

John Sampson
Giving Birth to Love”
Text: Matthew 1:1 - 19
Preached at KVCC
October 28, 2018

Will you pray with me?

God may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable to you our rock and our redeemer.

Amen.

There is nothing more off putting to a modern reading of the Bible than a genealogy like the one we just heard. Generation after generation of hard to pronounce names, droning on without any kind of story to keep our interest, this is the kind of thing that can make someone who picks up the Bible with high hopes, put it down not long after in favor of almost anything else.

But I wanted to share this passage with all of you this morning because I think it tells a beautiful story that can show us how we, all of us here this morning, have a role to play in nothing less than the sacred work of giving birth to love in this world

You see the genealogy we just heard tells us that little by little we can have a part in transforming the world. Only some of the people who were Jesus’ ancestors were good, upstanding citizens. His lineage includes a man who sacrificed children to a bloodthirsty god, it includes an adulterer who killed the husband of the woman he wanted for his own, it includes a prostitute. Jesus ancestry also includes people of Israel, and people from other lands. It includes men and women who were extraordinary, and some who were so ordinary we don’t know much beyond their name.

But year after year, and generation after generation, living their lives as best they could, these people slowly and surely gave birth to a man who would tell us that love is the most basic and powerful force in all of Creation. This man, would rip away the curtains of our conventions and show us the unimagined: that it is the peacemakers, and not the warriors, who will ultimately inherit our world. This genealogy we just heard tells us that the man Jesus was born to people just like us, right in the middle of a crazy world, just like this one.

And then it ends.

This genealogy that spans centuries and shows us how Jesus, how the one who teaches us to love God with all of our being and also our neighbors as ourselves, ends as if the work of love completes and is fulfilled with the life of the one we call the Christ.

But love never ends.

It is the timeless work of those who try to follow Jesus.

Love is the work that we have been given by our teacher, as the greatest of all disciplines.

Several weeks ago I asked all of you to begin to think about the future of our congregation. Where are we going as a community? What do we want our church to become over the next months, and years? How do we want to take up the work of love together? And I asked you to think about these kinds of questions, and to pray about them, and to open your hearts to where you feel the spirit of God leading us.

Well now is the time when I am going to ask that you share what you have been thinking about. Now is the time when we're going to harvest the spiritual work we've been doing within our hearts.

In each of your bulletins you should have received a slip of paper, and you should have also been given a pen when you came to worship today. If you are missing either of these things please raise your hand and an usher can provide you with what you need.

I'd like each of you to take a minute and think about where you feel how we're being invited into the work of love as a community and then write down your thoughts on the slips of paper provided. Once you're done. Please feel free to come up and place your slips in this basket. You don't need to sign your name on your slip, unless you want to. And these slips will be shared with the Church Council during our visioning work, which will be part of our November 10 retreat.

So now let us begin.

[People write ideas.]

Thank you for sharing your ideas and thoughts, your hopes and concerns about the future of our congregation. And if you think of any other ideas you'd like to share between now and November 10, feel free to email them to me.

These slips of paper represent the hopes and the dreams of our generations. They say that the lineage of Love never ends, but has continued on just as strong from Jesus. We may not be descendants of his blood, but we certainly are children of his spirit.

Amen.

