Advent 2026: Our Family Tree: Tamar
Matthew 1 & Genesis 38
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Matthew begins his book about the flesh-and-blood Jesus with a genealogy
In these names we find real, flawed people whose stories point to the power and kindness of God.

*Have you ever taken any notice of the names at the beginning of Matthew? What do you find interesting about this list?
*Why would Matthew want to showcase Jesus belonging to a family and being shaped by generations of people?

Tamar has an uncomfortable story
She is left widowed, vulnerable and betrayed, so she takes desperate and unconventional action.
Read and discuss Genesis 38:24-26
24 About three months later Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of prostitution, and as a result she is now pregnant."
Judah said, "Bring her out and have her burned to death!"
25 As she was being brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law. "I am pregnant by the man who owns these," she said. And she added, "See if you recognize whose seal and cord and staff these are."
26 Judah recognized them and said, "She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn't give her to my son Shelah." And he did not sleep with her again.

*What stands out to you from the entire story of Tamar?
*Notice Judah's willingness to recognize Tamar's righteousness and take accountability. What do you take from this?

When Matthew tells the story of Jesus' family, he doesn't erase Tamar's complicated history
He names her as part of the lineage of Jesus.

*Is Tamar and her story one you would expect to be showcased as one of Jesus' ancestors?
*What does this inclusion tell you about what is important to Jesus? What does it tell you about your own history?

God's redemption doesn't require a perfect family tree
What is broken in our lives is not beyond the reach of God's redemption.

*How do you recognize God at work in Tamar's story?
*Have you seen God work in your own complicated family?
*What might it look like to trust that your story can be redeemed?

The invitation of Tamar's story is trusting we don't have to see the whole story to believe God is at work
Even when we cannot see what He is doing, we can bring our real, honest, unfinished life before Him·

*Where is your story uncomfortable this Advent season?
*How might God be inviting me to see other people with the same compassion He has shown me?
*What is Holy Spirit saying to you about bringing your real unfinished life to God?

Access the Advent Liturgy of the Hours
Access the Our Family Tree playlist