

Sermon Topic: Roots, by Rev Dr Lorna Khoo, 21 Jan 2018

Sermon Text: Luke 3:23-38

| Matthew 1:1-16 (NIV) | Luke 3:23-38 (NIV) |
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| <p>1 This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: ² Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³ Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴ Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵ Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, ⁷ Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, ⁸ Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of Uzziah, ⁹ Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰ Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, ¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jeconiah^[e] and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon. ¹² After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³ Zerubbabel the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Akim, Akim the father of Elihud, ¹⁵ Elihud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.</p> | <p>²³ Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli, ²⁴ the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melki, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, ²⁵ the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, ²⁶ the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josek, the son of Joda, ²⁷ the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, ²⁸ the son of Melki, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, ²⁹ the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, ³⁰ the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, ³¹ the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, ³² the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, ³³ the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, ³⁴ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, ³⁵ the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶ the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, ³⁷ the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Kenan, ³⁸ the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.</p> |

Context

- Why have 2 different lists? Both Matthew and Luke trace the genealogy of Jesus. However, both had a different emphasis as they were written for different audiences.
 - Matthew: Jesus' identity as Messiah and King was emphasised for a Jewish audience. Jesus' genealogy in Matthew starts from Abraham, as a reminder of the fulfilment of God's covenant with the Jewish people through Abraham.
 - Luke: Jesus' genealogy is traced back to Adam (the start of the human race). As the book was written for a Gentile audience, it highlights Jesus' humanness (being fully human, one of us) and embrace of outsiders (regardless of race).
- Both books also trace a different ancestral line.
 - Matthew: Traces Joseph's biological bloodline [stemming from Solomon, son of David]
 - Luke: Traces Mary's biological bloodline [stemming from Nathan, *another* son of David]
- Why are there instances of the father's name differing across accounts, or missing names? For example, the father of Shealtiel is reflected as Jeconiah in Matthew. However in Luke, it appears that Neri was the father. There are also some missing names of kings from the Matthew account such as Joash and Ahaziah. Why could this be so?
 - Levirate marriage: If a man died without a child, his brother could marry the dead man's widow and any sons born to the brother in that instance would be legal descendants of the deceased, so as to carry on the deceased's line. Hence, some lists could reflect the biological, and others, the legal father).
 - The term "sons of" can mean "from the household of" (ie. brothers, cousins, sons in law, nephews etc)
 - The word "begat" need not necessarily mean "father of" only, but "grandfather of" as well

The Promise and the Curse

- God's Promise to David: Throne that will last forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16)
- God's curse on Jehoiachin (aka Jeconiah): None of his descendants will ascend the throne (Jeremiah 22:24-30)

How can God's initial promise be fulfilled in light of the subsequent curse on Joseph's line?

- David's bloodline flowed to Jesus via Mary's side of the family (cf. Numbers 27:1-11 – Jewish law says that inheritance can go through the daughter if no sons were available and she married within her tribe). Heli had no sons. Joseph married Heli's daughter Mary, and carried Heli's family line through being the son-in-law of Heli (Note: in the original Greek, it says "Joseph of Heli" not "Joseph, son of Heli")
- David's bloodline to Jesus was via Mary solely, as the virgin birth bypassed Joseph's biological line.
 - That is also why Luke 3:23 says that Jesus "was the son, *so it was thought*, of Joseph..."

Lessons

1a. God always fulfils his promises (even if it takes a long time – it could be delayed because of our disobedience. Our rebellion and unwillingness to learn and change can block our ability to receive God's promises)

- From David to Jesus:

- The original united monarchy under David and Solomon was divided into 2 kingdoms- the north (Israel – under Jeroboam) and the south (Judah – under Rehoboam).
- Even after the kingdom was divided, most of the kings that subsequently ruled Judah did not follow God and Judah was eventually exiled to Babylon.
- The Persians defeated the Babylonians, and Persian King Cyrus allowed the Jews to leave Babylon and return to rebuild Jerusalem
- The Persians were subsequently defeated by the Greeks, and the Greeks imposed their religion on the Jews. While the Jews revolted and won, the Greeks were later defeated by the Romans, who ruled the Jews.
- Amidst all this, it looked like God had forgotten His promises, and the Jews must have wondered when the Messiah from David's line would come.
- What is your heart's cry? Perhaps it is for your spouse, child, or job or about finances, healing, reconciliation, conversion or transformation. What has God promised? Is it delayed? Are there changes we need to make in our lives in the meantime to enable God to bless us? ("learn our lessons well" from the song 'we must wait'). If we don't learn our lessons well, we might not be able to move to the next step even if God wants to show us. Sometimes, we are stuck by our stubbornness. In His time, he will make all things beautiful (but we also need to be able to change).

1b. God always fulfils His promises even if it seems impossible by human standards and beyond human expectations (such as how He solved the problem of the promise and the curse). God can do the impossible if we let Him (ref. the transformation of Rev Don Wong who was once a drug addict to Prison Fellowship Singapore Chaplain and Founder of New Charis Mission).

2. God gives significance even if we are unknowns, nobodies, sinners, forgotten.

- Nathan (Another of David's sons by Bathsheba) must have felt insignificant next to his younger blood brother, Solomon. Yet, God honoured Nathan. The Messiah came through his line, not through Solomon.
- There are many unknowns in the lineage of Jesus (in both Matthew and Luke). Yet God used them for the Messiah's line.
- Even those that we are familiar with were imperfect people. There were the cowards/liars:
 - Both Abraham and Issac lied and put their wives in harm's way to save their own skin;
 - Jacob stole his brother's birthright;
 - Judah together with his brothers sold Joseph into slavery and lied to his father about Joseph's fate.

There were the murderers:

- Lamech was a murderous, vengeful character
- David committed adultery and later conspired and got Uriah killed to take his wife.

There were the immoral ones:

- Bathsheba, who committed adultery
- Rahab, who was involved in prostitution
- Tamar who committed incest
- They were all imperfect people. Yet, the amazing grace of God prevails and all are honoured to be in the lineage of Jesus and used by God to bring His Messiah.
- God gives us grace upon grace, cf. Mary's song in Luke 1 – He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly (Luke 1:52)

- We must learn to stop striving and learn to receive (paraphrased from the words of theologian Paul Tillich. Original words – “Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!”).

3. Roots are important to God (cf. lists of names in the Bible from 1 & 2 Kings; 1 & 2 Chronicles; Nehemiah) How am I connected to others from the past and in the present?

- Rootedness = Identity (my calling in life) and responsibility (to that household/family)
 - To whom do I belong? What spiritual household do I come from? Think about specific domains of life – family, cell, church, denomination etc. What is the spiritual gift/uniqueness about this group?
 - Who is the Lord of that household? → This is both an objective question and a reminder. It is not an excuse for judging others, but for looking at our lives: If God is the Lord, how do I make Him so in my life and thus bring His Lordship there?
 - What is the calling of that family? Live it out. (Eg. Israel’s flag has the Star of David, that speaks of God’s promise- that they will be a blessing to the nations; Eg. Salvation Army – blood of Christ and the fire of the Holy Spirit; each of the 12 tribes of Israel also had their own emphasis)

Reference

