

**Broken People**  
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(Matthew 1:1-17 NRSV) An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. {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 Aram, {4} and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab 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 King David. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, {7} and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, {8} and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, {9} and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, {10} and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, {11} and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. {12} And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, {13} and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, {14} and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, {15} and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, {16} and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. {17} 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.

I think I should begin this morning by apologizing to Nancy & Dan who had to read all those difficult names.

And I am sure you are wondering why --- why in the world would anyone make somebody read all those names out loud. I hope before this morning is over, you will have a new appreciation for the genealogy that Matthew shares with us.

Part of Christmas for me is watching some of the classic Christmas shows.

I think that the classic ones are the best, (I think that may be is a sign of getting older), but certainly one of my all time favorites is *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*.

There is a great scene early in the movie where a young Rudolph is trying to hide his nose while playing games with all the other young reindeer, but is discovered and immediately humiliated and sent home.

For me, the real shocking thing about this scene is Santa's reaction  
--- even Santa is in on this bullying, this intolerance and unfairness shown to Rudolph.

Most of us really don't need to watch a kid's movie to be reminded that we are all broken.

We are either the one who is humiliated or the one doing the humiliation

Brokenness is hard for most of us to deal with

We don't want others to see our (perceived) weakness so we puff up and get defensive.

But it is a reality of life.

Immediately after creation, the Bible wants to tell us why we are the way that we are.

Angry  
Hurt  
Selfish  
Disappointed

The description is one of being broken.

And the author explains this reality by giving us the story of the fall.

A couple of millennium later, Paul is still trying to put this condition into words.

Using phrases that would have connected with the people of his day, Paul tells us that we have "all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23).

What Paul seems to be saying to us is that despite our desire to do good, we have a propensity that is inherent within us to do evil.

In his letter to the fledgling church at Rome he wrote:

(Romans 7:19 NRSV) For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.

Despite ourselves, Paul says, we cannot do good on our own.

Our lives are fractured ---- broken

Some people have gone so far as to compare this malady that we all suffer with to a computer virus.

I don't know if any of you have ever had a computer virus.

It is not fun

The problem with computer viruses is that they stay lurking in the background but all the while, doing damage to our computer.

Brokenness is the same way.

If we are not careful, our brokenness can rob us of our joy, our hope and our dreams!

But while I say all this, I want to remind you --- that this is not a condition that you alone have.

We all have this affliction

It is the human condition.

Yet despite that --- God wants a relationship with us.

What is so amazing about our scripture this morning is who is named in this list.

This is reported to be a list of the family of Joseph according to Matthew.

What is fascinating is when you study it carefully --- a number of things become evident.

First, the list was developed to show that Jesus is an authentic king.

It is clear from the genealogy that Jesus is from the family tree of David. And David, of course, is the ideal king in Jewish understanding, and the one whom the prophets claimed would rule for ever.

Furthermore, the list is divided into three groupings of 14 names each. The list is clearly contrived as some kings are omitted.

But why?

Why 3 lists of 14?

Two reasons seem evident.

First, the three groupings correspond to the three great periods of Jewish history.

- From Abraham to David  
This stage moves from the call of faith to the period in which David brought together Israel as a nation
- From the nation of Israel to the exile  
This stage deals with the interplay between humanity and God --- exposing our unfaithfulness and consequent captivity.  
Intermixed within this period is the prophetic word of judgment and hope
- From the Babylonian captivity to Jesus  
This period shows how salvation history continues through a remnant of the faithful and how God decided to enter the world in the incarnation of Jesus.

This use of generations in 3 groupings of 14 was used as a teaching method on the part of Matthew to help persons grasp and memorize this sweep of history.

The purpose of this genealogy is to show how all history is in God's hands and that ever since God chose Abraham, history has been moving toward Jesus.

Second, the list was developed to show that Jesus was an authentic Jew.

This is evident, of course, in Matthew's proclamation that Jesus is "son of David". But in case we didn't get it --- he also wants us to know that Jesus is a son of Abraham.

For Matthew, Jesus was not some disembodied bearer of a divine message; Jesus was the ultimate Jew --- a Jew in whom Israel could find all of its hopes fulfilled.

When we go back and look carefully at the genealogy what is so interesting about it is who is included in the genealogy.

I know that it is very hard to pay attention to the genealogy when somebody is reading it because it is name after name after name.

But if you listen carefully to the names there are a number of very interesting people mentioned in this list of the family of Jesus.

So listen once again to the genealogy of Jesus as found in Matthew's gospel. And see if it doesn't startle you and invite you in a new way.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, (YEAH) the son of David, (YEAH) the son of Abraham, (YEAH), ABRAHAM WHO PRETENDED THAT SARAH WAS JUST HIS SISTER, AND GAVE HIS WIFE TO THE PHARAOH TO SAVE HIS OWN NECK AND AT THE SAME TIME GOT MUCH CATTLE (BOO).

Abraham was the father of Isaac, WHOSE VERY NAME MEANS LAUGHTER (YEAH), and Isaac was the father Jacob, WHO STOLE HIS BROTHER'S BIRTHRIGHT (BOO) Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers, WHO SOLD JOSEPH INTO SLAVERY (HISS) and Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (HUH?) whose mother was Tamar (YEAH) WHO ONCE PLAYED THE PROSTITUTE (BOO) FOR THE SAKE OF JUSTICE (YEAH) Perez was the father of Hezron (HUH?) and Hezron the father of Ram, (HUH?) and Ram the father of Amminadab (HUH?) Amminadab the father of Nahshon, A FINE CAPTAIN OF ISRAEL (YEAH) and Nahshon the father of Salmon, (HUH?) and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, THE PROSTITUTE (BOO) WHO ONCE SAVED GOD'S PEOPLE (YEAH) and Boaz the

father of Obed by Ruth, YOU REMEMBER RUTH (CLAP) and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king (YEAH)

And David was the father of Solomon (YEAH-CLAP) by the wife of Uriah, WHO HE SET UP TO BE KILLED (BOO) MOVING RIGHT ALONG

Solomon the father of Rehoboam, WHO WAS FAITHFUL TO GOD FOR MUCH OF HIS REIGN (YEAH) BUT THEN ABANDONED GOD FOR FIVE YEARS (BOO) and Rehoboam the father of Abijah WHO HAD 14 WIVES (YEAH BOO YEAH) and Abijah the father of Asa WHO ABANDONED GOD AT THE END OF HIS LIFE AND HE DIED OF GANGREEN OF THE FEET (BOO) and Asa the father of Jehosaphat, the father of Joram, the father of Uzziah, WHOSE PRIDE BROUGHT HIS FALL (BOO) and Uzziah the father of Jotham, A VERY GOOD KING IN EVERY WAY (YEAH) and Jotham the father of Ahaz, A VERY BAD KING IN EVERY WAY (BOO) and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, WHO RESTORED THE KINGDOM TO JUSTICE AND GODLINESS (YEAH) and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, WHO RULED AS KING FOR 55 YEARS (YEAH) AND WAS EVIL FOR ALL 55 YEARS (BOO) and Manasseh the father of

Amos, the father of Josiah, the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, WHO WERE ALL FAITHFUL TO GOD THROUGHOUT THEIR ENTIRE LIVES (YEAH) AND THEY WERE ALL DEPORTED TO BABYLON (HUH?)

After the deportation to Babylon: Jachoniah was the father of Shealtiel (HUH? who was the father of Zerubbabel A WISE GOVERNOR CHOSEN OF GOD (YEAH) Zerubbabel was the father of Adjud, (HUH?) the father of Eliakim, (HUH?) the father of Azor (HUH?) the father of Zadok (HUH?) the father of Achim (HUH?) the father Eliud (HUH?) the father of Eleazar (HUH?) the father of Matthan (HUH?) the father of Jacob (HUH?) the father of Joseph, YOU REMEMBER JOSEPH (YEAH) the husband of Mary (CLAP) of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. (CLAP\_YEAH)

Did you notice the craziness of this list ----

A number of the kings that are mentioned were losers.

No that's not the right word for it.

They weren't just losers, they were downright evil.

Asaph

Uzziah

Ahaz

Manasseh

All were considered very evil kings!

But also mentioned in this list are four women.

William Barclay said: "It is not normal to find the name of women in Jewish pedigrees as all. Women had no legal rights; she was not regarded as a person but as a thing."

And yet, four of them are mentioned here. And each of them are rather interesting characters.

Tamar:

Tamar was Judah's daughter-in-law, and the twin sons that are mentioned in the list were actually conceived in an immoral relationship. The whole story is found in Genesis 38

Rahab

Rahab was the prostitute that is mentioned in Joshua 2. She is the one who protected the spies when they entered Jericho. Tradition tells us that she later became the wife of Joshua.

Ruth

We all know about Ruth, but remember, she was not a Jew, she was a Moabitess.

In Deuteronomy we are told: (Deuteronomy 23:3 NRSV)

"No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted to the assembly of the LORD. **Even to the tenth generation**, none of their descendants shall be admitted to the assembly of the LORD"

Wife of Uriah

That of course is Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, who is the woman that David seduced when she was married to Uriah. David, after seducing her, has Uriah killed in an attempt to cover up his sin.

Four women are mentioned --- each of them of some questionable virtue.

Yet despite all of their flaws --- God still chose to use them.

Three are sexually impure  
One is a foreigner  
Yet all are included in the genealogy of Jesus.

God often chooses to use broken people for great purposes  
And that means that God can choose use!

Paul tells us in his letter to the church at Corinth:  
(1 Corinthians 1:27-29 NRSV) But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; {28} God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, {29} so that no one might boast in the presence of God.

When we read all these stories, they can easily be stumbling blocks to us and the rest of the world.

While the world may only see brokenness, God sees people who --- when they partner with God --- can literally bring about wholeness and restoration to those who need healing and forgiveness.

God will take the very thing that points to your brokenness and use it bear fruit, building the family and kingdom of God.

I encourage you to make room in your life for the Christ Child, and as you do ---let God use your brokenness to make a difference in the world.