


Matthew's Messiah
The Mothers in Jesus' Genealogy

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- Review the five women listed in Jesus' genealogy (see [2] in the **Sermon Summary**). What surprises you about each? (To read their backstories, see the **Digging Deeper** feature.)

Which one of these women do you **most** look forward to meeting in heaven—and **why**?
What will you ask her about her background? ...about the turning points in her life?
- Review the backstory of David and "**her who had been Uriah's wife**" (see 2 Samuel 11). David had at least six more wives—yet look how he is described in Acts 13:22! How do you explain that?

Why do you think God honored Bathseba by placing **her** in the lineage of the Messiah?
- How does the messiness of Messiah's lineage contribute to its credibility? ...to God's glory?

Creating "God Space" "God Space" is where cynics, skeptics, and spiritually curious people can safely raise their questions, reservations, and doubts because we have listened well and demonstrated love in practical, authentic ways.

- Think of those you'll be seeing throughout the holidays. Where is each of them spiritually?
- How do you think each would respond to the statement that "*God's promises have come true.*"?
- Practice explaining the significance of the five women listed in Matthew's genealogy in a way that they'd understand (with enough detail to make the point, but not so much that their eyes glaze over!)
- What question could you ask them that might help get this conversation going in a natural way?

Application-Challenge

- God fulfills his promises in his own time, his own way. Make sure you're trusting God for things he truly has promised—and then don't doubt him.
- Think of the implications of grace: if you feel unlovable or insignificant, remember Rahab and Ruth. If you feel particularly special—remember David's failure!
- If you're not sure you believe Jesus' story, read one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) over the holiday season. Make a list of questions you have—and then let's have lunch!



Sermon Summary

Matthew's and Luke's Gospels begin with genealogies. Boring! Not after we learn their significance! These genealogies teach us that God's promises came true, that God's grace rearranges all of our worldly categories, and that our deepest desires became historical fact. Let's see...

[1] God's promise came true. Abraham was promised that through one of his descendants, all the families of the earth would be blessed. David was promised that one of his descendants would sit on a throne, and his reign would last forever. Matthew 1:1 says that those promises have come true. Christmas means that God keeps his promises! It took God thousands of years to fulfill his promise, but fulfill it, he did! It looked like history was moving in a different direction altogether. It looked as though God had reneged on his promise—but no! Matthew's genealogy reveals that God always fulfills his promises, but he rarely operates on our time-frame and works in ways that we often cannot see.

[2] Grace rearranges all of our worldly categories. To us, genealogies are boring—so why are they included? In every society, if you want a place in the world, you have to have credentials. Today we show our credentials through our résumé. It establishes our place in the world. In ancient times, if you wanted a place in the world, you pointed to your genealogy. That was how you proved who you were. If there was something that tainted your résumé you'd omit it (much like we don't mention the job we got fired from). But notice that Matthew includes five women in Jesus' genealogy. In patriarchal societies the women were rarely listed. So the fact that Matthew lists five women in this genealogy might lead you to conclude that they must have been powerful women who burnished this résumé. Not so! Ruth was a Moabite, and Rahab was a Canaanite—both of these women were the descendants of despised people groups (v. 5). These are the kind of relatives you would typically leave out—yet there they are, prominently displayed for all to see! Tamar (v. 3) had two sons with her father-in-law! By Jewish moral code, Tamar was guilty of incest. And Rahab? Well, she was a prostitute! But despite their moral and racial pedigree, God doesn't leave these women out of Jesus' genealogy. He proudly displays their names, and in doing so, he affirms their dignity and worth!

Remember, this is the first chapter, of the first book, of the entire New Testament. Why would God embrace people whom the Law of Moses would exclude? The rest of the New Testament tells us! When you understand the significance of ancient genealogies, it causes you to say, "Wait a minute, what's going on here?" And so you want to read the rest of the book! But there's even more hidden here: Matthew seems to go out of his way *not* to mention one particular woman's name. The Greek of v. 6 literally reads: "David was the father of Solomon, *by her who had been* Uriah's wife." Many of our modern translations insert the name Bathsheba—so why didn't Matthew give us her name? I don't think that was meant to be a slam on her, but rather on David. Remember, David is the one person everyone would have wanted on his résumé. He was Israel's greatest king. But by saying "Uriah's wife," Matthew is forcing his readers to remember the whole sordid story. David seduced Bathsheba, got her pregnant, and had her husband killed in order to keep all this hush-hush. What is Matthew doing here? He is saying, "David is no better than the prostitute Rahab, or the incestuous woman Tamar, or the Moabite woman Ruth." Matthew is saying, "The great King David had no more right to go into the presence of a holy God, than does a common prostitute. Truth is, all of us are sinners. Matthew wants us to know that all of us need God's grace. Sin is the great equalizer. Before God, the prostitute and the king stand side by side.

True significance is found by being in Jesus' family, not through your résumé. All of these people in Jesus' genealogy are long gone, but their names have not perished from history. Their significance is linked to their connection to Jesus! It doesn't matter what you have done in this life—good or bad. Apart from a relationship with Jesus, your name is going to perish. Remember who you are as a child of God. In the big scheme of things, who cares what others think of us, if we have God's love and God's acceptance? We also learn that Christians should evaluate people differently than the world does. We must not value people based upon their résumé. I could care less about where you work, or where you live, or what your net worth is. If you know Jesus, you are my brother, you're my sister, and that is supremely important.

[3] Our deepest desires became a historical fact. All of our happiest, most exciting fairy tales begin with "Once upon a time..." but the New Testament begins with a genealogy—it's rooted in history. Think about it: a man from an obscure village, a nobody, is discovered to have a power to resist evil that no one had ever seen before. He's raises children from the dead; he quiets a storm; he feeds a multitude, he casts out demons, and he loves the poor and marginalized. As a result people were drawn to him. This incredible man is betrayed and put to death. All hope seems to be gone. But wait! He's miraculously raised from the dead! It sounds like another one of those great stories that *isn't* factually true—but we *wish* it were. But Jesus' story doesn't begin with, "Once upon a time." It begins with, "This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ." It really happened, and if you place your trust in him as Savior, then all the things you have longed for—escape from death, love-relationships that go on forever, good triumphing over evil—all of these will come true! Christmas is *not*, "Once upon a time..."!

Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asks you, "What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in *plain language* anyone could understand?

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page to the left) is a simple way to study any passage. We can use it to learn more about Jesus' maternal ancestors...

Monday—Tamar: Read Matthew 1:3 & Genesis 38:6-30.

Tuesday—Rahab: Read Matthew 1:5 & Joshua 2:6, 17 and 22-24; Hebrews 11:31.

Wednesday—Ruth: Read Matthew 1:5 & Ruth 1:1-18.

Thursday—Bathsheba: Read Matthew 1:6 & 2 Samuel 11:2-27.

Friday—Mary: Read Matthew 1:16 & Luke 1:26-56.

Saturday—*In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord with your church family,* study **Matthew 1:18–25.**

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]