



NO LIMITS

WITH PASTOR DELMAN



S E R M O N G U I D E

You Can Make It With A Messed Up Family

Matthew 1:1-17

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

We've all heard the popular Christmas song, "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year." But for many people, Christmas is not the most wonderful time of the year. Those who lost a loved one, are struggling financially, dealing with family drama, depression, job issues, or a medical diagnosis...all of that makes this season difficult. But even in the midst of a tough holiday season, there is hope to be found in God's Word. When the Scriptures are read closely and carefully, we discover that the message of Jesus' birth serves as an antidote to the pristine, polished view of Christmas we project each year. The glory and good news of Christmas is found in the humanity of the environment in which Jesus was born, and especially in the genealogy Matthew gives us.

KEY POINTS

1. The Christian Life Is Not Perfect

Matthew presents this genealogy as a corrective to the idea that a good Christian life is a perfect life. Jesus' family line is a long list of people with stains on their moral résumé: liars, thieves, outsiders, adulterers, people with trauma, scandal, and complicated stories. Yet despite all these imperfections, they were included in God's redemptive plan. This genealogy shows that God doesn't require what we regard as perfection in order to prosper us. A good Christian life is not one free from perils, pitfalls, problems, setbacks, or struggles. Jesus' own family tree included people who messed up, acted up, fell down, and were kept down, and yet God used them. That means God can use us, too. Whatever ideal of a "perfect Christian family" we hold, we must remember to include some blemishes in that vision.

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2. Don't Be Shocked If You Have a Messed Up Family

When people expect the perfect picture of life, they get thrown off when things don't go as planned. They become incredulous, jaded, or even question God because something happened that "wasn't supposed to happen." But Jesus told us in John 16:33 that in this life you will have tribulation...not if, but when. Matthew includes this genealogy so we won't walk around believing in the "Instagramification" of life where everything always looks good. Life in a fallen world is a mixture of good and bad, joy and pain, sunshine and rain. None of us is perfect, not you, not me, not the families we think are perfect. Matthew puts this list here so we won't set ourselves up for disappointment by believing God owes us ideal circumstances. Life will include trials, trauma, and trouble. But guess what? You can make it.

3. Handle Life's Imperfections Without Shame

Now that we know life and families are not perfect, we can handle difficult realities better. Matthew intentionally includes people that society would have omitted – outsiders, broken people, people with complicated stories – to dismantle the systems of silence and shame that govern how we treat people. Too often, families hide mental illness, addiction, sexual abuse, financial struggle, divorce, infertility, or orientation because of shame. But Matthew challenges the culture of judgment and secrecy. All of us and all our families have blemishes. That truth should enable us to extend God's grace, love, and mercy to others despite their flaws. Romans 3:23 says all have sinned. When we received Jesus, we were added to His family tree, and if Matthew would include those names, he would include ours. If Jesus could make it with a family like that, then you can make it with yours.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Which part of Jesus' genealogy challenges your assumptions about what a "good Christian family" should look like?
2. Where have unrealistic expectations of perfection created discouragement or shame in your life or family?
3. How can you extend more grace and less judgment to those in your family who are struggling?
