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Matthew 1:1-17

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English Standard Version

"The Line of the King"

The 1st Sermon in a series on the Gospel of Matthew entitled
"The King and His Kingdom!"

Matthew 1:1-17

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 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.

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.

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.”

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. You have brought us to this amazing Gospel to learn more about your Son, Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. We think we already know Him, we think we already know the story, we think we already know the characters, and this book will reveal that we think too much and know too little.

So by Your Spirit open this Gospel to us and help us to see Jesus all over again, help us to come to know Him in an entirely new way, help us to follow Him as we never have before, and, as always, for this we need Your grace. Give us the desire to learn from You this morning, in the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

INTRODUCTION: *Homo Viator* — A Person on the Way ¹

Every time I read a good story my heart thumps a little faster. I love mysteries and spy stories and techno thrillers — I can’t get enough of them. I especially love a good adventure story, tales filled with daring quests and dangerous journeys; these have always been my favorites. Even as a child, when I was reading with a flashlight under the covers, somewhere in the deepest part of my soul, I knew that life had to be a grand adventure or it was no life at all.

The ancients used to refer to a human being as a *homo viator* — “*A Person on the Way*” — a man or a woman on a journey, a quest, an adventure. Later in life, when I first heard that Latin phrase, it rang true. I knew it, we’re all *homo viators* — people on the way of adventure.

I can remember one summer, probably around 8th or 9th grade, and I was working at a summer camp, and one of the other staff members there gave me the book, The Hobbit. I can still remember Tolkien’s first line, “*In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.*” Ten words into the book and I was hooked.

Psychologists refer to this process as “**narrative transport**,” meaning the capacity for a good story to **grab us** and **move us** emotionally. What’s a hobbit, I wondered, and why does he live in the ground? Will he leave his hole? If so, what surprises, dangers, and delights will he encounter? And, if you’ve read the book, you know that both dangers and delights abound. And as I entered Bilbo Baggins’ journey, I’d wonder — what adventures **will I have?**

And so, with daring quests in my heart, I opened the New Testament, the grand story of

1 The Introduction, Exposition, and Conclusion are adapted from the books, “The Gospel of Matthew: God With Us” by Rev. Matt Woodley, Resonate Commentary Series, pages 14-28, “*The Wonder of Christmas: 50 Meditations on the Birth of Christ*” by Daniel Partner; **And the Sermons, “Jesus, the Christ: Son of David, Son of Abraham”** by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, 1/5/97, www.fpcjackson.org; “*Four Women in Jesus’ Family Tree*” by Rev. Ray Pritchard, 12/20/1992, www.keepbelieving.com; “*The Dawn of the Kingdom*” by Rev. Greg Gilbert, 1/2/10 and “*Angels From the Realms of Glory*” by Rev. Mike McKinley, 12/19/04, both of Capital Hill Baptist Church, Washington, DC, www.capitalhillbaptist.org; “*The Genealogy of Jesus (Part 2)*” by Rev. Bill Baldwin, Park Woods Presbyterian Church, Overland Park, KS, nd, <http://bettercovenant.org/matthew>; **And the Articles, “Why the Genealogies of Jesus Matter”** by Rev. Steve Weaver, Credo Magazine, 12/26/11, www.credomag.com; “*Who Do You Think He Is?*” by Rev. Peter Grainger, Unashamed Workman, 11/29/12, www.unashamedworkman.org;

Jesus, supposedly the greatest story ever told, and read a long and tedious list of Hebrew names ... and I was deeply disappointed. Where was the **adventure**? Where was the **danger** and the **delight**? Where were the *homo viators* — the people on great journeys — in this story? And so, the first time through, I just skipped it ... and, sad to say, I thought starting a book this way was an **epic fail**. ... Or was it?

More recently, as I was preparing for this series on the Gospel of Matthew, I've come to realize that Matthew, ever so slowly and gently, so as not to startle us, was sweeping us into **the greatest adventure tale ever told**. And Matthew does it all — provoking and surprising us right into the story of Jesus. The first two words — *biblos geneleos* — are also the Greek title for the Book of Genesis. There's a reason we went from Genesis to Matthew (with a little Colossians interlude so we could start Matthew at Advent). So there really is a method behind the madness.

Genesis begins with four chapters that comprise the book of the generations of the world — creation and the birth of human culture. Chapter five of Genesis teaches us, **Genesis 5:1**, *“This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.”*

The New Testament is a new book that tells of **the last Adam** (1 Corinthians 15:45). The Gospel of Matthew could easily be titled *“The book of the generations of Jesus Christ.”* It's the story of the One who created the world, breathed the breath of life into Adam, was born into the creation, and redeemed it from Adam's fall. You see, Matthew wants us to do a Genesis double take: the first creation, and now, in Jesus, the new creation. In other words, the original creation — damaged, flawed, broken — is being restored and transformed in and through the Messiah Jesus. And then Matthew quickly moves into one of those infamous Biblical genealogies. We don't usually begin adventure tales with a family tree, but in the ancient world a genealogy **grounded** people in **history**. It told **you** who you were and **where** you came from.

There is a story of a team with Wycliffe Bible Translators who completed the Gospel of Luke for the first time in a language — except for the genealogy. There was minimal interest in the story from the people group in question until the missionaries finally decided (believing that *“all Scripture is God's breathed”*) to translate the genealogy — a fairly simple matter of adapting the names using the sound-system of the language. The response when it was read out was astounding and the key to the reception of the gospel in that community. In a group that prized their ancestors (and could name them back many generations) they realized that this Jesus Christ was a real person — unlike the mythological figures featured in their own religion. And so, Matthew starts with this genealogy because, right from the start, he wants you to know ...

v. 1: THE IDENTITY OF THE KING

“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” You know, when we have New Member Visits, one of the elders often asks something to the effect of, “What is your favorite passage of Scripture?” **And no one ever answers, “Matthew 1:1-17.”** Instead, when we come to this passage, we're more likely to ask, “Why would Matthew begin his account of the life of Christ with this **boring** genealogy?” After all, most people just skim these lists when reading Matthew, but there are important things for us to notice here.

And even more than that, I want to suggest that this text is **one of the most important passages in the Bible!** **Matthew 1:1-17** is one of the most important passages in the Bible because **it's the thread that binds the Old and New Testaments** together. In fact, this text is **essential** to properly understand the meaning of the Old Testament. Matthew's genealogy is a

summary of nearly the entire Old Testament, from **Genesis 11** to **Malachi 4**, capturing the stories of the patriarchs, the Israelites' slavery in Egypt, and the exodus from Egypt to the promised land; there is David and Solomon and the divided kingdom, the destruction of Israel and the exile of Judah, and finally the return from exile.

Matthew carefully links the second part of the Bible with the first by citing **61 direct quotes** (Mark has 31, Luke 26, and John 16) and many other allusions from the Old Testament. Matthew uses the phrase, “*to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet*” **Ten Times**. Matthew clearly identifies Jesus as the promised and long awaited Messiah. The evidence presented is overwhelming. Jesus is clearly presented as the fulfillment of all that the prophets of old were longing for.

The book of Matthew opens with the genealogy of the King. These opening verses are important because Jewish people, who made up Matthew's audience, were very interested in a person's genealogy. The New Testament rests upon the accuracy of this genealogy because it establishes the fact that Jesus Christ is of the line of Abraham and of the line of David. Both are very significant. The line of Abraham places Him in the nation, and the line of David puts Him on the throne.

And that's important to understand. Matthew's not writing a strict genealogy that includes everyone. Rather, he's tracing **the royal line of David** as it comes down towards Jesus. Second, in interpreting the original Greek, the better way to describe the relationship between the names in Matthew's genealogy is “X begat Y,” rather than “X was the father of Y.” In other words, it's not necessary that one person was **biologically** the father of the person in the next generation, but rather that he was the **ancestor** of that person (so, for example, he could have been the grandfather).

Indeed, Matthew is not trying to give us a literal one to one corresponding line of people who gave birth to other people until we get to Jesus. Rather, he wants us to see that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises — the long awaited Messiah. Matthew does this in three specific ways.

First, we see in verse 1 that Jesus is the Son of Abraham. So Christ is the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham that he will be the father of many nations, and that the peoples on earth will be blessed through him, **Genesis 12:2-3**, “*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. ³ 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.*”

The genealogies were central to the nation Israel, and through them it could be established whether a person had a legitimate claim to a particular line. For example, when Israel returned from the captivity, we find in **Ezra 2:62**, “*These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but they were not found there, and so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean.*”

It was possible in Ezra's day to check the register of the tribe of Levi and remove those who made a false claim. Every king has to have a royal lineage because his ancestry is the most important thing about him. Kings have to be in the royal line in order to qualify to be on the throne. Matthew begins with a family tree that traces the right of Jesus to reign.

The first sentence of the Gospel of Matthew introduces not only this genealogy, but the entire gospel, and in fact, the entire New Testament. This sentence answers the question: **What is this book about?** Answer: Jesus. And: **Who is this Jesus?** This sentence tells you almost

everything you need to know about the identity of Jesus, “*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*” The genealogy that follows is given by Matthew to prove **the validity** of what Matthew claims in this first sentence.

Second, we see the Old Testament promise fulfilled in Christ because He is the Son of David. The story begins with this familiar name — “*the son of David.*” Well-educated scribes and Pharisees of that day knew the messiah by this name, as did the common people, as we’ll see later in Matthew — **Matthew 12:23**, “*And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?”*” And again in **Matthew 22:42**, “*What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.”*”

But the house of David was buried in **obscurity** by the time Jesus was born. How could they **imagine** the Messiah coming out of David’s family? Because it was repeatedly promised — it starts with **2 Samuel 7:12-13**, “*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.*”¹³ *He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*”

We’re reminded of this promise in **Psalms 89:3-4**, “*You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: **‘I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.’**”*”

David the King has been dead for almost a millennium. And so the Messiah came “*like a root out of dry ground,*” **Isaiah 53:2**, “*For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.*” Then the branch, the righteous branch comes, who is a greater king and a greater Lord than David or his descendants ever were. Matthew is reminding you that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise that God had given to David. This is a big promise that goes far beyond the little nation of Israel. It concerns the child who would be born and the Son who would be given — the one we adore during the Christmas season.

Here’s the point: Jesus’ birth is **the climax of this entire story** of God’s relationship with Israel. **Jesus is the end** to which the entire biblical story was moving. The point of this genealogy is establishing what Matthew declared in verse 1— **Jesus’ claim to David’s throne**. For 600 years, David’s throne has been empty — but David’s line was where the Messiah would come from. Stories of David had been told for a thousand years — imagine the impact of Matthew’s declaration of Jesus’ kingship in first century Judaism!

Third, Matthew makes it clear through this genealogy that Christ is the center of history. In verse one, Matthew suggests by his wording that Jesus is ushering in a new creation — that this is a **monumental** point in history. In verse 17, we see that things are working in a pattern throughout history. First there were fourteen generations of the patriarchs from Abraham to David. Then there were fourteen generations of kings from David to the exile to Babylon. And finally, there were fourteen generations from the exile until Christ. All of the major points of Israel’s history have been a stepping-stone on the way to Christ. And because this is a somewhat selective genealogy, it becomes clear that these names were chosen very carefully, and that’s because Matthew wants you to know ...

v. 2-16: THE PEOPLE OF THE KING

Matthew ties much of his understanding of Jesus’ kingship to the Old Testament, beginning with this genealogy. These forty names, representing the patriarchs, the kings, and the captives, tell the rich history of God’s faithfulness to Old Testament Israel. In fact this

genealogy teaches us some great truths about the Lord Jesus Christ. And I would like to concentrate on those truths with you today, just briefly. Let me say that this genealogy teaches so many other things, I would love to go through this genealogy and look at the stories which are brought to mind by the names that are recorded. Every time you glance at a name ... you see the name Jacob, and oh, the stories that come to mind. And Boaz and Obed ... and Solomon and some of the other great kings ... oh the stories that come to mind. And on and on, I would love to tell those stories, but we can't this morning, there simply isn't time. But maybe you can study that on your own.

If you study these names in detail, it's almost as if God has pulled together a rogue's gallery. I've already said that we don't know much about every person on this list. But of the ones we do know about, nearly all of them had **notable moral failures** on their spiritual resumes. For instance, Abraham lied about his wife Sarah. Isaac did the same thing. Jacob was a cheater, Judah a fornicator. David was an adulterer and Solomon was a polygamist. Manasseh was the most evil king Israel ever had. And on and on we could go. The best of these men had flaws and some were so flawed that it is impossible to see their good points.

It's somewhat remarkable that people like this make up Jesus' family tree. A murderer is on the list, a fornicator is on the list, an adulterer is on the list, a liar is on the list, a deceiver is on the list. Think about that. Most of these men were very great sinners. And what does that show us? Simply put, it shows us ...

v. 3-6, 17: **THE GRACE OF THE KING**

That brings me to my third major observation about this list — it includes women. That in itself is unusual because when the Jews made a genealogy they normally didn't include women on the list. They just traced the family tree from father to son. But Matthew includes four women in Jesus' family tree. They are Tamar (verse 3), Rahab and Ruth (verse 5), and Bathsheba (verse 6). All of them are very unlikely people — all of dubious reputation or background ...

Tamar, the mother of Perez, who, in Genesis 38 (as you all remember – at least those of you who were here last spring) played the role of a prostitute in order to have children after her husband died.

Rahab, listed as the mother of Boaz, was a prostitute when she first entered the biblical story in Joshua 2. She was also a foreigner.

Then there was **Ruth**, who, like Tamar, was a widow and, like Rahab, was a foreigner. We find her in the Book of Ruth where we discover that she's a member of the Moabite nation and excluded from worship in Israel.

Bathsheba is mentioned next — and Matthew won't even write her name but refers to her as the wife of Uriah the Hittite, which means that she may have been a foreigner, and she was an adulteress at the hands of King David, after which David had her husband killed, so she too was a widow.

Yet Matthew deliberately includes all of them in his genealogy, including two prostitutes and an adulteress. In this genealogy Matthew is pointing us toward Jesus' identity and mission. Jesus would bring hope to the widow, mercy to the sinner, and good news, not just for the Jews, but for all mankind. In one way or another, all these women were **outsiders**; Matthew is highlighting God's **providence** in using unlikely people for His purposes. This is a broken, deceitful, adulterous line that God would use to save the world.

With such a list, Matthew gives us a clue about the kinds of people that the Messiah came

to save. He was to be a Saviour for women and men who were both saints and sinners, Jews and Gentiles. Many can look at the stories of these women and men and find some reflection of themselves. Little wonder then that Matthew's Christmas story features foreigners who come to worship Jesus and concludes with the Great Commission given by Jesus to his followers to, **Matthew 18:19**, "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...*"

And then, finally, we get to verse 17, which reads, "*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.*"

Fourteen, Fourteen, Fourteen.

Matthew works hard to make the list come out this way. We've noted already that this genealogy is not complete. There are more generations listed in the books of 1 and 2 Kings than get mentioned by Matthew. However, Matthew's not ignorant of this; he's doing it on purpose. He **wants** a genealogy that comes out Fourteen, Fourteen, Fourteen. **WHY?**

We have to go back a few years, to when we went through the Book of Revelation, and in particular to Revelation, chapter 13, which we covered in March of 2010. And specifically we go to **Revelation 13:18**, which reads, "*This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.*"

Now, at the time, I told you the following ... As for the number 666, what is the number used throughout the Book of Revelation as **a sign of completeness? The Number Seven. A symbol of completeness.** The number 6 is **not 7**. It is incomplete. The dragon is incomplete, the beast from the sea is incomplete, the beast from the earth is incomplete. 666 – A sign of being incomplete. As the teens would say today ... "**Major Fail.**"

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit would be 777, **completely complete.**

The false gods who wage war against the saints, 666, utterly **incomplete.**

Now back to Matthew and a genealogy that comes out to Fourteen, Fourteen, Fourteen. Again ... **WHY?** Because of Christ, who is **the completer of the list.** Break down the fourteens further and you get 6 sets of 7.

Now with 6 sets of 7, what comes next? **The seventh seven! Christ!** The perfection of perfections, the perfectly finished work of God. Christ is the end and the perfection of this list, this genealogy. He is the one that this list points to, yearns for, and culminates in. With Him, the list is **complete** in a way that nothing has been completed before since the foundation of the world.

In Christ, the true Israel has come; the completion of all the genealogies has arrived in Him. In Christ, the Sabbath of Sabbaths, the seventh seven has come. There is nothing more that God can do, nothing more He needs to do, the fulfillment of all things has come in Christ. This is how Matthew begins his gospel so you will know up front what it's all about. This is how Matthew will end his gospel, sending forth the disciples of Christ into the era of completion and fulfillment, bearing tidings of a new creation and a perfected kingdom.

CONCLUSION: A Message For Us

Let's end by looking at this genealogy again ... this list. **Why** would God **include** women like that in this list? But it's not just the women. Think about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. They were sinners, too. **Why include** people like that? I think there are three answers to that question ...

1. He did it to send a message to self-righteous people.

Matthew was written especially to the Jews. Many of their leaders (the Pharisees in

particular) were self-righteous and judgmental toward others. They truly thought they deserved eternal life. What a shock it would be to read this genealogy because it is filled with liars, murderers, thieves, adulterers and harlots. Not a pretty picture. Not a “clean” family tree. This list was a stinging rebuke to that kind of judgmental self-righteousness. Do you know what this means? Jesus was born into a sinful family. He came from a long line of sinners.

2. He did it so that God’s grace might be richly displayed.

If you come from a family like this, you can’t exactly boast of your heritage. Sure, your ancestors were rulers and kings, but they were also great sinners. Question: Can a prostitute go to heaven? Yes or no? Can an adulterer go to heaven? Can a murderer go to heaven? Can a liar go to heaven? You’d better say yes, because Rahab and David are both going to be in heaven — and Rahab was a prostitute and a liar and David was an adulterer and a murderer.

When you read the stories of these women and men on the list, you aren’t supposed to focus on the sin, but on the grace of God. The hero of this story is God. His grace shines through the blackest of human sin as He chooses flawed men and women and places them in Jesus’ family tree.

3. He did it so that we would focus on Jesus Christ.

Many people are intimidated by Jesus Christ. They hook Him up with a lot of religious paraphernalia — big sanctuaries, stained glass, beautiful choir, pipe organs, formal prayers, and all the rest. When they look at the trappings, it’s all very intimidating to them. To many in the world today, Jesus seems too good to be true. This genealogy is in the Bible to let us know that He had a background **a lot like yours and mine**. He called himself “*the friend of sinners*,” and He said He didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He said “*...the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*”

It’s almost Christmastime, and many of you will be traveling home to spend time with your families. Some of our families will be coming here to spend Christmas with us. Some of you don’t feel too good about that. You’d rather **not** be going home this year, but you have to. You may have family members who **embarrass** you. Some of you are going to have to spend time with people who’ve **hurt** you deeply in the past. Fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts and grandparents and distant relatives. Some of them you’ll be **glad** to see. The others? Some of them you’d rather not see again.

Some of them are incestuous. Some are adulterers. Some are liars. Some are filled with anger and bitterness. Some are evil in bizarre ways. And you wish you didn’t have to do what you’ve got to do — **go home** and face those family members at Christmas. Jesus understands the way you feel. He came from a disreputable family. His family tree was decorated with notable sinners. He knows what it is like to have relatives who embarrass you. He knows all about a dysfunctional family situation.

Hopefully this will greatly encourage you: No matter what your past looks like, or your present feels like, no matter where you’ve been or what you’ve done, God can give you a fresh start. He knows exactly what you are going through this year at Christmastime. I hope you won’t skip **Matthew 1** in your Bible reading this Advent. This **unlikely** list of **unlikely** people may be the greatest chapter on the grace of God in all the Bible. In these forgotten names from the past God turns the spotlight on fallen men and women, and through their lives, we see what the grace of God can do.

Good news! Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Good news! As we’ll read next week, **Matthew 1:21**, “*She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He*

will save His people from their sins.” Jesus didn’t come to make you religious, He came to save you from your sins. He didn’t come to make you pious, He came to save you from your sins. He didn’t come to make you moral, He came to save you from your sins. He came to do for you what you could never do for yourself. He came to save you from your sins.

This passage teaches that Jesus is **the only Savior**. This genealogy is designed to show us that the only Savior is **Jesus**. He is the redeemer of all kinds of people ... of women, of men, of Jews, of Gentiles, of all kinds and types. In this genealogy are listed good men and bad men. Abraham is listed in this genealogy, a good man, but a man with failings. Ahaz is listed in this genealogy. A bad man with no redeeming qualities. Good women are listed in this genealogy. Ruth. Women of doubtful background are listed in this genealogy. Rahab. Good men who fail are listed in this genealogy. In fact, the very way, in verse 6, that David is introduced is interesting, *“And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.”* Matthew is reminding us that everyone needs a Savior. Jew and Gentile. Good and not-so-good. Righteous and wicked. Even the righteous in this genealogy need redemption. Jesus is the Savior of the world. He is the Savior of all kinds and types of men and women. God chose **sinful, broken, unlikely** people — who else does He have? To come near to Jesus is to come near to a perfect love and a perfect power to restore all things. Jesus will take all the broken things in your life — and the whole world — and restore them. All your sad stories will come untrue.

So don’t let Matthew’s dull-sounding introduction fool you. This is adventure storytelling at its best. It’s a true story that reads like fiction. What adventures, dangers, and delights will Jesus encounter? And if we follow Him, what adventures will come our way? Welcome to the Gospel of Matthew, you’re in for the ride of your life.

Think about that ... You need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I’ll close.

Oh Lord, our Lord. Thank You that You have given us an adventure story. A story that starts with sinful men and women who desperately need a Savior. A story that ends with a Savior who comes to save desperate men and women. Thank You for showing us that Jesus came to save sinful, broken, unlikely people like us, and He came to save us from our sins.

This Advent we look forward to His coming and we look forward to His saving. We give you great thanks for sending Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. And this morning we pray, in the Name of the King, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

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Luke 1:32-33

“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.”