

Wednesday: Advent Midweek 1

Date: December 2, 2020

Text: Matthew 1:1, 6

Title: Jesus: The Son of David

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Please pray with me.

As we enter the Advent Season this year, our world is mired in the upheaval of the Corona Virus. A year ago, we began the Season of Advent with anticipation of celebrations with friends and family. We looked forward to Christmas Day as once again we marked the Nativity of our Lord. Although we are often distracted by the secular celebrations of Christmas, we were drawn back by our Lord to the reason for the season. In the birth of Jesus, God broke into human history and took on frail flesh. In His incarnation, Jesus embarked on the final chapter of the plan of salvation. A plan that was prepared before creation.

This year is a little different. Well, that is an understatement. It is a lot different. Surging Corona Virus infection rates have disrupted the annual celebrations of many. Christmas parties and open houses have been canceled. Personal interactions are reduced. And now even family gatherings are discouraged. Add to this the aftereffects of a contentious Presidential election. a summer of forest fires and business shutdowns and we find the recipe for a dismal December.

In difficult times, historically it has been the family that comes together to combat the effects of a world gone crazy. This advent season our midweek reflections will look at family. Namely the family of Jesus. Using Matthew 1 we will look at a few of Jesus' ancestors as the starting place for finding hope in these difficult times. Beginning today with King David, we will see the good and the bad of human nature. Jesus' lineage is filled with people who were highly regarded and with characters who fell short of the glory of God, just as we do. Jesus' genealogy is a reflection of our family tree. As adopted sons and daughters of God, we are all members of Jesus' family. It is this family that we gather with as we seek to bolster our faith and prepare for the Nativity of our Lord.

In these weeks of Advent, the sermons will help us unpack the significance of Jesus' genealogy and how God was at work weaving his plan of salvation

throughout the history of his chosen people—as he reveals in the Old Testament all the way through Joseph and Mary. Tonight, we’ll see how David’s Son is David’s Lord and rules on David’s throne forever.

Matthew identifies David in verse 6 of chapter 1 of his Gospel. “Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.”

David was the first of many kings in the lineage of Jesus. Some were heroes, some were disappointments, some were both. David is considered the great hero of Judah and Israel. He united the tribes of Israel under one ruler and conquered the enemies of the nation of Israel. After David’s death, his son Solomon ruled with secular wisdom, but lost true direction as he succumbed to the gods of his many wives. Under his son Rehoboam the kingdom of Israel split into two kingdoms once again and the cycle of faithfulness and apostasy took hold. The kingdom of Israel fell on account of this sinfulness and unbelief. For centuries people waited in hope for that one of David’s descendants who would come to restore Israel to its former glory. They hoped for a warrior king who would crush their enemies and make them a nation that was once again to be feared.

One may wonder why Matthew calls Jesus the Son of David when he was the descendant of other kings as well? Jesus was also the descendant of Manasseh who was a descendant of David was Manasseh, the king who led Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the Amorites and the nations before them. Manasseh ruled after Hezekiah and just before the Babylonian captivity. Why did Matthew not want to focus on, let’s just say Manasseh, the king who sacrificed his own sons to false gods and filled Jerusalem with blood from one side of the city to the other? No one wants to remember King Manasseh because he was a failure, a part of history that most would prefer to forget. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, like so many before him, and like still others who would follow him. He was an embarrassment of a king, a shameful excuse for a king.

II

But Matthew includes the genealogy precisely because he wants to remind us that Jesus came to save and redeem all, the greatest heroes and the worst failures. We could just as easily call Jesus the Son of Manasseh because it would remind us that Jesus’ purpose in coming to this earth was not to return Judah and Israel to their former glory but to establish an eternal kingdom that is founded not on

account of power and might, but mercy and grace. He came to rescue all of those whose hearts were stained by sin.

David was not a perfect king either. King David, the man after God's own heart, also did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. The boy who slew the giant Goliath would need someone to rescue him. King David would be reminded by the prophet Nathan of his own sin and his own need for a Savior. Confronted by his own sin, David acknowledges that he was sinful from the time he was conceived (Psalm 51:5). The great and mighty King David would bow before God in repentance, begging God not to banish him from the Lord's presence nor take the Holy Spirit from him (Psalm 51:11).

David, the shepherd who struck down both lion and bear, was easy prey for the prowling lion Satan, and therefore, David needed a greater Shepherd to strike down the devil. The conquering King David who triumphed over all his foes could not master sin or death, and so he would need one to triumph over these foes for him. The man who had everything he could imagine and to whom God would have given even more was not content with that which he had received. Instead he took Bathsheba as his own wife, even though that meant murdering her husband. He did what was evil in the eyes of the lord. Yet, God was indeed merciful and restored him by forgiving him of all his sins for the sake of his descendant who was to come.

III

During one of the confrontations between Jesus and the Pharisees, Jesus asked them, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son, is he?" They answered, "The son of David" (Matthew 22:42). But then Jesus responded by quoting Psalm 110 and asking them how David could call his own descendent his Lord. The Pharisees never would understand. But the mighty King David believed that his own descendant would be infinitely greater than he, would indeed come to be his Lord.

Peter also quoted this psalm in his Pentecost sermon about the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Peter noted that David's own descendants would reign on his throne, but this descendant and king would be different from his father David who died and is buried to this day. David's Son was raised from the dead and ascended to the heavenly Father's right hand.

Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah reigning on David's throne forever: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

IV

While Jesus is the Son of David and the Son of Manasseh, he is an altogether different kind of king. Jesus is the only truly righteous King, whose kingdom will have no end. He is the One who comes to save the high and mighty who fall from their thrones, as well as the meek and lowly who have no strength of their own. There is no one righteous before God, not even the great King David. Therefore, God would send one who would become our righteousness. As the prophet Jeremiah foretold, "In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness"" (Jeremiah 23:6).

Jesus is a King with a crown of thorns adorning his head. He was covered not in beautiful robes but in sin and shame. He was the Son sacrificed for the sins of his fathers Manasseh and David. The Lion of Judah became the Lamb who was slain. The King who put the needs of the people before the crown. In fact, he gave up his crown, not for his own selfish desires but that he might save the nation. Paul writes of this in Philippians 2 saying,

Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a cross.

Jesus Christ is the King who put the needs of the people before the crown because it was better that one man should die for the nation than that the entire nation would perish, even if it meant it was the King who died. So the King took on the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even death upon a cross. On that day, the inscription over his head was the only thing that would mark Jesus as a king. But there the Son of David died. He died for David and Manasseh,

kings and queens, peasants and paupers, rich and poor, strong and weak, young and old, for sinners from every family. He died for you and for

You are also sons and daughters of David, for you have inherited from David his sin and shame. Yet Jesus, the Son of David, came to save all who share in David's weakness, in his frailty, in his sin—not just the father, but all of his sinful children. So, Matthew begins his Gospel, which focuses on the kingdom of God coming near to us, by calling Jesus the Son of David. For Jesus ushers in the kingdom of heaven that is proclaimed in his Word and given to us by grace and received by faith. Therefore, we can join with King David and sing, Psalm 145 “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations (Psalm 145:13). Thanks be to God that Christ's kingdom has come among us also.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.