

Introducing Jesus

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bibles, turn to Matthew chapter 1, verses 1-17.

Today and over the next couple of weeks, we'll look at Matthew's Gospel as we focus on the incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. First, we're going to begin at the very beginning of Matthew's Gospel, again, verses 1-17.

If you don't have a Bible, there are Bibles in the pews that you can use. If you don't own a Bible, please take that Bible home with you today as a gift from our church in our hopes that you'll continue to be reading God's Word.

Matthew chapter 1, verses 1-17. Would you stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word? The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. And Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nishan, and Nishan the father of Solomon.

[1 : 26] Solomon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph.

And Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram. And Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah.

And Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah. And Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiad, and Abiad the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor.

Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliad, and Eliad the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Mathen, and Mathen the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

[2 : 39] So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ, 14 generations.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? I once was listening to a sports radio in Kansas City, and they were talking about a Chiefs player who was eligible to be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

And they were talking about the selection process, and that it involved a representative from the media, from each professional football city, who served as an advocate to endorse a player from the team in their city for selection to the National Football League Hall of Fame.

So that what this person would do, or does, they stand up, and they list off all of the players' stats, all their accolades, all their accomplishments.

And the Chiefs player that was up for nomination was an offensive lineman, and if you know anything about football, unlike any other sport, offensive lineman, there's not any really stats that you can share about how good of a player or how great of a player they were.

[4 : 06] And so these radio hosts were talking about how important it would be for this media member to introduce this player and present this nominee who they felt was worthy of the Hall of Fame.

However, they also talked about the fact that there are some players who are so great, whose achievements are so well known, that when it came time for their advocate to make their case for induction to the Hall of Fame, all they did was stand up, state the player's name, and then sit back down.

They're like Barry Sanders, Barry Sanders, Joe Montana, Jerry Rice, Emmitt Smith, Tom Brady. I threw up a little bit in my mouth saying that last one.

But they are all examples of players that need no introduction. Everyone knows who they are. They are some of the best to ever play the game.

And they're obviously worthy of the Hall of Fame. In those cases, making an introduction is easy. But in other cases, like the offensive lineman that I mentioned, when the person is not as well known or maybe not as highly thought of as they should be, it is important for the person who does know, who knows their achievements and their significance, to introduce them in a way that captures all of that and presents them in the best light.

[5 : 42] That's what Matthew does here in the opening of his gospel. Now, if you were introducing Jesus to someone today who didn't know him or who maybe didn't know very much about him, I doubt that you would introduce him the way that Matthew did by launching into some kind of long genealogy.

It's not the way that we introduce people in our culture. For example, if I was going to introduce my son to someone, I would say, this is my son Jack.

I wouldn't say, this is my son Jack. Dominic was the father of Sylvester. Sylvester, the father of Edward. Edward, the father of Michael. Michael, the father of Michael.

I would call me, the husband of Danny, who gave birth to Jack. People in our culture, if you did that, they'd think that you were crazy.

So why does Matthew introduce Jesus, the most important person ever, in the way that he did? well one of Matthew's major purposes in his gospel especially in chapters 1 and 2 is to establish Jesus's right to the kingship of Israel because he is the long-awaited Messiah Matthew wrote his gospel primarily to a Jewish audience so he begins his gospel by showing Jesus's lineage from the royal line of Israel in Jesus's genealogy Matthew provides proof through the prophet Nathan God promised that it would be King David's descendant through whom he would bring the great king the king of kings who would establish and reign over his eternal kingdom we read about that in 2 Samuel 7 16 through 12 Samuel speaking to David says when your days are fulfilled and you when you lie down with your fathers or God I should say I will raise up for your offspring after you who shall come from your body and I will establish his kingdom he shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son when he commits iniquity I will discipline him with the rod of men with the stripes of the sons of men but my steadfast love will not depart from him as I took it from

[8 : 20] Saul whom I put away from before you and your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me your throne shall be established forever this promise was not fulfilled in Solomon David's son or in any other king who ruled in Israel or Judah the people had waited a long time for someone from David's lineage to come in fulfillment of this prophecy that God had given to David genealogies were also important to the Jewish people because when they conquered the promised land it was divided into territories for each tribe except for the Levites who served in the temple and who received cities genealogies were used by the Jews to verify where a person was from to verify their right to live in a certain place and to own property in that place and in the case of the Levites to serve in the temple the transfer of property also required accurate knowledge of someone's family tree even under Roman rule the census of the Jews in

Palestine was based on which tribe they belonged to but since the destruction of the temple in AD 70 no genealogies exist today that can trace the ancestry of any Jew now living back to especially the line of David this is significant because for those Jews today who still look for the Messiah his lineage to David can never be established Jesus is the last verifiable person who has a preserved genealogy to the throne of David in fulfillment of God's promise to send a Messiah a king whose kingdom would be eternal so now we know why the genealogy was important to Jews then but what importance does it have for people like us today I think we often skip over genealogies like this one when we're reading our Bibles because it it doesn't seem all that interesting these names are hard to pronounce and and so we look at these genealogies and I think we kind of treat them like the opening credits of a movie and and mentally we we fast forward or we physically fast forward

through that introduction those credits because we're ready for some action we do the same thing when we read books we treat the introduction in those first few pages as you know the skip over stuff so you can get to chapter one and start reading but this list of names in

Matthew chapter one verses one through seventeen tell a story it tells God's story it tells our story by introducing us to Jesus the son of God the son of man who came to live die and rise again to redeem sinful people making them citizens of his kingdom bringing outcasts into his family to reign with him forever as co-heirs of his eternal dominion and so the main idea for this morning's sermon is that the genealogy of Jesus proves he is a gracious savior and sovereign king the genealogy of Jesus proves he is a gracious savior and a sovereign king Matthew presents two proofs identifying Jesus as gracious savior and sovereign king in this genealogy and again you might wonder why is this important well

Christmas is around the corner and as Christians we often say things during this time of year like Jesus is the reason for the season and while that is certainly true I think we easily lose sight of that in all the ways that our culture celebrates Christmas and so this morning and again for the next two weeks my hope is to remind you and to fill you with gratitude gratitude that the greatest gift you'll ever receive is your salvation in Jesus Christ and the glory that awaits you after this life is over if you're aren't if you aren't a Christian I'm sure you've heard something about Jesus no other person has impacted world history like him you can't honestly deny that he was a real real person much has been said and written about him and there is a lot of confusion about him as a result of that regarding his true identity but today friends you are going to hear about that and I hope that you will receive the gift of salvation and know that Jesus is in fact a good and gracious savior and a king worth serving and following and so again

Matthew provides two proofs in his genealogy that identify Jesus as a gracious savior and sovereign king the first proof comes from most of the verses in this passage verses 1 through 16 it's the people in Jesus Jesus' genealogy that prove he is a gracious savior the people in Jesus' Jesus' genealogy prove he is a gracious savior at the beginning of verse 1 Matthew introduces Jesus saying the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ now the root word of genealogy is Genesis which means beginning or origin the name Jesus is the Greek equivalent of Yeshua or Joshua in the Hebrew which means God saves Christ is not Jesus' last name it's his title it's the Greek form of the Hebrew word

[15:10] Messiah which means anointed one so right off the bat Matthew introduces Jesus as the anointed one through whom God saves now I think it's necessary to point out that while Jesus' earthly life had a beginning the Bible expressly says that as God he has always been and John captures that in the beginning of his gospel in chapter 1 verses 1 through 14 look at how he introduces Jesus in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God he was in the beginning with God all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made in him was life and the life was the light of men the eternal son of God added a human nature to his divine nature this was essential because as God Jesus lived sinlessly as a human being he was able to die as a sacrifice to atone for our sin in the rest of verse 1

Matthew says that Jesus is also the son of David the son of Abraham David and Abraham were arguably at that point in time the two greatest men in Israel's history they are kind of like the George Washington and Abraham Lincoln of our history Abraham of the Bible was Israel's patriarch and David was Israel's first great king but the Bible reveals that these two great men weren't perfect men far from it Abraham was a great man of faith it's his faith that Paul uses to demonstrate that justification is by faith in Romans chapter 4 if you remember God chose Abraham and he called Abraham to be the father of the Jewish nation through whom God said all of the nations would be blessed when Abraham and his wife Sarah were old and they seemed past the point of having children and understanding that without children there could be no descendants no nation to bless the nations

Abraham required inquired of God about this in Genesis chapter 15 verses 2 through 6 Abraham said oh Lord what will you give me for I continue childless and the heir of my house is Eleazar of Damascus and Abraham said behold you have given me no offspring and a member of my household will be my heir and behold the word of the Lord came to him this man shall not be your heir your very own son shall be your heir and he brought him outside and he said look toward heaven and number the stars if you are able to number them then he said to him so shall your

offspring be and Abraham believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness later Sarah Abraham's wife did conceive and bear Isaac the son of the promise years later God put Abraham's faith to the test by asking him to sacrifice Isaac to him which foreshadowed God's sacrifice of his son for us and in that moment Abraham trusted in God he exercised his faith in him and before he brought the knife down on his son Isaac the Lord stopped his hand so yes Abraham was a great man of faith but he did some not so great things both before Abraham's faith in God was counted to him as righteousness in Genesis 15 and before Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son in Genesis 22 he lied about his relationship to his wife saying that she was his sister to avoid being killed by a couple of different pagan kings who desired her he was willing to let them have her he also had a child with

Sarah's servant Hagar because Abraham and Sarah gave up on God fulfilling his promise this was scandalous behavior that you'd expect to see on a show like Jerry Springer or Dr.

[20 : 04] Phil not read about it in your Bible yet despite these scandals despite Abraham's sin God continued to be gracious to him David also had great faith in God after rejecting Saul Israel's first king God sent Samuel his prophet to the man he said that I have chosen to take Saul's place Samuel broke that news to Saul in 1 Samuel 13 14 he said to him but now your kingdom shall not continue the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you that man was David who was a little shepherd boy when Samuel anointed him as Israel's next king and who by the way

Samuel couldn't believe that David was God's choice but David had great faith as a teenager he slew the giant Goliath trusting in God having faith in God at a time when the Jewish men didn't David was a great warrior but he was a terrible husband and a terrible father David had multiple wives and concubines as did his son and heir Solomon who repeated his father's sins only in worse ways another of David's sons Absalom led a revolt against him which almost succeeded but the sin David is most known for is his sin with Bathsheba Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite during a time when David's men were off to war David was lazy and he stayed at home and he saw Bathsheba and he took her and she became pregnant with his child and then David tried to cover up his tracks and pass off the child as Uriah's but when that failed David ordered Uriah's execution on the battlefield again stuff you'd expect to read about in tabloids not in the Bible there were consequences but God forgave him and kept his promise to establish David's throne forever despite this scandalous sinful mess Bathsheba had another child with David Solomon and all three are descendants of Jesus but the scandals and the sinful mess just continues to mount as we look at the other names in this genealogy

I don't have time to go through each one individually but we'll look at a couple we've looked at a couple of men I should say so now let's look at the women four women are mentioned in this genealogy Tamar in verse three Rahab and Ruth in verse five in Bathsheba called the wife of Uriah in verse six whom I've already covered and then Mary the mother of Jesus in verse sixteen so five sorry we'll look at four after mentioning Abraham Isaac and Jacob we come to Judah in verse three and there in verse three it says in Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar Tamar was Judah's daughter-in-law God had taken the life of her husband Ur and his next oldest brother Onan because of their wickedness Judah then promised Tamar that his youngest son when he was of age would become her husband

Tamar at that point was young she was childless she was a widow but as time went along Judah didn't keep his promise and so Tamar disguised herself as a courtesan and tricked him into giving her children these scandalous people were also recipients of God's grace and a part of Jesus family tree now while Tamar pretended to be a harlot it was Rahab's chosen profession Rahab was also a Gentile she was an outcast both religiously and socially however she protected the Jewish spies who came into Jericho during the time of the conquest of the promised land and in his grace God spared her life and he saved her and he brought her into the family lineage of his holy son

[25 : 18] Rahab's son married Ruth another Gentile another outcast Ruth was a Moabite a descendant of the incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughters Ruth's first husband was a Jew and when he died she devoted herself to her mother-in-law Naomi she became a believer she married Boaz and was the great grandmother of King David the last woman mentioned in Jesus' genealogy is Mary his mother Mary did not have the scandalous background that the other women did but in submitting to God's will to miraculously conceive Jesus his son by the Holy Spirit

prior to the consummation of her betrothal and marriage to her fiance Joseph that would be viewed as a scandal to many

Mary was probably 12 to 13 years old she lived in Nazareth that was that was the boonies that was the country that was the place where Nathan who became one of Jesus' disciples when they said hey we found the Messiah and he's from Nazareth and Nathan says sarcastically can anything good come out of Nazareth people would look at Mary's belly as it began to enlarge and swell and they would start drawing conclusions the angel that appeared to Mary and who told her and explained all this to her he didn't go around to all the different people in Nazareth and say hey just so you know by the way everything is okay something awesome is happening here nope that didn't happen and so rumors apparently swirled and by the time we get to Jesus and he's in his earthly ministry the Pharisees said to him in one occasion in John 8 41 we are not born of sexual immorality and that's what they're referring to we have one father even God but God had been gracious to bless

Mary to bear and raise his only son on earth this young teenage girl who think about it would it be like a seventh or eighth grader in our culture could you imagine that she lived out in the middle of nowhere and was a nobody to the important people who lived during that time now let me say this as sort of a detour before getting back on track with the rest of the genealogy to mention women in a genealogy back then during this time was scandalous because women were viewed in that time more as property than they were seen as people so what we see here is how the kingdom of this gracious king rocked the status quo in this genealogy looking at these women these outcasts we learn that women play an important part in the kingdom of this gracious savior women were part of the group that followed

Jesus women were the first to witness his resurrection churches get a lot of flack in our culture because we uphold the two different genders and the different roles that God has given to each but I'll say and I think you would agree that without the women in our church we'd have a lot of problems and all the women said amen and I know personally that without my wife and without my mother's influence I would not be a very good pastor I would not be a very good man the rest of the names in this list contain the name of king some were comparatively good to others but all of them were sinners and all this to say a closer look at Jesus' family tree reveals a lot of scandal a lot of messiness a lot of suffering a lot of sin yet God in his grace despite their scandals despite their sin despite their unfaithfulness was gracious to keep his promise to send a savior born of a virgin untainted unstained by the sin nature we are all born with to live sinlessly and die as a sacrifice in the place of sinners to atone for their sins that are ultimately committed against him and saving them he gives them new life and he raises them eternally with

Jesus his son in glory where the Bible says in first Corinthians 2 9 as it is written what no eye has seen nor ear heard nor the heart of man imagined what God has prepared for those who love him think about this the most beautiful thing that you've ever seen the most splendid feeling that you've ever had pales in comparison it will be as nothing compared to what sinners who have received God's grace will one day see can you believe it it's pretty amazing sometimes we don't last month we were at our Oklahoma Baptist annual meeting and on Monday was the pastors conference and one of the speakers there was Jared Wilson who's at

[31 : 27] Midwestern he's a great writer and a really good preacher and he was talking to pastors primarily and he was talking about all the times that you fail all the times that you sin all the times that in word or deed or thought you disqualify yourself and then he that you'll hear Jesus say well done good and faithful servant and then he said if you believe the gospel you will man that was powerful for me to hear 1st Timothy 1 15 through 17 says the saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom Paul says I am the foremost but I received mercy for this reason that in me as the foremost Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life and then he praises

God in this to the king of the ages immortal invisible the only God be honor and glory forever! ever! Amen! It's like he can't believe it but he knows it's true the he is associated with adulterers murderers coveters and cowards he is associated with those who lived in royalty and those who lived in poverty with kings and with outcasts with Jews and with Gentiles and he came to shed his blood for the nations as the savior of the world John 3 16 we know but how about verses 17 and 18 as well for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him shall not

perish but have eternal life for God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him whoever believes in him is not condemned! Last week Pastor Tyler had us sing a song we've sung it before it's called O Come All You Unfaithful and each time we begin singing that song the opening line that says O Come All You Unfaithful in my mind I'm thinking this is wrong because I'm familiar with the Christmas carol which says O Come All Ye Faithful but the more we progress through the lyrics of that song I think this is right and I think there's power sometimes not just in singing a song but just reading the lyrics which I want to do right now O Come All You Unfaithful Come Weak and Unstable Come Know You Are Not Alone O Come Barren and

Come See What Your God Has Done O Come Bitter and Broken Come With Fears Unspoken Come Taste of This Perfect Love O Come Guilty!

In Hiding Ones There Is No Need To Run See What Your God Has Done Christ Is Born Christ Is Born For You He's The Lamb Who Was Given Slain For Our Pardon His Promise Is Peace For Those Who Believe So Come Though You Have Nothing Come He Is The Offering Come See What Your God Has Done Christ Is Born For You Friend Jesus Is The Truest Friend Of Sinners He Is A Gracious Savior The Sinful People In His Genealogy And The Sinful People Who Are Part Of His Church Today Are Proof Of That He Is A Gracious Savior And So Now We See The Second Proof In This Genealogy And That's The Purpose Of

[35 : 51] Jesus Genealogy Which Proves He Is Sovereign King The Purpose Of Jesus Genealogy Proves That He Is Sovereign King In Verse 17 Matthew Says 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 Now Biblical Scholars Argue Over The Relevance Of The Number Fourteen In This Verse They Also Note That Matthew Excludes Some Generations To Get To The Number Fourteen I'll Tell You That I Don't Know What The Significance Is For Sure Maybe Matthew's Favorite Number Was Fourteen I'm Not Sure But What I Do Know And What I Believe That God Wants Us To See Primarily Here Is How Over Such A Long Period Of Time He Has Been In Complete Control He Has Been Sovereignly

Overseeing These Events Just As He Has From The Beginning Of Time And Just As He Will Continue To Do Until The End Of This Age Isaiah 46 8 Through 10 God Declares Remember This And Stand Firm Recall It To Your Mind You Transgressors Remember The Former Things Of Old For I Am God And There Is No Other I Am God And There Is None Like Me Declaring The End Not Just Knowing Declaring The End From The Beginning And From Ancient Times Things Not Yet Done Saying My Counsel Shall Stand And I Not Might Not Maybe I Will Accomplish All Of My Purpose This Is Why I Hate The Title Of Carrie Underwood Song Jesus Take The Wheel No Offense To Carrie!

Underwood I Understand The Premise Of It But The Theology Is Incorrect It's Really Bad We Need A Song That Says! Jesus You Are Behind The Wheel And I'm In The Back Seat Being A Back Seat Driver And I Need To Keep Quiet And Let You Drive Author!

Tyler Get On That One And Share The Royalties With Me We'll Be Looking Forward To Hearing That One Soon! but God's sovereignty is a reality that should bring us a lot of peace he is in control he is in control and Jesus's genealogy is proof of that let me read some verses to you or look at some verses with me Colossians 1 15 through 17 but when the fullness of time had come God sent forth his son born of a woman born under the law to redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons the fullness of time came according to God's sovereign plan Colossians 1 15 through 17 says sorry that was Galatians 4 4 through 5 Colossians 1 15 through 17 says of Jesus he is the image of the invisible God the firstborn of all creation for by him all things were created in heaven and on earth visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities all things were created through him and for him and he is before all things and in him all things hold together Jesus is pretty important he is a sovereign king Ephesians 1 11 through 12 says in him Jesus we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will so that we who are the first to hope in

Christ might be to the praise of his glory and then later Ephesians 2 10 says for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them Jesus Jesus is genealogy reminds us on this side of his birth as well as his

death and his resurrection that no matter how things may seem or no matter how things are going his plan is being worked out God is not frustrated his will will be done here in Matthew 1 through 17 the plan concerned the first advent of Jesus Christ. Presently, God's plan is at work in preparation of his second advent, the second coming of his son. That plan right now includes you and me, followers of Jesus

[40 : 47] Christ today. And so 1 Peter 1.13 urges us, therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Matthew's genealogy has a past, a present, and a future.

In Jesus Christ, we are now brought into this family. His genealogy becomes our genealogy. His story becomes our story. His death becomes our death. His life becomes our life. His resurrection will be our resurrection. It all, all of life, all of creation, all of history, all of the present, all of the past, all of the future, all of it centers on our sovereign king, gracious savior, Jesus, who is the Christ, the son of God. And so what do we do with this? How should we adjust our lives based on what we've seen in this genealogy? I think it's to praise Jesus for his grace and to be at peace knowing he is your sovereign king. Praise Jesus for his grace and be at peace knowing he is your sovereign king. One thing I love about scripture, and it's not surprising knowing who God is, is how honest it is. You know, if this was your family tree, and maybe you have a family tree that is somewhat or shares some similarities with Jesus, you'd probably be ashamed to have that knowledge put out there for other people to review. There'd be some people in your family tree who've done some things or said some things that you wouldn't want other people to know about. But here's the thing. Jesus is not ashamed to be associated with sinners. Martin Luther said, Christ is the kind of person who is not ashamed of sinners. In fact, he put them into his family tree. He isn't ashamed of us.

And so we shouldn't be ashamed of him. And we shouldn't, certainly shouldn't be ashamed of his gospel, which has the power to save sinners. Romans 1 16 says, For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Cowards, covetors, adulterers, murderers, outcasts, rich people, poor people, young people, old people, messy people, sinful people, scandalous people, sinners, sinners, are saved by God's grace. And God continues to save sinners today. And so I have a couple of invitations for you. One, if you're an unbeliever, you've heard, I hope you've heard about how gracious of a Savior Jesus is and how he is a sovereign king. And I hope that you will see that this is a gracious Savior that you don't have to clean yourself up before you go to him. You just come to him. You confess your sins, you repent of those sins, and you are saved, friend. You are completely saved. You become an heir with Christ. You have eternal life. And these glories that words cannot explain await you. And I hope that's true for you today. And I'll be here afterwards if you want to come and find me. And to those of us who have been saved by our Lord, don't be ashamed of this wonderful truth, especially during Christmas time. And I encourage you, invite somebody to come to church. Invite them to come to Christmas Eve. People are looking. If you would just extend the invitation, they would come.

[45 : 06] And they'll hear the gospel. But in all things, no matter what happens, no matter what your plans are, whether things go right or things go wrong, in the end, you've been saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Our Lord reigns and our Lord is coming back. What more in the end could you want?

Amen? Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we're thankful for just how rich your word is, even in looking at a genealogy and a list of names that are hard for us to pronounce. And yet, Lord, they tell a story. They tell your story. They tell our story of your graciousness to sinners. Your desire to bring them into the family tree of your perfect and sinless son, Jesus Christ, who is not ashamed of sinners, but who came to die in the place of sinners. This is an amazing story, Lord. Forgive us that so often we who have grown up in the church are familiar with the gospel and we just become cold to it. Lord, we pray that you would revive our hearts that we would not forget the great recipients of grace that you've made us to be.

And that in being reminded of this, Lord, that we would truly be your ambassadors. And that we would go and that we would proclaim the excellencies of Jesus Christ and the hope that we have in him that endures all things. And so, Lord, as I'm sure this month progresses towards the 25th, our calendars are full, we've made plans and are preparing things concerning those plans. Lord, it's so easy for us to get distracted. It's so easy for us to lose sight of what is most important. So, Holy Spirit, we pray for your help to cause us to not lose sight and to continually reflect upon the reasons

that we have always to be filled with joy, to praise Jesus and to be unashamed of his gospel that has saved us. So, Lord, we pray that we would make much of the name of Jesus Christ, not just this time of year, but all times as we look forward to his second Advent. What a glorious day that will be. Thank you for it. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.