

Series: **Christmas 2021**

Today's Title: ***"The Messy Path to the Perfect Savior"***

December 5, 2021 – *Matthew 1:1-17*

Objective: To help people know their past does not dictate their future.

Opening prayer

How important is your past?

Does your past determine your future?

If you asked 10 people these questions, you would get a variety of answers.

For some people, they keep reliving their past.

Their "Glory Days" as the Bruce Springsteen song talks about.

Some memories of the past are too wonderful to let go and leave in the past.

Some live their current life looking backward - wishing and longing for the way things used to be.

Others have sad, even horrific memories of the past.

They don't want to look backward - they have no nostalgia about the past.

They wish it never happened.

If they could wave a magic wand and make the events of their past disappear - they would!

But their past haunts them. It has a death-grip on their heart - on their soul.

They can't get the past images out of their head - and they keep replaying over and over again.

I think of some friends of ours - who on an Easter Sunday - received a phone call that their son had just been killed in a motorcycle accident. I can't help but think of that Easter - in their past - casts a dark shadow over every Easter morning.

As believers in Christ, they celebrate the empty tomb - as the images of their son's tomb is burned into their memory.

In our passage today - we see the people who created the legacy - the reputation - for each subsequent generation in the ancestral line of Jesus.

As each generation lived, and died, they passed on certain patterns, experiences, behaviors, attitudes, and traditions to their kids and grandkids - and the cycle repeated itself until one day, the 2nd member of the Triune God was born in human flesh and given the name 'Jesus' by His parents.

Turn in your Bible to **Matthew 1:1-17**

Today we're going to look at some of the people that made up the ancestral line of Jesus.

The Genealogy of Jesus.

We're going to see some important things about the people in His family line.

Hopefully, we can pull out some details about God - and about our own lineage and past - and apply those lessons and truths to our life today.

Read vs. 1

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

The importance of family lineage in ancient Israel. *vs. 1*

Matthew begins his gospel with a huge statement - a banner headline.

Jesus Christ - Messiah.

“...son of David, the son of Abraham.” - this would have gotten the attention of the average Jewish person in the 1st century.

Family lineage - your bloodline was very important in ancient Israel.

Especially when you are going to claim Jesus is the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies - that Jesus is the King who will occupy the throne of David!

After the initial banner headline, Matthew will give the evidence that supports his bold headline.

Read vs. 2-17

Jesus' lineage was full of sinners. *vs. 2-16*

Some were worse than others - more infamous in their sin than others.

But all of them were sinners.

We could go to each name on the list, read the accounts of their life in the Bible, and we would see their sins.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah. The first 4 generations of the Patriarchs, and each of them had some issues.

Abraham and Isaac struggled with lying about their wives.

Jacob had all sorts of problems - especially early in his life as he lied to receive the birthright.

Judah was guilty of selling his brother, Joseph. He was also guilty of sleeping with a prostitute - who ended up being his widowed daughter-in-law.

And that's only **vs. 2-3!!!**

Tamar (vs. 3) committed incest with Judah, Rahab (vs. 5) was a prostitute. Solomon was known for his sexual sins... his 700 wives and 300 concubines.

What about your lineage?

What kind of people are in your family tree?

In our modern era we're not as in-tune or aware of who was in our family line beyond our grandparents or great-grandparents.

Family history - ancestry - is not such an important thing for our culture.

In ancient times - and up until the last few centuries - your lineage was part of your identity.

Who came before you - was often thought to determine what you would be like.

Jesus came from a long list of sinful people - some were infamous for their sins.

But their sins - none of their sins - destined Jesus to repeat those sins.

And in your life, you are not destined to repeat the sins of those in your past.

Your past may influence the present, but it doesn't dictate your future.

When I do pre-marital counseling with a couple getting married, we always talk about their family of origin.

- Do your mom and dad show PDA?
- Do your parents argue in front of you or only behind closed doors?
- Who pays the bills?
- Who was the authoritarian - who was stricter with the kids?
- Who cooked the meals?
- Who did the dishes, cleaned the house, worked in the yard?
- Is your mom or dad the spiritual leader in the family?

I tell the couple: This is your template for marriage. Even if you don't like how your mom and dad's marriage works, their marriage is the template for your life.

I also tell them: This doesn't mean you're destined to have the same kind of marriage as your parents.

You can make changes.

Your destiny in marriage is not set in stone.

You can create a new path - a new template!

Why is it important to point out the sinners in Jesus' lineage?

Because it demonstrates the grace of God which was at work throughout history. His grace is not only seen at the cross, but also in the generations leading up to the manger!

His grace includes all sorts of sinful people in the bloodline of Jesus...and His grace extends to you today – to be a part of His family...no matter what sins you have committed!

Don't allow your sins to keep you from coming to Christ and seeking His forgiveness.

Don't think that Christ doesn't want you...that He would refuse you if you approached Him.

The truth is your sins motivated Jesus to take on flesh in the first place! It's your sin and my sin that caused Jesus to give His life as a sacrifice for our sins!

The grace of God calls you to be a part of His family...to put your faith in Jesus...for Him to be your Messiah...your king!

The lineage of Jesus rejects human divisions and limitations.

vs. 2-16

Throughout this list we find 2 very surprising things.

Surprise #1: women are recorded in the genealogy.

There are 4 women – 5 including Mary.

Tamar - Rahab - Ruth - Bathsheba (the wife of Uriah) - Mary.

Normally, a genealogy would only include the father's names. This was according to first century Jewish custom which unfortunately and incorrectly held men in higher regard than women.

But it's important for us to recognize that God doesn't work according to human divisions, limitations, and traditions.

He works according to His own character...according to what is right and true...according to what is good... according to what is perfect.

Women in the genealogy of the long-awaited Messiah and promised King would have shocked many, but no more than His plan to offer Himself to atone for the sins of humanity!

Surprise #2: Gentiles (non-Jews) are recorded in the genealogy.

God's plan to bring the Messiah into the world was done through the Jewish people – but it included non-Jews! The Gospel message is not for a select group of people...it's for the entire world. It doesn't matter what your background is – what your ethnicity is – what your bank account is – what your education level is – what your family history is...Jesus came for you!

Four of the women were Gentiles.

- **Tamar** was not in the line of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob.
- **Rahab** was a Canaanite prostitute.
- **Ruth**, the grandmother of King David, was a Moabitess.
- **Bathsheba** was likely a Hittite - since her husband was Uriah the Hittite.

Jesus came not only to the house of Israel, but also to the entire world. He came to “seek and to save the lost” (Matt. 18:11). It's what Paul says in **Galatians 3:28** “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

God rejects human divisions and limitations.

On a side note...the inclusion of all these people in the Genealogy of Jesus - gives us more reason to trust what the Bible says.

- The Bible is not a polished record of history.
- The Bible is not a white-washed version of the past.

- The Bible is not a collection of writings that were written to please and accommodate a specific culture with specific customs and practices.
- It was written to give us God's truth.
- It was written to show us the person and nature of God - to reveal to us our sin - and to tell us that God loves us and wants to redeem us - to forgive us of our sins.

The Bible is the truth of history - the truth of the people on its pages - it's the truth of God!

God's promises are greater than your past. vs. 16

No matter what is in your past - God is bigger - God is stronger - God is greater!

As I already mentioned, it was quite unusual in that culture for Matthew to list women in his genealogy. But **vs. 16** is even more unusual than that...simply because Joseph is not listed as Jesus' father – Mary is listed as His mother.

“...and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.” (“of whom” = Greek: Fem. Gender)

Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus.

In Luke's genealogy, it's lists Joseph as the 'supposed father' of Jesus – or “He (Jesus) was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph...” – NIV – Luke 3:23

He adopted Jesus.

Jesus was Joseph's legal son.

There is something very interesting happening here - and I want to walk through this with you.

Now you need to track this with me...

In **Matthew** we have the royal line of David - which is Joseph's family lineage. This genealogy is a descending record - going from Abraham to Jesus.

The other genealogy we have for Jesus is in **Luke 3:23-38** - which is Mary's side of the family. Luke's genealogy is an ascending record - going from Joseph all the way back in time to Adam.

This is the blood line - since Jesus was Mary's son, not Joseph's biological son.

Look at **Matt. 1:6, 11** -

6 "Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah..."

11 "...and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon."

Now, look at **Luke 3:31** -

"the son of Nathan, the son of David"

David had numerous sons. 2 of them listed in the genealogies of Jesus are Solomon and Nathan.

Now, turn to **Jeremiah 22:31** - talking about Jechoniah

Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall

succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah.”

This is referred to as ‘The Curse of Jechoniah’.

No descendant of Jechoniah could sit on the throne of David - due to Jechoniah’s sins.

Jechoniah was a descendant of Solomon - and this was the line of Joseph.

No biological child of Joseph could sit on the throne of David - because of the Curse of Jechoniah.

So, in order to qualify to sit on the throne of David, a son had to be born of the Davidic line (other than Solomon’s lineage), but they also had to be in the royal line - which was Solomon’s line.

How could this ever happen?

Because of the Virgin Birth, Jesus is Mary’s biological son, and since Mary is in the blood line of David via his son, Nathan, Jesus is in the blood line of David.

But since Joseph was not His biological father, the Curse of Jechoniah does not apply to Jesus, but since Joseph adopted Jesus and Jesus was legally his son, the royal line also applied to Jesus - without the Curse of Jechoniah applying to Jesus.

One more important detail to know.

You may have noticed a couple of things as we've looked at these 2 passages.

1. Mary is not listed in Luke's genealogy - even though this is Mary's blood line.

2. Joseph is listed in both - but there are different fathers for Joseph listed in each genealogy.

Why is this?

I mentioned in the beginning that it was very unusual for women to be listed in any Jewish genealogies in the 1st century.

Luke is giving a more traditional genealogy.

There are no women listed in Luke's genealogy.

But why is Joseph mentioned in Mary's genealogy?

Because of inheritance laws in ancient Israel.

If a man had no sons, but only daughters, when one of his daughters got married, her husband would be adopted by the bride's father - so that the inheritance could be passed down.

Inheritance was not normally be passed down to a woman.

(<https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/israelite-law-property-law>)

So, since Luke's genealogy is a traditional genealogy, Joseph is listed as the son of Heli, but it is believed that Heli is actually Mary's father.

Also, it's important to note in Matthew's genealogy - when we look at **vs. 17** - we read:

“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.”

Matthew is giving us a summary genealogy.

He is not listing every generation - but he is selective in his choices - and he was prompted by the Holy Spirit to create the genealogy in according to the pattern of 14 generations in each era.

We also have an important detail here.

If you actually count the generations Matthew lists, the groups from David to Jechoniah totals 15.

However, Matthew doesn't count Jechoniah - because he is cursed - so he is taken out of the equation, which tells us that Matthew included Jechoniah - even knowing the curse - but he doesn't count him as being part of the royal line.

One last thing...

Remember...Mary was a virgin and Jesus was conceived in her by the work of the Holy Spirit. The faithfulness of God goes all the way back to **Genesis 3:15**, where we read of the curse of sin that God lists. In that verse God tells Satan:

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

By specifying ‘her offspring’ – which spoke of the seed of the woman (not the seed of the man which would be the normal way of stating it), God’s plan was already set in motion before world history even began.

The Savior of the world would come through the woman – not the man – and we see that perfectly in the virgin birth – which is why Matthew lists Mary as the one whom Jesus was born – not from Joseph.

Joseph is connected to Mary as Matthew says he is Mary’s husband – but he doesn’t say Joseph is the father of Jesus.

Apply it...

Be confident that Jesus is the Messiah - Savior of the world.

Only Jesus could qualify to occupy the throne of David - and fulfill the prophecies related to the eternal King.

Jesus is from the royal line via His adoption by Joseph, and He is from the blood line of David through His mother, Mary.

Celebrate God's grace at work before the manger.

The genealogy of Jesus reveals God's grace has been experienced by people throughout history.

God's grace is not a new thing.

God's grace has always been a reality because God is gracious.

He is always seeking someone who needs His grace!

Your past does not dictate your future.

Your past influences the present, but it doesn't dictate your future.

Your past does not keep you from God.

God's grace is sufficient - no matter what happened in your past!

Put your faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins.

God will forgive your past sins.

He always forgives people's past sins.

He's been doing it for thousands of years!

He would love to do it right now...for you.

Close in prayer