

# A Christmas Family Tree

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good, well let's turn to our Bible reading now, Matthew chapter 1, Matthew chapter 1. Our preacher this morning is Terry McCutcheon, and he's going to be opening up this first chapter of Matthew.

And as you look at Matthew chapter 1, you may be saying to yourself, how is it possible to preach a sermon on this passage? Well, by the grace of God, we shall know shortly. So Matthew chapter 1, verses 1 to 17.

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 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nashon, and Nashon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Mathan, and Mathan the father of Jacob, and Jacob, the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

[ 2 : 41 ] So, all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ, 14 generations.

This is the wonderful word of the Lord, and may it be a blessing to us this morning. I invite you to take your Bibles and to turn with me again to Matthew chapter 1, which you will find in page 807 of the Pew Bible.

Matthew chapter 1, page 807. And as you turn up that page, a moment of prayer. Our Father, as we are gathered in this place this morning, as we are gathered in this place and around this book, the book of your Word concerning your Son, our deep conviction is that the Son of God is here.

He is here by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is here, so full of truth and grace. And in looking to Him, we find that your glory, dear Father, is disclosed upon a human face, the face of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, as we are gathered around this book, we ask that you would make this book live to us, O Lord. Show us thyself within thy Word. Show us ourselves, and show us the face and the grace of our Saviour.

[ 4 : 11 ] And make the book live to us, for Jesus' sake. Amen. I wonder if you are familiar with the television program, Who Do You Think You Are?

It sounds like the first line of an argument, doesn't it? Who do you think you are? But for those not familiar with the show, let me just explain what the program is all about. The program really is a genealogy documentary that explores the family tree, the family line of some of our British celebrities.

Some of the well-known faces from the world of film, television, media, and the world of music. And the celebrity highlighted in each program climbs back through the years, back through the history, and the ancestry of their family, not knowing what they will uncover, as they seek to trace through the help of the program's experts, as they seek to trace where they came from, and who they came from.

And I'm sure you can imagine, quite a few surprises are usually thrown up during this process, of who their relatives were, what they were, and what they done. Well, the show returned to our TV screens this week, Thursday night, 8pm, BBC One.

And the celebrity that was highlighted this week was a fella called Danny Dyer. Danny Dyer. He is an actor who was born in the East End of London, and rather appropriately, he appears in the BBC One's soap, East Enders.

[ 5 : 46 ] He plays the part of a character called Mick Carter, who's the landlord of the Queen Vic, the local pub. Now, I know that sounds as if I watch East Enders, but actually, Willie Phillip told me. I get all my soap gossip from Willie Phillip.

But through the course of the programme, and as the experts traced Danny Dyer's family tree, a very interesting relative, to say the least, was revealed.

In East Enders, Danny Dyer is the landlord of the Queen Vic pub. But in real life, he is the 22-time great-grandson of one of the former kings of our country, King Edward III.

And this revelation came as a massive shock to Danny Dyer. I'm related to King Edward III. Before the programme, he said, people are going to expect me to be related to criminals and crooks, but I would like to freak them out by being descended from aristocracy.

Now, there were plenty of criminals and crooks in his ancestry, but never for one moment did Danny Dyer. I think he would be descended from aristocracy, never mind a former king.

[ 6 : 54 ] Now, all of us have a family tree, a family history, a family line. And if our family trees were traced, then I am sure they would throw up eye-popping, jaw-dropping, stomach-turning facts about our ancestors.

Maybe we wouldn't all be related to royalty. I'm sure in my case it would be rascals. We wouldn't all be related to royalty like Danny Dyer or one or two in our congregation.

But all of our family trees would have interesting items in them and interesting people in them. But here is the question. Why did Matthew include this family tree at the beginning of his gospel?

I mean, look at it. It doesn't fill me with great enthusiasm, nor does it give me a great dose of encouragement as I read it through. I mean, look at it. Zerubbabel became the father of Abihu.

Abihu became the father of Eliakim.

Eliakim became the father of Azor and Azor became the father of Zadok. Are those names that were on your mind when you woke up this morning? Or any other morning in history for that matter?

[ 7 : 55 ] No, of course they weren't. I mean, I could hardly pronounce some of the names. So why did Matthew begin his gospel this way? Why did he give us a Christmas family tree?

I mean, friends, I don't know about you, but I take one look at verses 1 to 17, and if I'm going to be frankly honest, I want to begin reading at verse 18. So why do we have this Christmas family tree?

Well, Matthew isn't a stupid fellow. He isn't unintelligent. Matthew knew what he was doing. He has good reasons for beginning his gospel this way. There are many reasons as to why Matthew began his gospel this way, and we can't tackle them all this morning in one sermon.

But we will tackle three reasons as to why he gave us this Christmas family tree. The first two reasons will be rather brief, so don't think you're getting out before 12.

But then the third reason, the last reason, will be a wee bit more length. So why did Matthew give us a Christmas family tree? Well, firstly, verse 1, to fill you with God's hope.

[ 9 : 00 ] To fill you with God's hope. If you look at verse 1, verse 1 is not actually part of the family tree. Verse 1 is actually the title for the whole book of Matthew.

Verse 1 is the title of the book. It's not part of the family tree, but it introduces the family tree. Verse 1, the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Now that phrase that Matthew has just used in verse 1 is like a phrase that's repeated over and over and over again in the book of Genesis. I think Moses employs that phrase about ten times in the book of Genesis.

These are the generations of so-and-so. These are the family histories of so-and-so. The translation varies. But only in one of those ten times is there a kind of phrase like verse 1 of

Matthew.

And you will find that in Genesis chapter 5, verse 1. If you just keep your finger in Matthew chapter 1 and just turn up Genesis chapter 5, it's at the beginning of your Bible. And here's what Moses writes.

[10:12] This is the book of the generations of Adam. This is the book of the histories of Adam. Now Matthew begins his gospel this way.

The book of the generations of Jesus Christ. If you were a Jew reading Matthew chapter 1, verse 1, you would say to yourself, Oh, that's just like Genesis chapter 5, verse 1.

Genesis chapter 5, like Matthew chapter 1, is full of the phrase, And he fathered, and he fathered. But as well as the repeated phrase of, And he fathered in Genesis 5, you will see that there is another phrase that's repeated in Genesis 5.

It appears firstly there in verse 5 in relation to Adam. And he died. Then in verse 8 in relation to Seth. And he died. Again, verse 11.

And he died. Verse 14. And he died. Verse 17. And he died. And he died. And he died. And he died. Over and over again.

[11:15] Due to the wages, the curse of sin. Genesis begins in chapter 1 with creation. And ends in chapter 50 with a coffin in Egypt. The coffin of Joseph.

It begins with life in Adam. But it ends with that same phrase. And he died. But friends, Matthew is saying here in verse 1. That may have been so with Adam.

And with the book, The Generations of Adam. But now, but now we have another story. This is the book of the generations. The book of the history of Jesus Christ. This is a new beginning.

Here is the second Adam. And this book, this history, this story, does not end the same way as Adam's history does. Matthew and his gospel brings us to a different end.

His gospel does not end in death. His gospel begins with Jesus Christ. And ends with an empty tomb. And the resurrection of the dead.

[12:13] Matthew wants to fill us with God's hope. The hope of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It doesn't end with, And he died.

There is hope. Well, does it make any difference? Well, yes it does. If you know and love and trust the Lord Jesus Christ, then it does make a difference. A world of a difference.

An eternity of a difference. Matthew fills us with God's hope. He wants us to be caught up personally in this story.

The story of Jesus Christ that ends with an empty tomb. And not with the phrase, And he died.

Matthew wants to fill us with God's hope. But secondly, Matthew gives us a Christmas family tree.

In order to encourage you with God's persistence. To encourage you with God's persistence. If you take a look at verses 2 to 16, You will note that they are in three groups.

[13:12] Verse 2 to 6. Verse 6 to 11. And verse 12 to 16. And each of these paragraphs details a section of Israel's history. Begins with Adam.

And goes all the way up to David the king. It doesn't start that big or that great. But rather fragile with Abraham. But it comes down the line. All the while growing to David.

To David the king. And the golden era. The golden age of Israel's history. Then to Solomon. Verse 6. Down to Rehoboam. Verse 7. And the whole golden era begins to unravel.

God's people become a faithless people. Sure they have some godly kings in this era. Josiah.

Hezekiah. And one or two others. But they got some right rotten ones as well.

Ahaz. And Manasseh. And so God has to bring judgment on his people. For their faithlessness. And their disobedience. And so they're taken captive to Babylon.

[14:13] They're taken into exile in Babylon. And in verses 12 to 16. You have a list of his faltering people. As they come back from exile to the land of Israel. And when they come back to the land.

They're always under foreign rule. Under foreign domination. If it's not the Babylonians. It's the Persians. If it's not the Persians. It's the Assyrians. If it's not the Assyrians.

Then it's the Romans. This is the history of God's people. Fragile. Faltering. Faithless people. But God still brings forth his Messiah.

And he does so. Not because his people are great. He does so. Not because his people are successful. He does so. Not because his people are outstanding. He does so.

Because of the total opposite of these things. In spite of these things. In spite of this. God still brings forth the one through whom. And in whom. They would be blessed.

[15:11] Matthew is teaching us about the persistence. God will make sure that verse 16 happens. And verse 16 will happen. Not because of his people. But in spite of his people.

And look at the time of this in verse 12 to 16. This was not the most promising time in Israel's history. After the captivity in Babylon. In fact. It was one of the most darkest periods in Israel's history.

Sure they were back in the land. But they had no king. They were under foreign rule. What good could possibly come from this period in their history?

God's promise to Abraham about the land. Well. It seems to have gone. And God's promise to David. That one of his line would always rule as king. Over the people.

Well. That's also gone. No land. No king. This was the most bleak. And unpromising time. In Israel's history.

[16:12] What were those 500 years. Of verses 12 to 16. Like for the people of God. Well. Life was hard. It seemed like the sun was never shining. The people had to scrimp and scrape.

Just to have an existence. Yet at this time when it was so bleak. At this time when the sky was darkest. It was at this time that the sun of righteousness arose and began to shine.

It's really strange isn't it? Matthew is teaching us of God's persistence. Of his persistence to bring forth his promised king. Even at the darkest hour.

Matthew has given us a Christmas family tree. To fill you with God's hope. To encourage you with God's persistence. And thirdly and finally.

And at a bit more length. To amaze you with God's grace. To amaze you with God's grace. That's the title of the hymn that we sang earlier.

[17:10] Oh how the grace of God amazes me. Question. Have you ever been amazed. By the grace of God. Well if not.

Today's your lucky day. Matthew gave us this family tree for Christmas. In order that you would be. Amazed with the grace of God. In verses 3 to 6.

Matthew includes in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. The names of four women. Tamar verse 3. Rahab verse 5. Ruth verse 5. And the wife of Uriah verse 6.

Do you know these ladies? Have you heard of them? Do you know their stories? Well we can find the story of Tamar back in Genesis 38.

Abraham had a son called Isaac. Isaac had a son called Jacob. Jacob. Well he is the one who had 12 sons. The 12 tribes of Israel. And one of his sons was Joseph.

[18:07] But Jacob's fourth oldest son was a fellow called Judah. Now Tamar. Tamar had married Judah's oldest son. But before she could bear him any children.

He died. And in keeping with the commands given by the Lord. In Deuteronomy 25. Concerning Levite marriage. Because she had no children. And to carry on the family line.

And the family name. Judah's second oldest son. Onan. Married Tamar. So he marries Tamar. But again. He dies. Before she bore any children.

Tamar's a bit of a jinx isn't she? But Judah had another son. Shelah. But Judah said to Tamar. Look. I've got another son. But he's a bit young at the moment you know.

To marry you. So. What I want you to do is. Just for a period. I want you to remain as a widow. And I want you to go back and stay in your father's house. And when Shelah has grown up. I'll send for you. And we can get the marriage kind of arranged then.

[19:07] So. Tamar agrees. She goes back to stay. In her father's house. But Judah had no intention. Of allowing Shelah to marry Tamar. As he feared the son would end up dead like the first two.

And neither did he have any intention of facing Tamar up. And telling her that this was the case. So Tamar did as Judah had requested. And went and stayed in her father's house. But over time.

Tamar realized that. Shelah's grown up. Judah's never sent for me. And arranged the marriage. She knew that Judah had. Never any intention of arranging the marriage. Well at this time Judah's wife had died.

And after his period of grieving. He was going with a friend of his. To a sheep shearing festival. And friends that doesn't. That's not as innocent as it sounds.

These sheep shearing festivals. Were events that were. Greatly associated with great. Sexual immorality. So Moses the writer of Genesis. Wants us to understand.

[ 20 : 05 ] That this was. What was on the mind of Judah. Yes Judah the patriarch. This is what was on the mind. Of Judah. Sexual immorality. As he headed to the festival.

And when Tamar heard that her father-in-law. Was going to shear his sheep. I think she understood. What was on Judah's mind as well. And this helps us to make sense. Of what she did next. When she hears that Judah.

Is going to shear his sheep. She threw off her widow's clothes. And knowing what was on. Her father-in-law's mind. She dressed up. As a Canaanite prostitute. Wrapping herself with a veil. And standing by the roadside. On the way to the place. Where Judah was going. Well Judah came by. And he saw her. And he did not recognize her. To be his daughter-in-law. He thought her to be a prostitute.

And he said to her. Let me come in and lie with you. What will you give me? She replied. I will send you a young goat from the flock. He said. Well how do I know I can trust you?

[ 21 : 03 ] You must give me a pledge. Something to hold. So that I know you will make good. On your pledge. Well what should I give you? Ask Judah. Tamar said. Give me your signet.

Your cord. And your walking stick. Which was a modern day equivalent. Of him giving his credit card. Or his master card. Judah duly obliges.

They sleep together. And then Judah goes on his merry way. To go and shear some more sheep. And later he sends a friend. With the goat. To pay off the debt. But the prostitute woman. Is nowhere to be found.

So Judah says. Oh well. Just let the thing be. But three months later. Judah is told. Tamar your daughter-in-law. Has been a moral. And not only that. She has become pregnant.

Due to her immorality. Responds to this by ordering. Bring her out. And let her be burned. And as she's brought out.

[ 21 : 57 ] Tamar plays her trump card. Or her master card. Producing the signet. The cord. And the walking stick. She says. By the man to whom these belong.

I am pregnant. The man whose name. Is on these. Judah. Ben. Jacob. Judah. Son. Of Jacob. And then Jacob.

Makes the statement. She has been more righteous than I. Since I did not give her to my son. Shelah. So that's Tamar. And she bore two sons.

To her father-in-law. Whose names are Perez and Zerah. You will find them in verses 1 to 17. So there in the line. In the ancestry of the Messiah. Is Tamar. Then there is Rahab.

Verse 5. You will find Rahab's story. In Joshua chapter 2. You may remember it. From earlier in the year. In the series that Paul has been doing. In Joshua. Well Rahab was the Canaanite prostitute.

[ 22 : 54 ] The pagan prostitute. And she welcomed the spies of Israel. And then she said. She wanted to be safe. And that she wanted to follow Israel's God. And this pagan prostitute.

Sought mercy from Israel's God. And this pagan prostitute. Received mercy. From Israel's God. Well next is Ruth. You will find her in the book.

Of the Bible named after her. Bob File covered the book earlier this year. Well Ruth was from Moab. She was a Moabite. The Moabites were Israel's enemies.

And according to Deuteronomy. Moabites were not allowed into the worshipping congregation of God. She wasn't an Israelite. She didn't belong. She didn't belong among the official people of God. And she came back to Israel from Moab. With her Israeli mother-in-law Naomi. Naomi had went to stay in Moab. Some 10 years earlier. With her husband.

[ 23 : 52 ] And her two sons. But she had lost everything. During her stay in Moab. Her husband died. And her two sons died. And Ruth. Well she was married to one of the sons.

Well Naomi had made her mind. Mind up to go back to stay in Israel. And she pleaded with Ruth. Pleaded with Ruth. Not to come with her. Now friends. Naomi done this. Because she knew life was going to be tough back in Israel.

Not only because they had no man to provide for them. Not only because they had no man to protect them. But Naomi also knew. That life would be very difficult.

And could be very dangerous for Ruth. She was a Moabite. She was a foreigner. An enemy of Israel. Who didn't belong. But despite all of this.

Ruth covenanted herself to her mother-in-law. But more importantly. She covenanted herself to her mother-in-law's God. Yahweh. The God of Israel.

[ 24 : 51 ] And she came back to stay with her mother-in-law in Bethlehem. Even though it looked like a life of poor poverty. Would be ahead of her. And then there is in verse 6.

The wife of Uriah. Matthew doesn't even call her by her own name. He calls her Mrs. Uriah. Her name was Bathsheba. But Matthew calls her Mrs. Uriah.

To remind us of what happened. And you will find. Mrs. Uriah's story. Back in 2 Samuel chapter 11. 2 Samuel chapter 11 begins.

In the time that kings go out to war. Well in the time that kings go out to war. We are told. That King David. Didn't go out to war. His army went out to war.

But he stayed at home. And late one afternoon. While he was walking on his roof. He saw a beautiful woman bathing. And he inquired of his servants.

[ 25 : 45 ] As to who this beautiful woman was. And King David was told. She is Bathsheba. The wife of Uriah. Knowing that she was married.

And actually married to a man. Who was actually out fighting for him in his army. Knowing that she was married. And married to Uriah. Did not put King David off.

He sent for her. And he took her. And he lay with her. Well I suppose David thought that was that. But Bathsheba sent and told David. I'm pregnant.

Now David had a problem in his hands. And he thought to himself. Well I know what I'll do. I will cover up my sin. I will send for her husband Uriah. I will send for him. And I'll bring him back for the war.

And I'll send him up the road to see his wife. And they'll sleep together. And therefore Uriah will think the baby's his. And I'll cover up what I've done. But Uriah wouldn't go up the road to his wife.

[ 26 : 41 ] And when David asked why. Uriah said. How could I go up the road. And enjoy the comforts of my home. And the comforts of my wife. When the rest of the army. My brothers. Are out there camping in an open field.

So the next day. David thought he would try again. He invites Uriah for a meal. He feeds him. And he fills him with booze as well. Gets Uriah drunk. But still Uriah would not go.

And enjoy the comforts of his own bed. And the comforts of his own wife. So King David had to come up with another plan. Another plan. To cover up his sin.

Friends. What David did with Bathsheba. Sleeping with her. Shows that he was a real warm. Red blooded male. And if us real warm. Red blooded male are honest.

We know that this is a sin. That given the right set of circumstances. And situations. We are all very much capable of. But what David was about to do next. Wasn't warm and red blooded.

[ 27 : 40 ] It was cold blooded. And calculating. David sent a letter to the commander in chief of the army. That was actually delivered by the hand of Uriah. And in that letter.

David gave instructions. That Uriah was to be put in the front line. Where the fighting was at its hardest. But then when the fighting was at its hardest. The men all round about Uriah.

Were to draw back from him. So that he might be exposed. And be struck down. And die. And that's exactly what happened. Uriah. And a few other men.

Were struck down. And killed. Or if you want to call a spade a spade. Murdered. Really. In order that the king's sin. With Mrs. Uriah.

Might be covered up. So here we have these four ladies. And three of the four are not Israelites. They are Gentiles. Non-Jews. Pagans. And all of them except Ruth.

[ 28 : 36 ] Have sexual escapades. Involved with amorous sex. And here they are. In the family tree. The family line of Jesus the Messiah. It's absolutely amazing.

It's absolutely unthinkable. I mean if you were wanting to talk about the mothers of Israel. If you were wanting to talk about Israel's great women. Any Jew would talk about the wives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

They would talk about Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. They would be the women that you would talk about. But Matthew doesn't even give those women a mention.

Instead. Matthew talks about Tamar, Rahab, Ruth. And this is Uriah. And anybody who knows the history of Israel. Would read these verses. And these names would be highlighted.

Like they were in neon lights. These names would jump right off the page. They would light up and jump off the page. Not for the best reasons. But for these women's bad reputations.

[ 29 : 36 ] You see friends. That's why Matthew has given us a Christmas family tree. Matthew here draws us. He draws us in the very first page of the New Testament.

He draws us here in these verses. To the amazing grace of God. This is the God we are dealing with. A God who is willing to have dealings.

With the likes of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Mrs. Uriah. Well what does all of this have to say to us today friends? Well it tells you.

That if you have people like Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Mrs. Uriah. In the family tree of Jesus. If you've got people like that. Included in the family tree of Jesus. And the fellowship of Jesus. Then no matter what sort of a person I am.

Then that same Jesus. Will be prepared to have dealings. Even with me. If he has people like these four women in his family tree. Do you think he will be ashamed to have them in his congregations?

[ 30 : 39 ] Do you see the grace of God. That is highlighted here. But you know friends. Some of you don't yet quite believe it.

You say. Yes. I see what Matthew has written. And I can hear what Terry is saying. But you know. There is this.

One sin. That I committed. I cannot escape it. It is ever before me. I cannot escape it. It haunts me. It happened a year ago.

Or was it three years ago? Was it fifteen years ago? Thirty years ago? Or maybe even fifty years ago? I do not know when it was. But you know.

Don't you? You say. I cannot escape it. It haunts me. I just can't see how Jesus could forgive me. And receive me. Well I don't mean to be rude.

[ 31 : 40 ] And I don't mean to cut you off. But Bathsheba has just walked in. And she says. Terry. Did I hear someone say. Something about that. One big son.

That they committed. Well I know what that's like. David always gets the blame for what happened. David always gets the bad press. Even as you told the story in your sermon Terry.

You put the blame fairly and squarely on David. David always gets the blame. But I was married. I made marriage vows. I could have said no.

But I didn't. I consented. And yet. And yet it didn't keep me out of the family tree of the Lord Jesus. Someone else might say. If you only knew my family background. My connections. If you only knew what my upbringing was like. How lewd and how awful that was. Well in walks Ruth.

[ 32 : 39 ] She says. Yes I was a Moabite. You know I still am. And you know according to Deuteronomy 23. The Moabites weren't ever to be allowed into the worshipping congregation of the Lord. But the Lord didn't seem to think my background disqualified me.

From becoming an ancestor. And the great great great great grandmother. Of Jesus Christ his son. You may say Terry. If you only knew the sort of life I have lived.

Of my own choice. Before I ever took a seat here in the Tron church. That may be so. But here comes Rahab. I really like Rahab. She doesn't mess about.

She gets right to the point. She's like that because of her background. And she says. There isn't any sordid. Immoral. Horrible. Sexual stuff. That I don't know about.

Sordid. Immoral. Horrible. Sexual stuff. Is what I did for a living. And yet. And yet even I. Was able to find mercy. To find mercy.

[ 33 : 40 ] Under the wings of. The Lord. Israel's God. Do you see the point friends? The point that Matthew is making. He is making the point that Jesus Christ is not ashamed.

To be associated with sinners. Oh you're right. He will be criticized for doing so. He always has been. He was accused of being a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

He was the friend of tax collectors and sinners. And he is still their friend today. In fact that's why he came. Matthew chapter 1. 21. And she will bear a son.

And you shall call his name. Jesus. Why? For he shall save. His people. From their sins. You wouldn't give a doctor a hard time.

For going to visit the sick. Because that's his business. Don't give Jesus Christ a hard time. For welcoming sinners. For that is why.

[ 34 : 39 ] He came. That's why it says. The Tron Church. In big letters. Outside our building. It doesn't say the Tron Club. No. The Tron Church.

Why? Because the church is a hospital for sinners. A shelter for refugees. Refugees seeking the grace of God. And if Jesus didn't bat an eyelid at being associated with Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Mrs. Uriah.

Do you think he'll get a brass neck by acknowledging you? Do you think he will be ashamed to acknowledge you? Do you? Do you? Well, do you? Matthew has given us in these opening verses of his gospel.

A Christmas family tree. He has given us a Christmas family tree. In order that you would be filled with God's hope. In order that you would be encouraged by God's persistence.

And in order that you, even you, might be amazed by God's amazing grace. Oh, how I wish that God's grace would amaze you this Christmas.

[ 35 : 46 ] There is much, much more I could say. But being left in the arms of God's grace is not a bad place to leave things. Let us pray. Oh, Father, we thank you that you are a God.

Who is willing to have dealings with people like Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Mrs. Uriah. And not only that, we thank you that you are a God who is willing to have dealings with people like us.

We thank you, Father, that you are more willing to deal with us than we are to let you deal with us. But deal with us, we pray, through your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And for his great glory alone. Amen.