

EVERGREEN | SPLINTERED

DECEMBER 2, 2018

SERMON STUDY

Dive deeper into this week's message and passages from the Bible. Here are some questions to help you guide your group discussion.

Trees play a prominent role in the Bible, and in Matthew 1 we find a unique kind of tree—a family tree. Your family tree tells you who you are and where you come from.

Read Matthew 1:1-2. Jesus' family tree contained some heroes, but it also included liars, cheats, manipulators, murderers, adulterers, and prostitutes.

- Have you ever looked at your family tree? When you think about your family tree, whether it's your ancestors or immediate family, what limbs bring pain or discouragement? What limbs bring joy or hope?
- How does it make you feel to know what kind of family tree Jesus had?

Read Genesis 25:26 and Matthew 11:28-29. Jacob is a limb on Jesus' family tree. He was an unqualified hero and an important person in the bible, but he was far from perfect.

- The more out of control situations got, the more Jacob tried to control and manipulate. We do the same when we cling to money and possessions or posture and manipulate things to make ourselves look better at work. Can you relate to Jacob in any way? Why or why not?
- When life feels out of control, some of us react by worrying, stressing, lashing out, shutting down, or taking control. How do you tend to react in out-of-control situations? In what ways does your typical reaction work, and in what ways does it fail?
- In your life, do you find you are more self-reliant, or do you tend to trust God first with your circumstances? Knowing that rest is not inactivity, it's a condition of your soul, what could you start doing to rest more in Jesus versus relying on yourself?

Read Genesis 32:22-28 and Psalm 51:16-17. The details of the Christmas story found in Jesus' family tree tell us that God will not bless who you pretend to be.

- God was after with Jacob's authenticity. God ultimately redeemed, refined, and realigned Jacob through his weaknesses, not in spite of them, but it required him to be vulnerable for the first time in his life. Does defensiveness ever hinder your connection with God and others? Is there anything you need to start doing to be more real with others?
- How could you get more vulnerable with God and just be real with him? Are you willing to start resisting the urge to be in control and start taking your circumstances right to God? How can your group encourage you in going to God first rather than relying on self?

REFLECT

What is God saying to you through his word? How and when will you respond?

DAILY BIBLE READING

Need a review of what we're reading in Daily Bible Reading? Here's a glance at how we're being challenged this week.

Day One: Matthew 1:1-2 | Jesus' splintered family tree.

Day Two: Genesis 25:26 | Finding lasting peace.

Day Three: Matthew 11:28-29 | Rest in him.

Day Four: Genesis 32:22-28 | God's power in our weakness.

Day Five: Psalm 51:16-17 | A broken and repentant heart.