



## Sermon Notes from 2 December

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### The Christmas of Five Unlikely Women and One Just Man

(Matthew 1:1-6, 16-21) by Rev Guna Raman

In middle-eastern genealogy, only names of men are listed and never women. There is no mention of women in the list in Luke 3:23-38. But Matthew has women included:

1. Tamar (v3; Gen 38:1-30) An Aramean – a non-Hebrew gentile, Tamar boldly turned to a grossly immoral method – incest (Gen 38:16,25,26), to gain her right according to the Levirate custom which gave the widow and family estate protection. But instead of being stoned according to the Levitical law (Lev 20:12), Tamar gets into Christ's genealogy!

2. Rahab (Matt 1:5-6) Even as a harlot and a gentile she had faith in the God of Israel. She risked her life in courageously saving the 2 spies.

3. Ruth (Ruth 1:16-17) A Moabite and non-Hebrew, she forsakes her people and land to follow Naomi and the God of Israel. She had the courage to approach Boaz about his kinsman duty (Ruth 3:9).

4. Bathsheba (Matt 1:6) A Hebrew, married to a gentile, Bathsheba caught the eye of the king. Adultery led to murder! But David openly repented of his sin (Psalm 51).

5. Mary A low and peasant teenager, she humbly accepted the costly discipleship of being the mother of Jesus. The virgin conception was unique to her. Though seen by the public as an immoral woman deserving to be stoned, she surrendered herself to God (Luke 1:38).

Why does Matthew list the four OT women in Jesus' ancestry?

#### **1. He includes men and women.**

As Jesus had both men and women in his band of disciples - uncommon in those days, Matthew followed suit in his

list as a sign of the new kingdom of God (Gal 3:28).

#### **2. He includes Jews and Gentiles.**

All the men in the lineage were Jews. Only the women were gentiles.

#### **3. Among the women selected, he includes saints and sinners.**

#### **4. All four women demonstrate intelligence, boldness and courage.**

The list of Christ's ancestors gives us a clue into the kind of people he had come to save. God had us in mind.

6. Joseph (Matt 1:18-19) Joseph did not deal with Mary according to the law in Deuteronomy. He reprocessed his anger and instead showed her compassion according to the word in Isaiah 42:3: *Justice* means compassion for the weak and the exhausted; a *reed* is a kind of strong rope used to bind and build structures and a *wick* is made from a crushed reed which would otherwise be thrown into the fire.

Joseph was just because he saw Mary as *a bruised reed and a dimly burning wick*. He acted boldly with the Lord's justice - neither retributive nor of equal application.

Tamar, Rahab and Bathsheba deserved the wrath of God. Instead, they became carriers of the promised seed that crushed the head of the devil. And through Mary a young virgin girl, God brought the seed to life – Jesus his holy and sinless Son – to lash out his wrath against all of our sins on him. The 5 women and us can find grace and mercy through Jesus! We too now can reprocess our anger and turn it into grace towards those who have hurt and done injustice to us.