

Making Room

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Matthew 1.1-17

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I. Introduction to this Study

One of the most popular and appreciated Christmas Carols, *Joy to the World*, includes this encouragement: "let every heart prepare him room ..." As we enter into Advent that is a word of encouragement we need to hear once again. Why? Because during Advent we focus on the incredible reality of God entering into the life of humankind and the history of world in the person of Jesus. God made room to take on human flesh and dwell among us. God has also made room for us – to exist, to relate to God, and to bless others. My prayer is that through this season we will *prepare him room* by learning to know Jesus better, by allowing him access to every dimension of our lives, and by being available to serve the purposes of God's desires for this world.

II. Connecting with One Another

Who are some of the more accomplished, colorful, or influential people in your family lineage? How do you think your ancestors have shaped you? How is knowing your lineage helpful?

III. Study the Text

- a. Matthew begins his account of the good news regarding Jesus with a detailed genealogy of Jesus. Read through Matthew 1.1-17.
- b. In verse 1, the NIV translates the Greek word "geneseos" as "genealogy". This Greek word also translates "genesis". Why do you think Matthew begins with this term? How is the account of Jesus' birth (and ministry, death and resurrection that follows) a "genesis"?
- c. How does Matthew identify Jesus in verse 1? What is significant about the titles "Son of David" and "Son of Abraham" (grammatically both titles refer to the antecedent which is Jesus)? Refer to Isaiah 11.1-9 and Genesis 12.1-3.
- d. Genealogies in the Ancient Near East were used not only to show family relationship, but also economic, tribal, and political ones. Frequently they included only the most important members in the line, thus skipping over some of the links in the chain. Matthew does this, not in error, but to be deliberate in highlighting the key players and to make use of a literary device of arranging the genealogy in three divisions of fourteen generations. Some suggest it was because the numerical values of the three consonants that make up David's name in Hebrew equate to the number fourteen. Seven and multiples of seven are significant because they denote perfection or completeness. Matthew is deliberately shaping

this genealogy – three sets of fourteen generations. From Abraham to David, From David to the Exile, from the Exile to Jesus. How does this format support Matthew's assertion found in verse 1 that Jesus is both Son of David and Son of Abraham?

- e. As our ad through the list of people, what names do you recognize? With whom are you unfamiliar? Who are the people that you are surprised to see in this list? Why is it surprising to see them listed?

Maybe:

Tamar (Canaanite) Genesis 38.1-25

Rahab (Canaanite from Jericho) Joshua 2

Boaz (Canaanite – son of Rahab) Ruth 2

Ruth (Moabite) Ruth 1

Bathsheba (Married a Hittite which could deem her to be a "Gentile") - 2 Samuel 11

- f. Why do you think Matthew makes special mention of the women?
- g. How does this genealogy help to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of Israel's purpose and hopes?
- h. How does it show that Jesus is the central, definitive part of God's saving activity (or God's Upper Story as we have been thinking about through our study of "The Story)? How does it emphasize that Jesus, the Messiah, came into the world in continuity with God's saving history that began with creation, continued with the call of Abraham, took shape with the development of the nation of Israel, and extends into the future when Christ returns?
- i. How does it portray Jesus as a Royal King?
- j. How does it convey inclusiveness in God's saving activity (women, Gentiles)?
- k. How does it depict God as being proactive and working through ordinary lives of ordinary people to bring about extraordinary events?

IV. Reflect and Respond

- a. Think about your genealogy and the people whom God used to make room for you. Take some time to give thanks for them and the things they passed down through the generations that have impacted you.
- b. What are some ways you can more completely "*prepare him* (the Royal King and Delivering Savior, Jesus) *room*" during this Advent Season?

V. Pray

- a. Pray for families that will experience Advent and Christmas differently because of the loss of loved ones this past year.
- b. Pray for Good Shepherd as we continue to have a role in God's saving activity in our community. Please pray for many of our friends and neighbors to experience the joy of "*preparing him room.*"