

An Unlikely Candidate**December 9, 2012**

Talking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps. These talking points, questions and scriptures are designed to help you take the next step.

- If you were choosing the qualities of those who would be in Jesus' family tree, what would they be? Would you qualify?

You might think the Bible is filled with good, godly people. And it is. But these people have their fair share of dark secrets and shadowy pasts. Judah is no exception. He's a little shady – no, he's a lot shady. So why in the world would God decide to include him in Jesus' ancestry?

- What do you do with your darkest secrets? Do you have a form of confession or do you keep them hidden in fear of being found out?
- From your knowledge of the Bible, which characters do you identify with the most? Why?

With your Bible or YouVersion read Genesis 38:15-26 and Ephesians 2:8-10.

- Why would a person like Judah be included in Jesus' genealogy?
- Have you ever thought that your actions have made you unworthy of a relationship with God? Or have you every thought that the actions of someone else have made that person unworthy? How has the story of Judah changed your perspective?

- Is it possible to ever escape the reach of God's grace? What areas of your life do you need to bring out from the shadows in order to experience God's forgiveness?

Think it Over

Whether we realize it or not God is always drawing near to us. His grace is broad enough, regardless of how completely helpless or totally sufficient we might feel. For those who think they're good enough on their own...well, self-righteousness will only get you so far. And for the rest of us, guess what? You don't have to hesitate anymore because God's grace is available even to those who have not made themselves available to God.

Talk It Over with God:

These prayer tips can guide your time alone with God each day. Praying with a friend or a small group might help you stick to it.

- God's heart desires to embrace you and extend to you grace and mercy. Is this your mental picture of God. If so, thank Him today. If not, confess to God that you have had the wrong idea about who He really is.
- Our temptation is to believe that we stand on our own righteousness. But the scripture tells us that we are saved by what Jesus has done. Ask that God would reveal any area of your life where you are standing on your own righteousness.
- In this series we are being reminded that God loves, saves and uses sinners for His plans. Take a deep breath and realize that this means that God can use you, your wayward children and even your troubled neighbor or co-worker. Pray that God would do just that.
- Choose someone you know who needs to experience God's grace. Ask between 5 and 10 other persons to join with you in praying for them for the rest of this month.
- Christmas is such good news! Through Christ you can receive the gift of new life. If you have received Christ, celebrate this by offering up a song of praise to God. If you haven't then why not ask God for this new life today.