Stuff They Didn't Teach Me In Sunday School

Episode 123 - Who Would Listen to a Traitor?

(Matthew 1:1-17)

Matthew's Facet

Each Gospel writer was led by the Holy Spirit to show us a different facet of Jesus Christ. Matthew shows us a Jewish tax collector's point of view, as he reveals Jesus to a Jewish audience well versed in the Old Testament.

- What is strange about Jesus choosing a tax collector—a man most Jews considered a traitor—to be one of His 12 disciples?
- How does Matthew's status as a tax collector actually add credibility to his account?
- Why might Matthew have felt led to write to the very people who considered him a traitor?

Jesus' Genealogy

Matthew starts his Gospel where most any Jewish reader would want him to: he establishes Jesus' credentials. Since the Old Testament prophesied the Messiah would be from the tribe of Judah, and a descendant of King David, Matthew makes it clear Jesus met all those requirements.

- Why were genealogies such a big deal in antiquity?
- Why do people research their family tree today?

Skeletons in Jesus' Closet

Jesus' holiness clearly didn't come from His ancestry. His line includes people guilty of incest, prostitution and murder.

- Why wouldn't God want a purer genealogy for His Son?
- What difficulties does a person face when they have skeletons hanging in their family's closet?
- What comfort can you take from Jesus being willing to come from such a genealogy?

Matthew's Weird Math

Matthew claims there were 14 generations between Abraham and David, 14 between David and the Babylonian exile, and 14 between the exile and the birth of Jesus.

- Why do our Western minds have trouble with Matthew skipping three generations in the middle?
- How would you answer someone who stumbles over this point?
- What is the beauty of seeing God start a new thing for the world, just as He did with each of these sets of 14?