

Series: Jesus Genealogy

THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE

Sermon #1: The King's Lineage

Matthew 1:1-17

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- August 16, 2020

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/IGFtfqgBQkM>

The Bible is not a series of disconnected stories. It is a single narrative in which every story, every character, points beyond itself to one who is greater.

The story of Adam and Eve is not just about the first man and woman.

There was a true and better Adam
who passed the test in the garden
and whose obedience is ascribed to us.

There is a true and better Abel,
who, though innocently slain, has blood that cries out,
not for our condemnation, but for our acquittal.

There was a true and better Abraham,
who answered the call of God to leave all the comfortable and familiar
and go out into the void to create a new people of God.

There was a true and better Isaac, the son of laughter, of grace,
who was not just offered up by his father on a mount
but was truly sacrificed for us all.

There was a true and better Jacob,
who wrestled and took the blow of justice he deserved,
so we, like Jacob, only receive the wounds of grace that wake us up and discipline us.

There was a true and better Joseph,
who at the right hand of the king forgives those who betrayed and sold him,
and uses his new power to save them.

There was a true and better Moses
who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord

and who mediates a new covenant.

There was a true and better rock of Moses,
who, struck with the rod of God's justice,
now gives us water in the desert.

There was a true and better Job,
the truly innocent sufferer,
who then intercedes for and saves his foolish friends.

There was a true and better David,
whose victory becomes his people's victory,
though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves.

There was a true and better Esther,
who didn't just risk losing an earthly palace, but lost the ultimate heavenly one;
who didn't just risk his life, but gave his life to save his people.

There was a true and better Jonah,
who was cast out into the storm
so that we could be brought in.

There was a true and better Passover lamb,
innocent, perfect, helpless, slain
so that the Angel of Death would pass over us.

He's the true temple, the true prophet, the true priest,
the true king, the true sacrifice, the true lamb,
the true light, the true bread.

The Bible is not a series of disconnected stories. It is a single narrative that points to one person—Jesus.

And all God's people said --- Amen. Boy, that's a powerful video!

The Bible's not a series of disconnected stories. It is a single narrative where every story and every event point beyond themselves to one who is greater. Adam and Eve is not just the story of the first man and the first woman, but a true and better Adam that will pass the test of temptation and become righteous in that and give us that righteousness as a gift. That's the story of the Bible.

We're reading through the Bible. In God's sovereignty, we planned to read through the Bible and study it in the year 2020, and boy, it has been a good choice, because we need to understand the nature of God and His plan in life. That's what we're doing together—how He's ruling the universe and how He's bringing about redemption to all people.

We're studying that, learning about the nature of God, so that we can play our part in bringing that sovereign plan into fruition, helping redeem the lost, helping restore those that are broken. That's what we're doing together.

If you're joining us now—I know this is a good time for a lot of people to start joining church—if you want to jump in, you can jump in. We're in the New Testament now. We're in Matthew chapter 1, verse 1 today. And so, if you want to catch up, you can. You have a whole lot of Bible reading to do, so hurry up.

Or why don't you just read—start in Matthew chapter 1 in the newer Testament and read two chapters a day, and we'll probably all end together.

If you want an easier one even still, most of the semester of the remaining year is going to be through the Book of Luke. Read one chapter a day in the Book of Luke and we'll all end around Christmas time.

Introduction to the New Testament and Matthew

When you look at the Old Testament and as it moves into the newer Testament—when you turn that page and look at Matthew chapter 1, verse 1—it's the first sentence in the newer Testament. And it reads like a continuation of the older Testament, because it's supposed to be. Matthew is a Jewish author writing to a Jewish audience and he wants to show that we're on the same storyline. And he does it in a way to show it's the same storyline, but we're having a major shift in the way that God will be working, just like He does before.

And how does he do that? He does that by starting with a genealogy.

Here's the passage for today. I can't wait to study it. I hope you're waiting expectantly as well. Here it is.

Matthew 1:2-16

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

David was the father of Solomon (by the wife of Uriah).

⁷ Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, ⁸ Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah, ⁹ Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰ Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, ¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹² After the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³ Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵ Eliud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ.

Yeah. It's a genealogy—seventeen verses filled with “begats” and “fathers of”, and I was thinking this is a great time to study it, because most of you—I can see through the camera lens—are still in your pajamas. Most of you have a pillow standing by. Perfect. We're going to study this genealogy.

Four Principles We Can Learn from this

Really, here's the thing. This passage is filled with profound truth. We're going to look at four of those truths, four principles. Any one of those you can live by. Because this genealogy is the bloodline to the king. This genealogy is proof that Jesus has the right to rule the universe;

that He is the fulfillment of the promises of YHWH God from the beginning of time to the end of time.

Now genealogies in the Bible are very significant. We kind of look at them and want to fan through them. But in that culture, throughout the older and the newer Testaments both, genealogies are important because, especially if you're Jewish, that's where you get your heritage. That's how you know what property you own. That's where you have a certain amount of honor. That's how you know if you can be part of the priestly line or not. Very important. To be without a genealogy as a Jew would be like you and I trapped in China right now without a passport. We'd feel like we're in a lot of trouble.

Matthew 1:1

This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew, with that value of continuation of the older Testament into the New Testament, does this biography of Jesus, showing His pedigree, as though the Old Testament never stops, because it doesn't. Its continuation is here in Matthew chapter 1, verse 1. It says: "And this is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." The genealogy of Jesus Christ—literally in Greek, "the book of the genesis of Jesus the Messiah."

Now that type of phrase, sentence 1:1, is showing, harkening back to a very similar pattern that was used in the Book of Genesis, Genesis chapter 2. It says, "This the book of the creation of heaven and earth." This is how it all started.

Then a second creation takes place and it starts with Genesis chapter 5: "And this is the book of the genesis, or the book of the family of Noah"—the beginning of the recreation after the flood.

So, what Matthew is doing here is saying, *Look, we're about to start—not a new chapter—but a new book. Same story.* Think of it like Harry Potter. So, with Harry Potter there were a bunch of books. But each book was a dramatic change in storyline—same story but dramatic change in storyline. Same story, but a dramatic change.

Matthew in chapter 1, verse 1: "This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ." And here we go. We're working in a whole new way.

Four principles that we can learn about God in this genealogy. No, it's in there! I'm going to show you. It's good stuff.

1. The Nature of God and His Promises

Here's the first principle. It's about the nature of God and His promises. Matthew 1, verse 1—here it is again—“This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Boom. He starts off with the son of David and the son of Abraham. And if you mentioned it, that's how he concludes in verse 17 at the end of the genealogy. He bookends it and says, *Look*, “there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David.” He says it again.

So why it is significant that he begins and ends his story of the bloodline of Jesus with David and Abraham? Because these two men received a type of promise from God himself, a covenant, we call it. And not just any covenant—an unconditional covenant. A covenant where it's about how God will redeem the world, how He will restore not just the person, but all of mankind to himself, for those who repent. These promises are promises by God, but they're unconditional, they're unilateral. Only God is making the promise and only God is doing the work in these promises to Abraham, to David.

2 Samuel 7:13

“Your son is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be His father and He will be my son.”

And he starts with David. This promise to David is made clear to us in 2 Samuel chapter 7. Look what the promise is to David. This is talking to David and his future sons and descendants. He just says ultimately, “Your son is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he will be my son.”

This is a categorical, unilateral, unconditional promise that God makes to David. And it is an astounding promise. It's absolute. It's purposeful. He says, “I will build my house. I will build a house in my name.” It's eternal. He says, “And that house will be everlasting.” And it is

intimate. He says, “He will be my son and I will be his father.” There’s nothing like this promise in the entire Bible.

And yet it remained dormant for centuries. It was not fulfilled in the period of time when the kings ruled or during the exile or even when they returned or the 400 years of quiet. It never experienced the fullness of what was promised there. This great promise—what does it tell us, this kind of covenant, made to David, fulfilled in Jesus? It says this about the nature of God and His promises: that God’s promises are not fulfilled immediately, but they’re fulfilled certainly. They are not fulfilled immediately, but they’re fulfilled certainly. It is fulfilled in Jesus the Christ. He promised them that. You knew it to be true. You knew it had to happen because God promised it that way, but it’s just going to take longer than anyone expected.

You see that again in the promise to Abraham. Abraham’s promise, going from Genesis chapter 15 and then 17 and then 22—the promises that Abraham, who was without child, will have multiple inheritance of children, more than he could count; that he would inherit the promised land. That’s why they call it the promised land. God promised it to Abraham, and that all the world would be blessed through Abraham—all nations would be blessed.

And God promised this to Abraham, a nomad living in the Middle East. The promised land—what did Abraham fulfill in that? He didn’t own an acre of that land. All that he owned at the end of his life was a cave bought to bury his wife in. Oh, they got a mortuary for him. That’s it. And as far as family, he had one real, legitimate offspring.

That nation that was promised to him was born in slavery and then taken captive and turned into not much of a country. In its grand days it was the size of Vermont. And ultimately it was surrounded by superpowers and used like a poker chip as they just gambled and gave and took away, who wins, who loses, this little land of Israel. This is the big boys table. This is where world powers like Alexander the Great and Xerxes rule. And Israel’s caught in the wind like a windsock. Does this look like it’s the power of God sovereignly ruling His creation? It does.

Because 2,000 years after God promised Abraham that he would be a blessing to all nations and that he would have this real estate and all these sorts of things, we wonder, *How could that be fulfilled?*

Galatians 3:16

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.

But we don't have to wonder, because Paul clearly says this in Galatians chapter 3, verse 16. He says, “The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed.” The Scripture does not say, ‘... to his seeds,’ meaning many people, but rather ‘... to his seed,’ meaning one person who is Christ.” That promise to Abraham made a long time ago was not fulfilled immediately, but it was fulfilled certainly in the man Jesus the Christ.

And that's what we have to learn from this experience, that when God makes a promise it's not on a timetable. But it's absolutely going to happen. When Jesus was born in that little cave in Bethlehem, I assure you it was crowded with all these saints mentioned here in this genealogy, but all those who had put their faith in the promise and the covenants of God. They were looking down and saying, *This is the one*. This is the fulfillment of the promise that we've been waiting for. That's what Jesus does. He fulfills that—the certainty there.

Application

And what difference could that make in our lives? Does YHWH make other unconditional promises to us? He does. How about justice? Oh, there will be justice—absolute justice. I appeal to this regularly these days because I can't watch politicians and people in media just continually lie to me and think they can get away with misdeeds. Not to mention my own life where I need to get right in certain areas. Justice will prevail.

What about peace? He promises peace, doesn't he? Yeah, he does. And that comes after the justice.

And what about rest? Still later, but for sure. It happens.

Any other promises that YHWH has made that are unconditional in nature that we need to appeal to and cling to—his character, not ours? Right-- the salvation covenant.

The promise that God makes to us in the area of salvation harkened back to the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants because they are unilateral—one way, unconditional, not up to us. God does the promising. God does the work in these. If we repent of how we think we're

going to have right standing with God and surrender trying to be good boys and girls and say, *I am so broken only God can fix this*. And we receive the gift of salvation, the gift of forgiveness, the gift of honor, the gift of power—God says, *You're mine. And I'm never going to let you go. You can't even un-choose this choice*.

I find this value comes up a fair amount sometimes in my conversations with older parents that are parents of adult children. And they'll talk about their children that have gone astray. So we'll just unpack it. It's two steps, it's simple. *Okay, let's talk about his experience with Jesus Christ. Did he or she make that decision when they were of sober mind and at the age of accountability? Did they make it because they had a bad weekend and they felt terrible and they wanted a get-out-of-hell-free card? Okay, they didn't—good. They wanted to honor God. They wanted to live with Him now and forever. They wanted to experience that forgiveness. Yeah, okay, great. It took, right? Yes. So, now let's turn our focus not onto that choice, but onto the promise maker*.

Let's look at God, YHWH God. What did He say? "You can say, 'Ah, you'll leave me, but I'm never going to leave you.' You can say, 'You left, but God says He hasn't.'" And what we have here is someone that's on the run that's going to have to pay the price for that, because there's no easier way to live than under submission to the King. And so, they'll have consequences. But listen—it's just a prodigal son. It's a prodigal daughter. That can't be lost. That child that you call your son, your daughter—that's God's son, that's God's daughter. He swears by it. And sometimes the answers of restoration aren't immediate. But you can know this—they're certain.

I love the nature of the promise of God and His character because of this: something so valuable as our souls—He doesn't leave us much room to mess with that. It's way above our ability and responsibility, and so He takes all of that and says, "I promise by my own name." If you surrender your life to Jesus Christ—you could do that today—if you surrender your life to Jesus Christ and repent of your attitudes and thoughts about Him and call Him the king that He is, you're His child.

That's one thing we learn from these genealogies. It shows and proves that. He doesn't work quickly. But He works certainly. Sometimes getting really great stuff done takes a while. If you wanted to build a dog house you could probably use scrap lumber around your house and pull it off in an afternoon. You want to build a cathedral? You're going to need to use really

valuable parts and it's going to take a century or two. That's what God has designed. That's what He's building. Sometimes it takes time—past our own lifetime.

2. Everyone Is Welcome

Here's the second thing that we can learn from the genealogy. The second principle is that everyone is welcome. This is a very unusual—tremendously unusual—genealogy. The moment it was written by Matthew's hands and everybody saw this and even to this day, people look at it think, *What are you doing and why are you doing it?*

What are you doing? Matthew mentions five women in this genealogy. It's not just that this is the Middle East and we don't mention women in the genealogy, but even in that time people didn't bring up women in the genealogy. That's not how you keep track of your land, for example. And yet, in this Eastern culture during this period of time, five women are mentioned. In verse 3, Tamar. In verse 5, Rahab and Ruth. Verse 6, Solomon's mother, Uriah's wife. It's like Matthew can't even write the name "Bathsheba." It is beneath him. And then the last name, of course, is Mary. She kind of ends up different.

With the exception of Mary here, these women are exceptional—not just because they're women in a genealogy, but they are foreigners and they are of bad reputation in one form or another, except for Mary.

Let's look at them. Tamar—these are the passages you don't read to your children before they go to bed or before a certain age. Tamar: one of the vilest episodes in the early part of the Book of Genesis includes betrayal and prostitution and lying and deceit. And that's without even leaving the family ranch. That's all inside the family. And God says, *Yeah, she's part of that family tree that I get together.*

The next one is Rahab—Rahab the prostitute in the first conquest city of the promised land, Jericho. So, she spends her adult life up until this time in prostitution. And God says, *I could use that.*

The next one is Ruth. If you trace Ruth's heritage back, her bloodline, and look at how the family of Lot got started, it will make you blush. It's vile. It's decadent. And then later on in this storyline as the descendants of Lot become a nation, the Moabites, they do some things to

Israel that causes them to be cursed by YHWH himself. *Your nation is cursed.* And Ruth is from that very cursed nation. And she's an ancestor to the great King.

And then Bathsheba—oh, I'm sorry. I can't say her name—the one who was Uriah's wife. The high point of the hopes and dreams of the promises of God and the rule of the world were somewhat realized in the man David. That's as good as it gets in the older Testament. And all that hope comes dashing and crashing down and turns to dust when David calls her and she answers. That's when we realize we're never getting out of here. This is too broken. We can't fix this. And these four women, for multiple reasons, shouldn't be in this family tree.

Application

And so, you have to ask the question, *Why did Matthew put them in there?* He didn't even have to include women. But he intentionally went out of his way to include women, and these women. There were other women to include. Why did he put them in there? I think, certainly, one reason is this. So that we would know that if God would accept these, He would accept me. He would accept you. There's not a standard that He can't sink beneath to pull us out of. Failure—yes. High-handed sin—you betcha. How about blood-curdling evil? Okay. God says, *I'll take that.*

I took a class three summers ago at Regent College from Professor Scott McKnight. He's a Bible scholar—kind of famous, actually. He spent half a lecture on God's hillbillies. And he starts by saying that everybody has hillbillies in their background. We don't ever want to talk about them. Usually you have to have alcohol-induced truth to bring out your forefathers in those stories. And he says everybody has hillbillies.

Here's the thing that happens in the Bible. His point is that Jesus has hillbillies in His background. He's proud of them. He's not ashamed of them. He says, *Fine, let's talk about them.* Matthew goes out of his way to say this: *God doesn't care about your gender, God doesn't care about your race, God doesn't care where you've been, God doesn't care what you've done. God cares about this: do you seek Him with all your heart? Do you want to love Him the way He first loved you? Do you want to see what will happen when God transforms you by grace? Then let's go. Let's do this. God accepts everyone. Everyone's in.* It's a great genealogy, right?

And you, right now, I don't know what's holding you back right now. If you don't have an experience in a life relationship with Jesus Christ and you're holding back because you may

have done something, been somewhere, you might have some kind of shame, that sort of thing ... look at this genealogy. He says, *You know what? Today you can just drop that. This is a gift. This is a gift from God. You're not worthy to receive it.* You bet you're not worthy to receive it—that's the whole point! We hold onto shame about which the righteous King of all kings says, *Don't care. Just receive this gift. Drop your shame and take my gift.* That's what this genealogy does for us.

3. Christ Is the True and Better Expression of All Things

The third thing it teaches us is that Jesus is the true and better expression of all things. Jesus is the true and better expression of all things.

Matthew 1:17

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to Christ, fourteen generations.

He does that in chapter 1, verse 17, where he's going to summarize so that we can understand this. He says this: "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to Christ, fourteen generations." And so, this is not literal. It's for the purpose of making a point. So, Matthew says there are fourteen, fourteen, fourteen. Why? Why does he break these three cycles up into fourteens?

The first reason has to do with the number fourteen itself. The Bible is full of the mystery of numerology. It almost drove Sir Isaac Newton insane. You can get into the details of this. It's pretty—I don't know—mystical.

But these things we can know about the number seven and its multiples: seven represents perfection or completion. And in that perfection and completion—you'll see it show up, for example, in Daniel where there were seven visions and seven weeks and seven days and seventy weeks. And the point of that is this idea of a perfect, sovereign plan that God rules over. It's a complete and perfect thing that God oversees. And you can see it in the week that God makes in

the Genesis creation story. It's a seven-day week. That's God's doing. He rules all creation by making it a seven-day cycle.

We look at the moon as it waxes on for fourteen days and then waxes off for fourteen days—twenty-eight days, a lunar month, ruling all things that the moon looks down on and all the universe.

And it just so happens it is the reproductive cycle of the daughters of Eve made in the image of YHWH. He rules that. He's in charge. God's in control. He's in charge of that plan.

Fourteen generations, fourteen generations, fourteen generations—what about these? Some scholars will say this about this breakdown. It's three books in the storyline of God's redemption.

The first one is the age of faith and it's the fourteen generations of Abraham. What do we learn in that? That Abraham is the father of faith, but for fourteen generations people can't live that way. Because what we broke, we can't fix. And no matter how many episodes where God shows himself to be faithful and true, we can't do it. And so, Jesus is a true and better Abraham.

The next fourteen is the age of kings. It begins with King David, the great king. And yet for fourteen generations the kings don't show themselves to be righteous. They don't show themselves to be generous and loving, to be courageous. We have fourteen generations of failure. And Jesus rises above that as a true and better King David.

And the last book, the last season of fourteen generations, is during the exile period, during the season where we learn that we have to have a true and better covenant, a new covenant, one that just starts over. Because what we broke, we can't fix. Only God himself can fix this. And no matter how dreadful life has been, God can redeem that like He did the fourteen generations.

Application

How's 2020 going for you? Having some regrets? Finding some things out about yourself that you're not so happy about? Finding patterns that you can't stop, but God can? Whatever started this year, it doesn't have to end that way. Failure is never final, because God can fix what we have broken. We can't, but God can.

Step one: I can't fix this. Step two: God's bigger than my brokenness. Step three: I need to rely on Him to fix my brokenness. That's how it begins.

4. Jesus Is Identified with Us but He Is Separate from Us

The fourth thing, finally—let’s go back to the women in the Bible. The last woman in the genealogy is Mary. And you see that the genealogy is told in a very traditional way. You’d expect this, that Abraham was the father of Isaac and Isaac was the father of Jacob and Jacob was the father of Judah—right? And on and on ... all these fathers. Look at all the fathers. Well, that’s what a genealogy does.

Matthew 1:16

... and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

Until you get to verse 16, and it says, “And Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah, who is called the Christ.” Jacob, the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ.

Father, father, father ... Joseph is just a husband. Mary is the mother. At the bottom of the genealogy it changes and says, *Why do we have to change this?* Because of this. This is the fourth thing that’s true and what we need to understand is Jesus identifies with us, but He is separate from us. He is like us, but He’s not. He is fully human, fourteen generations of men, fathers having sons—fourteen generations. And then we have this mother. Because Joseph isn’t the father. God is the father. Jesus is fully man, born of a woman. But He is born of the Father as well. He is the new and better Adam. He is the last Adam. Because what we broke, we couldn’t fix. We couldn’t send one of us into this battle to redeem what we broke. So, He has to start over—*Let’s bring another Adam, a second Adam, a last Adam, Adam before the fall. This will be my son.*

And He won’t use His divinity for His own enjoyment. That’s how He practices His humanness. Because then He’d be like a superhuman, but He can’t do that. He’s the God/man.

Here’s a fun homework assignment for this last part. Would you, could you, consider watching a little series that’s out right now called *The Chosen? The Chosen*. I highly recommend it. I’m not sure how you do it. I think you have to download it on an app and then you project it

onto your TV—I don't know—that's for my kids to tell me how to do—trust me. But here's why I've enjoyed this series for a number of reasons.

One is that it does a beautiful job of the nature of projecting Jesus as being man and God. And in the context of Him being in the nature of man—I mean, you're probably going to have a little heartburn about the background stories with some of the major characters—they're somewhat fictitious, as far as we know. But they're fictitious for a purpose. They're setting up the storyline so that you have a greater context. And, at least what I know from my study, there's a beautiful expression of good academic work being brought into these storylines so that you can fully appreciate what's taking place in the miracles of these people's lives.

I love how Jesus is just being a man. They show Him one time just kind of brushing His teeth. They show Him trying to start a fire and getting frustrated. They show Him nicking His hand while carving some things. Yeah—He's a man.

And then His divinity. I love how they display His divinity, because He brings the power of the Spirit into life stories by setting up these people—this is the background context—but you know, I love how He twists people. An accountant and an engineer—He throws life at them, miracles at them, and it doesn't add up. It doesn't work in their formulas. And they don't know what to do with it. You realize how desperate Peter is for that big fish, and he gets that big fish catch and he is overwhelmed by the greatest expression of all of his dreams coming true to the point where he never wants to fish again.

And what I like about the series that I've seen so far is that they bring in shame in a culture that's a shame-based culture and they're showing how shame has so much power over a soul and how that shame can be lost when God gives us the blessing of His honor; and how these people start thriving and living again. I suggest you consider watching that.

What I love about this story as well is that when people come face to face with the Christ, they have to make a decision. *Follow me or reject me. You can't just leave me here.* Because Jesus can identify with us, but He is separate from us.

If He were just another son of Adam—C. S. Lewis said it nicely. We could admire Him as a humanitarian, we could venerate Him as a teacher, we could follow Him as a leader. But we could not worship Him as God incarnate. And when people find out who Jesus is, they worship Him, because He deserves it. He is God. He is man.

This is what we find in this genealogy---these four principles. Pick any one of those and live your life around it. It will radically affect you.

What I'd like to do now is ask a couple of questions.

One: is today the day that you need to repent of, maybe, the way you have seen Jesus Christ or God the Father? Do you need to repent about who you're living for and how you're living? Or maybe even how you think you can stand right in the presence of God. Maybe today's the day that you repent. That means change your way: change the way you think and act towards YHWH God, the God of the Bible.

He sent His only Son because He loves us. He loves you. And He sent His Son because that was the only way to fix what is desperately broken in your soul; that Jesus would pay the price of your sins, prove that the price was paid by His resurrection; and in that resurrection, you inherit His Spirit and His righteousness.

Would you trust in that? Would you give up trying to be better, trying to be good, trying to do more good things than bad, trying to be...? I don't know. It's called self-righteous for a reason. Would you become a child of God by believing in the unconditional promise of God, that if you take His gift He will call you His child?

The second challenge is this. Would you join us? Join along. We're going to spend the rest of the semester learning about Jesus, discovering who this great king is and how we can serve that king. We can live our lives in abject servitude to the great king Jesus, the Messiah, who had a right to rule. His bloodline proved it. He showed us that He is the promise maker and the promise keeper; that He takes anyone who will surrender to Him; that He's like us, but He's not. Would you do that? Join us.

Let me close in a word of prayer.

Lord, we are—if nothing else, we're just amazed that a list that looks a lot like a phone book could have so much power to describe who you are and what you're like; that you would include these five women and that these women would speak to us and say that your arms are open to us and your promises are sure. And I'd ask, Lord, that we would live in a way that would express that; that we would leave our shame and past behind, if that's what is plaguing us, and that we would live with our heads back, knowing that we belong to You.

What we have here is a group of people that are literally in this same bloodline, a prince and a princess. I'd ask, Lord, that we would act that way, that we would live that way, depending upon You to empower us to do that. Lord, I'd ask that we would become a church that focuses out. And how to bring that kingdom and that restoration and redemption to the people that You've brought into our lives, that You've planned for from the beginning of time as You rule this creation—Lord, I'd ask that You would give us the eyes to see that and the courage to do something with it.

Finally, Lord, I'd ask that we would be a church that thrives in a time when people are growing weary. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Hey, Grace, we're doing everything we can to let more and more people in every week. We're getting better at that. I can't wait until we can all gather again together. We need to—it's kind of a new year—it's kind of weird—this will be kind of a kickoff Sunday for us. But school has kind of started ... or didn't. But still—again, our rhythm calendar is messed up, isn't it? So, we're going to pretend that this is the beginning of the new school year. So, here's what I would say. Let's go. Let's re-up. Let's get ready to thrive. Let's do things. Let's get that glass of water while we're running that marathon. We're at mile twenty now. It's all choices at this point. We need to choose to thrive. Let's choose to thrive, Grace.

I'll see you again next week. We're going to look at John the Baptist and what we can learn from his life and how it fits into the bigger story of redemption. Don't miss that. We'll see you again next week.