



INTRO: Eugene Peterson observes that “Matthew opens the New Testament by setting the local story of Jesus in a world [and family] historical context. He makes sure that as we read his account of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, we see the connections with everything that has gone before. ‘Fulfilled’ is one of Matthew’s characteristic verbs ... Better yet, Matthew tells the story in such a way that not only is everything previous to us completed in Jesus; we are completed in Jesus.” (Introduction to Matthew, *The Message*)

1. Describe a time when you felt fulfilled or empowered by Jesus. What was unique about this experience?

READ Matthew 1:1–17

1. Why do you think Matthew began his story of Jesus’ life with a list of Old Testament names?
2. Jesus’ genealogy includes some surprising names. The four model matriarchs of Jewish history (Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah) are missing; the women that are named are all non-Jews. What does this tell you about God’s character?
3. What message does this offer our church today?

SERMON QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus has a pattern of inviting underdogs and outsiders to be key players in his story of redemption and hope. What passages in the Gospels highlight this for you?
2. Do you consider yourself an underdog or outsider? Explain.
3. In 2 Cor. 12:9, Paul says “[God’s] grace is sufficient for you, for [His] power is made perfect in weakness.” When have you seen God’s grace work through your weaknesses?

OUTRO: Matthew reminds us that God has been for us since the beginning of time and is actively working out all things for our good. Just like the long list of Jesus’ ancestors, we also are called to partner with God and participate in His story of forgiveness, redemption and transformation through Jesus. We’re not invited into the story because we’re perfect, but because we’re works in progress. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.” (Eph. 2:8–10)

PRAY TOGETHER.

(Pray to receive God’s grace and transformation in your weaknesses this week.)