

Matthew 3:13-17

I. The Baptism of Jesus was purposeful v13

Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him.

1. He arrived from Galilee, at the Jordan
 - a. He did not just stumble upon John
 - b. He intentionally traveled from the region of Galilee which was in the northern part of the region
 - c. Down through, or around Samaria, and to the wilderness of Judea to the Jordan
2. He went on purpose for a purpose: to be baptized specifically by this man: John.

II. The Baptism of Jesus was permissible v14-15

But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" 15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.

John has been heralding the coming of the king and the kingdom of heaven.

1. Now, the one he has been preaching about, pointing people to look for and wait for and long for emerges and enters the water to be baptized by him.
2. John immediately tries to turn Jesus away.
 - a. John had a baptism of repentance. Why would I need to baptize you Jesus? You have nothing to repent of!
 - b. Not only do I not need to baptize you... I need you to baptize me!

Why is it necessary for Jesus to be baptized? That is John's question too. There are 3 potential reasons.

1. To manifest Himself as the Messiah

- a. John is baptizing in order to give Jesus a clear way to manifest himself to the people
- b. John 1:29-31 *The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' 31 I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water."*

2. To identify with sinners.

- a. He did not come to be at arm's length, but to dwell among us and sympathize with us.
- b. 2 Cor 5:21 *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

3. To give us an example to follow.

- a. This is how we publicly profess our faith in Christ...through baptism
- b. This is our first act of obedience to Christ.
- c. Jesus identified with us by subjecting himself to baptism, we identify with Jesus by following him in believer's baptism

III. The Baptism of Jesus was powerful v16-17

16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

1. The heavens were opened

- a. Literally they were torn open or ripped apart.
- b. This was a powerful display
- c. Isaiah 64:1 *Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, That the mountains might quake at Your presence*
- d. He did! At the baptism.

2. The Spirit of God descends

- a. The Spirit of God had been on Christ before he was ever born.
- b. This was not the Holy Spirit coming upon Him...finally...so that He is now ready to do ministry.
- c. This didn't occur so much for His benefit as for the benefit of the people
- d. This was a visible testimony of the fact that Jesus was the Messiah.
- e. Isaiah 61:1 *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;*
- f. John 1:32-33 *John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. 33 I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'*

3. The voice of God speaks

- a. The audible voice of God booms from heaven: This is my beloved Son!
- b. Isn't this amazing...God the Father's voice is heard testifying to the Sonship of Christ.

In this passage of Scripture we are given special insight into the doctrine of the Trinity.

1. The Son is present in bodily form, The Holy Spirit descends upon Him, and the Father Speaks over Him...all three persons of the Trinity are present at one time.
 - a. So it is not as if God is Father in the Old Testament, Son in the Gospels and Holy Spirit in the church age.
 - b. No, the One True God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all at one time all the time.
2. The One True God is 3 persons who are all equal and fully God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - a. The Father is God, but He is not God the Son or God the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The Son is God, but He is not God the Father or God the Holy Spirit
 - c. The Holy Spirit is God, but He is not God the Father or God the Son
 - d. These three are The One True God: and we baptize in the name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit



We believe that baptism is by immersion.

1. The Greek word used here means “to plunge, dip, immerse” something in water.
2. The way that baptize is used in the New Testament implies immersion.
 - a. Mark 1:5 *And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins*
 - b. The Greek text has “in,” and not “beside” or “by” or “near” the river
 - c. Mark 1:10 *And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.*
 - d. John 3:23 *John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized*
 - e. Acts 8:36-39 *And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing*
3. The symbolism of baptism seems to require immersion.
 - a. Rom 6:3-4 *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*
 - b. Col 2:12 *having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.*

We believe that baptism is for believers.

It is assumed by paedobaptists that infants were present in the households of Lydia, the Philippian jailer, Stephanas, etc., but the Bible doesn't clearly mention any, so we presume...it is dangerous to presume.

The narrative examples of those who were baptized suggest that baptism was administered only to those who gave a believable profession of faith.

1. Acts 2:41 *So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*
2. Acts 8:12 *But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women*
3. Acts 10:44-48 *While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. 45 And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. 46 For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, 47 "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.*
4. Based on these texts is there ANY possibility that we could be in error by baptizing believers?
5. Now, is there any possibility that people could be in error by baptizing infants?
6. Let's be safe, rather than sorry.

We believe that baptism is not a saving act, but an obedient act.

Obviously baptism is extremely important.

1. It is a public profession of a personal transformation.
2. There was a pattern for baptism in the NT.
 - a. Acts 2:37-38 *Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you*
 - b. Acts 8:12 *But when they believed Philip they were baptized, both men and women*
 - c. The Ethiopian Eunuch
 - d. The Philippian Jailer
 - e. Lydia
3. It is a public profession of a personal transformation that has already taken place and is done in obedience to the command of Jesus.

Conclusion: Some of you need to be baptized...

1. Jesus' set a purposeful and powerful example for us to follow in His baptism.
2. The reality this morning is that some of you need to be baptized, as believers, by immersion in obedience to Christ.
 - a. You know who you are. You have never been baptized by immersion as believers.
 1. Maybe you were baptized as an infant
 2. Maybe you were never immersed and God is leading you to do so.
 - b. We are going to ask you to step out and respond!
3. Some of you profess to be born again and yet have never been baptized.
 - a. You might be telling yourself, The thief of the cross was not baptized
 - b. But keep in mind he was a dying thief...not a living one.
 - c. You are not saved and content unless you have been saved and baptized.
 - d. 1 Peter 3:21 *Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*
 1. Baptism does not save you.
 2. Baptism is our outward appeal to God, our public appeal or profession
 3. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
 4. For a good conscience!
 - e. There is no good conscience for us if we are relying on the resurrection of Jesus apart from the public appeal or outward profession of our faith in the resurrection through baptism.
4. Some of you know that you have not been obedient and your conscience is not clear before the Lord regarding your baptism....we are going to ask you to respond this morning as we sing.

Discussion Questions:

1. What did you learn about God in this sermon and in the biblical texts used? About Christ? About the Holy Spirit?
2. What did you learn about yourself in this sermon and in the texts used?
3. Were there any clear promises or commands in the biblical texts used?
4. What is the hardest truth that stands out to you from this message or the verses referenced?
5. What is the most impactful point or statement from the sermon?
6. How can you respond to this message?