

Sermon Study Guide



#1: A Scandalous Family Tree

A Covid Christmas: Discovering Joy & Peace in Troubled Times

November 29, 2020 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

The hardships caused by COVID-19 have made it difficult to see how disruptions and upheavals fit into God's plan for us. In this mini-series, we look to God's Word to help us discover that even in troubled times and amidst life's biggest upheavals, joy and peace can be found in Christ.

Reflect

Is family heritage important to you? Why or why not?

Read and Discuss

Scripture

Matthew 1:1-17

Discussion Questions

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us in one way or another, even in our celebration of Christmas this year. When Christ was born, there was no pandemic, but it was quite chaotic, jarring, and unsettling for all those involved. However, we will see that just like in Jesus' birth, joy and peace can be had even when things seem wrong.

1. **God extends grace to all who do not deserve it (v. 1-3).** Why did Matthew begin his account of Jesus Christ's life with a genealogy? In the first two verses, who were the prominent ancestors of Jesus that were mentioned? Who was Tamar in verse 3 and why does the mention of her name give a bad representation to Jesus' genealogy? What does it tell you about the grace of God being extended to all who do not deserve it, including you and me?
2. **God loves all people equally (v. 4-5).** Who were Rahab and Ruth? Why does the mention of their names in Jesus' genealogy show that God doesn't care much about your ethnic race because He loves all people? What does 2 Peter 3:9 say about God's love for all people? How should this fact about God's love motivate and inspire you to reach out to people of different ethnicities?
3. **God forgives sinners (v. 6).** Who was Solomon and how did he figure into the genealogy of Jesus Christ? How did David, the father of Solomon, respond when he was confronted with his sin by the Prophet

Nathan? What was his repentant prayer in Psalm 51:10-11? What could possibly happen to us if God doesn't forgive sin? What does the apostle Paul say in 1 Timothy 1:14-17 about God's forgiveness? Why should you, in the midst of Christmas celebration, first and foremost celebrate that Christ took on an incarnate form in order to save sinners?

4. **God fixes the most broken of conditions (v. 7-15).** Who were the people mentioned in these verses? How should you respond to the fact that in the listing of great godly men in between very evil leaders, God can save and redeem you from even the most broken situations? Do you personally believe that God can forgive and fix a person whose life is messed up? How would you treat a messed up person whom God had changed through Jesus Christ?
5. **God saves us through His Son Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah (v. 16-17).** What does "Christ" mean? Why did God allow His only begotten Son to take the worst punishment that has ever been inflicted upon any man when He (Jesus) didn't deserve it at all? How should this truth change the way you look at Christmas?

Respond

In Walk: Matthew reminded us through Jewish history and Jesus' own family tree of five great truths which are the reasons why Jesus had to come to earth to be born in Bethlehem. How should these truths encourage those who are suffering from a shady and problematic family history? How would you want to thank God for the amazing things He has done for you even when you think that you don't deserve them?

In Prayer: Heavenly Father, it is so amazing how You love me in spite of who I am. You have loved me when I was broken and messed up. My sin created a gap between You and me, but You sent Your Son to bridge that gap. Thank You that through faith in Jesus Christ, I am saved and am now Your child. May Christmas remind me that there is always a reason to celebrate because joy and peace came through Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us, the Lord of my life. Amen.