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| Topic | Christ Lineage and You |
| Reference | Matthew 1: 1-16 |
| Date | 4 December 2016 |
| Speaker | Guest Speaker |

Several years ago my favorite TV show of all time was one of the most popular shows in the world. It was a TV show called “Lost”. One of the things that was really nice about that show was that at the beginning of every episode they always had a short recap to catch viewers up on what happened in previous episodes. So as I would share my love for the TV show with my friends those who have had never seen it would say, “I don’t really want to watch the show because I don’t know what happened in the past and so how do I jump in now when there is all of these storylines”. And I use to say, “don’t worry, they will catch you up. You don’t have to understand everything in the past to understand what happens now”. Every episode started like this, someone would come on, black screen and they would say ‘**Previously on Lost**’ and then there would be a short recap of the major plot lines that were necessary to understand that story that night and I feel like what Matthew has just done for us as he wrote this genealogy, Matthew has an essence said to all of us today ‘**Previously in the Old Testament**’.

When Matthew gives us this genealogy of Jesus he gives us a list of names that to the original audience that he was writing too. When he wrote to them they would read these names and it would be more than just names. They would read the names and there would be stories associated with the names. Some of us find these names to be quite difficult and so we just try to get through the genealogy as fast as we can. Because we think it is unimportant, get to the good stuff. Even in some of my study and preparation for this message, one of the things I would like to do is I like to go and I see what other preachers and what other pastors have done and how they preach the passage that I am going to preach and it is very interesting. Some of my favorite pastors and teachers, they don’t deal with the first 16-17 verses at all. They began their sermon series and the gospel of Matthew at chapter 1 verse 18. Because we don’t know what to do with that names.

But we need to remember that first audience who Matthew wrote to, they knew the names and these names meant something. It reminded them of stories and not only that it reminded them of stories of these individuals, it reminded them of the big story that God has been faithful to His people and that God has made promises to his people and God always fulfills His promises and God is faithful to His promises to his people and so Matthew is reminding us that God is faithful to His people despite the circumstances, despite their sinfulness, despite their problems, God remains faithful and that is what Matthew is doing in these first 16 verses. We read these 16 verses and I find three reasons that we would celebrate Christmas in these verses.

* **We celebrate Christmas because of Christ’s lineage.**

His lineage impacts his place in history and his lineage arouses expectations.

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

Names has meaning, Jesus has a meaning. It is not just a name, it has a meaning. The name Jesus can be traced back to the Hebrew name that we translate into English, Joshua. So when you read the Old Testament and you read about the prophet Joshua, the same name for Joshua is the same name for Jesus in the New Testament and the meaning of that name is ‘Yahweh saves’. In the Old Testament and New Testament often times there is meaning associated with the name and right here we are told just by the very name that God gives his son that we should have great expectations for him. He is Jesus Christ. Now in America some one that is uninformed they might think Christ is his family name. Christ is actually a title, it is not a name. It means anointed one, the promised one. He is the promised one of God who would righteously rule his people. Jesus Christ, the one through whom God will save all people and the one who will righteously rule all people. We all look for righteous rules. The world is just aching for righteous rulers. We have the promise of the New Testament, there is a righteous ruler and his name is Jesus Christ because he saves his people and he righteously rule. By his name alone Matthew conjures up great expectations amongst God people, but he does not stop there.

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

Now if you were a Hebrew in the first century just saying the son of David would stir up affections of populism in Israel. They were looking for a leader who would come and save them from their oppressors, who would get them out of the problems that they were in because they looked around and they thought their problems had to do with the Roman Empire, they did not know that their problems had to do with the indwelling sin and the son of David points to the fact that God was promising an eternal king. Because in 2-Samuel 7 King David who God anointed to be the second king of Israel, it was said that David was a man after God’s own heart. When there was peace in the land David went before God and he prayed and he said, God I live in a beautiful palace and God you stay in a tabernacle that we move. God you don’t have a permanent home so God I want to build for you a beautiful temple that is worthy for you. I want to honor you by building you this temple and God sent word to David through the prophet, saying, David, did I ask for a home. He said you will not build me a temple, but your son will build me a temple and Solomon did but in that God made David a promise. He said, David you won’t build me a temple but I’ll tell what I am going to do. I am going to build for you a kingdom. I am going to establish your throne David forever and you will always have a son sitting on your throne forever and so when there is a king in Judah, his name is Son of David. Psalm 89 says,

**3** You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: **4** ‘I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.’”

So in the Son of David we see that Jesus because of his lineage he is royal and because he is the son of David the throne that God is establishing for all eternity, not only is he royal but he is also eternal, but Matthew does not stop there. He says,

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

By saying that he is the son of Abraham, he is saying that Jesus is the royal king who will sit on the throne eternally for all the people. He is a global king. God made a promise to Abraham when he called Abraham and he sent him out to a land that I will show you and he made a promise that I will be your God. I will make a great nation from you and then he said all the nations of the world will be blessed through you. Matthew is not interested in building up a populous movement amongst the Israelites during the first century. He wanted the Israelites to know that it was through the seed of Abraham, through the promise to David, through the fact that God would save all the people through Jesus that Jesus was global, that the hope and expectation for Jesus wasn’t just about Israel, it wasn’t just about Jerusalem but it was about all the people of the world, all the tongues, all the tribes, all the ethnicities would be blessed through Jesus. All of that in one verse. Three names, Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham. He is eternal, he is royal, and he is global. It is good news for the world.

The gospel of Luke has a genealogy; it is a little bit different. Luke emphasizes the human lineage but in Matthew he emphasizes the royal lineage beginning with Abraham and going to David and then through David all the way to Jesus. Luke begins in Adam. Mathew is trying to convince his readers of Jesus being the one who fulfill this kingly royal promise.

* **We celebrate Christmas because of God’s gracious loving-kindness and faithfulness.**

**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.

It is important to know that this genealogy is arranged in such a way to tell the story. It is not an exact lineage as though you might try to figure out every step in a family tree. Matthew skips over some generation sand skips over some names to show the royal lineage to make his point. The point is this royalty, it is not chronology but the descendants are historical descendants. These are real relatives. They provoke reminders and images from the Old Testament.

Names have meaning and these names in this genealogy have meaning. Perhaps you might have recognized some names. Some of the names and their stories you may not know. Some of the stories are good stories, they are fun stories. Some stories we try to pretend didn’t happen, for example the story of Judah and Tamar. If I was to write an email telling that story and I send it to you at work I would probably put in the subject ‘not safe for work’. It is a despicable story about a woman posing as a prostitute to trick her father-in-law into providing her with a child. Matthew is not trying to hide anything in this genealogy because the genealogy is not about the people and their goodness and it is not about what they did to deserve God to love them, the genealogy is to reveal what a great God this is that he would be faithful to his people despite their inability to be faithful to him. That is good news brothers and sisters that God remains faithful when we do not. It reminds us that God is faithful to his people, he is faithful to himself. He is faithful to his purpose. He has always planned this plan and when we read this genealogy, we go and we remember God’s faithfulness to each one of these people. It might do you well this Christmas season to remember how God has been faithful to you. It is really interesting we come to church on Sundays and we meet and greet and we talk and everyone wants to know how is your weak, how did you do and we are always putting on our best face. We come to church wearing our best clothes, our biggest smile as we don’t want anybody to think there is anything wrong with us and yet we know when we look in the mirror or we search our souls we know that there is really no reason for God to love us. There is nothing loveable about us. We are self-centered people, we are motivated by selfishness and self-ambition yet by the grace of God he might transform us and so when we see these stories in the Bible we are reminded that there are stories too that God is faithful to us. God is faithful to me when I fail him. These stories remind us of His faithfulness. It is interesting Matthew does not try to hide anything. He does not try to bury the bad stories.

There are sometimes, may be you have tried to draw out a family tree of your own. It is always exciting when you find that treasure in your family tree, someone who is like a really well known person, a very successful businessman or may be someone who you know was very well liked in society but then sometimes we come across that relative that we just don’t want to talk about. They bring shame on the family name. We call them sometimes the black sheep. So when we are sharing our family stories with other people we always tell them about the successes but we never talk about the failures, because we don’t want to be embarrassed and we don’t want to bring about shame but Matthew is not worried about that because Matthew is not emphasizing the people, he is emphasizing the God. Notice that he includes women in this list. Today it may not seem like much that a woman is included a list but in the first century women were not seen as equal to men, women were often considered to be property of men. So it is quite unusual for Matthew to give the women equal billing with the men, but he is saying something. He is saying this God who has a plan who sent Jesus did not send Jesus just to save men but he sent him to save men and women and not only did He send Jesus to save, women actually played a very key role in the coming of Jesus, in his lineage. They played key roles. They were key characters; Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, the wife of Uriah we know is Bethsheba.

In our current culture and context we value women but there are cultures are there are context and there are places in the world today where women are devalued, women are hidden and ignored, women need to hear this promise, women all over the world need to know that God loves them and God has a plan for them and God is not going to forsake them and God loves them. I was reminded recently a friend of mine was teaching an Old Testament class at a school in the US and they were going through the Book of Joshua. When Joshua went into Jericho he sent some people to scout out Jericho and they met Rahab and Rahab made promises to them. The professor asked the students, can you name one good thing about Rahab. A student said, “she was a prostitute”. We do not usually celebrate prostitution, but it is a good thing to know that God loves the prostitutes.

Not only does he mention women but he mentions non-Hebrews in the lineage. It is very important. Matthew is including people he understands that God has included people in Jesus’s lineage who were not Hebrews. Ruth was a Moabite. The Moabite people were considered impure and yet we have the story of Ruth where she just so happened by luck to end up in Boaz’s field and Boaz saw her and fell in love with her and redeemed her and married her and they had a child. Boaz and Ruth had a child who was named Obed and Obed had a child named Jesse and Jesse had a child named David. Matthew is not trying to hide anything here; he is trying to make a point. Men and women are important, Jews and gentiles are important.

We celebrate Christmas because God is so faithful not just to Hebrew people but he is faithful to all people. He is faithful to all his promises. He loves men and women. He loves all people all over the world and some people know and some people don’t know and we need to make sure that they know because God is faithful.

* **We celebrate Christmas because Jesus is the climax of redemption and missions history.**

This lineage shows us that Jesus is the climax of redemptive history and he is the climax of mission history. He is the expected one. He is the one that everyone, all the prophets were prophesying about in the Old Testament. He is the one who would come. As Isaiah said, he would be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. It would be through him and his death and his burial and his resurrection that Ezekiel can say, “I will replace your heart of stone with a heart of flesh” because Jesus establishes a new covenant through his blood and the breaking of his body. Jesus is the climax. He is the center, he is the climax, he is the yes, he is the amen, he is the final word when it comes to redemption and when it comes to mission. God shows us that he is a God on mission because he sent his son. Matthew communicates to this that story of redemption is not just a small story but in fact it is the story of the entire Bible. We have 66 books in our Bible, multiple authors, written over 100 of years in different context and in three different languages and all these various types of genres of literature but it tells one story. The creation of the universe by an almighty loving God, he created everything and those who he created rebelled against him and fell and then he acted a plan to redeem them through his son so that those who profess faith and belief in him as lord and savior could then pursue restoring their life back to God’s design. Four words to remember the story line.

* Creation
* Fall
* Redemption
* Restoration

That is the storyline of the bible and here we are right at the climax of the story redemption. Jesus came to redeem and to allow us to pursue restoring God’s design to all of creation.

In this storyline Jesus isn’t the end, although he is the yes and the amen. He is the alpha and the omega but he is not the end because we are not at the end yet. The lineage of Jesus, his genealogy ends with him. Jesus never was married and he did not have any physical children because he had a mission in this big story to establish for himself a church. It is the gospel of Matthew where Jesus tells peter, Peter you are right when you called me the son of God and upon this confession, upon this rock I will build my church. So Jesus does not have physical children, he has spiritual children. We become part of the storyline when we followed him. We become a part of the storyline that Jesus has come as he is establishing his church because of the sacrifice he made because of the faithfulness to his promises, because of the faithfulness to his people we celebrate and we live for him in this story to see his kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

Instead of following physical genealogies now we follow spiritual genealogies. He is establishing churches, he is establishing every believer. So the question might be for you is,

If you are following Jesus can you trace out your spiritual genealogy? Have you led someone to know Jesus? Can you say that person is part of the story because I told them about Jesus? Is your life being lived in such a way that it points to Jesus? Could the mere mention of your name remind somebody about God’s faithfulness?

We here the name Abraham and we know that God is faithful. We here the name David, we know God is faithful. When someone says your name is the first name that pops into their mind, God is faithful, God is worth living for because the life they life.

Here I think is the challenge for us in Christmas. Marketing companies have made Christmas all about us, what can I buy, what can I give, what can I do, what can I get. We never say that but a lot of us like to give gifts because we know it means we will get something in return. We would never say that out loud but we think that and marketing companies make Christmas time the time where we go and we spend lots of money for really no good reason at all, but really when it comes to Christmas season it is about how can be orientate our lives, rearrange our lives, our priorities so that our life points to Jesus. So that when somebody mentioned your name, the faithfulness of God is what comes to mind.

**What do we need to change in our lives, so that people around us that they know Jesus is worth living for?**

It is not about earning God’s favor, it is not about earning his trust, it is about his faithfulness and because he loves us how now should we live as a response to his goodness and his grace and his mercy.

**Who will you point to Jesus with the story of your life?**

We celebrate Christmas because Jesus is the center of redemption history; he is the center of mission history.

I hope after considering the genealogy that we have read that when you read your bible and you get to a list of names, you don’t just brush right past them. I hope that may be you would take a moment to think about the names and stories of their lives because I know that one day you want people to think about your name, you want people to think about the influence you had. It is worth remembering them because it is worth remembering you because we are all going to point to Jesus.