

Trophies of His Grace

by Steve Mays

Pastor Steve Mays emphasizes that God's grace transforms lives, making us trophies of His mercy despite our pasts.

Duration: 27:20

Scripture: Genesis 38:24, Ruth 1:16, Isaiah 1:18, Matthew 6:33, John 14:6, Hebrews 11:31

Topics: "Grace"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Steve Mays shares a personal anecdote about his grandson wanting to go to the zoo but not having enough time. He then transitions into discussing how sometimes in life, we feel like we've been set up or treated unfairly. He emphasizes that God is not embarrassed by the challenges we face and encourages listeners to come to God just as they are. Pastor Steve also explores the idea of ancestry and how God chose to restore and use flawed individuals in Jesus' lineage to bring forth the Savior of the world.

Transcript

It's the 2011 Summer of Sermons with Steve Mays. God is not embarrassed with the things that you go through in life. But yet, this is what we hear from Satan.

Clean your life up, then come to God. You're never going to get it clean. Pastor Steve Mays says, You can be a trophy of God's grace only if you let God do the work.

You need to come to God just like you are. And he said, Let us come together, reason together, sayeth the Lord. I'll change you.

I'll do a work in your heart. So we'll follow the light of the Lord. With the help of the internet, it's become quite popular to uncover our ancestry.

How cool would it be to discover you're related to say, Oh, I don't know, George Washington or Abe Lincoln. Then again, you might find yourself to be a descendant of the notorious Jesse James. How would that make you feel? Well, you know, Jesus had some disappointing members in his lineage.

He really did. Yet, as we'll learn today, God chose to restore these ancestors and use them to bring forth the Savior of the world. Think about that.

Pastor Steve uses their stories to encourage us in our own doubts of ever being used by God. Let's listen. I remember a few years ago when we were taking little Anthony, my grandson, out to hang out with him.

And he wanted to go to the zoo, but we didn't have the time. And I had a doctor's appointment. So I took off to the doctor's appointment.

And I'm sitting at the doctor's appointment and sitting there. He's a great doctor. Love him.

Jewish doctor. Very brilliant. He says, You know, are you a piece? You know, you have peace in your heart.

And I said, Well, yeah, Shalom, you know, peace. I have peace. He says, I didn't say that, Stephen.

I go, What did you say? I said, You're a beast. I thought, What happened to the peace? And he said, No, a beast. I'm just kind of devastated.

So I'm on the way home, pick up my wife, and we're going to pick up Anthony. And so we pick him up, and my wife is really in a happy mood, and Anthony's in a happy mood, and I'm in a bum mood. Because I just got told I was fat, and I couldn't believe it.

So we get in the car, and my wife, as she always is, is very creative. So what do you want to do, Anthony? And Anthony says, I want to go to the zoo. And my wife is very good.

Honey, we can't. We don't really have the time, but tell you what, we can think about the zoo right now. So, Anthony, what animal does Papa remind you of? And I'm thinking, Honey, what are you doing? You know, leave the boy alone.

We don't need to go down this road. You know, maybe an ant, maybe, you know, a little tiny critter. And he turns around and says a hippopotamus.

Now, I just got done dealing with a Jewish doctor calling me obese. And now my grandson, three years old, is calling me a hippopotamus. And I'm looking in the rearview mirror at him, thinking, you know, I don't need to spend the day with you, nor do I even have to talk to your mother anymore.

You know, this is terrible. You know, I look over at my wife, what are you doing? And she's giggling, and I'm thinking, what's wrong with you? You know? And so I turn to my wife, in a spirit of love and joy and peace, and I say, So, Anthony, what does Grandma remind you of? And Anthony says, a snake. I say, all right, the kid has discernment.

It's good. I like this boy. You know? And so I'm looking at her, and she's kind of hissing at me, and I'm looking at her, and I'm big and fat and want to step on her.

And we're both looking in the rearview mirror at this little three-year-old boy, you know, who called my wife a snake and called me a hippopotamus. And so it was just, I can't believe it. So, you know, finally my wife said, hey, Anthony, so why does Papa remind you of a hippopotamus? And I say, leave it alone, honey.

Just let it go. And then he came back with, oh, that's my most favorite animal. So I'm sitting there driving down the street, looking at this kid, realizing, oh, God, forgive me.

And then I, of course, have to finish this conversation. So, Anthony, why does Grandma remind you of a snake? Because I like to hold and cuddle it. So we are in the front seat with a very brilliant kid who's much smarter than we are in relationships, realizing that we've just been set up.

And sometimes we feel like we've been set up. Sometimes we feel like that's not fair, or what you've done to me is not right, or I shouldn't be here, or I've been fired, or, you know, this shouldn't be happening, or I didn't want to marry you, or I didn't want to go through this, or I don't even like you. And so we're beginning to be at each other's throat.

And that's what kind of takes place today in the story we're going to look at with Tamar and Judah. Judah was one of the boys. The family of Jacob was a mess.

And so we come to Tamar, and Tamar was basically got into the life of Judah because of the fact she married one of the boys of Judah. But then her husband died, and, you know, Judah was overwhelmed, and so, according to God's word, he would have to give the next son to this woman, Tamar. So he does.

He gives the next boy to this woman, and he dies. In fact, the Bible says that God kills him because he was wicked in the sight of the Lord. And now Tamar has two dead husbands.

And so the third time, Judah gives his third boy, and this boy refuses to have any type of a relationship with her, and God kills him. And now Judah is saying, I'm not going to give you no more of my boys. You're three for three.

And Tamar is just devastated because she has done nothing wrong in the sight of God. These boys were wicked, and they had sinned against God. So there was one young boy beginning to grow up, and Judah said, when he grows up, you can have him.

Well, now that boy had grown up. He's now 30 years old, and Judah did not give that boy to Tamar. So Tamar is stuck.

She's a widow. She doesn't want to be a widow. And we pick up the story right here in chapter 38, a trophy of his grace, Tamar, the prostitute.

Notice in verse 13 of chapter 38. It was told Tamar, saying, Behold, thy father-in-law goeth up to Timnath. That would be Judah, to shear his sheep.

And she put her widow's garments off of her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and set in the open place, which is by the way of Timnath, verse 15. When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot, because she had covered her face. And he turned unto her, by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee.

For he knew not that it was his daughter-in-law. And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come into me? And he said, I'll give you some animals from the flock. And she said, What wilt thou give me as a pledge, till you send it? In other words, you have nothing now.

You came just to look. You have no animals. What am I going to get? And all of a sudden, she says, Give me your bracelet, give me your staff, and give me your signet.

Those are very powerful things, believe it or not. The shepherd's stick was a very incredible weapon. It was a symbol of a shepherd.

And the nation of Israel were symbols of shepherds, and so it spoke of authority. The signet ring was what you would stamp, or you would heat the wax, and you put the seal. And this is a signet of who you are.

The family bracelet would definitely be the bracelet of the family of Jacob, and Judah, I should say. And then he went in, she conceived, and he now sends back his friend to get back his bracelet and takes the animals, but she's nowhere to be found. And so they start asking around the city, Where is this prostitute? And they said, There's no prostitute in this town.

There's no one here. They said, No, she was sitting right here. No, she's not here now.

And so they never did find her. And so he said, Fine, let her keep it. Well, we pick up the story in verse 24 of chapter 38, and it came to pass about three months after, it was told Judah saying, Tamar, thy daughter-in-law, has played the harlot.

And also, behold, she is with child by Hordim. And Judah said, Bring her forth and let her be burned. Interesting, isn't it? Another word so easy to judge, so quick to condemn.

And so she held up the staff and she said, By this staff is the man who got me pregnant. She held up the signet ring and also the bracelet. She said, This is the father of this child.

And the Bible goes on to tell us that he acknowledged that she was more righteous than him. Now what she did was wrong, but the heart was right. She wanted to be part of the family of God, but Judah did not want that.

And so, for some reason, we realize that God looked upon her heart. And I think that's the message today, that God sees your heart. Sometimes you don't do things right.

Sometimes you don't say things right. But in your heart, you do love God, and you're trapped, and you're caught, and you don't know which way to get out. And that's what happens oftentimes, that we get ourselves in a situation that we kind of, at the end, justifies the means.

That will never be true, I believe. If she would have waited, God would have worked it out. And in spite of her not waiting, her heart was to be part of this family.

And because Judah had lied, and because Judah had cheated, God vindicated this woman and put her in the genealogy. So when you get to the book of Matthew, you read Tamar, the prostitute, is right there in the genealogy. And through her life comes the Messiah.

So here's the cool thing. God was not afraid to identify himself with her. God was not embarrassed because of what she went through.

And God is not embarrassed with the things that you go through in life. But yet, this is what we hear from Satan. Clean your life up, then come to God.

You're never going to get it cleaned. You need to come to God just like you are. You need to know that God knows exactly what's going on right now inside of your heart and your mind and how you think and what you feel.

So there's no reason to wait but to come. And he said, let us come together, reason together, saith the Lord, I'll change you. I'll make you different.

I'll do a work in your heart. But once again, because of her great love for the family and for the nation of Israel, she wanted to get in and God helped her to get in. I just pray that's the heart of us.

Lord, we want to go to heaven. We want to get in heaven. We want to be part of that plan.

Now, we might not be doing things right. But Lord, please correct us. You know what our love is.

Sometimes we're complacent or we compromise. We get twisted. Bring us back to the truth.

Get us in line so we can be a blessing. And so he did to this woman, Tamar. He places her in the genealogy and so she becomes a trophy of God's grace.

The second trophy is kind of fascinating. It's Rahab the harlot, a trophy of God's grace. Rahab the harlot.

And you remember the story in Joshua chapter 2. God sent spies into Jericho to look around before they were going to destroy Jericho. And they wanted to survey what was going on. And the king of Jericho knew that the men were in his city.

Because it says there in Joshua chapter 2 that the king knew that the servants of Israel were inside his city and he had a good idea they were in Rahab's harlot's house. Probably because she was going to go to bed with them. But this time, that wasn't on her mind.

And what is interesting to me, I personally believe because she had that relationship doing that with all types of men, she was able to hear men talk. And what were they talking about? They were talking about the God that opened the Red Sea. And they were talking about the God that opened the Jordan.

And they were talking about the God that was destroying every single thing before them. And they were talking about Joshua that no one could stop him and that everything he did, God was behind. And the fear of God was all over the country.

And these men started telling her, listen, this God is on his way to Jericho. He's right outside. He's going to destroy this Jericho.

And nothing has been able to stand before him. And no doubt, she was horrified. But she was a Canaanite.

She was a Canaanite and she was a harlot. And she wanted out. And you remember what happened? She hid the spies.

And she sent the king's army the other way. And so it tells us here in James 2, verse 25, likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she had received the messengers and had sent them out the other way. In other words, she sent them the other way, held on to these two messengers.

And then she said, listen, when you come, will you save us? And they said, unless you put a sacred or a scarlet thread out your window, we will not know what we're going to attack. But if you send this scarlet out the window, we will spare this place. And she was looking to get herself saved and get her family saved.

And they made a covenant. And so she hid these men. What did God see? God saw a woman in fear.

God saw a woman that had sinned her whole life. But he also saw a woman that now wanted to be on the right side in the right army with the right God and wanted out of the horrible mess. And I believe

sometimes we get ourself in a bondage.

We can be caught in pornography or we can get caught in all kinds of things and we feel like there's no way out. There's always a way out. It was through that window.

It's through Jesus Christ. And when things look so bad and you cannot find a way out, there's one way out and it's through Jesus Christ. But most men and women will try to find another way if I simply will repent.

So when they came to destroy the city, there it was, that scarlet thread. And because of that, they did not destroy and she was saved. And because of that, God places her in Matthew 1 in the genealogy.

So check it out. Tamar, the prostitute, and Rahab the harlot are right in the lines of the genealogy that brings Jesus Christ. God's not ashamed because God saw and sees the heart.

And God sees your heart. And God knows that some of you are trapped in a marriage or some of you are trapped at work or some of you are trapped in your body because of health. And there's a way out.

It's through Jesus Christ. And it's interesting that that's what she wanted. She wanted into the family.

Tamar wanted into the family. This woman wanted into the family. Christians, they seem to want out of the family.

They don't know really what we want. We need to make a commitment like we've never made a commitment before. If there's ever time to be part of the kingdom of God, it's now.

If there's ever time to call on heaven, it's now. If there's ever time in my life for God to get me out of the bondage and get me out of my sinful past, it's now. God, work in my heart.

And so we find an incredible story. And then the third is that trophy of grace in the life of Ruth. And we pick up her story in Ruth chapter 1 verse 16.

And it's a great little story about Naomi. And Naomi takes her husband and they're living in Jerusalem and there's a famine. And so they come up with an idea to go down to Moab.

Now, that's a bad idea. The reason why is the Moabites and the Ammonites have been cursed by God to the 10th generation. But they thought that they could help God out.

So they took off with their two boys and their husband and Naomi went into the Moab area and there the two boys met two Moab women. Then all of a sudden, Naomi's husband died. And then out of nowhere, the two boys died.

And she says to the two girls, go back to your people. And Ruth says this in chapter 1 verse 16. And Ruth said, entreat me not to leave thee or return from following after thee.

For whether thou go, I will go. Whether thou lodge, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people and thy God shall be my God.

Where thou does die, I will die. And there will I bury. The Lord do so to me and more if I do not do this.

And so she just said, listen, I'm going. And God looks down and sees a Moabite woman that it'd be much easier to go back to your own people than to go into Israel because you're a Moabite and be dealt with.

But she made her decision.

Where you go, I'll go. Where you lodge, I'll lodge. Your God will be my God and your people will be my people.

And she made that covenant and God says, I want her. And what is so cool about the story is she walks in with Naomi into Jerusalem and she stands in this field that just so happens to belong to Boaz. And Boaz is the wealthiest man of all of Israel and he sees this woman Ruth and she was stunning.

And he ran over to his buggy and he got the food and he pushed a big handful over the side because Ruth was gleaning on the corners but he pushed the whole bundle to her. He calls it handfuls of purpose. And so Ruth comes back to Naomi look what I got, look what I got.

And she says, who gave this to you? And she says, Boaz. And Naomi just lifts her hand. Our kinsman redeemer.

And we know the story that eventually Ruth marries Boaz. And Boaz has to redeem her as a kinsman and then marries her. And guess who is in the genealogy? You have Tamar, the prostitute.

You have a Canaanite woman who was a harlot named Rahab. Now you have a Moabite that was cursed by God in the genealogy who marries Boaz which is the type of Christ. And then lastly, if that wasn't enough to make sure this whole package is together we have a prostitute, we have a harlot, now we have a Moabite.

How about an adulterous woman, the Sheba? And you remember her, a trophy of God's grace. She was the adulteress. And the story is found in 2 Samuel chapter 11 but it's a story about David.

King David coming home one day he took off his armor and he's gonna get himself in serious trouble. He went out, looked out the window and there was a woman taking a bath. He kept looking at her and just thinking about it and finally he said to the people around him, the servants go get her and they said to him don't you know who she is? Don't you know what this is gonna do? And David said what did I tell you? Go get her.

So they had no choice. They went and picked her up and David and her had an affair. She conceived and now what are you gonna do? She's pregnant.

David came up with a brilliant plan. He sent a letter to Joab send Uriah, her husband, home. When Uriah comes to the king's house the king says to Uriah don't you think you ought to go home and have a relationship with your wife hoping that he would do that then it would be his kid, not David's.

But the man said, no. How can I go to bed when all my men are dying out in the field? I cannot do that. David, let me go back out to the fight, the battle and save the nation of Israel.

David was stunned. So David thought, I'll get him drunk. But Uriah would not leave the front porch of David and when David woke up in the morning Uriah was sleeping on the porch.

And David knew that this was not gonna work. So he pens this incredible thought and he sends it back to Joab and Joab opens it up and it says, next time you go out to battle send Uriah and all the mighty men and in the middle of battle pull these men back and leave Uriah out there. In other words, murder him.

Joab knew that. Everyone knew that. Let's kill this man.

Why? Let's cover up and then I'll marry her and everything's fine. And so it happens. Everything's cool.

David got away with it. And then one day Nathan the prophet walks in. How are you doing, David? Great.

How are you doing? Well, you know what? I want to tell you a story. There's this guy in your kingdom who's very wealthy. Has all these sheep.

Hundreds and thousands of sheep. But one day he came in and he saw one man with only one sheep and he wanted to entertain his guests. So he went to that one sheep and he killed the only sheep this man had and took that sheep.

And David went crazy. Away with that man. Cursed to be that man.

And Nathan whipped around and said, Thou art the man. You have done this. You have taken and you have taken Uriah and you have killed him.

You had everything and God gave you everything. When the baby finally came out, the baby died. The Bible says that God took the child.

So here's this woman who has been unfaithful to her husband who has deviously known what was going on who found out that David murdered her husband. The baby's dead. And all of a sudden God says, I'm going to use you.

That's my final thing. I want to make you a trophy of God's grace. I want to show you that in the pit of everything wrong I'm going to put you in a genealogy.

And so when we finally get to the genealogy it's kind of interesting. It goes on to say, Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah which is Tamar, would be the mother. Perez was the father of Hezron.

Hezron was the father of Ammon. You won't remember these names. That's okay.

Ammon was the father of Amidadad. And Amidadad was the father of Naashman. And Naashman was the father of Salem.

And Salem was the father of Boaz. And Boaz was the father of Obedad. And Ruth was his mother.

And Obedad was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon.

His mother was the widow of Uriah. So David and Bathsheba finally had Solomon. So you think, you've got to be kidding me.

No. So you come into church this morning. I just feel terrible.

I don't want to do nothing. What? What? Are you a harlot? Are you a prostitute? Are you an adulteress? Have you done it that bad? Well, no. Then what's the problem? He'll take the weak things and make it perfect.

He'll take the weakness of my flesh and fill it with the power of his Holy Spirit. You're never to quit. Never to give up.

I make the mistakes. I lose patience and don't wait on God. And I make bad decisions.

God redeems me every single time. And sometimes I don't listen to God and put myself in a box and bless it be the name of God, he gets me out of that box. And sometimes I feel like I'm cursed and stuck in this place and God gives me the freedom to realize that I can get out.

Every area of my life has been blessed. And so when Anthony said, oh, you're a hippopotamus, I took it the wrong way. I was angered.

He wasn't saying I was fat. He was saying, you are the greatest grandpa and have all the animals. That's what I like because I like that about you.

That's how God thinks about me. So God loves you. And he's willing to identify with you right now.

Pastor Steve Mays, inviting you to come to God just as you are and let him change you from the inside out. You know, it's been said that the beginning is an important part of any work. And when it comes to understanding God's work in our lives, it's imperative that we start at the beginning.

And that's why we're excited to present Pastor Steve's in-depth collection on the book of Genesis. It's foundational understanding that reveals why the world is the way it is and provides a backdrop to fully grasp the power of the gospel in our lives. Journey through the dawn of creation.

Relive the days of Noah and the flood and witness the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Today's lesson is just a taste of what you'll receive in this collection. And we'll be glad to let you know how to get this entire set on the book of Genesis.

Just call us at 1-800-339-WISE and we'll give you all the details. That's 800-339-WISE. You can also order it right there at our website, lightoftheword.org. That's lightoftheword.org. Hey, do you recycle? So does God.

The Bible calls it redemption. Next time on Light of the Word, Steve helps us understand the law of redemption, the conditions of redemption, and the God who redeems. Hope you'll be along.

See you then. Light of the Word. Light of the Word.

Hope shines in darkness. So follow the light of the Word.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24312.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/steve-mays/trophies-of-his-grace/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net