

Friend of Sinners | Matthew 1:1-17 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To identify the pressures you feel like you're under and recognize the rest Jesus offers from those burdens.

Icebreaker: What is an Advent or Christmas tradition you remember from childhood? Or, what's a favorite Advent tradition that you practice today?

Transition: This is the first week of Advent. Advent the season before Christmas where we prepare to celebrate Jesus's birth. In his Gospel account of Jesus's life, Matthew starts the story with a genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17).

1. What's the role of a genealogy in the Bible?

Read:

[Matthew 1:1-6](#)

¹This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah^{1b} the son of David, the son of Abraham:

²Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

³Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

⁴Ram the father of Amminadab,

Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

⁵Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

⁶and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife...

2. Jesus's genealogy includes some unexpected people. In his sermon, Keith mentioned David, Bathsheba, Ruth, Rahab, Tamar, and Manasseh (v. 10).

Why are these surprising people to include in a genealogy?

3. What does the presence of unexpected people in Jesus's genealogy teach us about him?

Jesus's genealogy reminds us that entry into God's Kingdom is based on grace, not morality or merit. But often, we let pressure from others (or our own inner critic) convince us that our value lies in how well we perform.

In this sermon, Keith shared the story of Urban Meyer. A reporter for ESPN described him as a "man who destroys himself running for a finish line that doesn't exist." And Keith said, "No one can live under the burden of perfect expectations."

4. Can you identify with Urban Meyer's story? How do you experience the pressure to be perfect or live up to your inner critic?
5. Because of the pressure we experience in the world around us, it's easy to believe that we need to perform in our relationship with God as well.

How do you see yourself trying to earn your way into God's Kingdom?

Matthew intentionally made Jesus the 7th to say that he is the fulfillment of the promised rest. Jesus is our rest from performing. Jesus forgives our debt of sin.

6. How are you longing for this kind of rest? Where in your life do you most need the freedom that this truth brings?

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Read:

[Matthew 11:28](#)

²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

7. Jesus invites you to come and find rest in him. What is one thing you could do differently in your life this holiday season to respond to this invitation?

Sharing and Prayer:

Pray for the ideas you each shared in question #7. Ask God to give your group rest and help you focus on Jesus during the upcoming holiday season.

Then, close your together by thanking God for sending Jesus. Because of him, we don't have to earn our way. Instead of "running a race with no finish line," we can experience rest.