

Do you feel close to God this morning? [APPLAUSE] You can have a seat.

Jesus said before He left this earth I'll be with you. A bunch of you clapped your hands when I asked that question, but why is it then that I talked to so many people during the week that say to me, "I just don't feel like God's close to me. I feel like there's this distance. I want Him to be close, but I don't feel it." You ever say that? You feel it right now ...maybe. Those were His final words when He gave His assignment to those who were His followers; when He said to them go make more followers, make more disciples, baptize them, teach them to obey everything, and He goes I'll be with you. Let me pray for you.

*Jesus,*

*There are people in this room right now that feel very far from You. There are people in this room where there's an area of their life, there's something going on, and they feel that separation. They don't like it. They don't want it. They want to be connected with You, Almighty God. Lord, I pray that maybe something that's said here today will be the thing that will help draw their attention back to You and feel that closeness that they once enjoyed, or maybe have never enjoyed, that today would be the day they would feel that. We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.*

Glad to have you with us. Those of you watching online, welcome, so fun to just connect with you through the airways. And those of you out on the portico, boy, I hope you have a big coat on this morning. [SHIVERS]

Here's what I'd like you to do right now. Think for a moment that whole concept of God feeling close to you, would you mind pinpointing an area or areas where you don't feel close to God? Like, is there a specific, like, if we were to really drill down on this a little bit, is there a time that you don't feel close to God? Is it when you're at work? Is it when the kids are losing their minds? Is it when you're sitting down dealing with your finances? What is it that you're doing when you feel far from God? I want you to pinpoint that for a moment and we'll come back to that.



We're going to be starting today a study in the book of Matthew, first book of the New Testament, a gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. And it all starts long before this book is written, right after mankind has fallen and this whole issue of being close to God is revealed. Up until that point they walked and talked with God. They feel close to Him. They're with Him at all times. They sin and they're separated from God. And there's this automatic momentary thing that they feel this distance, and from there on out there is this desire, there is this promise for a Savior, a Messiah, Jesus to come and make that right. We get to the book of Matthew, the big story in Matthew is this is the climax. This is the answer. This is the culmination of all of this when all of a sudden Jesus bursts onto the scene and finally all of that separation is made right, and through the person of Jesus Christ we get to see how it all comes together for us once again.

**MATTHEW 28:19-20 (ESV)**

**The Great Commission**

<sup>16</sup> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

This book Matthew, the guy who writes it was in his day one of the most hated in all of a society. He's a tax collector, who likes taxes?! In fact, these guys they were taxed extra because they refused to do "emperor" worship, so if you didn't want to worship the emperor you paid extra taxes. And on top of that this guy Matthew, in order to pad his pockets, Rome pays him a certain salary but, really, the way he's going to raise his money is by charging you way more taxes than what you actually owe. And so the guy is rich, he's wealthy, he has status, he has comfort, he has it all except – everyone hates him. And Jesus calls him to Himself, "Follow me."<sup>1</sup>

You oftentimes see his name mentioned in the Bible as Levi; we believe that when Jesus calls him He changes his name and calls him Matthew, and he leaves all this comfort when Jesus calls him and actually enters into a life of following Jesus. Nothing better, but it would include suffering, it would include watching the One he loved so much suffer and die for the sins of mankind. Ultimately, this guy ends up going to martyrdom himself. But he becomes this fascinating example of someone whose life is changed by Jesus Christ and he sits down to write down what he saw and what he experienced and what he went through.



So as he begins to write the first chapter of Matthew a lot of it's a genealogy. You see, he's writing to an audience—we all speak to an audience, and you gotta really think about when you're talking to audience what it is that connects with them—and as he writes to his audience he's writing to a Jewish audience. And for them what connected with them were the people that went before them, the stories that were connected to those people. And those are the things that we read in the Old Testament of what takes place as these people connect with God through different experiences. And they really celebrated many of these people along the way and they repeated the stories of what was taking place along the way. And as they repeated those stories they got to know them, and they learned what God had promised yet to come. And so for Matthew he looks at this thing and he pieces it all together by bringing to these people some names that they're very aware of. He starts out Chapter 1, verse 1, saying this:

*<sup>1</sup> The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

**– MATTHEW 1:1 (ESV)**

By the way, I won't go through the rest of this genealogy here, but there are more names that are really important that the people know. When he says "Jesus Christ" here he's speaking of the name Jesus; in the Greek that name Jesus is from the word Joshua which means Yahweh, "God saves." The name Christ is "Messiah," chosen one, anointed one. And what Matthew is screaming out as he writes these words right off the top in this genealogy he says listen, all the rest of these names that you know that you've connected with in your past, they all culminate in this One that I want to tell you about—He's here! His name is Jesus. This One who will save, God saving you, the anointed one, Jesus is here. I want to tell you about Him. And as he does that he screams out this is the good news—that's why he goes through this genealogy of real people—this good news that has been promised through the decades.

He speaks here in the couple words in this first verse of David, King David. King David, the one who is at age 16 becomes a king, we remember him as a shepherd boy, becomes king and God makes a promise to David. He says listen, your kingship, your throne, your line is going to continue forever and ever and ever. It is from you that is going to come the King, Jesus, the Messiah, the One who saves. He mentions that because they connect with that. He goes even further there at the very beginning to

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 9:9 (ESV): As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

mention Abraham. No one's more mentioned in the New Testament than Abraham. There's no one more known to these Jewish people throughout the Old Testament than Abraham. It was Abraham that God speaks to; we don't hear from him before he's age 75. By the way, if you're over 70 and you're wondering, *Are my best years behind me?* You might see this and wonder. We're still talking about a guy who God comes to and asks something big of when he's 75 years old.

**The call of Abram  
(Abraham)  
– Genesis 12 –**



**By faith Abraham obeyed  
– Hebrews 11:4 –**

He says to him something he has no clue where this is going, what this is, but he recognizes God's speaking to him. He says listen, I want you to pick up your tent, I want you to start walking and I want you to go to where I lead you to go. And Abraham out of faith does that very thing; he goes to places that he is unknowing to a dream and to a promise that he has been given by God. And God makes promises; promises of blessing, promises of land, promises that He will bless those who are around him and those who curse him will be cursed.

He makes these promises to Abraham and the New Testament, that mentions that we actually as believers are children of Abraham, the New Testament really locks down a concept called faith using Abraham as an example, and he says *by faith* Abraham believed God. God said it, well, here we go. I don't get it, doesn't make sense, confusing, I'm going to step out. And from that very earliest time this man Abraham follows God and obeys God.

And, in fact, it is to Abraham back in Genesis 17<sup>2</sup> that God says from you is going to come kings, thus comes King David, thus Jesus in the line of King David; he has to paint this picture. In this genealogy it's more than just saying hey, there are people that you can relate with and connect with. This genealogy is written to a group of people who look at that very carefully and see that coming right out of the line of King David just as promised—the King of kings, Jesus Christ is born. And when Jesus arrives on the scene the one they've been waiting for to set up His kingdom everything changes.

**Faith** Very specifically through Jesus we can be reconciled to God—like Abraham, by faith. Through Jesus? Yes. God said it, I believe it, that's faith. Reconciled to God through Jesus. When we have that right relationship with God now all of a sudden we can have that right relationship with each other. And I love this, ultimately, this king, King Jesus, we're told will rule from sea to sea. There is going to come a day where there is a physical kingdom here on this earth that He reigns and rules over.

In fact, I won't go into it much depth, but Chapter 19 of the book of the Revelation. So I mentioned the beginning, you know, when mankind has sinned and been separated but God gives a promise and ultimately uses a man, Abraham, to start putting this thing into motion. At the very end—yet to come, in the future, Revelation Chapter 19—there is this picture of Jesus coming back in the clouds on a white horse with the armies of Heaven following Him. I mean Battle of Armageddon is raging here on planet earth and there appearing in the sky is Jesus with the armies of Heaven following him. And Revelation Chapter 19, verse 16, it talks about the picture of who this Jesus is; it says tattooed on his thigh are the words, "*King of kings.*" Because when He comes, you read the rest of that Chapter 19 – fascinating, you see the word "king" all over the place. The kings of this earth, the kings that are



***Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.***

**– Revelation 19:11 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> See Genesis 17:15-16

reigning and ruling, and how they're being struck down and made into nothing because there is one king and that king is Jesus. And it is that king that Matthew came to tell us about and to have us follow.

Now again, I just popped you prophetically into the future, I'm gonna pop you prophetically into the past. When I look at Chapters 1 & 2 of Matthew, normally I get to those chapters when we're talking about the Christmas story when we're in December. In fact, we're going to jump back into these chapters when we hit December and we tell the Christmas story again. But today because we're not focusing merely on that, I would love to share with you five prophecies that are listed in Matthew Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, and what I love about these five prophecies is you can really study these two chapters with these prophecies in mind. Each time you hit one of these prophecies in these two chapters it says just as the prophet said,<sup>3</sup> so each time I've gone through and I've underlined when it said that very thing.

So in Chapter 2 you'll read in verse 21 the message that the angel brings to Joseph where it says:

***21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.***

— Remember the meaning of Jesus, the name Jesus in the Greek? Joshua, God saves, Yahweh saves. Now the angel says hey, here's His name, here's what you'll call Him. Why? Because He will save His people. His name describes what He's going to do. And listen to the next words:

***22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:***

— And he said there's five times it says all this took place to fulfill as spoken through the prophet. And then it goes on to say:

***23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name***

— listen to the words written here, his name —

***Immanuel”  
(which means, God with us).***

**– MATTHEW 1:21-23 (ESV)**

Rewind real quick the way we began—do you feel like God's close to you? Well, um, He came to be close to you; just before He left this earth He says I'll be with you. When we put our trust in Jesus, He says I'll be with you. When we make Him the King of our life—a king is sovereign, a king rules and reigns over everything. When we say yes to Jesus we are saying yes to Him being the King of our life, sovereign over every little detail of our lives—sovereign over our kids, sovereign over our health, sovereign over our finances, sovereign over our relationships, sovereign over our job, sovereign over every need that we have—where all of that comes under His authority, under His power. And when we allow that to happen He says I'm with you. And that's the announcement, when Jesus invades your life He is Immanuel, He is God with us. It's the invitation that I just bring every week: Let Jesus into your life. For He will save His people from their sins—let Him save you from your sins. Let Him as He did on the cross take your sins upon Him and give you His righteousness. Let Him be with you.

Let me jump to the second prophecy. If you're looking at Chapter 2 and you're looking at verse 5 it says:

<sup>3</sup> "spoken by the prophet" – Matthew 1:22; Matthew 2:15, 17, 23; "written by the prophet" – Matthew 2:5

<sup>5</sup> *They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:*

**– MATTHEW 2:5 (ESV)**

What's going on here? Right at the beginning of Chapter 2 it says there's these wise men that begin to follow a star, there was actually a prophesied event in the Old Testament of something taking place, a major star event in the sky that when they saw [SNAPS HIS FINGERS] that something triggered them. These are guys, wise men from Persia, some 800-900 miles away in what we call modern Iran, they leave there and they head for Israel, a long trek, a long travel. They're priests, they're government officials, they were known in that time as the kingmakers, and when they show up they announce what they're looking for. They're looking for, verse 2 says:



<sup>2</sup> *saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it arose and have come to worship him.”*

**– MATTHEW 2:2 (ESV)**

Herod freaks out; Herod the Great, the one who is reigning over Israel at that time. What do you mean King of the Jews? He had actually been named King of the Jews, there can't be another king, there's no room for two kings, which is a key thought in all of this. Think about this in your life, there is only one king that you can be sovereign to; when you start adding another one you mess this whole thing up. Herod goes whoa, something's wrong. Now, by the way, Herod's king over all of this territory, over all of the Jews, a baby is born somewhere under the age of two and he's freaking out. He's saying to these wise men, "Where can I go find him?" And that's where the prophet and the prophecy comes in where it says hey, in Bethlehem because that's what's written by the prophet, and it goes and it lists that. That's the second prophecy mentioned here. Herod loses his mind and as a result of that there's a dream and an angel speaks to Joseph, says listen, you and Mary take this child and I want you to head out, I want you to head to Egypt.

<sup>13</sup> *Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”*

**– MATTHEW 2:13 (ESV)**

And that brings us to the third prophecy, Chapter 2, verse 15 says this:

<sup>15</sup> *and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”*

**– MATTHEW 2:15 (ESV)**

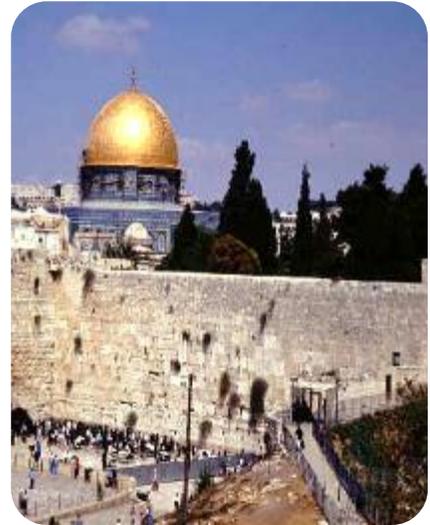
There is this picture, so, this is taking place after the birth of Jesus Christ. He goes to Egypt but this is to fulfill of prophecy out of Egypt bring my son. When was another time that the people came out of Egypt? You may remember it's the exodus where Moses leads his people out of Egypt. What was their problem there? They were under a pharaoh, they were in bondage, they were in slavery. When Jesus comes out of Israel a whole brand new picture of an exodus of people that will be led out of the bondage and slavery to sin. The pictures of the Bible and—for the people reading this who had heard those stories—putting these stories together had to be absolutely enlightening where they're going, "Wait a minute, this is fascinating. These are the stories we've heard, these are the prophecies we've heard. Also, we've heard something like this before."

We continue to fast forward, there's another prophecy and that's found in verse 17:

***17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:***

**– MATTHEW 2:17 (ESV)**

Here's what was happening. Herod freaking out—let's talk about who Herod is. This is a guy who freaks out and he says, "I want to have all the children under the age of two killed." Herod the Great was under Caesar in Rome. Rome controlled the then-known world, but there's these outposts like Israel where he has to set up these kings of those areas that are sort of like an under-king. Herod was one who was a great builder, he wanted his name to be on everything, wanted to leave a legacy with his name. There was actually an attack on the temple at that time and Herod stopped some of the soldiers from going into the temple, but he ends up putting himself into a situation where he's part of rebuilding that temple. And we read that in history that 10,000 men spent 10 years building actually the platform of the temple; those stones that actually hold up the Temple Mount where today when you look at it and you see those pictures on the news of the Wailing Wall, we're talking about that, and he builds this temple there in Israel. This is the guy who's using their tax money under the guise of "we won't make you worship the emperor if you just pay extra money" and he uses that money to build this great, big monument at the time.



**The Wailing Wall  
The Western Wall in Jerusalem**

But when he hears that there is a rival king he loses his mind and begins killing babies. I mean, to the person reading this who knows the back story, there's this reminder—you talk about the exodus that we just mentioned a moment ago, there's a backstory when Moses was born. Here's the one that's going to deliver the people out of that slavery and bondage and what's Pharaoh do? Sets up this situation to kill all the babies. It's fascinating to me how throughout history there is a constant killing of babies. The very life that we love so much, that we celebrate so much, that we hold, that we throw parties for, and yet there seems to be this ongoing okay-ness with killing of babies. And what it is—and you'll notice this—it is always a satanic attack to stop the work of God from moving ahead. Satan hates life and will do anything to shut it down, and Satan is opposed in this case to Jesus. It says in verse 18 in the prophecy fulfilled:

***18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”***

**– MATTHEW 2:18 (ESV)**

***15 Thus says the Lord: “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”***

**– JEREMIAH 31:15 (ESV)**

A fascinating picture being drawn here of Rachel, being this picture of the mothers of Israel. It reminded them and took them in the prophecy back to when their children were being taken out of Israel and deported to Babylon and the weeping of the Israeli mothers over their child being taken off. Can you imagine? And yet Satan's constantly in this business of tearing away children and babies.

Now there's one more, one more picture, but before I get there Herod is obsessed with what he has. Herod the Great with his kingdom, with his building projects, with everything he's created in his kingdom, that when that kingdom is opposed he goes to incredible lengths to stop that, even killing babies. What an incredible parallel that I want to throw out to you here. If you feel far away from God today, if you feel separated from Him, if you feel like He's not close to you, I would suggest to you that like Herod, you are so committed to your kingdom that when God steps in even though He's God, even though He's the King of kings, even though He's the one who's going to come and take over eventually, there's something here that we just want to grab onto and hold on to.

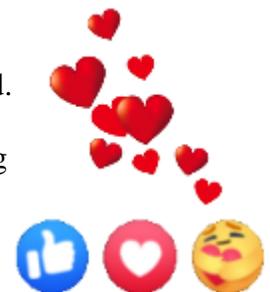
Herod should have just said, "Wow! The God of the universe has burst onto the scene in my world, in my day, wow! I ought to be a part of that." But instead he says, "No. This is my world." [FOLDS HIS ARMS ACROSS HIS CHEST] "These are my kids. This is my money. This is my relationship. And – yeah, no, the God of the universe isn't going to explode into that because I've got this and I like this." You can't have two kings, you can only have one. And that's why the one declares for ultimate allegiance, so much so they'll kill babies. And it's in that moment we have a choice which king we're going to follow.

One last prophecy, verse 23:

***23 And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.***

**– MATTHEW 2:23 (ESV)**

Herod has died, an angel again lets Joseph know through a dream he can go home, and he takes Jesus and takes him to Nazareth; it says there, "*so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled.*" Nazareth, oh, the words about Nazareth are something like this—nothing good comes out of there, no one good is there. This is not a place of influence. This isn't a place where kings come from. This isn't a place where you go to seek someone that's going to change the world. And yet the prophet said He will be despised, He will be rejected. Anytime we get despised, any time we get rejected, we think something's wrong. We see someone around us that's despised and rejected, we think something's wrong with them because in our world we want likes, we want loves, we want hearts, we want everyone to be in agreement, we want just everyone to be happy. "It's all good," we say. But Jesus would be despised, rejected. He would be punished to take on the sins of the world.



And He lives there until He begins His public ministry, which we'll move on to next week. He comes from humble origins and before He leaves this earth He says—to those who will believe in Him, those who will follow Him, people like Matthew who says, "I'm in"—He says I'll be with you. All in. You are my King. You are my sovereign King of every area. I will be with you.

So I'll end with this. What if—that area that you pinpointed at the beginning where you don't feel like God is with you in that area that when asked "Do you feel close to God?" you feel no, I'm not—what if that area that you have pinpointed is the area that you have not let King Jesus into? It's that area where you reject Him, where you say, "I've got this." It's sin. And we step back today and go, "Oh, yeah, of course, it's the sin that separated me from God way back at the beginning. That's what Jesus broke down when He came into my life. He has forgiven me of that sin. I don't have to live under that curse anymore. This is goofy me continuing to live under that curse. No wonder I feel far away from God. I want to be close to God and so I'm going to confess that sin in that area that I pinpointed where I'm not letting God in so that I can feel that closeness again."

If you've never met Him, if you've never felt that closeness in any area, this is your day to meet Him. The Scriptures say today is a day of salvation.<sup>4</sup> The angel said to Mary you'll call His name Jesus, He will save His people from their sins.<sup>5</sup> John says for God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever would believe on Him would not perish, would not die, but have everlasting life.<sup>6</sup> And that exactly the picture that the people connected with when he mentioned Abraham, God told him something that didn't make sense but he picked up his tent and started walking. And God blessed him and God made a great nation out of him, and God brought the Messiah through that. And God's saying to you today because of what Jesus did on the cross 2,000 years ago *by faith* trust in that. You go, "Oh, wow, it doesn't make a lot of sense." And we read in the New Testament our Bibles *by faith* Abraham believed God and God accounted it to him as righteousness.<sup>7</sup> And God wants to give you His righteousness because you say, "God, by faith, I don't think this makes sense but I'm going to follow it by faith because I know you're God. I'm going to give You every area."

So that area that—maybe it's with your kid, maybe it's with your health, maybe it's with your finances. Well, we're gonna give you the opportunity to give your offering right now, I mean, you just jump on the app and give that through an app. And you're saying, "God, I want You to have that part of my life, too." And that's scary and yet you stop and say, "What's scary



about that if I'm going to give Him that part of my life?" It's actually like training wheels. You say, "Okay, what's it look like if I do what He said and I give my first 10% back?" "What's it look like if I give my kids to God?" And I really, I go, you know, I'm not gonna build a life that's all about them, I'm going to train them and teach them and give them back to God and give them the tools it takes to follow Jesus Christ.

What if you give that relationship, your marriage is struggling right now, or maybe you're not even married yet but that relationship is just a mess. And you're doing it your way and you know you're doing it your way, you know this is God's way and yet you don't feel close to God when you're in that relationship, but you want to but you're afraid to lose it. You know, it's like the money. You want to have that relationship with God, you want God to tell you how to use your money, but you don't want to lose it. You want to tell your kids hey, follow Jesus and, you know, I'm going to help you, I'm going to discipline you so that you're doing it God's way—but you're afraid that they're not going to like you, you're afraid you're going to lose it. If you want to be close to God, put your trust in Jesus and trust Him in each and every area of your life. Let Him be King of kings in every area.

*Lord Jesus,*

*I pray for each person in this room right now. I pray that someone in this room today will just say, "Yes, I'm going to give my life over to Jesus" – maybe for the first time, and let You come in and reconcile them from their sins and give them your righteousness. Lord, I pray for the person of that one area, that area is like that sticking point they won't give that over to You. Lord, I pray they'll let You be King of kings in that area of your their lives today. We ask in Jesus' Name. Amen.*

<sup>4</sup> Corinthians 6:2 (ESV): *For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."*

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 1:21 (ESV): *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."*

<sup>6</sup> John 3:16 (ESV): [Jesus speaking] *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

<sup>7</sup> See Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:3, Galatians 3:6, James 2:23

## CF DOWNINGTOWN LIVE STREAM – SECOND SERVICE

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**SERIES: JESUS IS KING | WEEK 1 – ASTONISHED | 10.18.2020**

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