

# Matthew 1:1-17

**Date: Sunday, 5 December 2021**

**Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17**

**Sermon: The Faithfulness of God**

**Preacher: Justin Ang**

## Scripture

Matt. 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matt. 1:2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, 4 and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, 7 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, 8 and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, 9 and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, 10 and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

Matt. 1:12 And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, 13 and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, 14 and Azor

the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, 15 and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

Matt. 1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

## **Transcript**

Well we're coming up to Christmas, and in order for us to prepare ourselves for the festive season, I thought it would be important for us to look at the first two chapters of the gospel of Matthew. That's what we'll do over the next three weeks.

Many people around the world, today, are preparing their hearts as Christmas comes. Yes, there's preparations of meals, and presents, but more importantly, we are preparing ourselves to celebrate Jesus who chose to humble himself. Taking on human flesh, becoming a human baby and chose to live amongst us.

But maybe you're wondering, "What is this genealogy?" It's fairly long! Seventeen verses. But I want to encourage you this morning with it. I want to talk about three aspects of this genealogy.

His Faithfulness.

His Grace.

Our Hope.

### **His Faithfulness**

But let's talk about faithfulness. I want to talk about his faithfulness throughout the generations. Because that's what we see in the genealogies.

Maybe when you go through this genealogies, and your mind draws a blank. Maybe some of you love genealogies. You love looking at family history. Most people though love looking at their own family history. Genealogies can be less inter-

esting if it doesn't relate to us. And for some of us reading this today, it's easy to draw a blank when we read some of these names. But this genealogy is so important and it affects each and everyone of us. So let's take an interest and let's have a look at it together.

Matthew here makes an interesting point, do you see what he says at the end of the genealogy? Have a look with me,

*Matt. 1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.*

Matthew 1:17 (ESV)

Matthew is drawing our attention to the fact that there are three lots of fourteen generations. Fourteen generations between Abraham and David. Fourteen generations from David to the exile. And fourteen generations between Babylon and Christ.

Some people have suggested that the number 14 is really important. They say that the number 14 is code for David. In Hebrew, David is spelt with three letters. The fourth letter of Hebrew, then the sixth letter of Hebrew and then the fourth letter of Hebrew. When you add 4, 6 and 4, you get 14. And it's Matthew's way of screaming, David, David, David. Now maybe you think that's a little far fetched. But the point is that Matthew wants to show us that Jesus is the Son of David. A true descendant of David will come as the rightful king.

Another way of looking at 3 lots of fourteen generations is this. Three lots of fourteen is forty two generations. Or six lots of seven. And Jesus is the seventh, of seven. A sign of perfection. Maybe you think that's also a little far fetched. But it's also a way to show us that Jesus is the fulfilment of promises that God made to Abraham all those generations ago. It's Matthew's way of showing us his faithfulness over the generations.

Sometimes, Rachel and I would do those 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzles. One Christmas, my brother and his wife bought up this 300 piece jigsaw puzzle. That's not too bad, right? It was 299 cats, plus a one dog making up 300 pieces. Except here's the thing, there are no corners, and there's no picture. You know when you normally get a jigsaw puzzle there's a picture on the front so you know what the big picture looks like. We have not solved that puzzle to this day. It is not fun not knowing the

big picture. And sometimes, it's hard for us as finite human beings to not know the big picture. I want to know the big picture of the world. I want to know what will happen to the US, China and Russia.

But what Matthew is showing us with this genealogy is that God cares, God is in control of the big picture. He has known the big picture from the very beginning. He has known the big picture from Abraham, through all the generations, through David, and through to Jesus. He is faithful to his people.

But you know what? He doesn't just care, he isn't just in control of the big picture. But he's trustworthy with the smaller parts of our lives. When we remind ourselves of Jesus this Christmas, we're reminded that God cares about the big picture, but he cares about the smaller parts of your life. He cares for the sparrows. He cares for the Lillies. He knows the number of hairs that are on your head. And he cares. Isn't that something to celebrate this Christmas, when God's love came down for you and me?

His Faithfulness.

## **His Grace**

Let's talk about our second point. His grace. I want to show you that Christmas, I want to show you The magnitude of God's grace. It doesn't matter what background you've come from, it doesn't matter because isn't just for Jews, but it's also for Gentiles.

I want to draw your attention to a number of different things. Let me show you,

*5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king.*

*And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,*

Matthew 1:5-6 (ESV)

I love how Matthew mentions Ruth. Because Ruth isn't an Israelite. She's a Moabite. She's a Gentile. And yet, God's love is greater than just the Israelites, it's for the nations.

And then right after that, we're told that David's son is Solomon, by the wife of Uriah. Matthew is reminding us that David wasn't perfect. He was an adulterer, he was a murderer. And yet, God still loved him.

This genealogy is filled with glimpses of God's grace. It shows that God can use even messed up people like you and me to be part of his plans and purposes. It shows that God extends his grace beyond those of the chosen people. It shows that God's plan was to bring Gentiles into his covenant.

It's really easy to forget that Jesus was a Jew. He came first to the nation of Israel. God chose the nation of Israel out of every other nation on the planet to be his people. But God keeps his promises in ways that we can never imagine.

Maybe you know a man named Augustine. Born 354 AD. One of the greatest theologians the world has ever known. Before his conversion, let's just say he was deeply flawed. He lived a deeply hedonistic life. And yet, God spoke to him through a child who said, take up and read, take up and read. Read the Scriptures. And it was through the Scriptures that he was converted. A man so far from God and yet, was saved. And used by the LORD.

Maybe you feel that God couldn't possibly use you, that you have such a dark history. How can God possibly love me? And yet, God extends his grace to the greatest of sinners. Paul the Apostle, even he, the writer of 1/3 of the New Testament writes this,

*The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. 1 Timothy 1:15-16 (ESV)*

This Christmas, as you remember Jesus Christ, remember his grace. Remember that God can use anyone with any history, for his plans and his purposes. And he can even use a cross, to keep his promises in ways that we can never imagine.

His faithfulness.

His grace.

## Our Hope

Let's talk about our hope. When we read through Matthew 1, the author is talking about a new beginning. A new hope so to speak.

*Matt. 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

Matthew 1:1 (ESV)

When you hear this, you should notice that when Matthew uses the word genealogy, in the greek it is genesis. Like the Old Testament book, Genesis. Now something we have to understand is that Matthew's audience was mainly Jewish. When you read through the gospel of Matthew you see there's a lot of references to the Old Testament. And so when you hear Matthew's genealogy, it's meant to help us see that this is a new beginning.

A new beginning to what has gone on from before. A new beginning from the garden. Adam and Eve. Perfect relationship with God. Then they sin against God, they disobey him. And it's all down hill from there.

It's a pattern of disappointment.

You see it with Abraham. God speaks to Abraham, I will make you a great nation. And yet, Abraham, disappoints. He and Sarah grow impatient and Sarah chooses to give her slave Hagar to Abraham so that they could have a child. Taking things into their own hands.

You see it with God dealing with Israel. God bringing out the nation of Israel, out of Egypt through the Exodus. And God making them into a great nation. And yet, the people of Israel begin to grumble. They disappoint. They're left in the wilderness for 40 years because of their hardened hearts, because they choose not to enter the promised land even when God has asked them to.

You see it when they're in the promised land. God provides them a king. King David. And yet, David commits adultery with Uriah's wife, committing murder, killing her husband.

There's disappointment. It's a theme that we see in the Old Testament. But it's a theme that we see in our own lives as well, don't we? We may have dreams, dreams

of getting married, getting a job, having children, grandchildren. But there's disappointment. I am sure that as you reflect on your life there have been disappointments. And our disappointments can grow. We grow disillusioned. We grow frustrated.

This Genealogy wants to remind us that there is hope for us. Even when the Israelites failed to obey God in all that he asked them to, God would show there is hope. Even when all the generations of Israelites were cursed due to Adam and Eve's disobedience, with God there is always hope. With God, there is a time for new beginnings. And we see that in God sending his one and only son into the world.

Christmas is a reminder of hope. Even when this actual season might seem like a disappointment, when we remember the true meaning of Christmas, of Jesus, it is one of hope. Christmas, is a reminder that even though we may be frustrated and disappointed, there is one who has come to bring us the ultimate hope. The hope that we will be saved from our sins. The hope that we will have a new relationship with the LORD. When God's love came down, Jesus Christ born in a stable, it's a reminder that even when we look at the disappointments of our lives, there's a hope for new beginnings.

I love what Isaac Watts writes in Joy to the World says,

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,*

*Nor thorns infest the ground;*

*He comes to make His blessings flow*

*Far as the curse is found,*

*Far as the curse is found,*

*Far as, far as, the curse is found.*

As we're preparing our hearts for Christmas, it's a reminder that it is a time of new beginnings. The gift of God's grace, reversal of the curse in your life, in my life, but also for the whole world.

His faithfulness. His grace. Our hope. Let's pray.