

Time for Christmas: Peace
Matthew 1:1-17
Week of Dec 6

As you enter into prayer now, take a moment to settle your mind. Put aside your concerns and what needs to get done today, or what didn't get done today. Take a slow, deep breath. Center yourself in His Peace. He is the Alpha and Omega. The Beginning and End. You are found in Him.

Be Still.

Today as we enter into the second week of advent, we reflect on the genealogy of Jesus listed in the first chapter of Matthew. It tells so many stories. So many lives represented therein. The over-arching story is one that describes a God of love that has been pursuing relationship with the people of Israel for centuries. He has been working through them, broken though they may be. Out of their messy humanity, He will bring the Savior of the world. To prepare our hearts, we meditate on the words of the advent hymn, O Come, O Come Emmanuel.

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,

And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Adonai, Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Pause and Pray.

Jesus, I am here because I want to experience You. As I meditate on this passage, draw to mind those things that You would have me become more aware of. Center my heart and mind on Yourself. Use your Word to draw my heart to You. Amen.

Unless we are very familiar with the Old Testament, the genealogies of the Bible read like lists of names. This wouldn't have been the case for those reading and listening to these in Jesus' day. It would have been the story of their family. The story of their nation. Each name would have context and depth and meaning. As we read through these verses, imagine—each name represents a life—a life that God was at work in. He was always at work.

This is the genealogy^(a) of Jesus the Messiah^(b) the son of David, the son of Abraham:

² 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, whose mother was 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, whose mother was Rahab,

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

⁶ and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

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 Jehoram,
Jehoram 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^(a) and his brothers at the time of the exile to
Babylon.

¹² After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,
Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

¹³ Zerubbabel the father of Abihud,
Abihud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Elihud,

¹⁵ Elihud 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, and Mary was the mother of
Jesus who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from
David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

REFLECT.

Each name. God, you were at work. Generations of working to bring this redemption to pass through Messiah. All these names speak to your faithfulness through the ages. Your steadfast mercy, grace and love to come through for your people.

God, I think now of an area of my life where I am struggling to see where You are at work. The situation looks bleak, I don't see answers. I don't understand how You could possibly be here in the midst of this. I bring this situation before You now. PAUSE.

Ruth is mentioned in this genealogy. We discussed her last week, a Moabite who was grafted into God's family. She gives us an example of kindness to Naomi—and then Boaz exercises kindness to her. Lord, we ask that you would be at work in our hearts with your kindness. Who do you have for me to consider with kindness today? PAUSE.

King Uzziah is mentioned here. His story is one of both faithfulness to his calling and pride. Like Uzziah, we have moments where we follow You faithfully, and other times when we find ourselves seek first the Kingdom of Me. Jesus, show me where I may be struggling with pride now. PAUSE.

Jesus, I don't want to allow pride to come between you and me. Forgive me. PAUSE.

Joseph, Jesus' earthly father is mentioned here. A man who sought to divorce Mary quietly when he discovered her pregnancy. Extending grace – and then responding so faithfully to your call on his life when the angels came to him. God, where are you calling me to extend grace, and be faithful, though the road looks difficult? PAUSE.

PAUSE, PRAY AND ASK.

There are so many names, so many stories here that speak to your faithfulness, God. Today I would ask that you would give me a kind heart, that speaks of your love to those around me. PAUSE.

Today I ask that you guard me from pride. That my life would be a testimony to the greatness of God, not the greatness of me. PAUSE.

Today I ask that you give me your grace. That I would respond faithfully to those around me who need mercy, who need grace. PAUSE.

And now God, I ask that you give me your peace. Speak that truth to my heart about your faithfulness, the faithfulness of generations that brought Messiah to earth. That same faithfulness is the faithfulness that you show me. There is no situation that I face that You will not be faithful in. PAUSE.

YIELD.

CLOSE IN PRAYER.

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the ways of Thine only-begotten Son, that through His coming we may be worthy to serve Thee with purified minds. Who livest and reignest, with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.