

## Hey! That's Not Fair: Genesis 37-38

07/13/2025 - Andy Deane

We all know what it feels like to say, "That's not fair!" when life hits hard, people betray us, or justice seems nowhere to be found. The story of Joseph and his family is filled with unfair situations: favoritism, betrayal, grief, wickedness, and hypocrisy. But beneath the mess and pain, God was still working to bring hope, justice, and even the lineage of Jesus through it all. Today, we'll see that while life isn't always fair, God is always faithful.

### ***It's Not Fair When Favoritism Makes Us Feel Less Loved***

Genesis 37:1-11, 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

- Unfair to: BROTHERS
- If it happens to you, remember: Our identity comes from God, not anyone else's opinion or treatment of us.
- 1 John 3:1, *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!*
- Ephesians 1:4, *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*

### ***It's Not Fair When We're Betrayed by Those Closest to Us***

Genesis 37:12-28, 19 "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. 20 "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams." ... 26 Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? 27 Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother..." His brothers agreed.

- Unfair to: JOSEPH
- If it happens to you, remember: Jesus was betrayed too, and He still forgave His enemies who killed Him.
- Luke 23:34, *Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."*
- Colossians 3:13, *...Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

### ***It's Not Fair When Our Grief Receives No Comfort***

Genesis 37:29-36, 31 Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. 32 They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, "We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe." 33 He recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces." 34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave." So his father wept for him.

- Unfair to: JACOB
- If it happens to you, remember: God is near to the brokenhearted and offers us lasting comfort.
- Romans 12:15, *...mourn with those who mourn.*
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

## ***It's Not Fair When the Wicked Seem to Win***

Genesis 38:1-7, *6 Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. 7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the Lord's sight; so the Lord put him to death.*

- Unfair to: VICTIMS
- If it happens to you, remember: God hates wickedness more than we do, and His justice is never early or late.
- 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9, *6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord...*
- Romans 12:21, *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

## ***It's Not Fair When Another's Burden Falls on Us***

Genesis 38:8-10, *8 Then Judah said to Onan, "Sleep with your brother's wife and fulfill your duty to her as a brother-in-law to raise up offspring for your brother." 9 But Onan knew that the child would not be his; so whenever he slept with his brother's wife, he spilled his semen on the ground to keep from providing offspring for his brother. 10 What he did was wicked in the Lord's sight; so the Lord put him to death also.*

- Unfair to: ONAN
- If it happens to you, remember: Jesus carried our burden first, and it's our privilege to serve others.
- Galatians 6:2, *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*
- Galatians 6:9, *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

## ***It's Not Fair When Hypocrites Play Judge & Jury***

Genesis 38:11-26, *11 Judah then said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow in your father's household until my son Shelah grows up." For he thought, "He may die too, just like his brothers...." 14 she saw that, though Shelah had now grown up, she had not been given to him as his wife. 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!"*

- Unfair to: TAMAR
- If it happens to you, remember: God knows the truth and will judge with perfect justice. Let Him defend us.
- James 4:12, *There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?*
- 1 Corinthians 4:3-5, *3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.*

## ***It's Not Fair but God's Grace Will Break Through***

Genesis 38:27-29, 27 *When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 28 As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand; so the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his wrist and said, "This one came out first."* 29 *But when he drew back his hand, his brother came out, and she said, "So this is how you have broken out!" He was named Perez.*

- When God Writes Our Story Jesus Still Shows Up in Our Mess
- Matthew 1:3, *Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron*
- Romans 8:28, *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

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