

christ community church

CHARACTERS
FOR CHRISTMAS



DAILY ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2024

- volume 1 -

Dear Church Family,

During the Christmas season, our calendars fill up to make it one of the busiest seasons of the year. Advent is an opportunity to intentionally pause and remember the reason for our season of celebration. Advent holds some of my favorite memories growing up. As my family sat around our den, we would fight over who got to light the candles and snuff them out, but more importantly, we spent time **TOGETHER** focusing on the birth of Jesus and all it meant for us.

This Advent Devotional is for every person who desires to spend time focusing on Jesus this Christmas. Each day there will be a short devotional as we examine the characters of Christmas from Matthew and Luke.

My prayer is that by taking this daily pause, your Christmas season will be more special than any in recent memory!

-Pastor David

CHARACTERS FOR CHRISTMAS

December 1st

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, 4 and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah"

Matthew 1:1-6

Let's face it, every family has some characters in it - a crazy uncle or a branch of the family tree that gets "forgotten" in the legacy of family history. When Matthew lists Jesus' lineage, he not only includes the exemplary family members, but also puts the broken branches on full display. I don't believe this was just to ensure an accurate reporting of Jesus' genealogy, but as a constant reminder that nobody is beyond being included in the family of God.

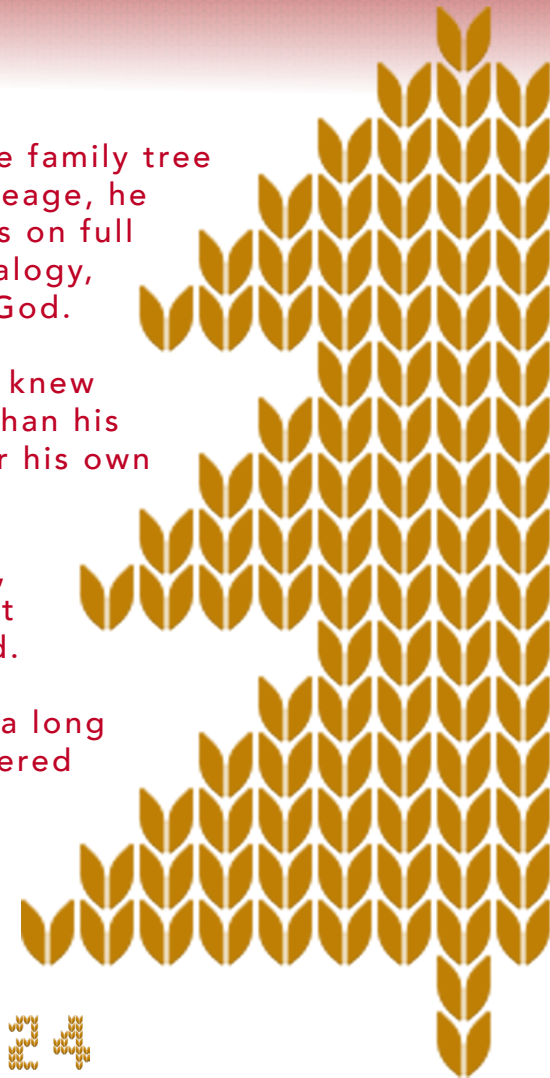
Matthew knew the sting of having a broken past he would rather forget. Before he knew Jesus, he was a tax collector who aligned himself with Roman oppressors rather than his Jewish brothers and sisters. He consistently cheated and exploited God's people for his own gain. When he met Jesus, everything changed.

Jesus embraces, with love, those who know they are broken. He runs to the tragic, both the exploiters and the exploited. Nobody is beyond His forgiveness. Your past and present don't exclude you from a future of being included in the family of God.

Abraham lied, Jacob cheated, Judah fathered twins with his daughter-in-law (it's a long story), Rahab was a former prostitute, Ruth grew up pagan, and Solomon was fathered from a marriage that began as an affair/ murder cover-up.

Thank Jesus for including you in His family despite your past. Remember His story isn't just for you. You will never lay eyes on someone outside the grip of His grace.

DAILY ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2024



December 2nd

"17 So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations."

Matthew 1:17



I'm not great at waiting. Even though I tell myself I'm more patient than I used to be, all it takes is a little bumper to bumper traffic to make the real me bubble up to the surface. Most of us are not good wait-ers, especially when it comes to adjusting our timeline to align with the Lord's.

The Word tells us God isn't slow in keeping His promises, but the timing surely felt slow as God's people waited 42 generations to see the Messiah's birth. It takes time to see the promises of God come to fruition. Chances are, there are some promises you are actively waiting to see fulfilled this Christmas season.

Delay doesn't have to lead to doubt. The enemy whispers lies when God's delivery doesn't match the intensity of our yearning. Satan tells us the delay means we should doubt the presence of God, the ability of God, or even the love of God. Don't buy into these lies. The Lord always keeps His promises!

Rather than letting delay lead us to doubt, let's double down on our trust. Tell Him you believe His hand is working beneath the surface even when you don't see the ripples of His movement.

As surely as God promised the Messiah would come, and He did, you can rest in the reality that every promise of God will come true. What promise has been delayed, leading to doubt? Double down in belief today.

CONNECTORS FOR CHRISTMAS

December 3rd

"18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit."

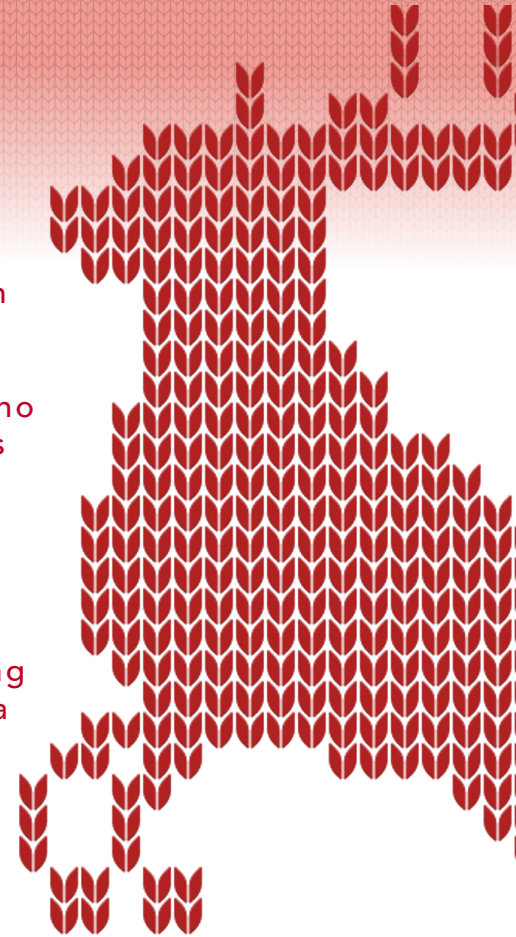
Matthew 1:18

Superheroes always have an origin story. They aren't just thrust onto the scene ready to save the day. Their back story always includes what they've overcome to bring even more glory to their victory.

Jesus is no superhero. He is so much more! The apostle John tells us that Jesus has no origin story. He always has been, with no beginning or end. He is the Word who has always existed. Through His powerful speech, all of the cosmos was birthed in shape and form. Our verses from Matthew's account of Jesus' conception don't recount an origin story, but an arrival story. It's the story of the preexistent One who pulled on skin to enter the creation He made.

The eternal plan of God had finally come to a climax. One moment, Jesus was receiving the praise of countless angels in heaven and the next He was inhabiting the womb of a poor, virgin girl. As mysterious and wonderful as His arrival story is, His return story will be even more magnificent. Jesus' arrival in the Gospels brought salvation so our relationship with God could be restored. As we look to the future, His return won't come as a lowly babe in a manger, but as a King over all Kings ready to rule and reign. He will rescue His followers and recreate a new home where heaven and earth are eternally linked together.

Knowing Jesus' arrival story sets the stage for a longing of His glorious return. Take time today to not only consider His arrival, but all that His glorious return will mean for those who love Him.



DAILY ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2024

December 4th

"18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus."

Matthew 1:18-25

Have you ever experienced the opportunity to claim the moral high ground, to shout, "I WAS RIGHT! I TOLD YOU SO."? Resisting the right to claim honor while shoveling out shame is difficult, especially when you believe you were wronged.

Joseph was an honorable man. He had done everything he was supposed to in order to have a great marriage. He was betrothed and getting the house ready to bring Mary home as his wife. Only a few more months until he would know the joy of wedded bliss! Then he discovered Mary was pregnant. Knowing he had been holy and honorable throughout their betrothal, he was faced with a difficult choice.

Joseph could go "Old Testament" and call for Mary to be stoned for her accused adulterous behavior. He could divorce her publicly and bring the shame he may have believed she deserved. He could divorce her quietly in the presence of just a few witnesses, releasing her to restart her life.

As Joseph drifted off to sleep, believing the quiet path forward was the most honorable choice, the Lord sent an angel to tell him to choose option four. This child was the Son of God and Mary had been faithful all along. Instead of divorce, God called Joseph to bring Mary home as his wife, to adopt and raise Jesus as his own son, and to spend his life instructing the Son of God as his earthly father.

The honorable thing isn't always the easy thing, but it is always the right thing. What hard and honorable thing is God calling you to do today?

CHARACTERS FOR CHRISTMAS

December 5th

“18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.”

Matthew 1:18-25

There have been many times when I've needed salvation from my situation. When I was little, my older brother came to my rescue when I lost my footing on the side of a steep mountain path. My mom swooped in to save me when my nose had been relocated by a friend's baseball bat (on accident of course). Strangers have stood by my side and offered a jump when a dead battery stranded me in a parking lot with toddlers in tow. All of us need saving from our situation from time to time.

Many people only look to Jesus as the Savior from their situation. The Jews of Jesus' day were hoping for a Deliverer. They dreamed of a Messiah who would save them from their situation, kicking out their Roman oppressors and raising up Israel as the light and hope of the world. When Jesus proved to be less interested in saving them from their situation than their sins, they cried out to crucify Him and sought the deliverance of a derelict named Barabbas instead.

Jesus came to offer so much more than salvation from our situation. He came to save us from our sins. His suffering on the cross saved us from the penalty of sin. Even though we are guilty, He has declared us not guilty because He took our place. His resurrection saved us from the power of sin. There is no sin that entangles the believer that remains unbroken by the power of the Risen Savior. One day when He returns or calls us home, he will save us from the presence of sin. No longer will we face temptation or be tripped up by the sins that so often make us stumble. We will only know peace and complete holiness in heaven with Him. Thank Him that He didn't just save you from your situation, but He saved you from your sins.

DAILY ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2024

December 6th

"18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus."

Matthew 1:18-25

When I was growing up, any time my grandparents were asked what they wanted for their birthdays or Christmas, their response was always the same, "We just want to spend some time together." My family lived less than a mile from my grandparents, went to the same church three times a week, and saw them nearly everyday. To them, our presence was the gift they wanted most... just to be with us. It didn't matter if we were eating together, working in the garden, stringing beans to can, cleaning the house, or watching sports, their greatest joy was just being with family. Each year I grow older, my own kids now flying through their teens, I understand what my grandparents meant.

The reason we feel the desire to be with family is because we are made in the image of our Heavenly Father. Creation began with God taking daily walks with His children through the garden in the cool of the day. When sin separated us from a perfect and holy God, He had a plan to be able to spend time with us again. Jesus came, pulled skin on, and lived in our world, experiencing all the trials and tragedies of sin while remaining sinless. He offered Himself in our place to experience the punishment for our sins so He could forgive us and gift us His righteousness. When we receive His gift, the Holy Spirit inhabits us and will never leave us.

He came and did all of this, just so He could be God WITH you. There is never a time when you are out of His presence. Draw near to Him today and recognize the gift He desires most is to be with you.

CONNECTORS FOR CHRISTMAS

December 7th

"18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus."

Matthew 1:18-25



When our kids were little, we stressed how important it was for them to obey. There were times they didn't understand why we were asking them to do something, but their obedience didn't depend on their understanding. There were some scenarios where obedience could mean the difference between life and death (stay on the sidewalk and don't cross the street). As parents, we also communicated the "when" of obedience was just as important as the "what". Delayed obedience is the same as disobedience.

Joseph understood what God was calling him to do. There's no way he grasped why or even how all of these things had happened, but the Scriptures tell us he immediately did as the Lord commanded as soon as he woke from his dream. That morning, he took Mary home to be his wife, fully obeying the "what" and the "when" from the angel's message. Mary officially became his wife, and Joseph named her baby the name given by the angel.

There is a cost to delivering immediate obedience, but we forget there's also a cost with disobedience and delayed obedience as well. What has God called you to do or stop doing that you have ignored or delayed being obedient? Choose to be like Joseph, and let your immediate yes reflect a surrendered heart.

DAILY AWAKE REVOLUTIONAL 2024