

A Bible Story Discussion – The Rape of Tamar

2 Samuel 13:1-22 (Reading dramatically helps us hear the different voices in the text. The following dramatic reading is taken from the NIV Version of the Bible)

Reader #1: In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David. Amnon became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.

Reader #2: Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. He asked Amnon, "Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?"

Reader #1: Amnon said to him, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

Reader #2: "Go to bed and pretend to be ill," Jonadab said. "When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.'"

Reader #1: So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, "I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand."

Reader #2: David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him."

Reader #3: So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. Then she took the pan and served him the bread.

Reader #1: But he refused to eat. "Send everyone out of here," Amnon said.

Reader #2: So everyone left him.

Reader #1: Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand."

Reader #3: And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom.

Reader #1: But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with me, my sister."

Reader #3: "Don't, my brother!" she said to him. "Don't force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing. What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you."

Reader #2: But he refused to listen to her.

Reader #1: And since he was stronger than she, he raped her.

Reader #2: Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her.

Reader #1: Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!"

Reader #3: "No!" she said to him. "Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me."

Reader #2: But he refused to listen to her.

Reader #1: He called his personal servant and said, "Get this woman out of here and bolt the door after her."

Reader #2: So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing a richly ornamented robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore.

Reader #3: Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornamented robe she was wearing. She put her hand on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went.

Discussion Questions:

1. Describe your initial reactions to the passage. What do you notice or what stands out to you?
2. Take a closer look at the following characters one character at a time and answer the following questions for each one: Amnon, Jonadab, Tamar, Absalom and King David
 - a. What was this person's station in life? Would you say that they were a powerful person, why or why not?
 - b. Summarize this person's actions in this story. What did they do?
 - c. Note the choices that each character made at different points in the story (Leading up to the rape, the rape itself, the response afterward). What other choices might have been made instead? How might those alternate choices have changed the outcome of the story?
3. What is similar or different about the way rape happens this story and in our current culture today? What is similar or different about the way rape is responded to in this story compared to our culture today?
4. What can we take away from this case study?

Safe Church has posted additional [information about Sexual Assault here](#) – The effectiveness of our prevention and response efforts, and our capacity for transformational ministry to those who have suffered abuse, depends on our growing understanding of this issue.