

Remnant Life Church  
May 6, 2018  
**Why Was Jesus Baptized?**  
Matthew 3:13-17

Consider this question – “Why was Jesus baptized?”

- When we are baptized we are declaring and demonstrating our commitment and gratitude to Jesus Christ for saving us from our sins
  - We are also identifying with Him, for what He did for us, transforming us into a brand-new person
  - We are publicly saying, “I am not ashamed!”
- But none of those applied to Jesus
  - Jesus was sinless His entire life
    - **2 Cor 5:21** - *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
  - Jesus did not need be transformed
    - **2 Cor 3:18** - *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*
  - Jesus certainly was never ashamed of who He was and why He had come

**READ – Matthew 3:13-17**

- To answer our question requires us to look at another man first – John the Baptist
  - Mary, the mother of Jesus; Elizabeth, the mother of John were related (**Luke 1:36** – kinsman or cousin)
  - That made Jesus and John cousins which means they most likely grew up together or at the least spent a lot of time together (John 6 months older – **Luke 1:36**)
- When John grew up he began his ministry to proclaim the coming of the Messiah – there was no question what he would do
  - The prophet Isaiah foretold his work 700 years earlier (**Isa 40:3**)
  - It was what he had been born to do
    - He knew what his calling was - **John 1:31** - *...the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.*
- And so on this particular day John is baptizing in the Jordon river and imagine how excited he would have been to see the very One he had been talking about coming towards him
  - What would Jesus say?
  - What would He do?
  - The One who John had been saying, (**Mark 1:7-8**) *“After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”*
  - John has been saying that he is not even worthy to unstrap Jesus’ sandals – the job of the lowest house-servant!
  - But instead, Jesus comes up to John and says, “I need you to baptize me.” (**Matt 3:13**)

- How John has responded to that?
- Probably froze with a look of confusion or bewilderment on his face
- This would be like you bragging to all your friends about this rich uncle you have that lives in a great mansion, is always buying lavish things, drives the hottest car, is always buying you great stuff and when your uncle arrives he walks up to you and says, “Hey, can I borrow \$20 bucks, I need to put some gas in the car?”

### So why did Jesus come to be baptized?

1. Just as we identify with Jesus when we are baptized so did He identify with all of us.
  - a. Jesus got in line with sinners
  - b. To them He was just another man who recognized his need for a savior
    - i. But actually, Jesus was preparing to pay the price for the sins of all those people
    - ii. If someone takes the check at the end of a meal and puts it under their plate or next to them what are they saying?
      1. I’m paying the entire bill
      2. Your meal is covered
    - iii. Jesus said the same thing when he stepped into the Jordon River
      1. The payment of the bill would not come due for another 3 years
      2. But when it did it cost Jesus everything
      3. But he paid it willingly for every one of them in that river, for every person who ever lived and for you and for me
    - iv. But He would do more than simply identify with us when He went to the cross
      1. He would take the sin of the world on Himself
      2. More than the physical and emotional pain agony, He would be separated from His Father - willingly
    - v. He knew all of this when He approached John and entered the water
      1. You see Jesus was very purposeful in His actions
      2. He was not walking along the road and suddenly realized His cousin was in the Jordon baptizing people
      3. He walked nearly 60 miles from Galilee to the Jordon river where John was
  - c. So the first reason Jesus was baptized was to identify
2. Second, Jesus was baptized to exemplify (means to demonstrate or be an example)
  - a. At first John was not going to do what Jesus asked
  - b. Verse 15 - Jesus replied, “*Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.*” Then John consented.
  - c. What does that mean?
    - i. “righteousness” in Jesus’ time was used as a synonym for a new life
    - ii. That new life was about a relationship with God characterized by living in obedience to God’s Word

- iii. John baptized people as an admission of their sin and repentance – obedience
  - iv. Jesus did not need to repent of His sins but He demonstrated what it was to walk in total obedience
  - v. First reason – to identify; the second was to exemplify
3. Finally, Jesus was baptized to be edified by His Father in a public ordination
- a. **Matt 3:16-17** - *As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*
  - b. Jesus is being set apart (ordained) in a way that no one had ever witnessed
    - i. The voice of God
    - ii. The Holy spirit in the form of a dove
    - iii. The Man Jesus Christ
  - c. This is the only physical representation of the trinity given in the Bible
  - d. But also, look what God called Jesus – My Son
  - e. We too are a child of God when we give our lives to Him
    - i. When we receive Jesus, Paul writes, *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:16-17a)*
    - ii. Just as He loves His Son, He loves you, His son, His daughter
  - f. Jesus’ baptism marked the beginning of His ministry – it was a turning point, if you will, in His life

BUT YOU MUST REMEMBER – baptism is not a holy eraser that gives us the green light to act any way we want to.

- It is not an act that brings forgiveness for our sins
  - It is an outward demonstration by someone who has confessed their sins and been forgiven by the shed blood of Jesus Christ
- Our hearts and our repentance must be genuine
- **Matt 3:7-8** - But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: *“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*
- John would never baptize any of them that were not truly repentant in their hearts for their sins
- So again, when baptized, we are willingly leaving the old behind and embracing a new attitude, a new focus, a new priority in our lives – to live every day for Jesus Christ.

In her famous book and film, “The Hiding Place” Corrie ten Boom tells the story of a Dutch Christian family, her family, who had a heart for the Jewish people.

Her grandfather Wilhelm started a weekly prayer group in 1844 in the city of Haarlem, near Amsterdam for the salvation of the Jews. And this weekly prayer meeting continued

uninterrupted until 1944 - when the entire ten Boon family were sent to a concentration camp - for helping Jews to flee from the Nazi persecution in Holland.

Corrie tells a curious story about her father Caspar ten Boon. When the Nazis forced the Jews to wear the "Star of David," Casper, who was not Jewish, lined up to receive one as well. He wore it because he wanted to identify himself with the people for whom he and his family had been praying for all those years. He was prepared to be so completely identified with the Jews that he was willing to wear a sign of shame and suffer persecution and death for the sake of the people he loved. He didn't HAVE to wear the Star but chose to.

And in that story, we are given perhaps the clearest reason why Jesus was baptized. He didn't HAVE to get baptized as a sign of repentance and turning from sin – because he was already sinless.

He didn't HAVE to be baptized as a sign that He was now leaving his past behind and following God – because His life was already completely and totally in tune with His Father's.

But, like Caspar ten Boon did much later, Jesus was baptized to identify with a fallen, lost, and broken people – a people that He loved.

And so, it with that knowledge and understanding that we come to the communion table this morning.