

LifeLines: Matthew Wants You To Know by Randall Floyd
Advent Devotions from Matthew's Gospel (December 2020)

12/01 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Genealogy

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. - Matthew 1:1 ESV

The family tree of Jesus Christ, David's son, Abraham's son: - Matthew 1:1 MSG

"Where did Jesus come from?" ...is a question that helps us answer why He came. Matthew wants you to know Jesus is descended from an important promised line. Through Jesus, we can discover that God keeps a promise made to Abraham and to King David.

Prayer: Lord thank you for keeping Your promises. Amen.

12/02 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Jesus

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. - Matthew 1:1 ESV

The family tree of Jesus Christ, David's son, Abraham's son: - Matthew 1:1 MSG

Who is Jesus? Many have different ideas. Historical figure, teacher, legend, Savior, Lord, ... even God's Son. Matthew wants you to know Jesus is real. As we keep reading, we will learn Jesus' lineage, heritage, and an important message for all of us!

Prayer: Lord, help me to know more about Jesus. Amen.

12/03 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. - Matthew 1:1 ESV

The family tree of Jesus Christ, David's son, Abraham's son: - Matthew 1:1 MSG

Focus of the Day: King

Jesus is a descendant of King David. The golden age of Israel's history included this King. The line of David goes all the way to Jesus, the royal heir of Judah! Jesus is also the King of kings!

Lord Jesus, You are my King! Amen.

12/04 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Abraham.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. - Matthew 1:1 ESV

Abraham is the founding father of Israel. Like David, he is a dominant figure in Israel's history. A covenant was made between God and Abraham in Genesis 12-17. In Abraham all nations will find a blessing. Matthew wants you to know Jesus' connection to Abraham, and He is the fulfillment of that blessing for all nations providing universal salvation to all.

Lord, thank You for Your blessing that came all the way from Abraham to Jesus to me. Amen.

12/05 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Generations

So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Matt 1:17

There are 14 generational sets of ancestors listed from Abraham to David to the Exile to Jesus. Matthew's organization of this is a Hebrew numerical code. He uses the sum of 14 corresponding to a Hebrew alpha-numeric system: 4=D; 6=V; 4=D. 4+6+4=14 or "DVD"; which is Hebrew for David. Matthew wants you to know Jesus' connection to the promise to the honored king (see 2 Sam. 7:1-16).

Lord, thank you for keeping your promises from generation to generation. Amen.

12/06 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Seven.

So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Matt 1:17

Not only is the use of the 14 generations depicted, there is also a picture of the number 7. Seven represents perfection in the Scriptures. (For example, God creates in 6 days, rests on and blesses the 7th day...Genesis 2:2-3) A careful genealogy has now been documented, which could be verified in the first century by Temple records. Matthew wants you to know that the ancestral list is six groups of seven. Jesus' birth is the "seventh seven" where God's promises will be fulfilled! Pay attention to the seven...it's a blessing in Jesus!

Lord, You are the Author of all details in the fulfillment of Your promises! Amen.

12/07 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Father

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,... and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. Matthew 1:1-16

The list is long, but the 42 generations includes the repetitive structure: "... was the father of..." A Father raises a son. He provides a family history, protection, sustenance, and love. Jesus' earthly father is Joseph, who with Mary raised Jesus with His humanity. Jesus' heavenly Father is God, who raised Jesus with His divinity. Matthew wants you to know that fathers are important. Earthly fathers such as Joseph play an important role in our upbringing. Our heavenly Father is also crucial because He provides us a divine blessing which lasts for eternity.

Father: Thank you for bringing me into Your family! Amen.

12/08 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Christ

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Matthew 1:1

Jesus - Christ. Christ is not Jesus' last name. Christ literally means "anointed one." When one is anointed, they are installed or acknowledged ceremonially into a position. "Christ" is a Greek word. It's a transliteration of the Hebrew word "Messiah." In terms of who Jesus is, this title describes His identity. Matthew wants you to know Who the expected Savior (one who saves), Messiah, and anointed one is: Jesus!

Lord: You are the Christ, the Messiah, and the anointed One! Amen.

12/09 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Women.

*...and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by **Tamar**, and Perez the father of Hezron-... -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 David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the **wife of Uriah**...Matthew 1:3-6*

In the lineage passage, the inclusion of four women shows us that God can use all kinds of people carrying out His will. These women come from sinful, sexual, foreign, or questionable circumstances. But all of them are related to Jesus. Matthew wants you to know that Jesus breaks down the barriers caused by sins of humanity and brings together races, Jews & Gentiles, male & female, righteous & unrighteous...all of whom are also in Jesus lineage!

Lord, Thank you for the solidarity Jesus brings to all of us, no matter where we came from. Amen.

12/10 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Tamar.

...and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar...Matthew 1:3

Who is Tamar? See Genesis 38:1-3. Due to the culture and circumstances of her people, she was widowed twice, then abandoned childless, with no means of support by her father-in-law Judah. She resorted to trickery, acting as a prostitute, sleeping with Judah, resulting in a child-heir that led to Jesus. Matthew wants you to know that even in our immoral circumstances, God offers grace.

Lord, Thank you for giving me Your grace! Amen.

12/11 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Rahab.

...and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab (Matthew 1:5)

Who is Rahab? See Joshua 2:1-24 & 6:22-25. She was a Canaanite harlot who betrayed her own people by hiding Hebrew spies in exchange for protection during the fall of Jericho. She is also praised as a person of faith in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25).

Matthew wants you to know that God offers us forgiveness even if we have a scandalous or foreign history.

Lord. Thank you for forgiving me and offering me a new start. Amen.

12/12 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Ruth.

...and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. Matthew 1:5-6

Who is Ruth? (Ruth Ch. 1-4). She is the great-grandmother of King David! Ruth was from Moab, a tribe that was hated by the Israelites. Moab was a nation that began after the fall of Sodom when Lot committed incest with his daughters (Gen. 19:30-38). Moabites were bitter enemies of Israel. Matthew wants you to know that God's will was accomplished by bringing together two people from different groups, both with a checkered past, who hated each other. God unites us in Jesus!

Lord, Thank you for using both males and females to accomplish Your will! Amen.

12/13 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Bathsheba

*And David was the father of Solomon by the **wife of Uriah**...Matthew 1:6*

Who is the wife of Uriah? Unnamed in this passage but known to be Bathsheba (see I Kings 1:11; 2 Sam. 11:1 - 12:25). Attracted King David while bathing, summoned by him to commit adultery; suffered the murder of her husband and the loss of a child; and later, after marrying David, gave birth to King Solomon. Matthew wants you to know that past sin, circumstances and personal history don't matter to God. Jesus came to rectify our history and reconcile us in spite of our sins.

Lord, You love me and forgive me no matter what my past circumstances are! Amen.

12/14 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Inclusive

There were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, another fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and yet another fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah (Christ). Matt 1:17

Jesus Christ includes us all! After seeing this list of names and all the people, and reminded of history, we are ready to meet the Messiah in Matthew's gospel. Jesus is the One who saves us all: women as well as men; even women with a scandalous past or checkered bloodline. Matthew wants you to know Jesus is the Christ for all people, regardless of gender, or race, or background, or circumstance.

Lord, Thank you for including me. Amen.

12/15 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Mary

The birth of Jesus took place like this. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. Before they came to the marriage bed, Joseph discovered she was pregnant. (It was by the Holy Spirit, but he didn't know that.) Joseph, chagrined but noble, determined to take care of things quietly so Mary would not be disgraced. Matthew 1:18 MSG

Mary is the mother of Jesus and is descended from Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, who also had suspicious tainted past to outsider onlookers who might question the virgin birth. Mary is the human parent of the Christ child. She is virgin, in that she has not known a man intimately, and that Jesus' Father is the Holy Spirit, fulfilling an Old testament prophecy in Isaiah 7:14: *The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with Child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.* Matthew wants you to know that any outside suspicion of Mary's pregnancy being illegitimate (compared to the four ancestral women) is now refuted.

12/16 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Joseph

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. Matthew 1:24-25

Joseph did exactly what God's angel commanded in the dream: He married Mary. But he did not consummate the marriage until she had the baby. He also named the baby Jesus. Joseph had human doubts and ideas, but cared for Mary enough to help her avoid embarrassment, trusted in the message from God, and was obedient to the Lord. Matthew wants you to know that Joseph is Jesus' father...he adopted Him, named Him, and raised Jesus as his own son.

Lord, help me to trust You like Joseph did, and do the right thing. Amen.

12/17 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Immanuel

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" Matthew 1:23

Immanuel is a Hebrew word. IM = with; ANU= us; EL= God. Literal meaning of the name given is ...God is here with us. Matthew wants you to know that Jesus came to be with us. Rather than have us achieve the impossible and come to Him, God comes to us! God has come to be with us!

Lord, You are always with us! Amen.

12/18 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Fear

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:20-21

Jesus' entry into the world abounded with human tension and dilemmas: A miraculous but potentially embarrassing conception; consideration of a quiet divorce; later, an outraged king resorting to murder; and less than ideal accommodations. The angel says to Joseph in his dreams: Fear...NOT! Fear is normal. Matthew wants you to know that even with all the chaos in our world, we do not need to have fear, because God is ultimately in control.

Lord, help me to trust You when I am afraid. Amen.

12/19 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Adoption

...and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ... *When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. Matthew 1:16 & 24-25*

Even though Joseph is not Jesus' real father, his actions by taking on this unique family are admirable. Joseph takes care of the woman he loves and is betrothed to, even though she is already pregnant. According to Jewish law, as Mary's husband, Jesus is his legal son. Matthew wants you to know through Jewish custom, Jesus descent is traced through Joseph and Mary.

Lord, Thank you for taking me into Your family! Amen.

12/20 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Joshua/Jesus

And he called his name Jesus. Matthew 1:25

Jesus is a Greek transliteration of his name: *Yeshua* or *Joshua* and it means "the Lord is Salvation." Joshua was a popular name of boys at the time. The Old Testament Joshua had brought the Israelites into the promised land, rescuing them from slavery in Egypt and fulfilling that task after the death of Moses. Matthew wants to remind you that now Jesus will rescue His people from the slavery of sin and will lead all people into the fulfillment of God's promises.

Lord: Jesus is my salvation! Amen.

12/21 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Bethlehem

He inquired...where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." Matthew 2:4-6

The insignificant town of Bethlehem has significant history: The scene of the story of Ruth; King David's hometown, the site of David's anointing as king, and of course, the birth of Jesus. The prophet Micah pointed to Bethlehem's significance (Micah 5:2), and he is paraphrased in Matthew, also referring to Judah three times... because only one from the tribe of Judah could become a king of the Jews. Matthew wants you to know that the place where David was anointed as king is the same place where Jesus the King is born.

Lord, You take the insignificant and make them significant. Amen

12/22 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Star

For we saw his star when it rose... And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. Matthew 2:2 & 9

It's a super-natural star, not a natural phenomenon. The wise men saw it, and followed it. It's not a comet, it's not a planet like Jupiter and Saturn, and it doesn't have the properties of a natural star like our sun. In Scripture, like the pillar of cloud or fire leading the Israelites from Egypt, the star moves and rests above the place where Jesus is. The star was prophesied by Balaam in Numbers 22 proclaiming a king. Matthew wants you to know that a star of light is leading those who seek Him to the King: Jesus.

Lord, I will seek You by following the light You send to Jesus.

12/23 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Wise Men

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." Matt. 2:1-2

Who are these wise men? We really don't know. We don't even know how many there were, their names, or where they came from in the East. Tradition (not Scripture) indicates that there were three (because they brought three gifts); their names were Melchior, Balthasar, and Gaspar; and that one was Indian, one was Ethiopian, and one was Greek. We do know they were men of prominence with power and influence (indicated by the wealth they brought), that they studied the stars, and they sought the King of the Jews to worship. Matthew wants you to know that gentiles and foreigners came to acknowledge Jesus as King.

12/24 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Worship

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. Matt. 2:10-11

Worship is acknowledging God. Worship is honoring God with our lifestyle. Worship is praising God for He alone deserves it.

Matthew wants you to know that we need to worship God through His Son, Jesus Christ. He is worthy of being worshipped and He should be the focus of our daily thoughts, actions, and service.

Lord Jesus I worship You! Amen.

12/25 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: JOY

...they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. ..Matt. 2:10-11

Joy to the world, the Lord has come! Joyful, Joyful we adore thee. Hymns, praise songs, and exclamations come from joy. Joy is not the same as happy. The feeling of happiness can go away (or return) with changing emotions, some of which are physical or chemical based in our bodies and brains. Joy is ever-present because of what we hold in our souls and comes to the surface when we want to express delight from our spirit. Matthew wants you to know that the presence of Jesus in one's life brings exceeding joy resulting in rejoicing.

Lord, with exceeding joy I rejoice in knowing You! Amen.

12/26 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Gifts

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. Matt. 2:10-11

Gifts are given. Presents are presented. In true giving, nothing is asked for in return. Nothing is required other than to accept the gift. God offers His gift of Himself in Jesus to all of us. John 3:16 tells us "God gave us His son." Matthew wants you to know that the giving of gifts is important. Giving should be a part of our lives, because God gives us the ultimate gift: Jesus.

12/27 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Gold

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. Matt. 2:10-11

Gold is valuable. In Biblical times, Gold was rare and only found in the distant area of Nubia (modern Sudan). It represents wealth. Throughout the Old Testament, it is associated with Royalty (see Psalm 45:9-13 & 72:15; 2 Kings 5:5). Matthew wants you to know that Jesus receives a royal honor through the gift of gold, which represents His kingship.

Lord, Jesus is the Royal King! Amen.

12/28 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Frankincense

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. Matt. 2:10-11

Frankincense is valuable and comes from the resin of trees found in Arabia and Africa during Biblical times. It was used in Old Testament times for royal processions, but also in holy offerings to God. We know it was stored in the chamber of the sanctuary of God (see Nehemiah 13:5). A holy priest would have had access to it for worship celebrations or the service of God (see Exodus 30:34 & Leviticus 2:1). Matthew wants you to know that Jesus receives a priestly honor through the gift of frankincense, which represents His deity.

Lord, You are our High Priest and deserve our worship! Amen.

12/29 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Myrrh

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. Matt. 2:10-11

Myrrh is valuable and comes from another resin of trees and shrubs. It is basically a perfume in the anointing of someone, as well as being mixed with wine as an anesthetic, or a spice used in burial. Mark 15:23 tells us that Jesus was offered wine mixed with myrrh. John 19:38-42 tells us it was used to prepare Jesus body for burial. Matthew wants you to know that Jesus receives a predictive honor of His sacrifice and death for our sins through the gift of myrrh, which represents His humanity.

Lord, Thank you for the death and sacrifice of Jesus for my sins. Amen.

LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Destination

And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son." - Matthew 2:14-15

Jesus was protected from Herod's rampage and murder of the children in Bethlehem by going to Egypt and returning after Herod's death. We don't know what transpired during those early years, only that Jesus fulfilled prophecy coming from Egypt and living in Nazareth.

Matthew wants you to know that it doesn't matter where one comes from, goes to, or lives. The destination we seek is a Person not a place: that Person is Jesus.

Lord: I will seek your Son everywhere I go. Amen.

12/31 LifeLines: Encouraging Words from Pastor Randall

Focus of the Day: Rise

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." - And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt - Matthew 2:13-14

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But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. - Matthew 2:19-21

In order to fulfill the Scriptural prophecy and to protect Jesus, God instructs Joseph to "Rise" ...and go. Joseph was obedient because he knew God always wants what is best for us. Although today God doesn't necessarily speak to us with angels or dreams (because we have the Bible; God's Word), we have the same mandate.

Matthew wants you to know that we are to listen to God and be obedient: Rise and go, following His instructions!

Lord, I hear Your command and will follow Your instructions. I will Rise and go where You send me. Amen.

Thanks for joining this devotional through December. Follow Randall Floyd on Facebook, MeWe, and Parler in 2021 for more Lifelines and Encouraging Words!

Background Sources: Christ Centered Exposition: Finding Jesus in Matthew by D. Platt; Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (IVP); Shepherd's Notes: Matthew; 365-Devotional Commentary by L. Richards; Matthew for Everyone by NT Wright. Word-in-Life Study Bible (Nelson)