

"God with Us" Hope for the Outsiders

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Preacher: Tyler Dueno

[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning, church. This is part two of genealogy. Matt explained the covenants last week, and this week we'll focus on the character of God.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer together. Father, as we come to your word, glorify your Son as a Son gives glory to you.

What we need most is to see you with eyes of true faith. Will the Spirit be the witness in our hearts of your love for us in Christ?

Lord, we need you to do what only you can do, give eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, the lame to walk. Lord, would your word rise up like the morning sun in our hearts and would sorrow and sighing flee away as we gaze at the glory in the face of our Lord Jesus.

We pray this in his name. Amen. In a book about the sufficiency of Christ, there is a story of William Randolph Hearst, a famous newspaper publisher, who was an extraordinary collector of art.

[1 : 2 1] On one occasion, Hearst saw a piece of art that he decided that he must have in his possession. He sent his agent to search for this treasure, no matter the cost, no matter how long it took.

Eventually, the agent reported that he had, in fact, found this elusive piece of art. It was found in a warehouse of Hearst's own possessions.

He was searching for a treasure that was already his. Now, I suspect many of us are like Mr. Hearst as we live our Christian lives.

We enter the Christmas season searching, longing, for something more. And we forget that the treasure that we are seeking is already ours in Christ.

Although the text before us is familiar and common, there is a storehouse of treasure if we look more closely. And with that, we'll read Matthew 1, verses 1-17, the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

[2 : 3 6] Let's read God's Word together. 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 Salmon, and Salmon 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.

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 Jatham, and Jatham 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.

And after the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel 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 Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Mathan, and Mathan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations, and from David to the deportation of Babylon, 14 generations, and from the deportation of Babylon to the Christ, 14 generations.

Amen. We will draw out three themes from this genealogy. God is faithful through Jesus, point number one.

[5 : 13] God is faithful through Jesus. Jesus is a friend of sinners. Point number three, Jesus gives freedom to those in slavery.

God is faithful. Jesus is a friend of sinners. Jesus gives freedom to those in slavery. God is faithful. His faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Not one of his words has fallen to the ground. That is what this genealogy is all about. You look down at the end of verse 1. Matthew begins with that phrase, the books of the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

That screams out, God is faithful. As we heard last week, Matthew grabs the very language from the opening chapters of Genesis. And this is a phrase that drives the narrative of the Bible.

All of Judaism was centered on a genealogy. If you go back to the dawn of creation, the world had been plunged into darkness through sin. But God made a promise to create a new world, a new race, a new creation.

[6 : 29] At the dawn of history, God said he would do it through a promised child that would come out of the family of Israel. To not only rule and reign, but to bring about the work of redemption.

And God is now bringing those promises to pass. God promised this offspring would be born of the woman in Genesis 3.15.

And this offspring would be the sin slayer. The new creation bringer. The kingdom inaugurator. The curse reverser.

The serpent crusher. I enjoyed saying that. God promised this offspring from the dawn of creation. And this offspring line was preserved in Noah's time.

We learn the offspring would come from the family of Abraham. This offspring is of the house of Judah. This offspring is of David's house in 2 Samuel 7.

[7 : 33] He descends from the royal line of Solomon. And Geliel and Zerubel. This offspring is of the virgin. And his name is Emmanuel.

God with us. This offspring's name would be wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, and the prince of peace. This offspring would come from the town of Bethlehem in Micah 5.

And when the fullness of time had come, God is now sending forth this offspring. So Matthew with neon lights and a dark sky is saying Jesus is the promised offspring.

That's what the title Christ means in this genealogy. The long-awaited king who has come to take his rightful place on the throne. And one day every knee will bow to this king Jesus.

So friend, Jesus is no myth. This is the long-awaited Messiah of history. Jesus is not a mere religious teacher. He is not a mere moral example.

- [8 : 43] He is not a politician trying to get you to vote for him. Jesus is the king of the universe everywhere at all times. And he is never up for re-election. He is the king.
- And he has come. If you are new to reading the Bible, this is the heart of the message from Genesis to Revelation. At the heart of Christianity and the scriptures is this Jesus of Nazareth.
- There are 66 books in the Bible written by at least 40 authors spanning over 2,000 years. But there is only one subject. One overarching subject.
- God, the Son, our Lord Jesus. So the center of history is not about oppressors and the oppressed. It is about sinners and their relationship to this all-sufficient Savior.
- And notice that in verse 17, this genealogy has three eras mentioned. First from Abraham to David in verse 2 to 6. David to the exile in Babylon in verse 6 to 11.
- [9 : 42] And then Babylon to the time of Christ, verse 12 to 17. Matthew is saying God has been faithful at all times and all places in every circumstance. God has been faithful to bring about these promises in every era of Israel's history.
- And God is the architect and source of this great plan of salvation. And he is committed to fulfilling these promises. So when you read the genealogy, this is not like flipping through the Old Testament yellow pages.
- Each of these names are links in a chain that God has carefully put together. God has controlled all of history to fulfill these promises.
- And you see God controlling all of history. You see his sovereign choice, even in this genealogy. In a culture where the older brother is entitled to the inheritance, you see God choosing the younger brothers.
- Isaac, Jacob, and Judah. David was the younger brother. And they took the older brother's place in the line. Now, if we really believed in God's faithfulness, in his controlling hands, how would your life change?
- [10 : 55] How would my life change? If we believed in God's faithfulness. You know, even in your dark days, God is in complete control. The apostle Paul wanted to preach, but God instead sent him into a prison.
- What everyone thought was an obstacle, Paul saw as a sovereignly ordained opportunity. He tells the church in Philippi, what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.
- Our God knows what he is doing. God brings his people into many storms, and Christian, he will preserve you in each one. God is faithful.
- In Christ, his everlasting arms are beneath you. His eye is ever upon you. Everything God says to you in his word is true, because our God is a God of truth.
- Heaven and earth may pass away, but God's words will never pass away. Your hope in God will never be disappointed. He will never deceive you.
- [12 : 00] So when it says to you, never will I leave you, never will I forsake you, Christian, you should believe it. When it says, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, take that check to the bank and cash it.
- Christian, if God's currency was mercy, his bank account balance is inexhaustible for you. There is no condemnation for those in Christ. But maybe for some of you, it doesn't feel like that.
- It doesn't feel like God has been faithful to you. God might feel like an absentee father. Mail is a child support check, but never around when you need him the most. Like a watchmaker who left the world to run it on its own.

Life might feel like a war zone. Artillery shells are exploding everywhere. You see desperation around you. You see death. No one is in charge in the chaos. Without minimizing the real pain, the witness of the scripture says the exact opposite.

All of history can be summarized in one sentence. For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

[13 : 15] So what a solid foundation to stand upon for those of us anxious about what the future holds. Are you anxious about finances and family?

John Newton, the author of Amazing Grace, once said this. What a comfort to know that the one whose hands were pierced for you is the hand that guides all of history. All of your concerns are held in his hands.

How can you not trust a God who has been so faithful to you? He has been your help, and he will continue to be your faithful God that guides you in the storm.

God has been faithful. Exhibit A in the New Testament. Look at this genealogy. But this genealogy doesn't just answer who the main character is, but what is he like? Who is this God?

And the answer is God is a gracious God. And point number one is God is faithful. Point number two is Jesus is a friend of sinners.

[14 : 19] And we'll spend most of our time here. Now, if the names in Hebrews 11 are a hall of faith, the names in Matthew 1 are a hall of grace. This is made apparent by who Matthew chooses to insert into this genealogy.

This is not a genealogy of insiders, but one of outsiders. But each of these names are trophies of God's majestic grace. You know, people scorn Jesus, saying this man is a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

They spoke better than they knew. Jesus was a friend of sinners. But there's a mystery and a paradox about our Lord Jesus. Because he was with them, but he was not of them.

He ate with them, but he did not sin with them. Jesus himself would say he came to seek and save the lost. He made himself a friend to sinners.

We see that right from the beginning. Because not only is this a royal lineage, as we heard last week, this is a genealogy of grace. Look at who Matthew includes. He includes five women.

[15 : 26] Tamar in verse 3. Rahab and Ruth in verse 5. And the woman known as the wife of Uriah in verse 6. And then we have Mary in verse 16.

And we'll deal with Mary next week, Lord willing. Now, we should note that it is striking for Matthew to include women in the first place. After all, Jesus' royal bloodline is being established through the fathers.

Through the line of Abraham and David. You might say, well, what's the big deal? If it includes women? Well, culturally, it doesn't make any sense for Matthew to do this.

After all, this was a society where women were seen as inferior. The testimony of women were inadmissible in court. Men could divorce their wives, throwing them out on the street for burning their toast in the morning.

In this culture, these women added nothing to Jesus' credentials. But Matthew disagrees. Matthew is intentionally breaking the pattern to include them. He wants us to see that these women are included.

[16 : 36] Why is that? Well, I think there are two things. At least two things. Well, first, it certainly anticipates that Jesus would fully include women in the family of God. Jesus called women to be his disciples.

Unheard of for women to sit at the feet of a teacher, Jesus invited them to sit and learn from him. He entrusted women to be his first resurrection witnesses. Jesus gave women dignity.

But second, although these women had dignity, they certainly did not have the pedigree. Because if he wanted to do that to list women with pedigree, he could have listed the four mothers of Israel. Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah.

He doesn't do that. Rather, the women here are outcasts. Outsiders. I think Matthew wants us to see where Jesus came from to help us understand who Jesus is and what he has come to do.

Let's look at these four women. We're going to pull out the family album and see some of these trophies of God's grace to get a glimpse of the God they knew. The first woman was Tamar in verse 3.

[17 : 50] You can read about her in Genesis 38. Now, Tamar had something of a notorious history. She had the reputation of being a black widow. You know, her husband just started to mysteriously drop dead.

Not once, but twice. And Judah, her father-in-law, was not about to let it happen a third time. Tamar was a childless widow, which in those days was a public disgrace.

Not only would she have been a public disgrace, but she would have been desperate because Judah, her father-in-law, neglects her, neglects to provide for her.

In people's minds, she was bad news. And in this sad story of a broken family, her father-in-law, Judah, is actually clueless because God was the one who was striking these men dead for their wickedness.

And the whole story was an ugly affair, filled with lies, scandal, and hypocrisy. Out of Tamar's desperation, she resorts to deception.

[18 : 57] She disguises herself as a prostitute, enticing her father-in-law, Judah, into getting her pregnant. Judah himself is on his way to a pagan party when he sees Tamar on the side of the road disguised.

But he takes a detour and takes her up on her proposition. And this was purely transactional. You can read the account. And Judah didn't have any money with him, so he leaves the equivalent of his ID card.

In his mind, he would be right back to get it. But then she disappears. And you thought your family was dysfunctional. But the story gets worse.

Fast forward three months later, Later, and Tamar is beginning to show the baby bump. She is pregnant, out of wedlock. Rumors are spreading about Tamar.

You can almost hear the gossip behind her back. Others saying, what an embarrassment she is. Judah, her father-in-law, hears about it, and he is easy on himself and harsh with Tamar.

[20 : 02] Like the Pharisees ready to cast the first stone at the woman caught in adultery. Judah demanded that Tamar receive the penalty under the law for her sin. And Tamar figured something like this would happen.

She said, Father-in-law, I'll show you the man who did this to me. In a dramatic moment, she produced Judah's ID card. Let's be honest.

Judah had it coming. But in a way, Tamar was the one to be commended in this sad story. Maybe some of you know what it feels like to be a Tamar. Misunderstood.

Slandered by your own family. Slandered by your in-laws. Slandered by even your church family. An outsider. You know, this is something you think Matthew would want to leave out of the family album.

But God is perfectly comfortable saying, these are my people. You know, every family has its flaws. Including this family here at Trinity. But perhaps God has called you out of a dysfunctional family.

[21 : 08] For some of you, maybe you were raised by your grandparents. Because your parents were drug addicts. Maybe you were in and out of the foster care system. Maybe your family disowned you for something you did.

It is so messed up that you feel you can never do anything with your life. You feel like you were the last person to ever be allowed on Instagram. Your life is broken and you don't belong there.

You know, there's a myth that your family background defines you. That's not true. It might help to explain you, but it does not define you. God loves to restore sinners.

God loves to choose what is low in the world so his grace can be lifted high. And saving sinners is God's delight. Here God does a miraculous work in Judah and Tamar's life.

Judah was a callous, murderous, pragmatic, sleazy man. Before this episode, he sold his younger brother into slavery for some silver and then disowned his daughter-in-law Tamar.

[22 : 13] But keep reading Genesis. And you realize God uses Tamar to change Judah. God uses Tamar to transform Judah and to bring about true repentance.

Because Tamar in that moment exposed Judah's selfish heart. And you see afterward, when Judah is before Joseph in Egypt, Judah is the one who steps up and offers his own life in exchange for his younger brothers.

Earlier in his life, Judah said, I'll sacrifice your life to improve my life. But by the end of it, he says, I'll sacrifice my life to save your life. Judah foreshadows the perfect man, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would lay his life down for others.

So you see why it makes sense for Jesus to come from the house of Judah. A simple application. By God's grace, people can change.

I know God has transformed men of this congregation that resemble Judah. But man or woman, if you are a Christian, you are a trophy of God's grace.

[23 : 25] You are a new creation. So be encouraged and rejoice in that grace. You can sincerely testify that his grace is as vast as the ocean.

You can say with Paul, where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. It overflows. God can not only overcome your past history, he can transform it.

And look at the mercy of God to Tamar and Judah at the beginning of verse 3 in this genealogy. God in his sovereign grace will choose Judah and Tamar's child, Perez, to be in the royal lineage.

But friend, there is no degree of sin or brokenness that prevents God's plan from triumphantly marching forward. Your life may be painted with dark colors.

But God is the master artist. He uses those dark colors on his canvas of history to make a beautiful display of his redeeming grace. But we see a similar pattern with a second woman, Rahab in verse 5.

[24 : 29] Now, Rahab didn't need to disguise herself as a prostitute. That was her profession. She started outside the family of God, living in complete darkness.

She came from the Canaanites, sworn enemies of God's people. Not the best pedigree. But the book of Joshua makes clear that Rahab heard about the power of God through the miraculous works in the Red Sea, and she put her trust in the God of Israel.

And by faith, God transformed Rahab. And by God's grace, the greatest sinner can become the most honored saint. In Hebrews 11, Rahab occupies a place of honor alongside the giants of God's people.

And you'll remember Rahab's courage in the city of Jericho. She risked her life. Rahab courageously protected the two Israelite men from the authorities.

She was the equivalent of a Corrie ten Boom in Nazi Germany. She did not put her trust in the walls of the city, but on the God who is invisible. And God spared her life.

[25 : 37] And she is in the place of honor in Hebrews 11. And likewise, your background might be like Rahab's too. There are things in your past that you are ashamed of. And when you first professed Jesus, the wind was not at your back.

You were a single fish swimming upstream when everyone was going in the opposite direction. You may have stood alone. You come from a house, a village, maybe even a country filled with those who hate God.

And you are familiar with your friends and your family rejecting you for following Jesus. But if you are a Christian, you are a new creation. The old has passed away.

God has transformed you like Rahab. And look at what God did in Rahab's life at the end of verse 5. We see eventually she turned from her sin and she became the wife of Salmon.

Wouldn't you like to know the backstory of that relationship? It would make for a great book. Rahab, a redeemed bride. Oh, friends. Salmon's love for a redeemed Rahab would be a faint echo of that love that Christ would show for his bride.

[26 : 49] But not only that, Rahab became the mother of the godly Boaz. What an illustration of God's grace to Rahab. Redeeming Rahab's family history.

Friend, no matter what you've done, who you are, Jesus can save and redeem you too. But you say, I am unworthy. Yes, you are.

You have arrived at the truth. And so is everyone in this room. The ground is level at the foot of the cross. This is a God whose heart is full of free grace that runs after the worst sinners.

He is the father who runs after the prodigal son. His son would leave glory to seek and save the lost. Look at exhibit A in the New Testament.

Jesus came to be a friend of sinners. Look at where he comes from. God is saying, look, if her name is in here, no matter what you've done, who you are, your name can be too.

[27 : 49] Christ's blood is able to save any sinner. He came for adulterers, pornography addicts, deceivers, doubters, hypocrites like Judah, liars, murderers, perverts, thieves, outcasts, blasphemers, terrorists.

We don't minimize these sins, but God brings good news to the guilty rebel. As William Tyndale first translated the word gospel, these are glad tidings to the guilty.

You know, paraphrasing Spurgeon, the veil to the throne room of heaven has been torn. It was not a small cut so only small sinners can enter in. The veil has been cut from top to bottom so that even the chief of sinners can enter by the blood of Christ.

So look to the Savior and live. Take your eyes off yourself and leave your sin behind you and take hold of Christ. Some of you are outside in the cold and there is a rich banquet and a feast happening in God's house.

And you have no right to enter in. But then the owner of the house comes outside, calls you by name, takes you by the hand, and he personally walks you inside the house.

[29 : 00] And he introduces you as his guest. And the whole house erupts with joy. Jesus said there is joy in heaven when one sinner turns from their sin and takes hold of Christ.

He has come for you. Not because anything good in you, but because he is a gracious God. We go from the grave to glory by sovereign grace.

He is a gracious God who is a friend of sinners. And look at the third woman, Ruth, in verse 5. Now, if you've ever read the book of Ruth, you know she was a fierce follower of God.

But if you're familiar with Ruth, you also know that she also was an outsider. You know, in some ways, her life is an exact duplicate of Tamar. Both are childless widows.

Both are vulnerable. Both are foreigners. And because they were foreigners, the law of Moses prohibited their entry into the assembly of God's people. They were outsiders.

[30 : 05] But in God's sovereign grace, Ruth, a Gentile, was brought into the family of God. She becomes a daughter of the king. And God's plan has always been to include the nations in the family of God.

And Ruth became the grandmother of Israel's King David. You might be an outsider, too. You might not even have a family. But if you put your trust in Christ, you can be brought in the family of God.

Christ would say the last would be first and the first would be last. Outsiders are being brought in while those who think they're insiders are being cast out. There are no unimportant people when God calls you into the family of God.

In the world's eyes, Ruth was a nobody. But she is an honored daughter of God. And finally, the fourth outcast was Bathsheba. Now, Matthew refers to her as the wife of Uriah in verse 6.

She is neither a prostitute nor is she a Gentile. Why is she an outsider? Well, I don't think it's because of her adulterous union with King David.

[31 : 19] I don't think the Bible holds that against her. You can read the circumstances of what happened. But I think Matthew referring to her as the wife of Uriah gives us a hint. Matthew is pointing to her status as an Israelite marrying a Gentile.

Now, God prohibited Israelites from marrying Gentiles. Now, if you are a Christian, you should understand why this prohibition is in the Bible. It was not because of their ethnicity.

After all, we see Salmon marrying Rahab, a Gentile Canaanite. Rather, it was because God knew that his people would be drawn away from him.

If his people married Gentiles who worshipped pagan gods. Bathsheba ignored God's commands. And that would have made her an outcast.

But like these other women, God had mercy on Bathsheba. God transformed her. She, like the other women, performs courageous acts as the mother of Solomon.

[32 : 22] And you can read them in 1 Kings. Now, all these women had a lot in common. These were all women who were the subject of gossip and rumors. Some of these women had shameful pasts.

All of them were outsiders. But it is the outsiders at the edge of society that God has raised up in the Old Testament. It is no surprise that when Jesus came on the scene, outsiders flocked to him.

God transforms them to be courageous and bold followers. Prostitutes received Jesus. The Pharisees rejected him.

Outsiders brought in. Insiders cast out. Some of you are thinking, well, I'm glad they got their act together. But that misses the point. Jesus' genealogy is filled with Gentiles.

And in the world's eyes, they were nobodies. God does not need the elite. He does not need the ones at the top of the tier. God loves to choose what is low and despised and weak in the world to accomplish his sovereign plans.

[33 : 31] He can take even your deepest failures and use it to bring about his glory. Matthew is saying the gospel is for all people. Like a great neon sign, all are welcome.

Jesus is not ashamed to be identified with these people and the family album. And knowing where Jesus came from prepares the reader to know what Jesus has come to do. Jesus, soon after his ministry began, associated himself with sinners.

The high and exalted one, Jesus, does not stay up in his ivory tower, writing self-help books, preaching down to the crowds, pick yourself up by your own bootstraps.

No, he doesn't do that. He goes down to them. He eats with them. He dines with them. Even the chief of sinners he welcomes. Jesus would say he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Christian, do you remember who you were before the Lord saved you? Some of you were the elder brother, and some of you the prodigal son.

[34 : 40] Either way, you were lost. And Paul, in his mind, never lost sight of the fact that he was a great sinner. Even as an apostle, he called himself a blasphemer.

He trashed the name of Jesus. He was a persecutor. He arrested, beat, and imprisoned, and violently attacked Christians. Paul hated Jesus. But Jesus showed undeserved mercy.

Grace was overflowing to Paul. And if you trust in him, that grace overflows to you too. Come to this all-sufficient Savior and receive the grace that Paul experienced.

Remember this amazing mercy and grace that you have been shown. This grace brought you into the family, and this grace brings you through to the end.

Friend, what is your past? Are you a victim? A victimizer? Either way, Jesus has come for you. You are a great sinner. Yes, you are. But Jesus is an even greater Savior.

[35 : 45] He has come for the vile. He came for the foul. He came for the ungodly, the unfaithful, for you and me. Whoever you are and whatever you've done, he has come for you.

But he not only comes to be a friend of sinners, he comes to save you from the greatest problem that threatens to ruin you forever. The wrath of God and slavery from sin.

That's the third point. God brings freedom to those in slavery. Now, this is a dark history because each of us and each of these men and women are born into darkness.

Christ was born into this nightmare of a world. Look at the end of verse 17 when Christ arrives. The people are in the deportation in Babylon. They're carried off into exile.

In a sense, they were in a political exile. The people were put in chains. The temple destroyed. Exiled to Babylon. And they were still occupied by a foreign government, Rome.

[36 : 46] But a greater exile existed. It existed then and the exile still exists today. Every human being is born into this exile. And this greater exile has existed since the garden.

You see, when Adam and Eve sinned, they died. They died physically and they died spiritually. The world was plunged into darkness. Sin spread and death spread.

The dark truth is that you and I are naturally born slaves. Sin in our hearts. Powerless. Guilty before a holy God. To be descended from Adam is to be a slave to sin.

Liable to death and hell. And God's eternal wrath. But we see Christ comes in grace. This is God's miraculous intervention in history.

The one whom the angels have worshipped since the dawn of creation condescended himself and became a human. He comes to free us from slavery. The religions of the world are trying to teach you how to reach up to God.

[37 : 56] Christianity says God has come down to us. We see that even here. Notice with me the abrupt change in Matthew's genealogy. There is a break at the end of the pattern in verse 16.

Something new is happening. Up to this point, Matthew has kept saying this person was the father of so and so. But now in verse 16, Matthew says this.

Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born. That's a massive statement. That is a massive statement in all of history. He did not say Joseph, the father of Jesus, like the rest of the pattern.

No, it's passive. It's suggesting Jesus' birth is from God. Jesus is born of the woman and of the spirit. And it's begging to be explained. How did this happen?

Well, that's how the next section begins. Lord willing, we'll get to that next week. This is the miracle of the incarnation. When we could not lift a finger to save ourselves, the king of heaven came down to earth so he could bring sinners on earth to heaven.

[39 : 01] Through one man's trespass, many died, as Paul would say. But in the sovereign grace of God, the second Adam has now come and arrived to bring freedom and life to those who are in slavery.

This is the good news of Christmas. Christmas is a rescue mission. Because we all have the same problem. God is holy and we are not.

That is the biggest problem you face in this life. That God is good and you are not. And his eyes are too pure to look on evil. God hates sin.

And he will not brush your sin under the rug. If God gave us what we deserved, all of us would be condemned to hell forever. And the bad news is this. You who are outside of Christ are right now in a state of condemnation.

But praise God, the one who was a friend of sinners came to be the substitute for sinners. The one who held out his hands, welcoming the outcast, were nailed to a cross.

[40 : 06] The one who had never sinned made himself an enemy of God. An outsider to bring you and me in. Jesus lived the perfect life.

He fulfilled the law perfectly. Every single thought was a perfect God-glorifying thought. But despite this, the father crushes his own son Jesus as our substitute for all who had returned from their sin and put their trust in Christ alone.

It should have been you and me suffering under the wrath of God. He took all the blame, all the shame. He took for us, for you and me. He drank the cup of God's white, hot anger for us.

The first Adam condemned us. The second Adam has come to save us. The first Adam shut the door to God's presence. The second Adam has opened heaven's gates wide.

The first Adam led us into slavery. The second Adam purchases our freedom. And the first Adam disobeyed God by eating of the tree. But friends, the second Adam obeyed his father to bring life by being nailed to a tree in our place.

[41 : 27] Jesus rises from the dead and ascends to his throne. The kingdom of God comes in power through the conquering king crucified and risen.

True freedom from sin is found in Christ alone. If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Amen? If you are not a Christian, run to this friend of sinners.

There is no hope for you outside of Christ. Either in this life or the next. It is appointed once for you to die and then you will face judgment.

No amount of crying or weeping will help you on that final day. Romans 2, Paul says there will be wrath and fury. Jesus will no longer be a friend but a judge of sinners.

You will be subject to the wrath and final judgment of a holy God. But if you run to the cross, if you throw yourself at the mercy of God and trust in the blood and righteousness of Christ, you can be saved today and forever.

[42 : 30] Turn to Jesus. He is an all-sufficient Savior. Jesus, by his blood, makes his enemies his friends. If you would come to this king of grace, he would receive you.

The good news is this. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. To close, there is a missionary named Damian Molokai who traveled across the sea to bring Christ to a quarantine colony of lepers.

Lepers were contagious, and so they were exiled to an island in the Pacific to go and die alone in exile. Damian would write to his brother that he would make himself a leper with lepers to gain all to Christ.

He immersed himself in the miseries of leper life, physical and moral miseries. But he embraced the lepers. He spoke their language, bandaged their wounds.

He wept with them. He built their homes and took them into his arms. He built 2,000 coffins by hand to bury those the world had forgotten.

[43 : 44] He shared his life with lepers. And the lepers quickly sensed they had a true friend in Damian. One day, Damian went to dip his leg in water and realized he had become a leper himself.

From that point on, he began his sermons with, we lepers. Eventually, he would die as a leper. This is a dim echo of the true friend of sinners.

Christ, with his infinite arms of mercy, reached across the universe to the unclean. The one who took your sins and your sorrows and made them his very own.

Who suffered and died alone as a leper. Jesus, the friend of spiritual lepers, the lost and the lame. Who is a God like this?

A holy God who so freely and fully pardons, whose grace is so rich and free. When we could not ascend to him, he descends to us.

[44 : 54] Nailed to the tree to free you to worship him before his throne forever. What a friend of sinners. Let's pray. Oh, Father, we thank you, Lord, that you sent your only son, Jesus.

That while we were still weak, he came and died for us. Father, your sovereign grace, we pray that we would glorify you. Lord, that we would find our dignity in you.

Oh, Lord, be with us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.