

DAY 2

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH

Our theme for today: Parenthood.

We continue on in Matthew chapter one looking at the verses up to v. 17. We will see names – lots of names. Read through verses 3-17 and make note that God was faithful in keeping all these generations going. Despite all the troubles these people faced, each one gave birth to the next and did so for a remarkable 14 generations (as it so clearly mentions in v. 17).

- Can you imagine 14 generations back in your family? Can you imagine 14 generations forward? Can you speculate what your family experienced in the past? How about what they might encounter in the future?

[If one generation is roughly 25 years, we are talking about 14*25 years, which is 350 years! That would be as far back as 1670, or as far forward as 2370!]

Given that short introduction, our key verse to look at today is Matthew 1: 16.

Scripture

¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

Matthew 1:16

Thought provokers

- Of all these names that are listed for us (in Matthew 1) when it comes to Joseph, we don't find him described as a father (at least not yet). Instead, we find a different description for Joseph; namely, that he is the husband of Mary. All of the listed men are noted as a father of a child; but that's not how Joseph is described.
 - At this juncture, how might Joseph have felt knowing this?
- We might compare Joseph with one of the earliest in the family line, that of Abraham. Let's spend a little time on this. What might the connection be there? Well, for years, Abraham had no children himself. In fact, it wasn't until he was 86 that he had his first child, Ishmael. Let's remember some background about Abraham. His name in his early days was actually 'Abram'. It's meaning? 'Exalted Father'. Later, when God called him, he was given the new name of 'Abraham', and this new name took things to a new level: he would be 'Father of Many'.

So, here was Abram, now named Abraham, a man who had to walk around with the title of 'exalted father' – though with no children – and then God gives him an even bigger name of 'father of many' – and still no children whatsoever.

- What must that have been like for Abram/Abraham? Was he ridiculed? Did people whisper: “*Here comes the father with no children?*” Did he go through moments of doubt? We can only conjecture, right?
- Could Abraham have imagined in any way whatsoever that he really would be a father, and more than that, a father of multitudes? What hope did he have living in his eighties that he would ever have a child?
- Now consider Joseph. Here is this private man, a man from a long line of renowned men. Like Abram, he too is yet without a child. And, similarly, life is going to drastically change for him as well. His name also speaks of promise. The meaning of Joseph’s name? “*He will add.*”
 - So then, “what’s in a name?” Well, clearly a lot! What does your name mean?

Reflections

We know that God works all things together for good! Both Abraham and Joseph might not have known it, but both their private lives would dramatically change.

Joseph is a man without a child, though his name kind of intimates he would have one. He may have hoped that one day he, too, would be described in family discussions as the father of a new generation like all his fathers before him. He may have imagined being a proud father. He might have dreamed of sitting his child on his father (Jacob’s) lap. But God had a different plan for Joseph. And, when you think about it, the plan for Joseph was grander than the plan for Abraham. Joseph would be given the privilege to raise the Messiah. He would be given the privilege to see this babe grow into boyhood, to oversee his education; even to apprentice him. Alongside Mary, Joseph would have a view closer than anyone else... of the Son of God!

- Share your thoughts, feelings and reflections of what it means to see God provide something immeasurably greater than we could imagine.

Prayer and Song

Take time to pray and sing praises to Him. Our song today is:

Of the Father’s Love Begotten

*Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the Source, the Ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore!*

*O that birth forever blessed,
when the Virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Savior of our race;*

*and the babe, the world's Redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore!*

*This is he whom heav'n-taught singers
sang of old with one accord,
whom the Scriptures of the prophets
promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long expected;
let creation praise its Lord,
evermore and evermore!*

*O ye heights of heav'n, adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing:
all dominions, bow before him
and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent,
ev'ry voice in concert ring,
evermore and evermore!*

*Christ, to thee, with God the Father,
and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
and unwearied praises be,
honor, glory, and dominion
and eternal victory,
evermore and evermore!*