

SERMON STUDY GUIDE



Advent Week 2—Ornaments of Grace | December 14, 2025
Matthew 1:1–17

READ

Read the Scripture for the week:

- Matthew 1:1–17 – The genealogy of Jesus
- Genesis 12:1–3 – God’s promise to Abraham
- 2 Samuel 7:8–16 – God’s promise to David
- Optional cross-references: Ruth 1:16–17; Joshua 2:8–14; 2 Chronicles 33:10–13; Matthew 1:21–23

DISCUSS

Before diving into the sermon material, take a moment to share:

1. Think about your **family’s Christmas tree** (or the one you grew up with).
 - o What ornaments tell stories—funny, painful, or beautiful—from your family’s history?
2. Share one “ornament of grace” from your own life—a moment where God’s grace showed up in a surprising or undeserved way.
3. What was one “aha” from the sermon that changed how you see **genealogies** or Matthew 1?

COME AND SEE

Matthew’s genealogy is like God’s patchwork tree skirt—a woven story of promises, failures, outsiders and grace. It’s not random; it’s a plotline driven by a promise.

Use these questions to explore the four big movements from the sermon.

1. God Makes Seemingly Impossible Promises to a Most Unpromising People

Read Matthew 1:1–6, 17; Genesis 12:1–3; 2 Samuel 7:12–16.

- What did God promise to **Abraham** and **David**, and why did those promises look humanly impossible?
- How do Abraham’s and David’s failures (lying, adultery, abuse of power, family chaos) make God’s faithfulness even more striking?
- The sermon said, “*Nothing can stop the promises of God—not our situation, our lack, our sin, our mistakes, or even our rebellion.*”

Where is it hardest for you to believe that right now?

2. God Elects the Most Unlikely People – Ornaments of Grace on His Tree

Read **Matthew 1:3, 5–6** and brief snapshots of **Tamar (Genesis 38)**, **Rahab (Joshua 2)**, **Ruth (Ruth 1–4)**.

- Why is it shocking that Matthew includes **women**, **Gentiles**, and **morally complicated stories** in Jesus’ family tree?
- If you were telling the story of your life, which parts would you be tempted to leave out of the “recap sequence”? How might God see those places differently?

3. God Redeems Deeply Broken People

Read **Matthew 1:6–7, 10–11**, then **2 Samuel 11–12** (Bathsheba) and **2 Chronicles 33:10–13** (Manasseh).

- The sermon said God gives grace to both—the sinned-against and the sinner.

How does that speak to:

- o those carrying **shame** from their own choices, and
- o those carrying **wounds** from others’ choices?
- Read **Romans 8:28**. How does God’s ability to “work all things for good” show up in this genealogy?

4. God Comes Close for All People – Why Jesus Had This Family

Read Matthew 1:16–17, 21–23.

- How does knowing Jesus' messy family story deepen the meaning of the name **"Immanuel – God with us"**?
- The sermon said: "This genealogy reveals WHERE Jesus comes from and WHY He came at all."
 - What about this list of names shows us **why we need a Savior**?
 - What shows us that we also need a **King**?
- Where does it comfort you to know that Jesus comes from a line of **wrongdoers and rejects...and still isn't ashamed to call us family**?

FOLLOW ME

Move from observation to personal and communal response.

1. If your life were **a tree of ornaments**, which ones would you prefer to hide?
 - How might God be inviting you to see those very places as **ornaments of grace** He wants to redeem and display?
2. Which of the four movements of sovereign grace hits closest to home right now?
 - God keeps promises to undeserving people
 - God elects unlikely people
 - God redeems broken people
 - God comes close for all people
3. Is there a part of your story where you still feel **"too far gone"**—too ashamed, too hurt, or too stuck to imagine God using it?

What would it look like to bring that specific place to Jesus this Advent?

4. As elders / leaders / parents / friends, how can we become a community where **outsiders, wrongdoers, and rejects** feel like they have a place on God's tree?

GO AND BE

This week, live the "ornaments of grace" story in tangible ways.

1. **Name an Ornament of Grace:**
 - Take a quiet moment and write down one event, relationship, or season that used to only feel like failure or pain, but where you can now see traces of God's grace.
 - Thank God specifically for how He met you there.
2. **Family / Group Practice:**
 - Around your tree (or at the table), have each person choose one ornament and tell the story behind it.
 - Then ask: "Where can we see God's faithfulness in this part of our family story?"
3. **Reach to an "Unlikely" Person:**
 - Ask God to bring to mind one person who might feel like an outsider right now.
 - Reach out with a text, call, invitation, or practical act of love as a sign of God's inclusive grace.
4. **Prayer of Surrender:**

Pray this sometime this week:

"Lord Jesus, thank You for entering a broken family line to redeem mine.

Make my life an ornament of Your grace.

Use my story—the beautiful and the broken—to point others to You. Amen."

Bottom Line for the Week:

Your family line doesn't define you.

God's sovereign grace in Jesus does.

In Christ, even the most painful parts of your story can become ornaments of grace on His evergreen tree of faithfulness.