

Matthew 1:1-17

I. Matthew's genealogy

A. His genealogy contains 4 very surprising people: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah. These people had three strikes against them:

1. All four are women

Women were second-class citizens at that time who could not testify in a court of law. It was rare to include women in genealogical lists.

2. They are Gentiles or closely associated with Gentiles

-Tamar was very possibly a Canaanite, Rahab was a Canaanite, Ruth was a Moabite, and Bathsheba was married to a Hittite

-Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience.

3. They each had a sexual history that was sinful, scandalous, or at least unconventional

-Tamar slept with her father-in-law

-Rahab was a prostitute

-Ruth had that interesting experience with Boaz on the threshing floor which was at least very sexually charged

-Bathsheba was a pawn in David's sexual lust in committing adultery and murder

4. But each of these women also displayed great faith in God (Bathsheba least so). They clung to God in faith, and stepped out in faith to do risky and courageous things.

B. Why does Matthew include these women?

1. To demonstrate the way God uses broken, messy, even scandalous events and people to bring about his good plans and purposes.

2. Matthew is communicating the gospel that this Savior has come for people such as these women: misfits, broken, messy, sinners who cling to him and faith and step out in faith.

3. Matthew is about to tell the story of another woman (Mary) whose life looks messy (from an outside perspective, it looks like she cheated on her fiancé), but who shows great faith in God

II. Our lives today

A. There is a lot in our lives pushing us in the exact opposite direction: towards a life that is safe, comfortable, put together, not messy, yet towards a life that doesn't require faith in God

B. Where are you tempted to choose safety, comfort, predictability, and "non-messiness" over genuine faith?

1. How can we choose faith in our relationship with God (coming to him just as we are, in our messiness)?

2. How can we choose faith in our relationships with each other (having open and vulnerable conversations rather than presenting ourselves as more put together than we actually are)?

3. How can we choose faith over the holidays?

Discussion Questions

1. What is your reaction to God using seemingly scandalous events and characters to accomplish his greater plans and purposes (consider especially the example of Tamar in Genesis 38)?
2. Of the five women mentioned in Matthew's Genealogy (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary), which is the most inspiring to you and why?
3. Describe a time in your own life where you saw God work right in the mess and brokenness to bring about healing and transformation in surprising ways.
4. Consider the call given on Sunday to choose bold faith in God in the midst of the messiness of life rather than simply choose a life that is safe, comfortable, and "all put together." Where specifically do you think God is calling you to choose faith in this season of your life?