

The Courage and Wisdom of Tamar

2 Samuel 13:11 - 13

Nutshell: Bravery and wisdom in the face of real harm is a proof of character/ heart. Tamar had it.

I. Context: Amnon's obsession with Tamar.

II. Text

2 Sam 13:11 And she brought *them* near to him to eat, but he seized her and said to her, "Come lie with me, my sister."

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

Review

- A. The Book of Kingdoms, our 1 & 2 Sam + 1 & 2 Kings, is the story of Israel's kings, beginning with the prophet Samuel, who anointed both of the first two kings, Saul and David
 - 1. Samuel warned Israel vs. having a king, 1 Sam 10:19, Hos 13:11
 - 2. **Saul** demonstrated *man's* kind of rule. God previewed *His* version of king through **David**, 1 Sam 13:14
- ✿ B. 1 Kings 15:5 tells us that David kept God's commands *except* in the Bathsheba incident. This dramatically shapes our approach to each incident in David's life.
- C. David was God's chosen king, a *picture* of Messiah, but *not* the Messiah; a *reference point* for later kings of Judah, 2 Kings 14:3
 - 1. David was anointed king over **Judah**, 2 Sam 2, then **Israel**, 5:1-5.
 - 2. Trouble between the two begins in 2 Sam 2:12-32.
- D. **DAVID'S WAITING BUSINESS AS KING***
 - 1. Conquer Jebus (Jerusalem), where Goliath's head was, 1 Sam 17:54
 - 2. Retrieved the Ark from its 'wanderings', 6:1-19; tragically wrongly, 1 Chron 15:2; then rightly & joyfully
 - 3. Build a permanent form for the Tabernacle, the Temple.
 - ★ 4. God chose **Abraham** to bless all nations. Now He chose **David's** line to bring forth the King of all nations

5. Fulfill his oath to Jonathan through his son Mephibosheth, 9:1-13. *ALL OBLIGATIONS CAUGHT UP.
- E. The Ammonites incited war, but Israel won Round 1, 10:1-19. In Round 2, David stayed in Jerusalem, as in 10:7
 1. David murdered to cover adultery, Ch 11. Now David, though forgiven, would see continued violence, ch 12
 2. David's son died, *not*, per Deut 24:16, as a cohort, but was replaced by Solomon, or Jedediah, "adored" by God.
 3. Joab gave David the Ammonite victory, 12:26-31
 4. Now David's firstborn, Amnon, lovesick over his lovely half-sister Tamar, receives Jonadab's bad advice
 - a. Amnon plays sick in order to gain Tamar's presence
 - b. But Amnon goes too far, changing the venue to the privacy of his bedchamber

Kid-speak: Amnon was David's firstborn son. He loved his half-sister Tamar and played sick so he could get her close to him. Is he going to try to do something really evil and stupid? Yes.

- F. 2 Sam 13:11-13, Tamar, embodying holiness, wisdom, and courage, will strongly implore Amnon with seven discouragements to his wicked intention.

Outline:

- I. Amnon's coercion to sin, 13:11
 - II. Tamar forcefully and wisely refuses, providing 4 disincentives, 13:12
 - III. Tamar completes her entreaty with 3 more disincentives, 13:13
- G. "So she brought *them* near to him to eat, but he seized her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister."
1. Tamar brings the heart *cakes* to Amnon
 2. If Amnon had any romantic interest before, it has now given way to mere lust
 3. More likely, lust had always been his only regard for her
 - a. In which case, Jonadab, wise as he was, knew what his advice might provoke. Yet his wisdom framed his advice to absolve himself.
 - b. And it *was* Amnon who tailored the advice to quench

his own desires

H. We lay no blame on Tamar

1. It was an unusual situation. She thought he was sick.
2. The witnesses present who would have protected her thought he was sick too. They were all tricked.
3. But, with the advantage of hindsight, we can give clear advice to girls: *don't go into a boy's bedroom*
 - a. Don't go into his *house* if no one else is there
 - b. Don't be *anyplace* where the two of you are isolated
 - c. It's not a matter of "I trust him." Trust doesn't negate common sense rules.
 - d. Any good aspect of a relationship can be carried out in the presence of adults/ caretakers/ or out in *public*

I. "He seized her"

1. He didn't talk to her first. He wasn't interested in getting to know her after all (if he had told himself he was).
2. The grabbing in itself was a serious crossing of a boundary
 - a. In our own legal system, steps could be taken to punish laying hold of someone
 - b. But in the moment, Tamar could only seek to protect herself. Presumably, 2 big, well-insulated rooms distant, those who had gone outside would not hear her scream.

Kid-speak: Amnon was bad to his sister, Tamar. Are you good to your brothers and sisters?

J. "Come, lie with me, my sister."

1. He doesn't call her Tamar, but his sister
 - a. He acts as though their kinship somehow provided permission
 - b. Of course, just the opposite was true, as he doubtless knew, Lev 18:9
 - c. But, permission or not, he had already made up his mind
2. He may have called her sister in a domineering way, as though his status as older brother allowed him to boss her
3. What is the first trait of love in 1 Cor 13? Patience.
 - a. What then, is the answering trait of love's counterpart, adultery/ fornication (comp. Gal 5:19, 22)? Impatience.
 - b. Boys/ men say, "If you love me, you'll let me."
 - c. Girls must be ready to answer, "If you love me, you'll wait." (Then, for his impudence, crack him a good one

in the jaw... with a brass knuckles keychain)

2 Sam 13:12 But she answered him, "No, my brother, do not abase me, for no such *thing* ought to be done in Israel! Don't commit this sick *act*."

K. Her clear-headedness in this moment is amazing

1. She doesn't yield to panic, despite a clear danger
2. She keeps her *allegiance to God* before her
3. She answers precisely and correctly

L. She repeats two forms of "no" and "not" four times

1. She is definitive
2. She articulates that this would be *unacceptable*

M. In her case, answering "my brother" was proper, for it was on that basis *first* that he should not be doing this, Lev 18:9

1. But she was also appealing to him: 'Would you do this to your own *sister*?'
2. This is DISINCENTIVE #1

N. With the force of his grip, perhaps already having her in both of his arms, she sees what is coming, so she adjures him not to "abase/ debase/ oppress/ lower" her, DISINCENTIVE #2

1. She uses the word for what prince Shechem the Hivite did to Dinah, daughter of Jacob, Gen 34:2
2. From what Tamar says, that incident might be playing prominently in her thinking. More on that next time.

Kid-speak: What did Tamar tell Amnon? That he was treating her like she wasn't even a human.

O. "No such *thing* ought to be done in Israel"

1. She is referring primarily to rape, DISINCENTIVE #3
2. She appeals to his high status. He's the prime candidate for next king, being firstborn.
 - a. He therefore ought to think of Israel
 - b. But mainly, this was against the laws God gave His nation Israel, Deut 22:25

P. "Sick," *nebalah*

1. We saw this word in 1 Sam 25:25 as Abigail's description of her husband. Ironically, it was even his name, Nabal.
2. "Don't commit this *nabal*," meaning fading, peeling, fallen, sick, disgusting, disgraceful, DISINCENTIVE #4

- (Nabal's name might have been because he was sickly from birth, with only the physical connotation)
3. Fairly bold for Tamar to say this! She was rightly insulting his character that he was even thinking of it.
 - a. But for some people, you can only say, "Have you no shame?", meaning that you've concluded that they *don't*
 - b. And it turns out that Amnon didn't
 4. Perhaps Tamar's best case for *self-preservation* would have ended here. But her character's nobility requires that she make a fuller case.
 - ◆ a. That is, she hopes to preserve *Amnon's dignity* as well
 - b. Therefore she continues:

2 Sam 13:13 "And I- where shall I carry my shame?"

And as for you, you shall be as one of the vile men in Israel.

But now, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you."

- Q. Tamar adds three more lines of reasoning
1. "And I- where shall I carry my shame?"
 - a. The pronoun is repeated for emphasis: Amnon has obviously singled her out because of attraction to her. Does he indeed care about *her*?
 - b. Not only will the act shame her immediately, the shame will go with her wherever she goes, **DISINCENTIVE #5**
 - i. Will she be able to get married after this?
 - ii. Might she be suspected of complicity or even seduction?
 - c. She'd be stuck with a problem and no good solution. Again, does he intend to do that to her?

Kid-speak: Tamar told her brother that if he did this, she wouldn't be able to lead a normal life. She could hardly go out and be with people again. Should he have listened to that? Yes!

2. "And as for you, you will be as 1 of the vile men in Israel"
 - a. "Vile," a repetition of the word *nabal*
 - b. For the moment, she's granting that he is not a *nabal*. This act would make him one.
 - c. He'd join a new society, one he should reject

wholeheartedly, DISINCENTIVE #6

- d. Again, she puts this in the context of their national identity under God in the word “Israel”
 - i. Does he want to be part of the subculture that lives contrary to their nation’s holiness unto God?
 - ii. ... a living, cynical contradiction?

Kid-speak: Tamar said that if Amnon did this, he would be like the men who get drunk and cuss and fight and hit women. Was she right? Yes, that’s who he’d be like.

3. “But now, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.” DISINCENTIVE #7
 - a. The most noteworthy facet of this is the *concession* she makes to someone who is showing her great disrespect
 - b. She implicitly agrees that they might be married, if that was his desire
- R. The difficult part of this is deciding whether she actually thought they could be married, contrary to Lev 18:9
 1. Or whether she was merely proposing an outside *possibility* that was superior to this heinous *actuality*; i.e., we could look into this further
 2. Consider, though, that we have to read between the lines a bit to see *marriage* in her words.
 - a. Could she mean that David would not withhold her from Amnon as a *friend*, lifting the barrier that had existed between them because of her virginity/ preparation for marriage? v 2
 - b. Marriage *does* seem to be the import of her words, though
- S. The Book of Kingdoms (1 Samuel through 2 Kings) certainly has its share of *prominent* female heroes!
 1. Starting by making Hannah the announcer of everything within the volume! 1 Sam 1
 2. Then Abigail, preserving David from a rash act, 1 Sam 25
 3. And now Tamar, especially remarkable for her youth
 - a. She speaks as well *for* David as Amnon does *against* him
 - b. A sort of symbol of the split occurring at David’s fornication/ murder
- T. Anyone saying the Bible is sexist hasn’t read the Bible
 1. The Bible *does* recognize differing male and female roles

2. Those who reject those roles, of course, will find fault no matter what
3. We will not see greater character, courage, and wisdom than Tamar has, even in Samuel, Jonathan, or David

Kid-speak: Tamar is one of the heroes of the Bible. She wasn't very old, but she was very smart and had decided to live her life God's way. We should try have a heart like hers.

- U. Any good person in the world *can become* subject to the whims of the vile and violent. He/she may escape or not.
1. This possibility was unavoidable at the Fall
 - a. Man being what he is, living among other men
 - b. None of us can be insulated from evil people
 2. Those who are abused are martyrs- *if* they have grace to accept the designation, meaning-
 - a. Martyrs are “testifiers.” They testify to man's nature.
 - b. If only they concede the same about their own nature
 - i. Of course, without condoning the evil done to them
 - ii. Nor making all sin equal. It's not, Jn 19:11.
- V. A *half*-person martyr, fearing God, though sawed or ground by the vile, has been *doubled* in a real measure
1. For she (we'll use Tamar's gender rather than the generic “he”) bears *in her bruised soul* the testimony of man's evil. She agrees with Christ that man can't be trusted, Jn 2:25.
 2. Those who merely *assent* to man's depravity do so cheaply by comparison, risking nothing
 - a. But the least the unaffected can do is to be incensed
 - b. Without giving in to perpetual rage, 1 Tim 2:8b

Kid-speak: If we are good, is it possible that bad people will hurt us? Yes. But should we be afraid of that? No.

- W. Let's view Tamar's answers as our *own answers to temptation*
1. Under the 6th and 7th requests: “Don't lead us...; rather, ...”
 2. #1- Call the temptation by name- its unvarnished designation;
 - #2- Call it a debaser;
 - #3- How can I yield to you in this temple of the Spirit?;
 - #4- You seem a plus, but you'll infect and sicken me;
 - #5- How will I restore my pre-sin status if I yield?;
 - #6- The *benefit* you're promising me will step forth as a *bane*;

#7- Get God's permission.

- X. As Abigail was before, Tamar is a type of Christ in this episode
 - 1. Righteous
 - 2. But suffering at the hands of a *nabal*
 - 3. Caring enough for the oppressor to provide him with every incentive to renounce his wickedness
- Y. What is God telling us here? Be brave and wise in smaller decisions, even though your 'promotion' from them will include tests of greater consequence and danger.
- Z. Tamar's character was already trained, tested, well-rounded, and mature coming into this encounter.

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1Thess 5:14, "Uphold the *strengthless")
Like Tamar, let your limp be a blameless one.

V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): **What have I done wrong?**
How have I lost righteousness?
Am I courageous in the face of 'smaller' battles?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):
How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?
I will specifically bridle my tongue, Jms 3:2.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**
Lord God, keep me in Your way. May I not back down when my heart is tempted to quail or roil.

Wrap-up: Tamar was still in God's hands.

Her life changed this day. It was not the life she chose or wanted, but God did not abandon her thereby.

Tamar's chief temptation going forward would be **doubt** of God's goodness and/or power- unless she had the matter man's depravity settled: God is good; man is bad. (This would also make her better appreciate men and women remade good by God.)

Tamar would now have peculiar ministry opportunities to women similarly abused. By her character, we can well imagine she used those opportunities to God's glory and her own good.