

# 12-27-15

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Preacher: David Moser

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's pray. Lord, your faithfulness and your steadfast love reach to the skies.

! Thank you, Lord, that you've given us the ability to love the butterflies.! But also, Lord, your steadfast love includes the gift of the butterflies.

They can love the butterflies to us. They can comfort us with the comfort you've given them. They are a testimony of Scripture lived out day by day to us as well.

Lord, we thank you that you have not left us without your word. That we can turn to passages like Psalm 57.

That give voice to our sorrows and our troubles. But also direct our paths back to you.

[ 1 : 21 ] Thank you, Lord, for your instruction. I pray that you'd help us to delight in it. Help us to seek it out and abandon foolishness and wickedness that this world tempts us to, that our own hearts tempt us to.

thank you, Lord, for your word to us and nourishes us, causes us to be fruitful, causes us to stand in the midst of great trials and the onset of great temptations.

Thank you, Lord, for your word to us and the Lord. Thank you, Lord, for your word to us and the Lord. Thank you, Lord, that you have traced out our paths and that you seek our great good in all things.

Lord, thank you, Lord, for your word to us and the Lord. Lord, thank you that you are seated in heaven and you are eager to hear our prayers.

Lord, we pray that you would show us our need for you day by day. We pray, Lord, that you would comfort us. The only comfort that truly transcends this world found in your son.

[ 2 : 43 ] Lord, we pray that you would forgive us for not delighting in your ways and not delighting in you yourself and filling ourselves with lesser things.

Father, we pray for all the travelers today. Everyone who couldn't be here with us today.

Lord, we pray for their safety. We pray for their refreshment this Christmas season. We pray for their joy and for their fruitfulness. Lord, that in the midst of this season, they'd be focused on you.

They would be putting off the old man, putting on the new man. Lord, we pray for your love and your light with others. Lord, we also lift up this city to you.

Pray that you'd make us fruitful and bold in reaching it and serving it. Lord, thank you for this little gathering today. Lord, thank you that we get to be your church, no matter how big or how small that we're to our gathered.

[ 4 : 06 ] You are there with us, here with us. Lord, I pray you would fix our eyes on you. Lord, I pray these things in Christ's name.

Amen. Our passage this morning comes from Matthew chapter 1. It's from verses 1 to 17.

I'll give you a moment to get there. Matthew 1, verses 1 to 17. And as you get there, you're going to realize what it is pretty quick.

And I know what you're thinking. You're probably saying, you're kidding, right? You chose a genealogy. This wasn't on a list of things I had to do.

I chose this on purpose. I really did. And I'm really excited to preach a genealogy to you. It is a long list of things.

[ 5 : 07 ] And I'm so excited to preach it today. Let's start in verse 1. There are kind of three sections to this genealogy. And you'll kind of see them.

They're arranged at the midway points. It starts with Abraham, David, and then the Babylonian exile. So here we go. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

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 Solomon. And Solomon 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. Our first section. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jeconiah, and his brothers at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

[ 6 : 39 ] The second section. Verse 12. And after the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah was the father of Sheatiel, and Sheatiel was the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abayud, and Abayud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zedok, and Zedok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Mathen, and Mathen the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who was called Christ.

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 Christ, 14 generations.

So did I just doom us to the most boring Christmas sermon ever? That's what you're probably thinking. To yourself, and I don't really blame you.

You probably, we don't probably pick this that often. But it is telling the story of a royal dynasty. And it's showing us why Christmas matters. And it's showing us just how much God loves us. And it's showing how Christmas draws us close to God.

[ 8 : 09 ] And how Christmas makes a giant claim on our lives. And if that's not enough, if we look very closely, we'll see that in the midst of all of it, this passage offers us a kind of peace that is not available anywhere else.

We're in our modern Christmas season. It's all hustle and bustle, the budgeting, the stress, the awkward holiday parties. The real Christmas, the one that this passage is talking about, offers peace and rest.

Because the king, the prince of peace, his name is, secured peace. Peace with God and rest from our strivings.

So if Christmas seems like a distant thing, this will draw us close. And if you don't think it matters very much, this is going to change that.

It's going to make this, this genealogy makes it personal. So let's dive in. Let's take a look at all of these names. Now, I didn't mean for this to happen.

[ 9 : 27 ] I really didn't, I promise you. But Star Wars mirrors this genealogy. Now, I'm not going to ruin anything from the new movie.

I haven't seen it, so I can't spoil anything. But I'm actually thinking here of the original series back in the 70s and the 80s. So we're going to look at three Star Wars-ish things in this genealogy, if you'll bear with me.

First, a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. Secondly, a pretty rough family tree. And third, a long-awaited renewal.

So we'll start with a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. Now, it used to be that when we started a work of fiction, what did we say?

We said, once upon a time, right? And what did that tell us? That told us that what you were about to hear was a tall tale. It was for your entertainment or instruction. But it didn't really happen.

[ 10 : 27 ] It's not a thing that really happened in human history. Now, once Star Wars became part of just our social fabric, a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away has steadily been replacing that.

I mean, you hear people saying that who've never even seen the movies. And, you know, a galaxy far, far away, or a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, will introduce stories that people have all over the place.

So what does that communicate to us? Well, it tells us to prepare to hear some fiction, to hear something that didn't really happen. It might be entertainment for us. It might be, you know, an Aesop's fable sort of a thing, trying to teach us a moral lesson.

But we know right off the bat it's not real, and we shouldn't treat it like it's real. But that's exactly not how Matthew starts his account.

He says this, The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. He begins not with a fable, but with history.

[ 11 : 34 ] Jesus had a real family with real relatives, just like you and me. His life isn't just a series of nice stories.

The book of Matthew isn't just a series of inspiring tales that we tell ourselves. It's anchored in history. It's real life.

We know who these people are. We know when and where they lived. Many of the names, Hezekiah, his name was just found in a piece of, a shard of pottery and a royal stamp in Israel.

We know these people and who they are in real life. So Matthew is telling us, it matters that Jesus came at a specific time, to a specific place, and from a specific family.

More on that family later. So when I said this passage was like Star Wars, actually in this aspect, it's the exact opposite of Star Wars. where George Lucas wants us, wants to tell us that his universe is a work of fiction.

[ 12 : 43 ] Matthew wants no confusion, that this really did happen. This is history. So it's not something simply to enjoy.

Star Wars is an inspirational tale. You can enjoy an inspirational tale, and then completely ignore it, if you like.

But you have to deal with real life. You can't avoid it. You can watch Star Wars, and then walk out of the theater, without a second thought.

Disney only cares about your ticket stuff. That's what they care about. But you can't hear this story, and walk away without making a choice. This story is the story of a real king.

And he claims dominion over you, for your good. But you can't remain neutral. Even not making a choice is making a choice.

[ 13 : 46 ] There's no option to abstain. So if this is real life, real history, and we have to deal with it, what is it exactly that we must deal with?

Like, what are the things that we have to respond to? Well, there are three things. First, his family. Second, his peace, the peace he brings. And third, his role as king.

So first, we're going to start with his family. As we already said, Star Wars mirrors this narrative a bit. So first we said, a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. Now we're going to say, there's a rough family tree.

Now, I promised you no Star Wars spoilers, but I lied. Here comes a Star Wars spoiler. Now, this comes from the second Star Wars movie, The Empire Strikes Back, which came out in 1980, I think.

So 35 years, I think, is enough time to let pass for a spoiler. And if not, too bad. Empire Strikes Back has the most famous line in the whole Star Wars universe, and it is this.

[ 14 : 57 ] Darth Vader, probably cinema's most amazing bad guy, right, looks to the hero, Luke Skywalker, and says, I am your father. Now, in that one moment, we realize that the hero doesn't come from an honorable line, like he thinks.

He, in fact, has a broken, sinister family tree. Well, Jesus has a rough family tree, too. These names might not ring a bell for us, but the Jews in the first century who read this document would know that it was a mixed bag.

In fact, one of the earliest Christian writers called this genealogy, he called it monstrous. Why?

Well, this family tree has murderers. It has prostitutes and their johns. It has foreign spies. It includes women, which in the ancient world is completely unthinkable.

It has idolaters. It has really evil kings in it. It's really ugly. If you were trying to write a royal lineage, a pedigree, you'd find anything other than this.

[ 16 : 18 ] You would do your best to not include these people. What does that tell us? It tells us that God is not ashamed to redeem hateful people, messed up people, the people that nobody wants, and call them his family.

They say you can choose your friends but not your family. Luke Skywalker couldn't choose his family. He couldn't choose that Darth Vader was his father. But Jesus could. Jesus did choose his family. And this is the one he did choose. Did he choose the most noble? No. Not by a long shot. Did he choose the most holy? Absolutely not. Go read about Manasseh. Did he choose the most popular? No. Not at all. He chose the hurting. He chose those who hurt others. He chose those that no one noticed. Why? To signal to us that his love is for everyone. [ 17 : 32 ] He takes sinners and outcasts and draws them near and calls them family. And that's not just a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.

It's not just the family tree that preceded him. It's today too. We recently preached through the book of Ephesians. How did it begin? Chapter 1, verse 3.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him.

In love, he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved.

He chose us for adoption into his family. When you come to Christ, God the Father adopts you as his child. He makes you family.

[ 18 : 37 ] And it doesn't matter where you come from. It's not about what you've done. It's about what he has done for you. And it's not about what has been done to you.

It's about what's been done for you by Jesus Christ. Christ. It's not about who you can attract to yourself. It's about God sending his son to us.

It's not about what you bring. It's about what he gives. His love. His grace. He makes his family. So if you don't feel worthy of God's love, know this.

He was born from sinners and broken people because he came for sinners and broken people. So that he could make an end of sin and brokenness for all.

So if you don't feel worthy of God's love or you know someone who feels that way, you're actually right. But that's not what counts. It's not about what you deserve.

[ 19 : 48 ] It's about God wanting to show his love to us. Can Star Wars touch that? No. Not even a little bit. So, a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.

A rough family tree. A long-awaited renewal. In the original Star Wars trilogy, what's at stake? The rebels want rest from the tyranny of the galactic empire.

And they fight off the oppression to win peace. I just spoiled the whole thing for you. It's actually easy to miss.

But that same rest, that same peace is a huge component of this genealogy. Look at verse 17. There are three sets of 14 generations.

It says this, 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.

[ 20 : 55 ] That's three sets of 14. Now, for the mathematically inclined of us among us here, I had to break out a calculator. But three sets of 14 is the same as six sets of seven.

Why does that matter, right? Who cares about that? Because the next number on that list, the seven, the seventh seven, that's huge in the Bible.

every seven years in the land of Israel was a year of rest, the Sabbath year. They didn't farm the land, slaves were released, debts were forgiven. But every seventh, seven years.

After 49 years was the year of Jubilee. In Leviticus chapter 25, we read this. You shall count seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you 49 years.

then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the day of atonement, you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land, and you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.

[ 22 : 03 ] It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property, and each of you shall return to his clan. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you. In it, you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of itself, nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines.

For it is a jubilee, it shall be holy to you. The year of jubilee restored virtually everything in the promised land. Not only were slaves released and debts forgiven like every seven years, but each of you shall return to his property.

Every family received back any land it had sold, and each of you shall return to his clan. It says, the land was restored and the families were restored. Every seventh, seventh, once in a lifetime, the jubilee year celebrated God's restoration.

The land belonged to him, the people belonged to him, and he restored it all. And that's exactly what Matthew wants us to be thinking of.

We've gone through six sevens, and we are waiting for the seventh seven. But he isn't the jubilee year.

[ 23 : 23 ] He is the jubilee king. The jubilee year restored the promised land of Israel, but the jubilee king would restore the true promised land, the promised land that Israel points to.

That jubilee year doesn't happen anymore because Christ has come. What did it point to? If you remember a few weeks back, Matt preached the first sermon in this Advent series about God with us.

In the beginning, God was with Adam and Eve face to face in the garden. The promised land, the land that was restored every 50 years in the jubilee year, it always came with the promise, I will be their God and they will be my people.

And so this promised land that was restored all the time, every 50 years, once a generation, it was pointing towards God with us. Until Jesus came, not as a jubilee year, but as we've said, the jubilee king, he, God, came to be with us.

The great high priest to make a new covenant where he would seal his spirit in our hearts. And secure for his people, the jubilee peace and rest and restoration in God they had always needed.

[ 24 : 51 ] And think about how that compares to Star Wars. Luke and Han and Leia, they had to fight for three movies, right, to secure their rest and peace.

peace. But you and I don't have to fight. Jesus came as the king of the jubilee to secure our peace and our rest with the father.

We don't struggle and fight to him. He came to us. It's not a peace and restoration that we need a new series of sequels, right, to keep secure.

it's one that he has secured forever. Our place with God is set. A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, a really rough family tree and a long-awaited restoration.

Why does Star Wars mirror this story? Why does it mirror Christmas? It's because God is the best storyteller there is. And all good stories take some themes and ideas from his story of redemption.

[ 26 : 06 ] They're riffs on his tune, as it were. But he doesn't tell his stories on film or in music or in theater. He writes his story in the fabric of history and on the tablets of men's hearts.

So where Star Wars says a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, Jesus was born a real king in real history. And we really have to choose how we'll respond to that fact.

Where Luke Skywalker couldn't choose his rough family tree or not, Jesus decided to be born into a family full of broken and sinful people because he came for broken and sinful people to gather them into the father's house.

Where Luke and Leia and Han had to win their own peace and keep fighting to secure it. Jesus was born the prince of peace. Not in a jubilee but as the jubilee to make peace for his people not the other way around.

Finally, Jesus comes as a king who makes a claim on us. Now, Star Wars doesn't mirror this because it can't.

[ 27 : 19 ] There are two names in this genealogy that really stand out. Matthew highlights them twice. Once at the very beginning in verse 1 and once at the end in verse 17. Verse 1 says, the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

And verse 17 says, 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.

Why does Matthew highlight those two names, David and Abraham? Because he wants to remind us this is the family of a king. Abraham was promised descendants who would be kings.

David was the king on whose throne the Messiah would sit. Who cares about a king born 2,000 years ago? What claim can he make on our lives? Do the Caesars who were ruling Rome at the

same time?

Did they have a big impact on our lives? No, not really. What's special about this kingdom? When the angel Gabriel first announced Jesus' birth to Mary, he said this, Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

[ 28 : 40 ] He will be great and will be called the son of the most high, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever.

And of his kingdom there will be no end. This king didn't just descend from kings. He is the king of kings.

And he has no successor. There is no king in Jerusalem. Because he will reign forever. forever. And his kingdom has no boundary because everything that exists was made by him and for him. Abraham Kuyper, one of my favorite theologians, put it this way. There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, mine.

he made this world and it is his. He made you and he made me and we are his.

[ 29 : 53 ] Matthew presents Jesus to us as king because Jesus is the king of kings and makes an absolute claim on our lives. That's a good thing.

Remember, he is the king of jubilee, the prince of peace. restoration, complete, lasting, real restoration is his and his alone.

You want to be in his kingdom completely. So if you aren't his today, if you aren't a member of his family, if the king of kings is not your king, this is real history and you have to deal with it. the thing that you must deal with immediately is this, will you make him your king? In Romans chapter 10, the apostle Paul writes, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord, that is your Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. God and that looks very much like the adoption and the peace that we've been talking about today. There is nothing more urgent for you.

[ 31 : 13 ] Kuyper said there isn't a square inch of you over which Jesus does not cry mine. Turn to him today and say I am yours. And for those who do belong to Christ, remember that scripture tells us we are not our own.

We have been bought with a price. We don't own ourselves, this king does, so we must not act like we own ourselves.

The Christian life is the lifelong process of finding jubilee rest in every aspect of our lives by making Jesus king in every aspect of our lives.

So the question we ask daily is where have we retained ownership in our life? In the great hymn Come Thou Long Expected Jesus, Charles Wesley wrote, Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king, born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring, by thy own eternal spirit, rule in all our hearts alone.

So the question we must ask is, does Christ rule in your heart alone? Another pastor, Charles Spurgeon, put it this way, when you hear the bells ringing out at Christmas, think of the reason why Jesus was born.

[ 32 : 46 ] Dream not that he came to load your tables with a Christmas feast and fill your Christmas tree with presents. but in your celebration look higher than all those worldly things.

Look within your hearts and say, for this purpose was he born, that he might be a king, that he might rule through the truth in the souls of a people who are by grace made to love the truth of God. So this Christmas, is Jesus your king completely? That's the question. does he rule in your hearts alone, or do you compete with him for lordship?

Do you love his truth such that he rules in your soul, or are there competing ideals in your heart?

We could ask the question this way, does he hold your future, or do you?

Does he hold your security, or do you? Does he hold your satisfaction and your joy? Or do you?

You see, he can handle those things well.

[ 33 : 57 ] He upholds the universe, the galaxies spin, and atoms adhere, because he wills the laws of physics. He can handle our future, our security, our satisfaction, and our joy.

We have no control over those things. enemies. Let's hand them over to the king who was born so that we might have life. And remember, this king doesn't just want your heart.

He wants the hearts of the whole world. He has made us ambassadors. And so part of that stewardship is being ambassadors on his behalf, and not just an ambassador to the people that we

would like to have sitting here today with us, to the whole world.

If Jesus is not ashamed to call the outcast, and the stigmatized, and the sinners, his family, are we ashamed to do the same? I hope not.

And do we choose who we'll associate with, invest in, and invite to church based on their social value? I hope not. One writer put it like this, a question for the church to ask itself in every age, is how well it is visibly representing this commitment to reach out to the oppressed and marginalized of society with the good news of salvation in Christ.

[ 35 : 32 ] There is a whole lot in a list of names, isn't there? It was not long ago in a galaxy far, far away, the birth of this king is anchored in history and we must deal with it one way or another.

We recognize that he was born from broken sinners like you and me, so he could make broken sinners like you and me his family. It applies to you and it applies to everyone we meet.

And you must recognize that true rest and restoration is only found in this king of Jubilee. Anywhere where you hold sway as lord of your life, you will not experience that Jubilee peace, that Jubilee rest, that Jubilee restoration.

Everywhere else you look for it, you will come up short. You must recognize that those benefits, being adopted into God's family, on the Jubilee restoration, they come from a king.

A king who claims you as his own. If you've never repented and turned to this king of glory, you must. And if you have, you want to see this Jubilee rest everywhere in your life, you have to turn to him everywhere in your life.

[ 37 : 03 ] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you have come really in history. Not as a pleasant fiction, but as a real king.

Lord, I pray that we would not take that lightly. We would not take lightly any of the other truths we've seen in this passage.

That you care about about the sinner, about the outcast, about the marginalized, the people that nobody notices. And it is your delight to make us your family.

Lord, I pray that we would take this message of the Jubilee King, and that it would sink down deep in our hearts and that we would hand over every facet of our being to you.

And we would invite others to do the same. For their great good and for your glory. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.