

Columbia, Missouri
The Worship of God • September 26, 2021



The Scripture
Matthew 1:1-17

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, 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 Aram, and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon 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 King David. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and 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 Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

The Message
“Jesus, for Real: Because of Who We’ve Been...”
Mark Briley

What you’ve just experienced is the number one reason elders quit the team. But friend, you made it, you did great, and there’s not a single one of us that is ready to get up here and read it better ourselves. Thank you!

A beloved friend and elder in our congregation in Tulsa, when asked to read a text with lots of hard names or towns to pronounce would just name the first name in the list and then say, “*and there were others...*” We get that, right? But all these names – why are they in here? None of the other gospel writers thought it was a good idea.

We all know that most people decide in the first paragraph or two whether or not they’ll keep reading a book, and let me tell you, Matt, this start isn’t going to get you on the NY Times Best Sellers list. But here it is... all these names. “*Why preach on such a text, Briley? It’s just a big list of names?*” It’s a great question – and here’s my thinking. What better text to start a new sermon series called, “*Jesus, for Real*” than the genealogy account of Matthew?

You want to know the real Jesus – let me introduce you to his family. You know the family always tells a story, right? It’s why people hesitate to bring a new partner home to meet the family. You’re worried about what dad might do or what unpopular opinion Grandma is going to offer about your friend’s hairstyle. “*Well, I’m entitled to my opinion,*” grandma always says. Or... you’re friends with somebody for a long while and when you finally go over to their place and meet their family, light bulbs flash all over the place: “*Ah... this all makes a lot of sense now.*” The family story gives us some important things to think about who Jesus really is and where he comes from.

This shapes us, too, right? We all come from somewhere. Our director of community engagement, Adonica Coleman, led an exercise with those who attended the “*Feet Under the Same Table*” night last Monday titled that very thing: “*Where I come from.*” For better or worse, that story feeds who we are today, how we perceive the world, and what direction we think we should move from here. Sometimes we’re less excited about sharing our backgrounds but generally we’re proud of it. A quick Google of “*Where I Come From*” reveals songs of that very title from Alan Jackson, Kane Brown, and *another one* from DJ Khaled. Montgomery Gentry has a song by that title, saying, “*Where I come from, there’s a pickup truck with the tailgate down, where I come from, that little church is gonna have a crowd and yeah, I’m pretty darn proud of where I come from.*” Jennifer Lopez was quick to sing, “*Don’t be fooled by the rocks that I got, I’m still, I’m still Jenny from the block.*” She’s from the Bronx... that’s where she comes from. It’s a part of her.

Jesus grew up in a non-Christian neighborhood. Can you believe it? Not a single Christian anywhere near his home. There are 2.5-billion Christians on the planet today – none in Jesus’ ‘hood – none on the planet for that matter in those days. Lots of Jewish neighbors, of course – many devout like his mom I’m sure. Some of them were probably passive or even dismissive about their faith just like in every community in every culture across the history of the world. I’m sure he relied on his neighborhood. The ‘hood taught him how to play, and how to survive, how to tell a joke, and how to break up a fight. They taught him street smarts and Torah smarts. They taught him the common language that we hear in the Sermon on the Mount – the most influential sermon of all time.

He was surrounded by commerce, educational systems, entertainment, military, businesses, taxes, and local, regional, and imperial politics... yes politics! All of these things were integrated into his spiritual life. He was skilled as a carpenter – swung a hammer to support his family for the first 30-years of his life – picked up the trade from his old man.

Why is it, do you think, that there is no Parable of the Good Carpenter, no story of the lost hammer or tool of great price? Even my dad taught me “*measure twice, cut once.*” But think of all the parables Jesus does tell – a man who owns a vineyard and lends it out. There’s one about a physician and others about commerce, wage earning, shepherding, farming, fishing, baking, sewing, and throwing parties. Where did he learn this stuff? It’s not passive knowledge either. He knew them so well that he could effortlessly apply them to the most profound aspects of life and could spontaneously discuss them with thousands of eyes on him or during a hostile interrogation. Where did he learn these things? He must have learned these from the block.¹

Don’t be fooled by the props that he got, he’s still, he’s still Jesus from the block. This is the real Jesus from Nazareth. He lived in a real town with speed traps, block parties, and kids who whitewashed the street for homecoming. These realities shaped his ministry – without a doubt.

So did his family tree. Our text from Matthew uncovers the truth that Jesus comes from a family not that different from yours and mine. It is a messy family full of flaws and awkward family reunions. It reminds me of a title of one of John Ortberg’s books, “*Everyone is Normal Until You Get to Know Them.*” Matthew gets Jesus’ family mess right out on the table from the beginning. He’s trying to accomplish a number of things by listing this family tree of Jesus. He is first making clear that Jesus fits into the prophetic story of a King coming from Judah... the house of David... important

¹ This motif about Jesus’ neighborhood is inspired by Tony Kriz’s work, “Neighbors and Wise Men.” Thomas Nelson Publishing. 2012. Pg. 192.

connections to link him to the messianic hopes. By having King David in his family tree, it claims Jesus as a legitimate ruler of God's people. Second, writing to a primarily Jewish audience, Matthew makes it clear that Jesus is presented as an authentic Jewish man. Jesus was not a disembodied bearer of a divine message, instead he is presented as the ultimate Jew, the one in whom Israel's deepest hopes would find reality. A third purpose of this list of humanity may be to proclaim that Jesus, fully in touch with the troubles of humanity, is capable of understanding all of us and being an empathetic Lord of all.

He specifically names some Gentiles in the line-up which expands Jesus family and witness. Important to note that Matthew includes women in his lineage, but perhaps they are not the names you would expect. Sarah and Leah... both missing. Instead, Tamar is named. Rahab makes the list – both named as those with professions that were frowned upon. Ruth gets name dropped. She's a Gentile. Bathsheba's there with whom David committed adultery. Matthew doesn't call her by name but identifies her simply as "*the wife of Uriah*"... a reminder of the adulterous and murderous scandal David instigated. The family history is full of dysfunction. Abraham fathers Ishmael by Hagar, Rebekah deceives Isaac, not to mention the polygamy, adultery, violence, and more found in the households of David and Solomon.²

And finally we get to Mary and Joseph. Imagine Mary and Joe... scared teens given such an enormous responsibility before they even get to do teenage things like cruise the back parking lot on Friday nights or go to prom. They've got to parent the Savior of the world. You don't want that to go to his head, so you make sure he has chores and keeps his grades up. You let him try sports and take guitar lessons. Do you put a bumper sticker on the back of your Dodge Stratus that says, "*Proud parents of the Savior of the World?*"

It's a different kind of deal, you know? You want him to fit in with the other kids who are skateboarding and playing video games, but Jesus at 12-years-old is all, "*No thanks. I'll just be down at the Temple teaching the rabbi's, ma.*" Sigh, Mary, sigh. A little strange, right? And we follow him which makes us a little strange, too, I suppose.

Why does any of this matter? Because we've done so much to elevate ideals and doctrines and structures and bylaws that sometimes we forget who Jesus is, for real – the reason, theoretically, that we do anything we do as the Church. So we're spending the next seven weeks in a series that will consider just that and how it overlays our recently approved *Priority Action Plan* that will not replace what we love so much about our church right now but enhance who we become because the real Jesus guides us this way. That's been true of Broadway Christian Church from day one.

² Interpretation Commentary. Douglas R. A. Hare. "Matthew."

Our church has a long history of names, too. The charter role, those who officially joined and launched the church in 1958 are listed just outside of the sanctuary to your right as you move up that next hallway. We have a few still active among us today – 63 years – can you believe that? How many of us can say we’ve done anything for 63 years? Isn’t that amazing? I pulled out my historic Broadway notes this week thinking about this morning. Beloved founding member who is in the resurrection now, Glenn Geiger, sent it to me in a package after I arrived along with a vintage postcard – he collected them and had tens of thousands of post cards. I am so grateful for him sharing it with me but even more for his legacy of leadership here. He and his wife, Delores, were among those at First Christian Church downtown Columbia, who looked at each other and rose to their feet when Rev. Dr. C.E. Lemmon, said, “*Who will go start this new church?*” One-thousand, two-hundred adult members at First Christian – 57 rose to their feet and said, “*We’ll go.*” First Christian beautifully shepherded the launch which is why Broadway always speaks of being birthed in love. It wasn’t a church *split*. It was a church *sent*.

And here we are today... because of the names of every person who ever came alongside this love story and said, “*I’ll bring my best. I’ll be a part. I’ll learn about Christ here. I’ll serve like Christ served.*” And even if you join the church today, you can name someone who is a part of the lineage here – someone who welcomed you, invited you, included you, showed you the real Jesus in some way. I want to honor those names now. Would you think of a name of someone at Broadway... whether a founding member saint or the person who called you by name this morning and reminded you that you are known and loved? It’s important to name and remember. On the count of three, say that name out loud in honor, would you? You got a name? Okay. 1, 2, 3 _____ . (God... thank you for each name, shared, each story represented, each saint remembered. Amen.). It feels so good to say and hear these names. Why the list? To channel Erykah Badu, “*If we were made in God’s image, then call us by our names.*”

And what happened over these years to these people inspired by the real Jesus to build a church on love? We grew. We learned. We expanded. One weekly worship became three. Could we break the mold and have a different style? Broadway, you said, “*We can make room.*” Sunday School changed its hour of meeting from one to multiple. Small groups flourished. Outreach to the community became a growing presence. Columbia knew they could count on Broadway. We made hard decisions and prayed for direction and did the loving thing as best we could understand at the time. The late fifties and early sixties amidst racial oppression of people of color, Broadway made it known in the city that we were all for one and one for all – color not only welcomed but wanted and needed to be more like the authentic kingdom of Jesus Christ. We were the first congregation in Columbia to come out and say that’s who we

believe God says we are. The AIDS epidemic brewed divided thought, and Broadway said, love leads us to care for these folks who are hurting, to heal bodies and emotions and spirits with our help not our judgment. And Broadway responded.

And beyond these notable moments were the day-to-day realities of Christian education, fellowship, and care for each other. The best chicken dinners. Youth mission trips. Vacation Bible School fun. The staples of community life that are simply people of faith being people together.

Our youth met out On the Hill last Sunday night. It was a great turnout of young people after a year and a half of wondering how and if and when could we gather. There were donuts hanging from trees on a string, and a bonfire, and students running and laughing. Two dads who were there, Mike Crews and Darren Day – both who have been raised by this church and have stayed in this church for “*f?o!r*t@y*” years stood on the hillside with our amazing teammate John DeLaporte who is committed to bringing a flourishing new future to our young people – said to him, “*This is what I remember about growing up at Broadway,*” with smiles that said, “*We’re on to something here, friends.*” Darren and Mike are teaching our high school Sunday School class. Do you know why? Because Phil Fichter and Ed Stansberry teamed up to teach Mike and Darren and their classmates when they were high schoolers. Ed and Phil are still leading here at Broadway today, too. This is the history, friends, which becomes the present that births in love our future.

Like Jesus’ story and that of our own families, Broadway’s history has ups and downs – real struggles and missteps but also some of the most genuine transformations of lives this city has known. And that’s why, even as we stretch ourselves in this series to imagine the expansion of our ministries in some new and growing areas, we never stop being a Church that is grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ who calls us to study, and pray, and grow as individuals, and grow as a Church.

Growth will be an outpouring of our good health in Christ. Why? Because when you grow... when you’re involved and find purpose in serving and learning and sharing in fellowship... you put off a different vibe... a different glow... and people will want to know and you’ll want to tell others: “*Come experience this transformation with us.*” We’re not about pretending. We’re still, we’re still, Broadway from the block.

Because Jesus rose... because he lives again... we can face tomorrow. We can rise, too. As people who trace our lineage back to Jesus and beyond... it’s truly in our DNA. Because of who we’ve been, we will be stronger as we step in faith into the next Broadway chapter to come. I’m excited to dive into our Priority Action Plan... our PAP... with you these next six weeks. Come with an open heart, with a pure desire to

uncover the real Jesus in our time, and with a gratitude for the Broadway shoulders upon whom we now stand.

Song of Focus
"He Understands"

WORDS AND MUSIC BY ED VARNUM

1. Born a descendent of Abraham,
he learned of Moses, the Promised Land.
Son of a carpenter, worked with his hands.
He understands. He understands.

2. Born of the Hebrews with darker skin,
ripped from their homeland, enslaved by men,
lived on with hope to rise again.
He understands. He understands.

Refrain:

Saying, "I am with you! I'm always there.
I'm in your midst. Know that I care.
And when you feel lost, just reach out your hand.
I understand! I understand!"

3. Have you fallen short, sunk like a stone?
Sometimes feel broken, so far from home?
Like social outcasts, feel so alone?
He understands, calls you his own.

4. See his compassion, see how he cared;
embraced the leper and healed the impaired
where there is suffering, Jesus is there
and calling us, ministry shared.

Refrain:

Saying, "I am with you! I'm always there.
I'm in your midst. Know that I care.
And when you feel lost, just reach out your hand.
I understand! I understand!"
He understands.

BROAD HEARTS BROAD MINDS BROAD REACH