Sermon-based Small Groups

_____ of _____

1stPresDowntown

The Grace in Our Stories

Matthew 1:1-17

Week of September 13, 2026

This week's scripture:

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham… Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar… Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab… David the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah… So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

Scripture Reflection Questions: Read this week's scripture together and discuss the following:

- What do we learn about God (e.g., traits, personality, what matters, priorities) in this passage?
- What do we learn about people, and ourselves in particular, this week?

Sermon Reflection Questions: Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:

1. The Genesis of Jesus

The sermon highlighted that the Greek word Matthew uses is not "genealogy" but "genesis"—a deliberate echo of the first book of the Bible. Matthew is announcing a new creation, not just a family record. What does it do to your reading of the Gospel to know that Matthew intends it as a new genesis? How does that frame what Jesus has come to do?

2. A Story That Reaches Back: Abraham

The sermon noted that Matthew descends from the level of promise into the level of particulars—name by name, generation by generation—and that "in the particulars, things get complicated." This is true of our own stories as well. When you think about your own family history, where does it get complicated? How have you related to those complicated parts?

3. The Scandalous Names: Grace in the Broken Places
Matthew includes five women in his genealogy—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary—each carrying a story a careful writer might have omitted. The sermon asked: why does Matthew name them? The answer offered was that Matthew is not writing sanitized history—he is writing a testimony to grace. Which of these women's stories strikes you most powerfully, and why? What does her presence in Jesus' lineage say to you about the character of God?

The sermon posed the question: "What is the scandal in your story?" That's a personal and potentially vulnerable question. You don't need to share details, but consider: is there a part of your past—a decision, a season, a family pattern—that you have assumed disqualifies you from being fully used by God? How does Matthew's genealogy speak to that assumption?

4. The Defining Moments: Grace in the Larger Story
The sermon made a crucial distinction: God's faithfulness does not depend on Israel's faithfulness. The thread continued not because Israel was faithful, but because God was. How does that distinction land for you personally? In what area of your life do you most need to hear that God's faithfulness is not contingent on your own?

5. The Grace in Our Stories
The sermon asked: "What is the part of your story you have assumed God cannot use?" Take a moment to sit with that question together. Is there a chapter of your life—a failure, a loss, a period of wandering—that you have written off as outside the reach of grace? What would it look like to offer that part of your story to God and ask what he might be doing with it?

6. Living It Out
As we begin this fall series in Matthew together, what is one thing you hope to discover or understand more deeply about Jesus? And is there a specific part of your own story—a question, a wound, a longing—that you are bringing into this series, hoping the Gospel might speak to it?