

Text of a message delivered by Grant Harris at Windsor Park Baptist Church on Sunday 5th October 2025.
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Jesus: Prepared & Proven

Luke 3:1 - 4:13

This week in our *King and Kingdom Come* series, we look at Luke 3:1–4:13. Luke shows us that Jesus is prepared and validated for His mission through John’s preaching, his baptism, his genealogy, and his testing in the wilderness. Jesus’ genealogy reminds us that he belongs to all humanity, enters our broken family stories, and offers us a new identity as children of God.

Jesus’ whakapapa becomes ours, and that changes everything.

Introduction: Recapping our series

Today is Week 3 of a series called **King and Kingdom Come** as we continue to walk through the **Gospel of Luke**. When I started this series two weeks ago, I said that the first chapter of Luke was like a trailer for a book that contains 35% more material than any of the other gospels, which is why it’ll take a while to get through it! In that first message I outlined three big themes that we’ll see repeatedly over the next 18 months, and today I’m going to expand on the first of those themes, that **GOD WORKS WITH ORDINARY PEOPLE**.

Last week, Aidan looked at Luke Chapter 2 that contains the very popular Christmas story, but he focussed on Verses 21-31 where Jesus was presented to the priest, Simeon, in the temple,

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as was the custom of the day – and we saw an ordinary person's life be transformed when he saw the promised Messiah. This emphasises how Luke spends a lot of time giving authenticity to Jesus, which really is just unpacking Chapter 1 Verse 3 when he said, "***I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning.***" Luke is wanting Theophilus, and latterly us, to get a solid understanding of who Jesus was as the fulfilment of prophecy, and the difference he [potentially] makes to all people.

Spiritual growth

By looking at the story of Simeon you'll see that we're mostly trying to give you pointers towards the big themes of Luke that highlight why this gospel is often called the *social gospel*, or the *gospel of mercy*. We want to help you get started, and at the end of our texts that are available online every week, we give you some questions to think about and some links to further resources – spiritual growth is ultimately your responsibility and is so much more than a 25-minute message like this, so we're just prodding you in the right direction.

Luke Chapter 3 – 4:13

Today I'm covering another big section – Chapter 3 through to Chapter 4 Verse 13 which contains four big stories that set up the public ministry of Jesus. Interestingly, we don't see Jesus as an adult until Chapter 4 Verse 18, although we do see him back in Chapter 2 Verse 46 as a 12-year-old, "***In the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.***" It takes almost 3½ chapters before we see Jesus as an adult, such is the long introduction that Luke gives us.

Looking at this section, the overarching theme is a continuance of the preparation and validation of Jesus for his public ministry, which flows through several connected stories:

1. **Firstly, John the Baptist's ministry (3:1-20)** establishes the context of repentance and preparation, with John pointing beyond himself to the "***one more powerful***" who is coming. This sets up the expectation and need for the Messiah.

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2. **Secondly, Jesus' baptism (3:21-22)** represents his identification with humanity and his official commissioning, marked by the Holy Spirit's descent and the Father's declaration of approval, "***You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.***"
3. **Thirdly, Jesus' genealogy (3:23-38)** validates his credentials by tracing his lineage back to Adam, emphasising his connection to all humanity and his fulfilment of messianic expectations. More on this shortly.
4. **Lastly, the temptation in the wilderness (4:1-13)** demonstrates Jesus' qualification for ministry by showing his resistance to the same temptations that have historically led humanity astray - the desire for *provision, power, and prestige*.

These stories show Jesus moving from private preparation to divine validation, to public readiness, having proven himself capable of the mission ahead. This theme of preparation and validation creates the foundation for everything that will follow in Luke's account of Jesus' public ministry, which we get to in the next part of our series.

The genealogy of Jesus

While all these four sections are significant in themselves and worthy of deeper exploration, today I'm focussing on the section that supports the theme I've already mentioned, that **God works with the ordinary**. I'm looking at Verses 23-38, **the genealogy of Jesus section**. These are verses that we often skip, but this genealogy is imbedded with huge significance.

Of course, genealogies of Jesus aren't unique to Luke, as Matthew also records a long genealogy, but the two are strikingly different. Matthew *begins* with Abraham and moves *forward* to Jesus, tracing the royal line through David's son Solomon and highlighting Jesus as the rightful King of Israel, which was vital for the Jewish audience that Matthew was writing to.

Luke, on the other hand, *begins* with Jesus and moves *back*, tracing the line through David's son Nathan all the way **back** to Adam, with the intent purpose of showing a Gentile audience that Jesus belongs not just to Israel, but to all humanity. Even the details differ as Matthew names Joseph's father as Jacob, while Luke calls him Heli, because one is focused on the legal, royal

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line and the other on the biological, human connection. Very different ways of telling the same story.

Together though, these genealogies give us a fuller picture of who Jesus is. Matthew reminds us that Jesus fulfils the promises made to Abraham and David; He is the long-awaited Messiah, the true King. Luke shows us that Jesus is more than Israel's Messiah; He is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, connected to every single one of us through Adam. The two accounts are complementary, revealing Jesus as both the King of God's covenant people and the Redeemer of *all people and all nations* ... which, as I keep repeating, is one of the biggest themes for Luke – **God works with ordinary people!**

Luke isn't just filling space by writing something different to Matthew, he's preaching to us. He's telling us something profound about Jesus, about humanity, and about us:

1. He's telling us that Jesus belongs to the whole human family.

Here in Aotearoa, *whakapapa* is deeply important, because for Māori, who we still have a lot to learn from, it forms the core of their identity, establishing connections between individuals, ancestors, land, and the wider universe. It provides a framework for understanding history, culture, and spiritual beliefs. By tracing genealogical lines [whakapapa], people understand their tūpuna (ancestors), their whānau (family), and their whenua (land). Understanding whakapapa provides a place of belonging which gives a strong sense of identity.

My Dad passed away one year ago last Friday, and over the last year, I've been trying to sort all his ... stuff. I've recently brought home a small box of medals – his NZ Army Service Medal from when military service was compulsory and several of my ancestor's medals from the 1st & 2nd World Wars. I'm learning more about my whakapapa and their place in the world, which then builds my own story, and then that of my children and grandchildren. It strengthens my sense of identity knowing the stories of those who have come before me.

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In this genealogy Luke is not saying that Jesus' whakapapa is about one nation or one family – Luke wants us to see that Jesus isn't just the Messiah for Israel, Jesus is for the *whole world* because his whakapapa stretches all the way back to Adam, therefore his story is linked with every human being. Jesus' whakapapa embraces you and me, and in a world that continues to crave identity, perhaps more than ever, I cannot overemphasise how revolutionary this could be, not just in our lives but in the lives of those who we know who are trying to find meaning and identity in the things of this world, which always falls short. Jesus is the answer for the world today, above him there is no other, Jesus is the way. This is the cry of Luke's heart. **He's telling us that Jesus belongs to the whole human family.**

2. Secondly, Luke goes to great lengths to show us that Jesus enters a broken family tree.

Let's be honest, Jesus' whakapapa isn't tidy. There are definitely heroes of faith in the list, but there are also plenty of failures and ordinary people. In this genealogy we see that:

- **Jesus came for the forgotten.** Names like *Admin, Mattathah, Menna, Esli, Naggai, Josech* are names we barely know with no famous stories, no great victories. God weaves His story not just through kings and prophets, but through ordinary and unknown people.
- We can also see that **Jesus came for the faithful and the flawed.** Names like *Noah, Shem, Enoch, David, Abraham* show that some were faithful (Noah built an ark, Enoch walked with God), and yet others were deeply flawed (David's sin, Abraham's failures). The genealogy holds together saints and sinners, and Jesus claims both as family.

You don't have to have a spotless past to belong in God's family. Jesus' whakapapa includes kings and shepherds, the famous and the forgotten, the faithful and the flawed. It's not neat. It's real. And Jesus steps right into that line. He doesn't avoid the mess. He embraces it. He carries it. He redeems it. Jesus came for broken people. You may feel invisible, overlooked, or insignificant, but in God's story, no one is forgotten.

In our own whānau stories, there are people we celebrate - pioneers, achievers, people of mana, people who got medals, and there are people whose stories we whisper about, the uncle

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who disappeared, the cousin who struggled, the scandal nobody talks about, the skeletons in the closet. Jesus looks at the whole family album and says, *"I'll take it. I'll make it new."* This is good news for us in Aotearoa too as our whakapapa includes both *mana* and *mamae*, glory and grief, but Jesus steps into our history and says, *"I can bring healing and restoration."*

3. Thirdly, the restoration Jesus talks about is a new identity.

Luke's genealogy ends with Verse 38, ***"Adam, the son of God."*** By ending here, Luke is pointing forwards ... Jesus is the true Son of God who restores us to God's family. Again, when we look across the genealogies of Jesus in Scripture, we see something radical. His whakapapa includes not only the great patriarchs and kings, but also the outsiders, the broken, and the unexpected. These names are intended to powerfully remind us that Jesus' family tree is not only Jewish, not only male, not only *"respectable."* It's wide enough to include women, Gentiles, the broken, the forgotten, and the outsider.

So, again, if you've ever felt like you don't belong, if you've ever felt like your background disqualifies you, if you've ever felt like you're an outsider - **look at this genealogy.** It already includes people like you. And when you put your faith in Jesus, you're not just tolerated, you're adopted, named, and honoured as a child of God. This is what Paul means when he talks about adoption in Romans 8 or being grafted into God's people in Romans 11. Through faith in Christ, we become heirs with him and part of his family story. We carry the name. We share the inheritance. That's what God does for us through Jesus.

Which story are you living in?

So, here's the question: which family story are you living in?

- Some of us live trapped in the failures of our whānau. *"I'll always repeat their mistakes."*
- Some of us live trapped in shame from our own past. *"God could never use me."*
- Some of us live thinking our worth depends on our background, our achievements, or our name.

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But Luke says: through Jesus, you have a new family. You have a new Father. You have a new inheritance. When God looks at you through Jesus, He sees *tamaiti* - His child. He sees *taonga* - treasure. He sees an *heir* - an inheritor of His kingdom.

Stop living as if your life is chained to your past. Start living as if your life is rooted in Jesus. The whakapapa that Luke gives us, like no one else does, is our new beginning. And as we journey through the rest of Luke, this will be reiterated to us time-and-time again in the ordinary people that Luke emphasises are touched, sometimes literally, by Jesus. It really is good news.

Conclusion – The Family Tree That Changes Everything

So next time you see a genealogy in the Bible, don't skip over it. These aren't just names, it's God's story of redemption written through history to all people.

I hope that we all decide to take our place in Jesus' whakapapa, because once we do, everything changes. Taking our place begins with a decision, to turn from living for ourselves and trusting in Jesus as our Saviour and Lord. It means believing that his death and resurrection make us part of God's family. If you've never made that decision, today could be the day you step into your new identity as a child of God.

Amen.

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Reflecting on Sunday 28th September 2025: Last week Aidan talked about the **radical inclusivity** of the gospel invitation. Who did you think about who might still be (or feel) excluded from the way of Jesus or Christian community, and what did you do about that?

These questions help you think more about this message. We hope they might be a conduit for conversation and reflection, encouraging us to wrestle with how this message might practically work itself out in our lives.

1. How has your understanding of your own family history (whakapapa) shaped your sense of identity, and what would it mean for you to let Jesus' genealogy become your primary source of belonging?
2. Which part of Jesus' "broken family tree" do you most relate to - the forgotten, the flawed, or the faithful, and why is it difficult to believe God can work through your particular story?
3. What specific failure, shame, or background limitation are you currently allowing to define you more powerfully than your identity as God's adopted child?
4. If you genuinely believed Luke's message that "no one is forgotten" in God's story, what practical risk would you take this week that you've been avoiding due to feelings of inadequacy or insignificance?

If you'd like to chat with someone about your spiritual journey or anything else going on in your life, please contact us at care@windsorpark.org.nz; **we're better together** and **no perfect people are allowed.**

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Below are some further resources that may take the message further and deeper and enable you to explore other viewpoints on the same theme. We also encourage you to engage with the preacher if there are further questions you have or if you'd like clarification on anything. Email us here info@windsorpark.org.nz and we'll direct your query to the appropriate person.

1. In this message, Grant speaks about the significance of the genealogy in the Gospel of Luke, and touches on the significance of the same genealogy in the Gospel of Matthew. **The Bible Project** dives into **Matthew's genealogy** which provides us with some more information on why both genealogies are so critical in the Bible, and what Matthew seeks to communicate. Click here to learn more: <https://bibleproject.com/articles/jesus-genealogies/>
2. For a longer article on the differences between Matthew & Luke's genealogies, read this article called, **Jesus' Genealogies in Matthew and Luke: Why does Jesus have two different genealogies?** <https://answersingenesis.org/jesus/jesus-genealogies-in-matthew-and-luke/?srsltid=AfmBOoqEalt6mFqnA0vPqFdsg7XC92sldlNXT5lnZoTaDmMJBkxYf8B>
3. Rightnow Media contains some great resources related to identity. **Transformed: Our New Christian Identity** featuring Mawuli Tsikata is a good place to start. Here's the description: *You may look the same on the outside. You may feel the same on the inside. But as a believer, you've been given a new identity. In this three-part series, Mawuli Tsikata explores the idea of spiritual rebirth and digs into how the gospel transforms our past, present, and future.* Check it out here: <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/918109>