

# Bathsheba— When we Fail to Keep our Promises, God does not

Please open with me to Matthew 1.

In our study of the lessons God has given us from the life of David His servant, we have come to a woman named Bathsheba. Bathsheba is only mentioned by name in the Old Testament (11 times). But for a very special purpose she is also found in the New Testament.

In America we celebrate moms in many different ways; but there is a list of mothers that God has honored in a most unusual way.

God has singled out and highlighted five mothers out of all those hundreds described in His Word. And He placed them in a special place—in the pathway through which Christ came. Please open with me to Matthew 1.

Have you ever studied the women with whom God chose to surround Christ's coming to earth? I am talking about the highly unusual presence of five special women included in His genealogy in Matthew 1. It is interesting that no women are listed in any of the genealogical records of the Old and New Testaments except for Matthew's. Matthew 1:1-16 lists five special mothers in the line awaiting the coming of the Promised One.

Women weren't highly regarded in ancient times; they lived in a man's world. This fact made life very difficult for them. God profiles these five courageous and gifted women because they were a part of God's team. Their lives were part of God's plan to bring a ray of light to herald the sunrise on the night of sin that had come into our world. Through their line, the promised Savior was going to be supernaturally born!

Five women in a long list of genealogical records, all of whom have something in common. Each of them, during their lifetime, were the subject of moral scandal. Each of them would be what we may call—stained by sin.

*Matthew 1:1-6, 16 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: 2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. 3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah **by Tamar**, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. 4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. 5 Salmon begot Boaz **by Rahab**, Boaz begot Obed **by Ruth**, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon **by her who had been the wife of Uriah**. 16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of **Mary, of whom was born** Jesus who is called Christ. NKJV*

Read and pray.

Bathsheba is a Hebrew name that means 'daughter of an oath, promise, or covenant'. What is so interesting about that name is, that it belonged to a woman who didn't keep her oath, promise, and covenant.

What comes to your mind when you hear that name Bathsheba? Most often it is the sin of adultery that David and Bathsheba together committed against God and their marriage covenant, oath, and promises.

- But do you also think of Bathsheba's loyal and faithful husband Uriah, betrayed by the king he served--as he was left to die under a barrage of arrows? *Because Bathsheba failed to keep her promises...*
- Do you think of what it must have been like as Bathsheba watched the army of Israel bringing Uriah's body into Jerusalem after carrying him back the 44 miles from where he fell in battle? *Because Bathsheba failed to keep her promises...*
- Do you think of what it must have been like for her to have stood at the funeral for a fallen war hero and know that deep within her womb was the growing life whose conception prompted the murder of her own husband? *Because Bathsheba failed to keep her promises...*
- Do you think of a tiny grave that held the infant son that died by God's judgment? *Because Bathsheba failed to keep her promises...*
- Do you think of how many times in the years that followed, when a place or person reminded Bathsheba of her youthful days of meeting and marrying her husband Uriah--and wouldn't Bathsheba again remember why he died? *Because Bathsheba failed to keep her promises...*

So when Bathsheba (daughter of a promise) married Uriah (the Lord is my light) they became a wonderful picture of all the best that God offers us in this life. But after one very bad choice Bathsheba made, when ever we think of her we are reminded that when we fail to keep our oaths, promises, and covenants—God does not.

Bathsheba will always remind us that there are dire and inescapable consequences for sin.

So Bathsheba is forever associated with David and their sin. And that is because she failed to keep her promises. And because of the consequences that come from sin, Bathsheba was stained and her life marred.

But is that the end of the story? No, as we open to the New Testament we find one last mention of Bathsheba in a whole new light—the light of grace. Bathsheba's name in the opening paragraph of the New Testament reminds us of the One who came as Paul says in Romans 5:20:

*"... But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" NKJV*

Bathsheba on this side of the cross is a forgiven sinner and a portrait of God's grace.

Matthew 1 is the final mention of Bathsheba, the woman that became the stain on David's record. Remember last time we saw that incredible postscript to an incredible life? Has God's Word stopped you yet and made you soberly think about where your life, habits, and secret thoughts are headed?

Listen as I read and emphasize again that one word God emphasizes for us.

*1 Kings 15:5 because David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. NKJV*

God forgives the sins, and God forgets the iniquities. But the consequences and loss are recorded in the Bible, God's forever settled in Heaven Word. Even here in Matthew 1 notice what God says and let it be a warning to flee sin and avoid lust all costs. If you and I don't—it will cost us dearly.

None of the women—of all the women of the Bible—are more special than the five who actually open the pages of the New Testament. Who are they? They are the five precious wives and mothers tucked away in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Why would God place them there in that usually “men only” genealogical section? You will see, as you read this chapter, encouraging applications these women offer as a testimony from their lives:

- Their lives give **hope** to those who have failed, and feel that it is impossible to ever go on and please God.
- Their lives give **comfort** to those who ache with pain from wounds, sorrows, and hurts that God has allowed to invade their lives.
- Their lives are an incredible source of **strength** to those who have a long struggle ahead. Knowing that God helped them, sustained them, and kept them going fosters confidence that no struggle will ever exceed His grace and power to uphold.

Each of these women was stained either by her own sin, the sins of another, or the scandalous plots of others. Only one word can adequately describe what God did in their cases—**grace!**

First, we will consider the fourth woman in that list who is alluded to in Matthew 1:6. The reason Bathsheba is here in this chapter is to remind us of the doctrine of God's forgiving grace. That doctrine reminds us all that we are like...

### **Bathsheba—No Stain Is Too Deep for God's Grace**

The story of this fourth woman we have already seen in 2 Samuel 11 and 12. Bathsheba was in the wrong place at the wrong time—in all these areas we could call her “defeated”:

- She was unwise at best, to have washed herself, unclothed outside of her home.
- She was immodest in her display.

- She responded to David's interest in her, even though she was another man's wife, and he was another woman's husband.
- She muffled her heart's warning as God's conviction was upon her conscience.
- She stifled the virtuous vows that she had made of lifelong loyalty to Uriah.
- She ignored the fact that God had given her a wonderful, courageous, loyal warrior husband.
- She yielded herself to passion, and the sin that would follow.

What did Bathsheba reap from all that defeat? Her husband, Uriah, was murderously slain, and the baby she had conceived by David choked out his life in death. Bathsheba and David—the grieving, sorrowing mother and the murderous, adulterous father—faced great sadness. And, after Nathan spoke to David about his sin, the world would forever know that Bathsheba was a defeated woman.

Her sin became monumental for all time. Numerous movies have even been made about her illicit romance, which was both public and shameful. Some people may think: *Oh, I can do that, and no one will ever find out. We can cover our tracks!* But the Scriptures say that whatever you sow, you will reap; and whatever you whisper in secret will be shouted from the rooftops (Matthew 10:27; Galatians 6:7-8).

What did God's placing Bathsheba in Christ's genealogy do? He graciously lifted her out of her pit of defeat. In doing so, God was saying, "Here's a woman who is unworthy, who is a sinner. Though she's done many things wrong, I'm going to let her be one through whom I will bring Christ into this world." God also poured out His grace upon David and Solomon, from whom we've received a great deal of our Scripture. Through them, we learn about what it means to live wisely—to be someone after God's own heart. And, according to His perfect plan, Bathsheba became a beautiful portrait of His grace, as we find in Matthew 1:6: *"David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah."*

Jesus loves to forgive and cleanse. He is waiting today, as He was in Revelation 2-3, for us to hear His voice, repent of our sin, and let Him wash us clean. Revelation 1:5 says that Jesus wants us to know Him as the One who *"loved us, and washed us [kjb] and freed us [niv] from our sins."* No stain of the past, no sin of our youth, no failure in our home or marriage is too deep for the God of the Second Chance.

No failures are permanent with Him.

- **Take your burdens** to the Lord right now, and start over. You may be estranged from your mother, father, or children, or grandchildren—Jesus can help. Bring that deep pain and sorrow to Him right where you sit and place it at His feet. The Christian life is a continual offer from God—new beginnings.
- **Bow before Jesus and start over** as a mother or father for God, as man or woman of God, as a husband or wife for God, or as a godly boy or girl—right now.

When we look at the rest these women in the remainder of this chapter, we will be looking at women who were His beautiful portraits of grace—women who were defrauded, defiled, despised, defeated, or determined—yet, all were given a part in

God's grand and glorious plan!

If you are like most mothers, there have probably been times in your parenting when you have felt ready to quit!

Whenever that type of emotional tidal wave happens to sweep over you, remember these five incredible mothers who overcame great obstacles to shine through the centuries like the rare and precious jewels they are in God's sight!

Now then, let's meet the rest of these special women individually. Remember the reason these women are here in this chapter is to remind us of the doctrine of God's forgiving grace. That doctrine reminds us all that we are like...

### **Tamar—No Pain Is Too Great for God's Grace**

Thirty-eight centuries ago, in Genesis 38, we are introduced to Tamar. Whenever you think of her, think of a woman "*defrauded*." One of Judah's sons had married her, but was personally struck dead by God because he was a wicked sinner, a rebellious man. Judah promised, as was the custom, that he would get her a new husband.

Tamar put on her widow's raiment and waited, and waited, but she was forgotten. Judah had taken care of everything else except for her. Tamar was lied to and overlooked, and she finally took the law into her own hands. Posing as a harlot, she had an incestuous affair with her own father-in-law. A child born out of wedlock resulted. God never condoned what she did; He just described it. Tamar was defrauded of many things:

- She was defrauded of a normal life.
- She was defrauded of a happy marriage.
- She was defrauded of a good name.
- She was defrauded of a sterling reputation.

Tamar was robbed of all these normal expectations by one thing— sin. She was a woman who was deprived by losing her husband. She was overlooked by her husband's father. She then allowed sin to cause her to take matters into her own hands through an illicit union. But, in spite of all that, God compassionately looked down at her and said, "I have a plan for Tamar! She is a woman who portrays My plan—a wicked sinner, forgiven!" She was allowed to be part of the line that would bring the Redeemer to humanity— Christ, the One who perfectly portrays God's grace! God graciously placed Tamar in Christ's family tree, as recorded in Matthew 1:3: "*Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar ....*"

**Do you have the pain** of being wronged or defrauded by someone who promised love, took all you had, and then deserted you?

- Then through your pain **listen to the voice** of Jesus as He whispers to you, like He did to Paul, "*My grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in [your] weakness*" (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- **Believe the truth and go on**; let God fill you with the comfort and strength of His Word!

Remember the reason these women are here in this chapter is to remind us of the doctrine of God's forgiving grace. That doctrine reminds us all that we are like...

## **Rahab—No Past Is Too Bad for God's Grace**

If we were to identify Rahab with one word, the word that best describes her is "*defiled*." Her life story is introduced in the second chapter of Joshua. In 1406 b.c., fifteen centuries before Christ, the children of Israel faced the walls of Jericho. A woman was on those walls—a very smart businesswoman. She was in two ancient businesses that were often interchanged: (1) inn keeping, and (2) harlotry. She not only provided lodging, but also gave men a sinful substitute for what God ordained in marriage. In every sense, Rahab was defiled:

- She was a sexual sinner.
- She was a member of the cursed Canaanite race.
- She was a city-dweller doomed because Jericho was about to be annihilated.
- She was literally sitting on a "time bomb" because God's judgment was about to cause the walls to fall.

However, in His mercy, God said, "I'm going to destroy everyone and everything in Jericho except for that tiny section of the wall—and that little family huddled together at the inn there."

Can you imagine what it must have been like on that day of destruction? To see the 60-foot-high walls crumble and fall around you while your portion of the wall stood firm? To witness the Hebrew army march in, slice and demolish every living thing in its path? To watch the city in which you've lived and worked all of your life suddenly go up in flames?

Nevertheless, Rahab, through faith, heeded God's warning through the spies: "Stay inside of your house; hang a red cord out your *window* and you will be saved!" So that day, in Joshua 2, God reached down and plucked Rahab with her family out of the inferno of His destruction on Jericho.

Have you ever met anyone like Rahab? She was terminally defiled; in every sense her destruction was looming. Her story is one of the most beautiful pictures of how God saves lost people. You see, Rahab was part of a doomed race, and so are we.

Did you know that the human race itself is doomed? Every one of us has a terminal illness. Some people know the name of it; the rest of us just don't know what is going to "get us" yet. But one thing is for certain: death will happen sooner or later.

We are all going to die, and the germ that will kill us is called sin. No one gave it to us; we received it by inheritance from our forefather, Adam, who had fallen into sin. Every one of us is guilty of sin; each of us faces His judgment (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

We are all in a world that God is going to destroy (Revelation 21:1-8); but, by God's grace, we can be eternally saved (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Rahab's life is quite a portrait of salvation by God's grace. The Lord needed no spy report; He graciously wanted Rahab; and put this defiled woman in His plan. She was in the line of special mothers who would bring Christ to portray God's marvelous grace to the world, as recorded in Matthew 1:5: "*Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab.*"

If your past is less than sterling (and whose isn't?), always remember that this too is God's offer of grace. What do I mean? Listen to the voice of Jesus as He spoke to another woman so much like Rahab in the New Testament, who wept about her sinful past, at His feet: "*Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, [the same] loves little.*" (Luke 7:47) A stained past "forgiven" is the opportunity to "love much"—a wonderful, loving Savior who forgives much!

If you have never received Christ's forgiveness you can have it today. One greatly defiled man came once to Jesus and said to Him, "If You are willing, You can cleanse me." To which come Christ's sweetest words, "I am willing—be cleansed"!

- To receive His cleansing forgiveness today all you need to do is to come to Him and say I need Your touch, I want to turn away from my sins (that is called repentance) and I believe You are my only hope (that is called faith). He does the rest.
- Jesus said that all who come to Him—He will never cast out! Come to Him today.

None of these five special women deserved to be a woman of grace. None of them deserved for God to use them. All of them were women with a mark against them, and most were unqualified to serve in such a manner. Yet, God lifted up each of these special ladies as an example of His fathomless grace! Through their life experiences, women for all time can learn that:

- No pain is too great to be healed.
- No past is too bad to be forgiven.
- No problem is too big to be solved through Christ.
- No stain is too deep to be cleansed through Christ's blood.
- No task is too great for God's enablement.

As we look at the fourth woman and mother in this chapter, remember the reason these women are here in this chapter is to remind us of the doctrine of God's forgiving grace. That doctrine reminds us all that we are like...

### **Ruth—No Problem Is Too Big for God's Grace**

It is in the second part of Matthew 1:5 that we see another special mother in Christ's lineage. Ruth—could be described as having been "*despised.*" Yet, her life represents such a beautiful portrait of grace that God devoted a full Book to tell about it.

Ruth's story began way back in Genesis 19. Ruth's distant forefather—Abraham's nephew, Lot—in the midst of a drunken orgy with his two unscrupulous daughters, sired Ruth's race. It is noteworthy that in Scripture God doesn't cut out any of the facts

because they capture lessons He wants us to learn. He has always condemned drunkenness, and the various evils that accompany it. It should come as no surprise that the sins, which produced the tribe of Moabites, would lead to a people under God's judgment.

These people whom God had cursed because of their wickedness were protected until Deuteronomy 23. Because the Moabites were from such a defiled and despised race, God announced that no Moabite could enter God's assembly for ten generations. Therefore, though Ruth had done nothing personally to deserve it, she was despised by the Jewish people. Remember all the strikes against her?

- She was of the wrong race.
- She was out of the wrong family.
- She was tainted by a bad past.
- She was hounded by someone else's sin.
- She was scarred by a family scandal.
- She was plagued by the darkness of a stain.

Additionally, after a short marriage, Ruth's husband died; and a famine was all around them. God tells, in the Book of Ruth, one of the sweetest Old Testament stories of grace that has ever been written! What did He write? He reported how He graciously reached down and took a woman from a cursed race, a despised people, and said, "You come into My family!" Thus a man named Boaz took Ruth to be his wife, and she then, upon that marriage, became a woman of hope. Like Tamar and Rahab, Ruth was one through whom Christ would come—one through whom God gloriously portrayed His grace, as recorded in Matthew 1:5: "*Boaz begot Obed by Ruth ....*"

Adversity reveals who we really are. Its fires burn away only what is temporary, and leave behind what is permanent. What are your trials revealing? Peter said that God's grace accepted in trials purifies us, and we become precious like costly gold. Give those big problems to the Lord; allow Him to refine you and do something you could never plan or imagine—and then He will get all the glory!

Finally, we remember the reason these women are here in this chapter is to remind us of the doctrine of God's forgiving grace. That doctrine reminds us all that we are like...

### **Mary—No Task Is Too Great for God's Grace**

The word that best describes the final woman of Matthew 1 is "*determined.*" What is interesting about Mary is that we have heard a lot about her that is not true, and we know very little about her from what the Bible records. In fact, books and books have been written about Mary, none of which contain facts from the Bible. What is in the Bible?

We know this to be truth: Mary was born a sinner. There is nothing in Scripture which says Mary was anything else other than a very normal sinner. She came to faith in the true God by acknowledging that she was lost without Him (Luke 1:47)

She quoted from the Old Testament, talking about the fact that God lifted her up out of



the ash heap, out of the dung hill (1 Samuel 2:7-8; Luke 1:52).

Mary, who wanted to know God's Word and obey it, even as a young woman became quiet and determined. She kept on following and obeying the Lord—even through all this:

- She fell in love, and was engaged.
- She was visited by an angel.
- She received an unusual commission.
- She supernaturally conceived a child.
- She faced possible stoning because that was the penalty for fornication.
- She was scorned by others and falsely accused.
- After Christ's birth, Mary patiently endured public shame for one third of a century—through the entire life and ministry of Christ.
- She was even "put in her place" by Jesus.
- She was continually saddened by her unbelieving sons.
- She never gave up; she determinedly pressed on in faith for God's glory!

All that Mary was experiencing fit perfectly with God's gracious plan: He had chosen her to be the "Mother of the Promise." She bore Christ. She partook of grace. She rejoiced and said, "Oh, God, my Savior!" (Luke 1:47)

She ultimately became the one through whom "The Promise" arrived: *"And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ."* (Matthew 1:16)

The lesson for us today is to decide *now* that we are in this for the duration. We see our husband and children not just as they are, but how they will be by God's grace. We do what we are called to do, staying in close personal touch with the Lord—and persist.

Mary is never mentioned again after Acts 1, yet she was so used of the Lord. Keep on keeping on—whether you are noticed or ignored, loved or rejected, needed or abused—and determine by God's grace to persist no matter how great and overwhelming the challenge may seem.

## Experiencing God's Fathomless Grace

None of these five special women deserved to be a woman of grace. None of them deserved for God to use them. All of them were women with a mark against them, and most were unqualified to serve in such a manner. Yet, God lifted up each of these special ladies as an example of His fathomless grace! Through their life experiences, women for all time can learn that:

- No pain is too great to be healed.
- No past is too bad to be forgiven.
- No problem is too big to be solved through Christ.
- No stain is too deep to be cleansed through Christ's blood.

- No task is too great for God's enablement.

Have you personally ever been defiled by sin? Defeated? Defrauded? Despised? The good news is that *"God [is] able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all [things], may have abundance for every good work."* Regardless of your present circumstances, there is hope in Christ for the future! By God's grace, you can partake of "The Promise." You can trust Him, your Savior, to wash away whatever sin has been dragging you down—as far as the east is from the west—so that He can look upon you in the righteousness of Christ!

Will you, then, as each of these five special mothers did, determine that by His grace you too will be energized by hope? What do I mean by that? Every child you bear, Mother, is marked by sin. All of them are already defiled. All of them, because they are sinners, are already defrauded out of the inheritance God wanted to give them. Every one of them is despised. Every one is defeated at birth by sin. But today, like the "Mothers of the Promise," you can point your children to Christ; your life can be a portrait of God's grace to them—a portrait of hope!

Will it be easy? No. Will it be worth it? Absolutely! And as long as you trust Christ to be your strength, you will never walk alone, for:

**"He Giveth More Grace"**

*He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,  
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;  
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,  
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.  
When [you] have exhausted [your] store of endurance,  
When [your] strength has failed ere the day is half done,  
When [you] reach the end of [your] hoarded resources,  
[Your] Father's full giving is only begun.  
His love has no limit; His grace has no measure,  
His power has no boundary known unto men;  
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,  
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!*

**— Annie Johnson Flint**