

Matthew 1:1-17

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 January 2018

Preacher: David Moser

[0 : 00] For those of you who have not met, my name is Dave. I'm one of Shoreline's elders or pastors. And it is my great privilege and joy to begin a new sermon series with you.

We are going to be walking with Jesus in the book of Matthew. So I invite you to turn to Matthew chapter 1. We're going to start us off there. If you don't have a Bible, we'd love to give you one. They're in the back. They're already bookmarked to today's passage. And as you turn there, you're going to see what we are arriving at. And you'll see it is a long list of names.

A family tree, a genealogy. Now, I never, ever read front matter in a book. I don't read introductions. I don't read prologues or prefaces or dedications or acknowledgements. If I'm reading a nonfiction book, I generally don't read the opening chapters either.

[1 : 06] Because normally, the first chapter or so of a book, the author is just kind of raising the problem and convincing you that it needs solving.

And, well, you know what? I already have the book in my hand. I don't need you to convince me to read the book. So, in fact, this week I was reading a book. A pastor was sharing how he had sort of ignited a passion or had seen a passion for evangelism ignited in his own church.

And I didn't actually start reading until chapter 4 before he actually started saying something new or started solving the problem. And this genealogy at the beginning of Matthew might feel like the acknowledgements page or some sort of front matter that we would skip over.

But all Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for his people. And Matthew packs a real punch in these opening verses that at first seem very simple and unimportant.

But if we look through here, there are so many themes that he raises and issues that he highlights. Just look at some of these things.

[2 : 34] This is a whole bunch of names historically rooted. And so he's telling us this is real history. This is not once upon a time. This is not a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.

These are real people in a real place, in real history. We aren't reading some fable or morality tale. We're hearing facts. We have to respond accordingly. Matthew brings up issues of race. He goes out of his way to announce the names of foreigners in the lineage of King David, the royal house of Israel.

This is, as we will see, an impact from the missionary God who is always reaching out. Matthew raises the importance and the dignity of women.

It's almost unheard of in the ancient world to include women in a genealogy. There are notorious sinners in this genealogy.

[4 : 00] Matthew doesn't shy away from that. See, kings used a genealogy to establish and cement their family honor.

Their heritage was really important. Now, you and I can't choose our family, right? We say, you can't choose your family, you can choose your friends. But Jesus could. He's God Almighty. He chose the family into which he was born.

And he chose some particularly notorious ancestors to show that he was bringing honor to the dishonorable. And this was in part to show us that he's not ashamed to call ruined sinners like you and me his own.

So this is more than just a list of names. Matthew is highlighting some really weighty topics. But even those weighty ideas are not as substantial as his chief aim, his real goal.

More than all of those things that he brings up, those very weighty things, and they will be themes that run through the whole course of the book of Matthew, more than all of that, he is highlighting a story told in three names.

[5 : 21] He bookends this passage, verse 1 and verse 17. Verse 1 says, The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

And again, verse 17, he highlights those same three names. So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations. And from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 generations. And from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ, 14 generations. And this genealogy is broken down into three sections, which we will treat in turn.

One headed by Abraham, one headed by David, and one concluding with Jesus Christ. This is a story of three names, Abraham, David, and Jesus.

And if we have the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the Lord will bless us and he will change us. So let's pray and then dig in.

[6 : 25] Father, will you give us eyes to see and ears to hear? Your heart, even as we read a list of names, will you be glorified in our hearts, in my words, and in your church?

We pray this in Christ's name, who we hope to see in this passage today. Amen. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez, and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nashon, and Nashon the father of Selmon, and Selmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz, the father of Obed, by Ruth, and Obed, the father of Jesse, and Jesse, the father of David the king.

This first section of Matthew's genealogy sets its sights on Abraham, on his descendants. Now, it was through Abraham and through Abraham's family that God established the nation, his nation, Israel.

Abraham's life is incredible. He was a traveler. He became wealthy. His household was so large that he defeated a small army on the battlefield.

A man of incredible achievement. And a man of incredible faith. But those are not the most impressive thing about Abraham. The most impressive thing about Abraham is this.

[8 : 28] God made him a promise. Now, we see that promise in Genesis chapter 12. Genesis chapter 12, verses 1 through 3, read this.

Now, the Lord said to Abraham, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land I will show you, and I will make of you a great nation.

And I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Now, in that promise, the Lord commits to two blessings. First, he's going to bless Abraham, and Abraham will be a blessing to the whole world.

Now, we see the part where Abraham gets blessed quite clearly, right? He's blessed in this genealogy.

[9 : 34] The birth of Isaac, if you are familiar with Abraham's story, is miraculous. He acquires property and possessions and a great name.

And his posterity, they increase. And he is built into a great nation. And his whole line is blessed as it grows.

But in this great blessing, we don't see how Abraham will be a blessing to the world, that second part of the promise.

But even though we don't see him blessing the world, Matthew is quick to remind us, even in the midst of this genealogy, that God is caring about the rest of the world.

We see that as he shows us Tamar and Rahab and Ruth, these foreigners being enfolded into the blessed family.

[10 : 32] So we see in them that the nations are coming into the promise by placing their trust in the Lord and joining this covenant community. And so even as Abraham is being blessed, the world, we still see, we still have it in the back of our minds, they're being blessed too.

And so there's this reminder, God's promise to Abraham is to bless not only Abraham and his family, but the entire world. But what sort of blessing will that be?

Well, we see a better picture of that in the second part of Matthew's genealogy. Abraham's blessing increases in the form of an expanded family to the point where it becomes a nation.

With a prominent king. And we see that in verse 6. The end of the first segment of the genealogy, Jesse became the father of David, the king.

And the second section begins with that second half of verse 6. It also begins with David. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.

[11:42] Now, this is really the height in the story of Israel, the height of Israel's glory. The united monarchy under David and Solomon before Israel splits into two nations.

And that's why the high point is David. And like Abraham, David has an incredible resume. Giant slayer.

That's not from Dungeons and Dragons. It's like what he did. He was handsome. After Israel lived in the promised land for generations, it was David who finally captured the capital city, Jerusalem. Under David's rule, Israel knew peace and prosperity. But even the king with the most military success, the king who prospered the nation, the king who God said had a heart after him, just like Abraham, the most impressive thing about David was this.

God made him a promise. And that promise comes in 2 Samuel chapter 7. See, even this king, who blessed Abraham's family so richly, he didn't bring this blessing to the nations.

[13:08] That blessing was still to come. Instead, God made another promise. This time, he promised a king for the whole world forever.

Through the prophet Nathan, the Lord said this, Now therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel.

And I have been with you wherever you went, and I've cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.

And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place, and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more as formerly.

From the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. That's a huge blessing to Abraham's family.

[14:17] Here comes the blessing to the world. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled, and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. David was certainly a blessing to his people, but he wasn't the blessing to the world.

He wasn't the king described in this promise. And actually, if we see verse 6, Uriah is kind of the emblem of the darkness that would creep into the Davidic line.

Those who are familiar with that name know that David had Uriah killed so that he could have Uriah's wife. This adultery, this murder, this wickedness did not depart from David's household. Many of the kings that followed David, kings in this genealogy, like Uzziah and Ahaz, were wicked kings. And by the time we reach verse 11, the kingdom has withered into weakness and is taken into captivity.

[15:38] This last section of the genealogy, verses 12 to 16, it doesn't begin with a great name like the first two sections did because there was no great name.

Matthew has taken us from the hope and the expectation of Abraham to the glories of David's throne, to the valley of the shadow of death as his people are taken into captivity and a foreign oppressor.

But God is not done with them. He's going to honor his promise to Abraham. He will bless Abraham's household and he will bless the whole world. Now, if you were an Israelite refugee at the time of the captivity, you would probably want God to promise to restore the prosperity of David's reign.

But he doesn't. He doesn't promise them a return to the days of David. He promises them more. For the prophet Isaiah, he writes, For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. On the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

[17:31] The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. And so even from their captivity, the Lord shines a light. A king is coming from David's line, just like the Lord promised, and his throne will endure forever, just like the Lord promised.

And now the Lord is promising that the increase of his government will be unending. And so the king won't just bring blessing, but the king himself will be our blessing. And Matthew is here to introduce us to this king. And so where the last section doesn't begin with a great name, it ends with the greatest name, Jesus Christ. And so Matthew is setting up Jesus before our eyes, and he wants to emphasize that he is the coming king. Kings do a number of things, and we are going to see, in particular, three in Matthew's concern throughout the whole book. Kings defend their people. He came to defend us from an enemy. We will see him battle Satan. [19 : 01] He came to defend us from ourselves. We will see him teach us how to live as true humans, not sinful, broken ones.

But most importantly, he came to defend you from his own just wrath. There is wrath to come for sinners.

And we have no means of saving ourselves. This king came and at the highest price bought our pardon.

And in fact, his command, the first thing that he says when he brings forth his public ministry, when we get to chapter 4, verse 17, from that time, Jesus began to preach, saying, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And friends, if you do not know this Christ, if you are not covered by his blood, if you have not been forgiven, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[20 : 10] This king came to save his people. Turn to him in faith. And he will be your guardian.

And if you have already been saved by his mighty grace, friends, let's celebrate that. Let it be your joy. This must be our chief source of joy.

God gave his son for us to reconcile us back to him. And in fact, joy in him is how we find his yoke easy and his burden light because next, he's not only the king who comes to defend his people, but also he's the king who reigns.

Today's passage is an introduction. Matthew wants to prepare us, have us prepare our hearts for a coming king. Over the holidays, we often sing joy to the world, right?

Let every heart prepare him room, we sing about this king. Preparing room for a king means more than rolling out a red carpet for a royal welcome.

[21 : 22] It means preparing to receive a king over you, over your life. It means preparing to serve, preparing to obey, preparing to put his priorities first.

This is a king who by the end of the book will say, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. All authority means that he governs the planets and the stars, but not just that.

All authority means he rules the nations, but not just that. All authority means he is the head of the church, but not just that.

All authority means you and I are not in charge of you and I. for me this week a moment came where I had to lay down.

Authority over my own thought life. I was halfway through rolling my eyes at my wife when the Lord convicted me of sin and prompted me instead to pray for her.

[22 : 51] How does that have anything to do with all authority? This king who comes to reign.

When I presume to lord my own thoughts and opinions over someone else, when I choose my own vindication within my own head, right?

I am choosing to set my view of the world limited and sinful and selfish as it is over someone else and in direct defiance of God.

In fact, when we get to the Sermon on the Mount, he has something to say very specifically about if you call your brother fool, which that's exactly what rolling your eyes at someone is.

He has very stern words for that. And so even something as small as something I didn't say, something no one else saw, she was in the other room, doing something for me, of course, that was me usurping the authority of this king who has authority over every aspect of my life.

He demands lordship over every facet of our lives. See, if Jesus is king, I don't get to govern how I speak.

[24 : 31] If Jesus is king, I don't get to govern how I act. If Jesus is king, we don't get to decide how we think about money.

If Jesus is king, we don't choose how we think about relationships. If Jesus is lord of life, every part of life changes and is subservient to him.

And so I have to ask you, we've been singing, let every heart prepare him room. Are you ready to do that? Really? Or are there areas that are off limits?

Paul Tripp once wrote, a wise person rests in Christ's control, relies on his grace, and lives for his glory.

And so we have this king who came as the great defender of his people to seek and to save the lost, who comes to rule as the great ruler.

[25 : 45] He's also the king who has ambassadors. Remember, we've said from the outset, this genealogy highlights God's mission to the nations. his book will end with him commissioning his followers as emissaries of the king.

The great commission. The most incredible thing is that it's not emissaries to the world in a very sterile sense, in a political sense.

one of the chief word pictures that we are given of salvation is adoption. Which means that if you belong to Christ, you are part of this family tree.

And so our appeal to the world is you can be part of this family tree. You can belong to Christ.

And so Jesus didn't just come to give us blessings, he is the blessing. The one who shields his people from his own just wrath and reconciles them to himself at the cost of his blood.

[27 : 02] He is the king who rules and reigns, who gives his good law, proclaiming his edicts and sending out his ambassadors. He is completely clear. Those who love him will obey him.

And so we sing joy to the world. The Lord has come. Let earth receive her king. Let every heart prepare him room. Friends, let's receive this king. One of the greatest preachers the church has ever known was John Chrysostom.

He ministered in the late fourth century. Received the title Chrysostom, which means golden-tongued.

We have records of actually all the sermons he preached. Well, we have a record of sermons that he preached throughout the book of Matthew. I would like to quote him here to you.

It is one of the most beautiful quotes I've ever read. and he talks about how this king came. He defeats an enemy in the most unusual way.

[28 : 09] It is not by a might. It is by a beautiful irony that he takes the enemy's tools and uses them against him. And I hope it whets your appetite to walk into this most amazing book, Matthew's Gospel.

Herein stands the trophy of the cross, glorious and conspicuous, the spoils won by Christ, the first fruits of our nature, the treasure of our king.

All these I say we shall see out of the Gospel of Matthew and know perfectly. If you follow, becoming quietness, we shall be able to lead thee about everywhere and to show where death is set forth crucified and where sin is hanged up and where are many and wondrous offerings from this war, from this battle.

Consider what a thing it is to hear how on the one side God from heaven leaped down onto the earth and even into the grave itself.

And what is marvelous you will see death destroyed by death and curse extinguished by curse and the dominion of the devil put down by those very things whereby he did once prevail.

[29 : 43] Let us therefore rouse ourselves thoroughly and let us not sleep for lo, I see the gates opening to us, but let us enter in with all seemly order and with trembling set foot straight away within the vestibule itself.

Friends, this book is going to be incredible because our God is incredible and he walked into our world. Let's walk with him. If that's a story you want to hear, well, let's walk alongside Jesus, our king, our savior, our elder brother, through this book of Matthew.

Friends, let's pray. Lord, we praise you that you are a God who promises, who makes promises to Abraham and then increases those promises to David and increases them those promises of