

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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^a 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 Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.^b

Dear friends in Christ, "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year,rew there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

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What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year, there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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,

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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,

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⁹ Uzziah the father of Jotham,

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¹⁰ Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,

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Amon the father of Josiah,

¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jeconiah^a and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

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Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,

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¹³ Zerubbabel the father of Abiud,

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¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

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¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

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Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year, there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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^a 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 Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.^b

Dear friends in Christ, "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

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shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

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Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year, there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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^a 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 Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.^b

Dear friends in Christ, "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

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shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

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Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year, there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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^a 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 Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.^b

Dear friends in Christ, "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

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shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

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Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year,rew there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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^a 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 Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.^b

Dear friends in Christ, "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

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Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year, there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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^a 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 Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.^b

Dear friends in Christ, "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

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shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

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Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year, there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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^a 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 Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.^b

Dear friends in Christ, "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

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shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

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Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year, there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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^a 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 Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.^b

Dear friends in Christ, "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

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shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

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Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year, there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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^a 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 Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.^b

Dear friends in Christ, "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

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shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

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Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year, there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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^a 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 Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.^b

Dear friends in Christ, "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

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shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

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Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year, there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ 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^a 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 Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵ Eliud 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, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.^b

Dear friends in Christ, "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

What is this new year going to bring? It's gotta be better than 2020, right? What if it's not any better? Oh boy, the anxiety of those thoughts may have already started building in your mind as the first few days of the New Year haven't felt that much different.

How do we usually handle those kinds of anxieties? We might say something like “Give it all to God. Trust in Him. He is in control.” In the opening greeting, we heard that well-known passage of, “Cast all your anxieties on him,” and let us also remember how that passage so graciously continues, “because he cares for you.”

As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

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shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

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As we inch away from Christmas and as we enter a new year, hold onto that Christmas comfort that God so loved you that he gave his own and only Son to us and for our salvation. Hold onto the Christmas mystery that God cared about us so much that he took on human flesh and entered into human history to change our eternity. For without the incarnation, without knowing the extent of God’s love, comfort is horribly lacking even from that well-intentioned phrase: God is in control.

Knowing who God is and therefore key in having comfort that God gives and that we express in the phrase, “God is in control.” And so what kind of God is in control? For many people who look around at the problems of the day and they see the pains that people endure and the grief and shame that are painted all over this globe they are quick to surmise that if there is a God, he is a God far away. It seems to some that God cares nothing about the trifles of the common everyday people of today. He must be disconnected, like some king or politician in a far-off out of touch state making decisions and guiding and directing things with no concern for the common folk. Therefore, if this is the perception of God that a person has that the holy and powerful who is in control and he is generally unconcerned with us because we are sinners, and he is not. That does not bring a lot of comfort at all, does it!

Therefore, dear sinner, we see what a gift of God it is that the Lord tells us who is in such a grand display at Christmastime. It is such a blessing that he gives us this gift wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger that he intends for us to hold onto and treasure throughout the year. So we hold onto the treasures of Christmas comfort and we dive into the pages of Scripture and according to God’s graciously will we see a God who is not distant, instead, we see a God who graciously comes near. The God who made us in his image, planned on and promised to take on our humanity to save us. And then he came. In well-documented humility, he came to be our Immanuel. He is our God who is with us. Consider the mystery of the incarnation and hold onto it throughout the entire year. God came near. God becomes one of us, fully human in every way, yet without sin, because he cares. And so we remember from that beautiful Christmas account in Luke 2 that God came born of a virgin, and the angels announced the birth of the one born to save us. With sentimental fondness, we hold on to that account. What you probably don’t remember as fondly is how Matthew begins his account of the good news of Jesus. He begins with the genealogy of Jesus. Not a real page-turner. Well, actually I guess, it might be, because we probably tend to just page by it, to get to something more interesting. And so it happens that people start the new year with the goal of reading the bible as one of their new year’s resolutions. They decide they are going to start with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and so they open up to the New Testament because their pastor or friend told them that it would help them better understand the Old Testament, and they open to that first page of Matthew and this is what they find: a list of names that are unfamiliar and they aren’t the easiest to pronounce. I wonder how many people are tempted to give up, right then and there, on page one of their new reading plan. But don’t. Read on!

But what seems strange and dry at first glance is rich with significance and beauty and is so very good for us to know and be familiar with. In this human genealogy, we see that God came near. He came into our human history from the house and line of Abraham and David into the family of Joseph to save sinners because he cares for us. God became fully human and the babe born in Bethlehem, the Jesus we see grow and preach and teach and live and die and rise in the pages of the Gospel accounts, he is fully God and fully man. And to prove that promise passed through the ages is true, to hang that truth in reality and highlight the faithfulness of a God who cares about our human race, Matthew traces his lineage through a number of generations and stages of Israel’s history. Starting with Abraham and the age of the patriarchs, down through the royal line of David and Solomon, even through the time of humility and exile and after the people of God returned. When the once regal line of David was a mere

shadow of itself and there were but common and nearly forgotten names, we see that God remembered his promise. Through all of this God remained faithful. The holy God who formed creation by his almighty word, spoke promises and had his prophets record promise after promise that a Savior would come. He passed these promises down through the generations, down through Abraham and David and Boaz and Ruth, and Zerubbabel and Joseph, and then just as promised the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

And God not only showcases his faithful devotion to his promises through this genealogy, but he makes his grace abundantly clear as well. God did not come just for those heroes of faith and the well-known patriarchs and kings that are sprinkled into these verses, he came for all humankind. Look at the family history and there are names that we do not recognize much at all. We see well-known names from Bible history, but we also see names of common folk that mean little to us, but God he knew them all by name. God cares for each of them and then grace upon grace God has Matthew include while others would have left out to save face and to avoid disgrace because there are plenty of examples of unscrupulous behavior and wicked and sinful characters highlighted in this tree that are preserved according to God's good purpose. A scandalous relationship is laid bare as Tamar, who played the harlot in an unsavory way, and yet she is included and highlighted in this family tree. Remember that Rahab was the prostitute of Jericho who harbored the spies and escaped from the walls of that foreign power before the walls came tumbling down. But Rahab was welcomed into God's people by God's grace. An outsider like Ruth, born from the tribe of Moab, another nation with a complicated history, and yet God welcomed her not only into his people but into his plan of salvation. In this plan of eternal significance and grace, God includes kings who abandoned his ways and those who desecrated his temple. Arguably one of the worst of those kings was Manasseh who set up idols in the holy place of God's temple and led the people into awful acts of idolatry, but God's power and grace and patience and loving kindness were all put on display in his life. For Manasseh would be led to repentance for after he had hook put in his nose and was dragged away into captivity there God changed his heart, and in his return he devoted himself to spiritual reforms. These reforms only lasted until the next wicked king led the people away from God once more, but God was faithful and would not give up on his people even after all the times that they gave up on him. Even David's well-known transgression is highlighted in how Bathsheba is included in this genealogy as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

It's all right here in the first verses of the New Testament. This epic true story of human sin and God's enduring grace. And so Matthew gives us this genealogy, a tracing of Joseph's family tree just as Luke records for us Mary's family line to show us God's faithfulness and his absolute devotion to send a Savior. God makes this promise again and again and then he becomes human to be the Savior of all humankind. The holy God graciously came near and entered into human history in order to save sinners because he cares for us. Take the time to walk through this tracing of names and you will clearly see a God who cares for you! Despite our unfaithfulness, he is faithful. He knows us each by name, and the God who is in control, he cares, and he comes near to forgive and save!

That is the God who has revealed himself to us in the light of his Word. In his ancient promises fulfilled, we are drawn to worship the King, who would come in such humility to save us. We are drawn to him as we see this bright light of salvation dawn. We worship him as we pass down his promises and his gifts of hope and peace and salvation and the promise of his return down from generation to generation. For God is faithful. We see that faithfulness on display as we walk through this family line. Around the new year, there is usually an emphasis on our human resolve and our ability to make and keep promises. Maybe you have formed some New Year's resolutions this year, and I suppose that even on the 3rd day of the new year some of those promises have already been tested and broken, rewritten, or forgotten. We are sinners. We are flawed. We human beings are by nature unfaithful and unreliable. If it were up to our resolve to save ourselves, we would surely be condemned. We make resolutions to be closer to God, to read his word more, to follow his ways, but as

it happens every year and every day, we depart from those paths for we are weak and we are sinful. We cannot be perfectly faithful, and to pretend like we can, only pushes us away from God much more than it brings us closer to him. And then in our sin or our pride or our disappointment or guilt, we drift from him and the problems of the day cloud our vision and soon we lose sight of his promises and his faithfulness. But God's Word shines forth like a star that parts the clouds and serves as a bright morning star as it dawns and lights up the darkness. God is faithful. God cares. God comes near for us all. It is all right here on page 1, in Matthew chapter 1, just as promised in all of Scripture leading up to this point. And so today, be drawn close by the words of God, and behold this list of names precious to God and see a God who knows your name. Look upon this list of names and behold the faithfulness of God. See the unexpected and wonderful way, that God demonstrates his faithfulness and love and grace and devotion to us. Through sinners full of failings and unfaithfulness God was faithful to his promises. For all humankind God becomes human. He cares about us all, and he comes into human history to save us and be the Immanuel for all humankind because he cares for us!

Finally, before we conclude our meditation on this genealogy of Joseph, take one more look at those names who were outside of the physical line of Abraham and David and know that God cares for you. As those who come from outside of the Jewish race, we find special comfort that Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth were included and highlighted in this genealogy as well. While Matthew was focused on reaching out to a mostly Jewish audience and how the Old Testament Scriptures and promises were fulfilled in Christ, there is no denying that Jesus came as the Savior of all nations and even Matthew in his gospel account would make that clear. Matthew would then go on from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel's announcement to Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Son of God and then he proceeds to tell of the journey of the Magi who traveled from afar, drawn by a promised star, to worship the king born as the king of the Jews and the Savior of all nations. God cares for you! Get to know this God who is in control and find comfort and strength in him and be renewed by his unfailing faithfulness and his enduring Word!

Therefore, be renewed by God's faithfulness. Continue reading, continue coming, watching and listening, and participating in the worship of our Savior, Christ our King. As you start and even when you fall out of the good habits of reading God's Word know that God's faithfulness and his devotion is what saves you. And then by the power of his faithfulness be renewed in your devotion to your loving King who comes for you. With the Magi, let us come with joy and worship this king born for all people of all time of all nations.

God is faithful. God is in control. And God cares! Look at how he came into human history. To those who did not deserve the time of day, he gave them a Savior. He called them family. And he does the same for us. He brings us into his family through faith. He becomes fully human and he remains our Immanuel from year to year for all of human history he comes with his Word to assure us of his faithfulness and grace, his love and concern. This is the God who is in control. From year to year from age to age. The God who reigns came to share in our sorrow and our woes our joys and delights. He was made fully human to be the Savior of all humankind from all time and from all nations. And we are drawn to him by his faithful promises fulfilled in Christ. We are brought from afar to be included in this salvation story that is absolutely true – God breaks into our human history to save us! How awesome is this good news of Jesus! Come let us adore him!

Wise men and women, therefore, still seek him, worship him, because he came to us first. He placed his promises, his Word, in front of us. And even in what appears to be a dry genealogy we have this tremendous accounting of God's grace dripping from the pages as Matthew embarks on this good news of great joy that is for all people. And Savior has been born for us and he is Immanuel. So be renewed this new year, by God's faithfulness and grace. Read his word, be drawn in as you marvel at the beauty of his promises fulfilled in Christ, and worship the One true King as he leads you and guides you and cares for you with the light of his Word. His Word, and his faithfulness, endures forever! Amen.