



A Christmas Sermon

Suggestion: begin with a personal story of when you had to wait for something.

Waiting can be hard. At Christmastime, waiting to open presents can be especially hard.

How many days before Christmas do you start wrapping presents? And who starts counting down how many 'sleeps' you have left until the big day?

Did you know that in their lifetime, the average person spends around 8,000 days asleep! That was one of the first things Jesus did on earth – sleep!

We also spend around 1,000 days eating. I wonder how much of that is made up of Christmas dinners?

One thing we'll maybe never know is how much time in our lives we spend waiting. Waiting at the petrol station to fill up our tanks. Waiting at the supermarket checkout for the person in front of us to pack their bags. Waiting to open Christmas presents. We spend a lot of our lives waiting.

The Bible is full of people that waited. For over 400 years, people waited for the birth of Jesus. They were anticipating a time when a king would be born to rescue them from their enemies.

In the first book of the New Testament, Matthew, the first thing that's written down is a large group of people who were Jesus' ancestors.

They are the messy, but royal, family tree of Jesus. We hear about Tamar, the prostitute Rahab, a royal king David, and an old man called Abraham.

You may have heard of Abraham before? His story is in the very first book of the Bible, Genesis. It's a messy story that also involves a lot of waiting. He and his wife Sarai want to be parents, but Sarai is unable to conceive a child. But one day, God speaks to him and tells him that he will be a father. Can you imagine how excited he must have been? He was 75 years old, and being promised a child at last.

Time goes by, and life goes on for Abram and Sarai. They move house, their nephew is abducted, Abram goes on a rescue mission, he defeats kings in battle, and he makes royal friends. You know - typical, ordinary life. But still no baby.



They receive more promises from God. God tells Abram that his descendants will be more numerous than the stars in the sky; there will be even more of them than the sand on the shore. But Abram is still waiting for his first child.

Doubt kicks in and a messy scenario unfolds. Abram's wife Sarai tells him to sleep with another woman, Hagar, and have a child with her. It's a success! Baby Ishmael appears the same year that Abram turns 86. Eleven years after God's first promise. But despite all going to plan, it wasn't God's plan.

Eventually, God gets specific with Abram. He tells him he will have a son with Sarai, and he will call him Isaac. He also gives them new names; Abram becomes Abraham, and Sarai become Sarah. Fast-forward, and 100-year-old Abraham is celebrating with his 90-year-old wife Sarah at the arrival of their son, Isaac.

He was worth the wait! This was the messy start of a family leading to Jesus. Through Abram's descendants, Jesus would one day be born.

In Jesus' family tree in Matthew, we also come across King David. As a youngster, David had always been an irrelevant one in his family. The one whose own father didn't even mention him when Samuel, a man sent by God, came asking to see his sons. Samuel was looking for the future king, but David's father presented all of his sons except for David. Really, David's own father didn't even believe in him. But that didn't stop God.

Just like God made an enormous promise to Abraham, he made an enormous promise to David. God promised firstly to make him king, and secondly that through his descendants, there would arrive a King of Kings. This King wouldn't rule only Israel, but the entire world. And not only would he rule the world, but he would save the people of the world from all of their mess. But again, the promises didn't come true right away; David had to wait 15 years to become king. And then it took much longer than that for the King of Kings to arrive. But the King of Kings, like Isaac, was well worth the wait! The King of Kings was baby Jesus.

Jesus was born but the world around him was a bit of a mess. The king of Israel, Herod, was threatened by the news of Jesus. People were going to worship this baby, calling him King. Herod was raging with jealousy and wanted to kill Jesus, and he was the first of many people who wished to do the same. So for the 33 years he lived on earth, Jesus was surrounded by a messy world.



Why is this baby Jesus so important? Born into a messy world, with a messy family history, he arrived to clean up our mess. Not a kind of Christmas mess like wrapping paper across the living room floor, or the dishes after Christmas lunch. He came for our messy lives.

Matthew 1.21 says that Jesus has come to save people from their mess. This means their mistakes, their wrong decisions, and their shame. He comes to exchange the mess for hope, peace and love. He was, as is, the promise. The promise of new life.

David and Abraham's lives were far from perfect. David's dad didn't believe in him. David started out as a 'nobody'. Abraham's promises from God always seemed to fall flat, year after year. But God didn't need perfect people to fulfil his plan. He didn't need their lives to be neat and tidy. And God doesn't need our lives to be neat and tidy, either. God knows that we aren't very good at keeping our lives free from mess, so he promises us a way to be part of his royal family even if we're not very good at being royal.

God weaved a story of hope, through an old man Abraham, and an unexpected king, David. He presented Jesus, his only son, to pay the price for all of the mess we have created, and even the mess we still create today.

God promised the world a saviour, and he came through on his promise. Jesus enables us to be forgiven, and to exchange all of our mess for his peace. God also promises that one day, he will wipe away every tear from his people and live with them forever. But now we continue to be the family of Jesus, sharing the good news until he comes again. We get to be Abraham's descendants, sharing the hope and peace of Jesus with everyone.

Maybe this Christmas, instead of waiting for the next big thing, or the next big celebration, we can be at peace because of our King of Kings, Jesus, who offers life in all its fullness. We can know that the mess in our own lives is no barrier to God. His family is not limited to the elite, to the royal and famous. His family extends to the old and young, rich and poor. Through Jesus, despite what our lives may look like, if we choose to accept his invitation then we ourselves become 'royal'. And this Christmas, you are warmly invited not only to join in the celebration, but to join the family and to play your part. The messy, royal family of God.