

Imagine a loving Father

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and Fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand. And he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Matthew 3:11-12

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. Matthew 3:13-15

➤ Matthew defines righteousness as living right or obedient before God.

When Jesus said to John, **“It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all “righteousness”**, even if John didn’t fully understand why, he did it out of “righteousness” or “obedience” to Jesus, just as Jesus did it out of “righteousness” or “obedience” to God.

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.” Matthew 3:16-17

As Jesus is obedient to baptism we hear and learn three things about the Father’s heart for Jesus.

1. God identifies with Jesus.

“This is my son.”

- It was out of Jesus’ understanding of whose He was that He could confidently live out the life God had called him to live.
- The key point here is that not only does God identify with Jesus, God identifies with us through Jesus.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

²⁹ And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:26-29

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. Matthew 16:24

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

- If we are going to truly identify with the Father, we must submit to Him.

2. God loves Jesus.

“This is my Son, whom I love...” Matthew 3:17

- Jesus' identity is anchored in the Word of God as God's Son and Jesus identity is anchored in the love of God that was spoken over him.

This is the reminder God gives Jesus, and it is also the reminder He gives us.

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” 1John 3:1

- When we let God's love shape our lives, God's love will do more in us and through us than we could have ever imagined.
- The fact that Jesus was God's loved son is crucial, because it is that identity that allows Jesus to begin his ministry.
- It is also out of that identity as a loved child that you can live the life that God designed specifically for you.

“Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean He no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow – not

even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below – indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:35-39 NLT

3. God is pleased with Jesus

“With Him I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:17

- Jesus has not even begun his ministry and yet God says that He is well pleased with him.
- The word “well pleased”, has the implications of God saying, “I am amazed by Him” or “I delight in Him”.
- This passage should not be read as though Jesus had to earn God's love or favor, rather it was out of the fact that Jesus took the step of baptism in obedience that delighted the Father's heart - He was overjoyed by his faithfulness.

Some of us grew up in families where we had to earn the favor of our parents so they would love us.

That is not the way God operates. Instead God loves you as you are.

BUT He is overjoyed when you walk in obedience into who He sees you can become as you surrender your life to him, trusting that He knows what is best for you.

Jesus lived out of his identity as a loved son of God and he walked in obedience toward the person God made him.

- **OUR IDENTITY AS GOD'S CHILDREN, WHO HE DEEPLY LOVES, WILL PROPEL US INTO LIVING OUT HIS PURPOSE IN OUR LIVES.**