, she knew that the Israelite God was powerful. She heard the stories of his greatness and she believed them. She believed that God must be the one true God. So, she allowed the Hebrew spies to hide in her house and she only asked for one thing. Like any mother, she asked them to "Save my family."
 - o In order to be spared, she was to tie a scarlet cord from her window. Now, the color meant nothing to her then, but it shouts to us thousands of years later that this represented the BLOOD OF CHRIST!
 - o Even though the whole city was destroyed, she and her family were saved. Her house stayed up when all the walls around her fell. She went on, it is thought, to marry one of the Israelite spies she hid and to be a mother in the lineage of Jesus. What an honor! It's all because of the blood of Jesus!
 - o Ephesians 2:11-13 sums up Rahab's intervention of redemption and really the intervention of redemption for all of us. It says that although Gentiles were without Christ and had no hope. But, because of the blood of Jesus, we, who were once far off, have been brought near!
 - o His arms will reach to the highest mountain and the lowest valley to redeem us from the worst of sins.

- Maybe you feel like your circumstances have taken you away from God. Maybe your family lineage is filled with people who have sinned greatly. Maybe you have done things that have greatly affected your family and you wonder if anything can undo what you have done.
 - o Well, here's something that can undo any sin – the blood of Jesus!
 - o Rahab found out that no matter how far she was from God, she could redeem her whole household through her faith in the one true God. One scarlet thread in the window of Rahab's house saved her family.
 - A. TODAY, the scarlet thread of Jesus' blood in your life will bring you to Him no matter how far you've drifted. It's never too late for the arm of Jesus can reach through time and redeem any time lost. Your guilt may be a long line of bad memories, but God's arm of redemption is LONGER!!!

- Romans 5:6-9 says "When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. ⁷ Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. ⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for

us while we were still sinners. ⁹ And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation."

- Rahab was made right in God's sight. Regardless of what you have done, you can be made right in God's sight.
 - So, mother guilt, be gone! Forget what other may say or may do or the standard you are to live up to. When you are covered with the blood of Jesus, his arm is long enough to break the bond of sin and inadequacy in order to bring redemption! And, living a life of redemption is the greatest thing you can give and the best example you can set for your family.
- Ruth is the third woman in Jesus' lineage. Ruth is also a Gentile, a non-Jew who seemingly had little hope because of her non-Jewish heritage. Again, though, God is going to say something different.
- Through her story, we find that 100% commitment brings God's intervention of redemption.
- If you know her story, she was married to a Jewish man who died and left her without anything. They, along with his mother and father, were living in Moab, a Gentile country. Ruth's father-in-law also died and her mother-in-law, Naomi, decided to go back home to Bethlehem where she had some hope of being taken care of by family.
- Naomi told Ruth to stay in Moab, but Ruth committed to God and to God's people. She told her mother-in-law, "I'll leave my old life and go with you wherever you go. Naomi said, "I have no other son for you to marry. Going with me is a death sentence."
 - Ruth would be rejected among the people. She would never find another husband. There was no hope for her in Israel.
 - But Ruth left all to be with the people of God. Her commitment is 100% as found in Ruth 1:16-17 which says, "But Ruth replied, "Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. ¹⁷ Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!"
- Regardless of what is going to happen to her, Ruth committed 100%. God is going to bless that because along comes Boaz, a relative of Naomi.
- Did you notice in the lineage who Boaz was also related to? Boaz's mother is actually Rahab! Talk about God working it out to bring this Gentile woman together with a man who understood God's intervention of redemption! His own mother had been redeemed by the unfailing and all-consuming love of God. He understood the redemption and compassion of God probably more than anyone. He now could extend that to Ruth.

- He extended it through being kind to her first. Then, in seeing her commitment to the Lord and to God’s people, he fell in love with her and would marry Ruth.
 - Because of her faithfulness, God honors her and she is rescued! Boaz and Ruth became the grandparents of King David.
- Ruth’s story show us that there comes a time when you must say “goodbye” to the old life and pursue Christ with all your heart. Mothers, your 100% commitment to Jesus is the best thing for your child to see in you.
- If it means you have to leave the things or the people you once knew in order to be 100% committed to Jesus, then so be it. When your children see that, then they begin to understand how completely important Jesus over all other things. And, they will begin to emulate that as well.
 - Over the last few years, Josiah has received several birthday party invites from friends. And, unsurprisingly, about half of those have been for parties that are on Sunday late morning / early afternoon. The first one to come that was on a Sunday, I read the invitation to him. Then, I said, “Josiah, this party is on a Sunday, right during church time.” He said, “What? Well, I can’t go then, because we go to church, right?” I said, “Right. And, worshiping Jesus is the most important thing for us to do as family.”
 - Although he is often disappointed when a party is scheduled on a Sunday, he doesn’t ever ask to skip church to go. Oh, it is my prayer that this continues. A big part of if this continues is if we, as his parents, display 100% commitment to Jesus and the people of God.
- Ruth left all to be with the people of God and was greatly blessed because of it. Have you left all to be with God and his people?
- The final woman in Jesus’ lineage was Jewish, but listing her tainted King David’s lineage because it reminded everyone of the sin that David committed. Her name is Bathsheba and the lesson we learn from her life is that even the best can fall.
- We probably know this story. Bathsheba was the one David saw taking a bath and wanted her. He called for her and slept with her. She became pregnant with his son. Her husband, Uriah, was one of the highest army officials in David’s army and he was out fighting for his king. David called him to come home so that it might look like she became pregnant by her husband.
 - But, Uriah was a good man of integrity and refused to sleep with his wife in his comfortable home while his men were fighting in battle and sleeping far from home. So, David conspired to get him killed in battle and then he married Bathsheba.
- That all sounds horrible and it is. But, let’s remember - David and Bathsheba were good people. David was a man after God’s own heart, according to Scripture.

Bathsheba was a good woman, married to a good man. She obeyed David and did what he wanted probably because of fear if she disobeyed the king. They both sinned.

- Even the best can fall. Even those closest to God can fall if we let our guard down. But, even when the best fall, it cannot taint what Jesus can do through that! He can still redeem and make them his best again.
- Too many times, people fall and they turn from God's plan. While that is tragic, even worse is if then they believe the lie that God will never fully use them or forgive them or love them as much again. Bologna! That's just a ploy from the pit of hell to keep you from being redeemed fully and completely again!
 - God can and will and desires to redeem fallen people completely! He included Bathsheba in the lineage to remind people not of the sin of David and Bathsheba, but of the redemption that came through their repentance! There is redemption in repentance! You may fall, but you don't have to stay fallen! You were created to rise up and fly in redemption!
- Moms, if you feel guilty today, God is telling us through the lineage of Jesus to stop it! For everyone, if you feel guilty today, God is telling us through the lineage of Jesus to stop it! Jesus is saying, "Look at my family line! If I can have a plan that uses all of those folk – both men and women – who have messed up, but my perfect plan still prevails, then I can surely do it for you and your situation!"
 - Jesus still has a plan for you and he will intervene to make his plan a reality as you trust him.
- If you have left God's plan, he can still redeem it! You will never be good enough to redeem it on your own or by what you do, but Jesus can! He can redeem your sin, he can redeem your inadequacies, he can redeem your mistakes, he can redeem your failures. And, he can set you free from guilt!
 - His arm is long enough, his love is wide enough, his intervention is great enough! Turn to him and commit 100%, see what his intervention can redeem! He's already more than committed 100% to us!
- Today, maybe your family is in a difficult situation and you are at your wits end as to what to do. Maybe you had turned over and over in your mind what you have done or what you can do. This is what you can do – commit yourself 100% to trust in God and turn to him with every worry and fear you have. Then, wait and see that the Lord is good and that he has a plan of intervention to redeem your family.
 - Trust him to intervene. Trust him to take what Satan intended for evil and that Jesus can make it into good!
 - Then, you can get rid of the mother guilt and have a happy, redeemed, intervention-filled Mother's Day!