

MONDAY, AUGUST 2ND

DAILY READING ASSIGNMENT: **Matthew 1-4**

"ROOTS"

SCRIPTURE Matthew 1

OBSERVATION

Matthew chapter one has a lot of strange, unpronounceable names. Read them fast and with conviction and everyone will think you are a Bible genius. In ancient Hebrew culture your genealogy, or "roots" were extremely important. And since Matthew's gospel (account of the life of Jesus) is targeted toward a Jewish readership, he starts off with the genealogy of Jesus (makes perfect sense to first century Jews).

But as you read through the genealogy of Jesus – our savior, Messiah, redeemer – there are some unexpected folks in his lineage. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (v. 2 – the patriarchs of the Jewish faith)? We would expect Jesus to have those sorts of people in his family tree. Same thing with people like King David (v. 6 – Israel's greatest king) and King Solomon (v. 7 – Israel's wisest king).

But what about Rahab (v. 5)? Wasn't she a prostitute? Yup. And what about Ruth (v. 5)? Wasn't she a Moabite – a non-Jew (loathed by Jews)? Yup. And what about Bathsheba (v. 6)? Wasn't she the woman raped by King David? Yup.

What a strange bunch of characters to be named by Matthew as part of Jesus lineage. One would think such shady characters would have been edited out of the story.

But perhaps their inclusion is an intricate part of the story. Perhaps the point is that God did and does work through all kinds of people--saints and sinner – to accomplish his redemptive work. Perhaps his point is to say that prostitutes can be part of God's redemptive story. So can foreigners and people of different socio-economic – racial backgrounds. Perhaps the point of Jesus' genealogy is to say, "Your life can be redeemed too. There is hope for you."

APPLICATION

If God used deeply flawed people, outsiders, and misfits to bring the Savior of the world to us, why would I conclude that he can't use me??? Do I have the faith to believe that God can and wants to use ordinary people like me to partner with Him to accomplish extraordinary things?

Truth be told, we all have some interesting characters who are part of our "roots."

We may actually BE that interesting character! But the gospel comes to us through Jesus Christ--born from a long list of messed up people. And that gives me great hope for what God can and do in the life of one fully yielded person.

PRAYER

God, help us to believe – truly believe – that you delight in using ordinary people with flaws and sin and past histories we may not be proud of to accomplish your work in the world. Jesus, help me today to join the great parade of humanity that has found grace, hope, forgiveness and redemption in you. Use me today as an instrument of your love. *Amen.*

S.O.A.P. Entry Author: Nick Twomey