Baptizing Jesus — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 3:13–17 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, January 11, 2026 · *Straight Paths*

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At Jayton, Texas, my family would always go to the Christmas lights. There was this guy in Jayton, he was just a normal average Joe, but he would spend thousands of dollars on his Christmas lights in his front yard and it was a it was a big to-do and people would travel from all over. And every time we'd go look at the Christmas lights we'd go to Dairy Queen and have dinner and a and a blizzard. And I always get my butterfinger blizzard. That's kind of where I got my appetite for those butterfinger blizzards and kind of became a little bit of an addict.

But I remember one time after having a chicken strip basket with gravy and I was nursing my butterfinger blizzard and I had something on my shirt and my grandmother says, Hey, I think you got some ice cream on your shirt, you might want to get that. All the while knowing it wasn't ice cream that I had dripped on my shirt, it was gravy. But she led me to believe that it was ice cream. And I like gravy, but when you're thinking ice cream and you get gravy it's quite a shock so I just remember going, Whoa, that was terrible.

And I remember my grandmother just losing it. She laughed so hard, she cried. Have you ever seen your grandmother laugh so hard she cried? I'd not seen that before in my life. And I went to I got to thinking to myself, wow, sh she has a sense of humor. She's a normal person like any other person. Of course every grandparent's a normal person, but you know those moments when you're like, oh you're just like me, you're a normal person. And it took me it took me by surprise. And that was first of many many more experiences where I got to see her humor and stuff like that.

But I'll always remember just how shocked I was, not only by the gravy, but by the fact that my grandmother was laughing at my plight of discomfort. What about you? And maybe something with your children, maybe one of your spouses, maybe boyfriend or girlfriend or friend, best friend. It could be for the good, something really good, it could be for the for the worse, but it exposed something about their character that prior to that moment you just didn't have in your mind as a category or as something that that could possibly happen.

That's going to happen to you. If it hasn't happened yet, it happens to every single one of us. And when someone does something that's out of character or that takes you by surprise, you're going to have a choice to make in that moment. And that choice is to either update your framework for what's possible for that person or to reject the person. In other words, to make your relationship with that person dependent upon them meeting your expectations and being a certain kind of way and you will decide the people you let into your life and let out of your life.

When those confrontations or those crises happen. And I think that's true spiritually as well when it comes to the person of Jesus, especially as we study the life of Jesus over the next 12 months or two years or three years, however long it's going to take us, there will be moments where Jesus is going to say something or do something that's going to take you by surprise. Maybe you've already had that experience where you're reading the Bible and you see Jesus say something and you say, I can't believe that's in the Bible.

I can't believe that he said that. In that moment you're going to be confronted with a choice, and your choice will either be to update your framework for what it's possible for Jesus to say, think, or do, or to make your dependent with r Jesus to make your relationship with Jesus dependent upon him meeting your expectations, your prior expectations for how he should think or live or do. And I would encourage us all this morning that when that crisis of faith happens to be humble enough to update our framework and to try to wrestle with the biblical portrait of Jesus, even when he says things or does things that are difficult for us to understand.

And that the reason I bring all this up is because our passage today is a passage in which Jesus does something that takes John the Baptist by surprise. He John the Baptist, if you weren't here last week, is the forerunner who paves the way for the ministry of Jesus. John the Baptist is mentioned in all four Gospels. He is paving the way for Jesus in that he is calling people to repent. And that John would call people to repent was a little bit controversial because the people he was calling to repent were Jewish people.

Now the part that wasn't controversial that John was preaching was that the kingdom of God was coming. The Jewish people in under Roman occupation, they were hungry for the kingdom of God manifesting, kind of liberating fr them from their captivity and their Roman oppression. So John was not unpopular in preaching the kingdom of God is at hand. But what made him a challenging voice was that he said, You need to repent if you're going to be ready to receive it. And many Jewish people at that time assumed that by virtue of their ethnicity they were natural heirs to the coming kingdom of God.

And John was saying no God did choose the nation of Israel. They do have a special place in ministry from the Lord, but for you to receive what's coming through Messiah, you all must repent. And be baptized. And John didn't know it at that time, but he was actually paving the

way for someone he might have known personally. Someone who was his relative through through his mother Elizabeth, and that someone was Jesus of Nazareth. And Jesus is actually going to stand before John in line to be baptized with every other person that had been coming out to John in the wilderness to be baptized.

And John is going to be confronted with a choice. What am I going to do? Because I don't understand, Jesus, why you would be standing here asking me to baptize you when You should be baptizing me. It was a shocking, shocking moment. And John's response in that moment invited him into a greater understanding of the person of Jesus Christ, and I would say a greater experience of the kingdom of God. And the same will be true for you and for me. Your response to Jesus doing something shocking in the scriptures or something shocking in your life is oftentimes a matter of life and death.

Your response is going to show a lot about your faith of what you think a relationship with Jesus or with God actually consists of and how that relationship should materialize in day-to-day life. So with that in mind, let's read the passage, Matthew chapter one. Starting in verse 3, like I said, John the Baptist has been on the scene doing his thing, and he's garnered a huge movement, people coming from all around the region. To be baptized by John. And then we see in verse 13 that Jesus himself came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

But John tried to stop Jesus, saying, I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me. And Jesus answered him, allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness. You might want to underline that phrase there. Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness. And so then John allowed him to be baptized. And when Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water. I can't help as a Baptist emphasize, he went up from the water.

There wasn't any sprinkling action going on here. The heavens suddenly opened for him, Jesus, and he saw, whether that's Jesus or John, it's hard to know, but he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove. And coming down on him, and a voice from heaven, this is the voice of God the Father, saying, this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Now you may not know the geography of Palestine or Israel and all that, but Jesus is up in the northern region. That's Galilee. He's in Nazareth.

He's going to go down to the lower regions, on the Jordan River, probably b John's gospel says Bethany, which was east of or west of no east of Jerusalem. So essentially from up here to down here it would have been a sixty to eighty mile. Journey takes three to four maybe five days on foot depending on the route and the weather and the way that Matthew phrases the Greek it's for the express purpose of baptism. Like Jesus was not just happening to be in the area or Jesus is like I'm going to be doing some other things, I might as well catch up with John.

No, it was specifically on purpose to be baptized. That was the purpose for his coming. And we don't know this for sure, but it's possible that this was actually the first face to face visit between Jesus and John the Baptist, right? We know they were relatives because of the experience between Mary and Elizabeth. When Mary walks into Elizabeth, her relative's home, John the Baptist, who's in Elizabeth's womb, leaps for joy. And so they had some kind of connection, I guess, in that respect, but past that biblically we're not sure. Jesus went to Jerusalem.

He might have run into John the Baptist. Maybe they saw each other at family gatherings. It makes sense that they probably knew of each other sufficient that that when John when Jesus shows up he knows he knows who he is but what is important to note is that John did not know, nor did he believe, that Jesus was the Christ, or that Jesus was the one that God had sent him to prepare the way for. John doesn't know any of that. And we know that John doesn't know that because John tells us he doesn't know that in John chapter 1.

By the way, John, the Gospel of John was not written by John the Baptist. It's easy to get the Johns mixed up. We were saying in my small group this week. I wish they had nicknames or like little hyphens or titles, but Unfortunately, that's not the case. But if you'll turn to John 1, I'm going to show you this just really quick. We ended last week with the Pharisees and the Sadducees coming to John in his baptism to kind of spy on him or see what was going on and John calls them out.

When they confront John, they're they're basically saying, you got to tell us who you are and what you're doing all this for and are you the Messiah? John says no. And they say, are you the prophet? John says no. Are you Elijah? John says no. I'm not any of those people. I'm just one crying out in the wilderness, make straight the paths of the Lord, just like Isaiah the prophet said. And then he says in verse 25, John chapter 1, verse 25, they say, why then do you baptize if you aren't the Messiah or Elijah or the prophet?

And John says, I baptize with water, but someone stands among you. In other words, I believe this person is on the scene today. He's born. But you don't know him. He's the one coming after me whose sandal I'm not worthy to untie. Go down a little bit lower to verse 31. He says in verse 30, this is the one I told you about, who somebody comes after me, ranks ahead of me, he existed before me. This is important in verse 31. He says, I don't, I did not know him. I didn't know him.

But I came baptizing with water so that he, Jesus, might be revealed to Israel, the Messiah. And then John testified, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he rested on him. Here's our key verse I didn't know him, but he, God, who sent me to baptize with water, told me the one you see the Spirit descending and resting on. He's the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I've seen and testified that this is the Son of God. So what John is saying is, you know, I might have known Jesus, my cousin.

I recognized he was a different dude, you know, if he was sinless and all that, that's probably he was a little bit abnormal from other people I had no idea he was the Messiah until after this baptism experience. Because it was after the baptism of Jesus that the Holy Spirit descends like a dove, the voice comes from heaven, and I say all that to say that the baptism of Jesus really is important for you and me if we want to make sense. Of who Jesus is. It's recorded in all four Gospels.

Those kind of events that get recorded in all four Gospels are very important events. And Matthew's portrayal of this event is a little bit different from the others because he has a little bit different agenda. But you will not be able to make sense of Jesus fully without making sense of his baptism, to make sense of Jesus You got to understand his baptism. And so that's what I want us to do today. And the thing that's so unique about Jesus' baptism is it's hard to understand why he would be doing it.

Why would Jesus be baptized? The people who study the Bible and study the life of Christ, when they raise the question, why would Jesus be baptized? It isn't for the same reasons everybody else would be coming to be baptized, right? Because everybody else who came to be baptized was being baptized because they needed to confess their sins. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. When Jesus comes and stands in the water with John essentially says, I don't need to baptize you. You need to baptize me, implying that you don't have the sins.

That anybody else has. In fact, if I was to be honest, I'm probably more sinful than you are. I mean you know what I did last summer. He's he's he's recognizing there's a discrepancy between the moral goodness of Jesus who is standing before him in this water and his own deficiency, even as a prophet, he's even as a very godly man who lived in the wilderness and had dedicated himself to God. And so for whatever reasons Jesus had for being baptized, what we do know is it was not because He was sinful.

Jesus was not a sinner because Jesus was sinless. And you can take that by faith if you want. It's very clear in the scripture, especially in the New Testament, that Jesus was unique. Not only in that he was fully human and experienced the same temptations and hardships and sufferings that you and I experience, but that in experiencing those temptations and hardships, Jesus did all of it without sin. There's a passage in the book of Hebrews, verse chapter 4, verse 15, that says, we don't have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.

He's talking about Jesus A high priest, the priest was like a preacher, someone who would intercede for the people, identify with the people. But every priest that came before Jesus was a sinner just like everyone else. Jesus was unique in that he was not. A sinful man. By the way, I came across a survey this week in studying for this sermon, a survey of the Bible

survey that was in 2022. That said 33% of US adults believe that Jesus was a normal human being and sinned like everybody else. I thought that was shocking.

That Christians would believe Jesus was A sinner just like everybody else. And it said that sixteen percent of biblically engaged people believe that Jesus was a sinner like everybody else. I that this totally took me by surprise. And so in your notes, there's a list of other passages that speak to the sinlessness of Jesus. I'm not going to go through them today, but suffice it to say, whatever Jesus' reasons were for standing in those baptism waters to be baptized by John It was not because he was a sinner. Jesus was sinless.

And so if it wasn't because he was a sinner, then what was it for? Well, Jesus actually answers the question in verse 15. Jesus answered him, allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness. Now these three words are very, very, very important. If you want to understand the baptism of Jesus. And if you want to understand Jesus, you need to understand his baptism. So it's really, really important for us to understand those three words. And one of the things you'll learn as you study the Bible is that to understand the meaning of a text you need to be able to understand the words in that text and to understand the words of that text you need to understand the context.

It's one of my pet peeves. I say it all over and over again I feel like that words don't get their meaning from the dictionary or your life experience that words in the Bible, or words in any text to be honest, words in a text get their meaning from the context. And if you ask the question, what does Matthew mean when he says Jesus was to fulfill all righteousness, you would also ask the question, has he used this word before? And the answer to that question is yes, he has. Now, if you take just the general definition of the term, you get a English lexicon, which is a study of the original.

Languages. You look up this word and essentially it has a range of meanings from to fill completely to satisfy, to bring to pass. All of those things are in the wheelhouse of what this word means. I use the word satisfy because it has an S and I'm trying to fit with S's today, but He was satisfying all righteousness in that he was filling up what was required on the question of righteousness. Now we'll get to what righteousness means in a little bit. But if you look at how Jesus uses this word fulfill, if you look at how Matthew uses this word fulfill, you'll see that he uses it again and again and again and again.

I gave you just a few references in Matthew 1:22, Matthew 2:15, 2:17, 2:23, and chapter 4, verse 14. But almost in every one of those instances, Matthew is showing how Jesus fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet. In other words, how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy about the coming of Messiah. Jesus in his life was bringing to pass everything that God had promised beforehand. So when Jesus says, I've come to fulfill all righteousness, it's in that same wheelhouse that I'm bringing to completion what God has been doing from Old Testament past.

You know that also the word fulfill has some other kind of nuance because Jesus uses the word again one chapter later. If you turn the page to Matthew chapter 5, this is the sermon. On the mount, and Jesus is giving his kind of like Moses gave the Ten Commandments on the mountain. Jesus is giving this new covenant ethic on the mountain. And he says in chapter 5, verse 17, don't think, go back one slide please. He says, don't think that I've come to abolish the law or the prophets. I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.

Again, so he's saying, whatever you think I'm doing here in terms of teaching new things and doing miracles and challenging the status quo. It isn't about saying that God's law is irrelevant or wrong or broken or any of those things. What I'm doing is I am satisfying them I am bringing them to completion. I am filling up what is lacking on the question of these two really big and important matters. And then he goes a little bit later and he uses the word righteousness, if you'll go to the next slide.

He's going to challenge his disciples on living the kingdom life. And he, before he begins the Sermon on the Mount with you've heard it said, but I say unto you He says, I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven. That was a controversial statement because as we said last week, the scribes and the Pharisees they were like the most holy people on the planet in the first century in that in that context. They were super dedicated to moral conformity to God's expectations in the Old Testament law.

They took God's, you know, however many commandments, the Ten Commandments, and then the 600 on top of that. And they added even more on top of the 600 and guardrails on top of guardrails to say we're going to be super righteous. We're going to be the superest righteous people that have ever lived. And Jesus looks at that and says, yeah, you've got to do better than that. So people were like, what do you mean Jesus? You can't be better than the Pharisees. And Jesus is saying something He's saying something unique.

He's saying something about righteousness. That people did not have a category for. He's saying you can do external moral conformity to the law, but still be unrighteous in the eyes of God because you're doing what you're doing for the wrong reasons. You're trying to be moral and righteous to be superior to other people, or you're trying to be moral and righteous in an external behavioral way, but your heart is still far from the Lord. That's what the whole Sermon on the Mount's about. You said don't murder, I say don't hate.

You said don't commit adultery, I say don't lust. It's not about the actions, it's about the heart that motivates the actions. And so when Jesus says, I'm coming to fulfill righteousness, he's essentially saying, John By you letting me be baptized, I'm going to bring to completion what God desires by righteousness. I'm going to bring to completion what real righteousness is. And righteousness is not just moral conformity or good behavior. Really righteousness, if

you want to think of it in this way, is just being right in every respect. It's rightness. It's rightness in every way.

It's like if you've ever seen something that's been broken and not doing what it's supposed to do, you say. Well that's not right. But then when everything is hitting every cylinder and it's just right and everything's perfect, like that's righteous. Man, that's righteous. That's exactly like it's supposed to be. There's no deficiencies there's no there's no inadequacies, there's the there's the standard, and then there's perfect adherence to what the standard is. That's righteousness, but it's so much more than behavior. It's everything that surrounds that. And Jesus is saying, that's what I've come to do.

That's what I've come to bring. I've come to bring that to pass. And this baptism is part of that agenda. And that's the answer. That's why Jesus was baptized. It's not a super helpful answer because what does that even mean? And how does your baptism do that? How does the baptism of Jesus bring to pass all righteousness? And to answer that question, I want I think you got to have two things in your mind. You need to understand the Old Testament history of Israel, which a lot of us don't know.

And you need to understand the symbolic significance of baptism. So I want to show you those two things and then we're going to be done. The reason the Old Testament history of Israel is relevant to what Jesus is doing in his baptism. Is because by being baptized in this way at this time, Jesus is showing solidarity with the sinful man that he came to redeem. He's identifying with them. And so if you're taking notes, baptism is symbolic. Of something else. Now I said that Matthew used the word fulfill over and over again to talk about how Jesus brings to pass Old Testament prophecy.

There's another example of this in Matthew chapter 2 where Jesus is Joseph and Mary and Jesus, they flee Bethlehem to go to Egypt because Herod was threatened that his throne was going to be taken away by this new king that the Magi were talking about. And so he kills every firstborn child in that area. And an angel comes to Joseph and says, this is coming, you need to go. And so they flee. But as they flee and they come back, Matthew makes this statement about Jesus fulfilling what the prophets had spoken.

Out of Egypt I called my son. But if you go and you look at the original context of this quotation that Matthew gives, it's from Hosea chapter 11, verse 1. And the one that God calls out of Egypt, that is his son, is actually the nation of Israel. When Israel was a child, I loved him. And out of Egypt I called my son. And so what Matthew, I think, is suggesting is that Jesus is in a way, reenacting the history of Old Testament Israel, and Jesus is succeeding where Old Testament Israel failed.

And why do I why do I think that? For one, because of what happens before and what happens after. Not only is Jesus coming up from Egypt like Old Testament Israel did. Jesus

is going to be baptized, which has Old Testament imagery, but right after his baptism, where does he go? He's led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be Tested, right? Or tempted for how many days? Forty days. How many years did Old Testament Israel wander in the wilderness? 40 years. Then in chapter 5, Jesus goes up on the mountain to give the new covenant people of God the law of God.

Who else went up on the mountain to get the law of God and deliver to the people? Yeah, that's right. Moses did. And so Jesus is, I'm not saying he's the nation of Israel, but Jesus is fulfilling and bringing to completion that which Old Testament Israel did not. They did not obey God in the wilderness. They did not perfectly accomplish that which God had called them to accomplish. You see this in the genealogy of Jesus. He's the son of Abraham and the son of David. So where they failed, where there was failure after failure after failure, Jesus is succeeding.

And in that way, I think his baptism is symbolic of his mission, his life mission. To stand with sinners, to stand in the place of sinners. Theologians talk about this as sometimes substitutionary atonement that Jesus stands in our place. And if you think about his baptism in that respect, it's almost as if Matthew is saying Jesus is standing in as the new and better Moses. Jesus is standing in as the new and better Adam. Jesus is standing in as the new and better Israel, but he's not just standing in for the big people in the Old Testament.

He's also standing in for the normal average people who were wandering in the wilderness, which means Jesus stands in for you and for me. He stands in our place. There's a sense in which Jesus' baptism is to communicate to you and me. We have a high priest who is in solidarity with us. We have someone who understands what we go through. We have someone who feels the mess that we feel on a regular basis. We have someone who faces the challenges that we have faced. Except what's so unique about Jesus is not only that he can sympathize with us, but that he experienced the full brunt of that temptation and he still resisted it without sin.

And so Jesus is standing in that way. That's symbolic in that way. It's also symbolic in something else. If you go back and you look at this language of Matthew using, he fulfills this, he fulfills that. One of the other things that New Testament authors will talk about how Jesus fulfills or completes or what was in the old in the new is this imagery behind baptism. Now I used to think baptism was something that the Christians created and came up with in the first century, but that's really not true Jewish people have been practicing baptism from the very, very beginning.

Except for Jewish people, baptism was something reserved for Gentile converts coming into Judaism, at least for the most part. And so what it symbolized was someone dying to their gentile former way of life, dying to that idolatry, dying to all that sin and stuff. And then coming up out of the water was symbolic of a new birth, a conversion of sorts, that my new

life is now lived for God, Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God. And all of that's symbolized in baptism. But the New Testament authors also thought of baptism as a as a form as a type of salvation.

Through judgment. Now I want to show you this in the New Testament, a couple different places. I think I put them in your notes as well. I want to give you three examples. One is with Noah and the flood. The other is Moses and then Joshua. Actually I'll just show you the first two. When it came to Noah, in the book of 1 Peter, when he's talking about baptism, he likens the baptism of Christians to the baptism of the world that they experienced in the flood. He said that in the ark, a few people, eight people, Noah and his family, they were saved through water.

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you. Now let me ask you a question. Was the world saved through the water that came through the flood? No, the world was flooded. It was destroyed by the flood. And yet, it that same water which destroyed the world, what did it do for Noah and his family? It saved them because that water lifted up the boat and the ark and the ark survived the flood because of all that. And so Peter is saying Noah and his family were saved through baptism. Not that baptism like washes away your sins.

People read into all that, but he's saying the water of judgment that that burned or that flooded the wicked, that destroyed the wicked, was the same water that for the faithful, those who had faith in God's covenant promise, and those who had union with God's covenant mediator, they experienced salvation through that same baptism. Okay, is that making sense? That was a theology of baptism for New Testament authors. Same kind of theology in the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Except he doesn't apply it to Noah, he applies it to Moses.

If you don't know the story of Moses and the Exodus, watch the movie or read the Bible. But essentially, they were enslaved to Egypt for a long time and they come up out of slavery and they go through the Red Sea God parts the Red Sea. Here's what the Apostle Paul says. Our ancestors, they were all under the cloud. That cloud was a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night that would lead them where they were supposed to go. They were all under the cloud and look at this.

They all passed through the sea, or they passed through the water. You're talking about the Red Sea. And all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. What does he mean by that? He means they were baptized into Moses in that they went through the Red Sea because they had faith in God's covenant promise, and because they were united to that covenant mediator Moses, they were saved through those waters, the same waters that destroyed Egypt, who didn't have faith and wasn't walking in accordance to the covenant. And so they were baptized into Moses.

So yes, it's a death and a rebirth. They had to die to their way of paganism in Egypt. They had to live a new life to God in the desert. But it's also a symbol of salvation through judgment. See the same thing in Joshua chapter 3 and 4. I'm not going to show you that on the screen, but they cross the Jordan. A symbol of that baptism. And then the Apostle Paul says, just like it was true for Noah and just like it's true for Moses, it's also true in Jesus.

And Jesus' baptism is symbolizing that for you and for me. When the Apostle Paul talks about the baptism of Jesus in Romans chapter 6. He says, first he says, should we continue in sin so that grace may abound? By no means. We died the sin. How can we live in it any longer? Are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his what? And to his death. So the death of Jesus here is being likened to the flood waters of Noah and the Red Sea of Moses.

And if you know what happens at the death of Jesus, you realize it wasn't just that Jesus ceased to live. But the death of Jesus on the cross was an atoning sacrifice. Jesus was bearing a judgment for us. Jesus was absorbing the wrath of God for sin, towards sinners, that we justly deserve. We justly deserve to be punished for sin, to be separated from God. And what the New Testament teaches about the death of Jesus is that he was taking that penalty onto himself. He was absorbing God's wrath for us.

He was standing in our place. And we are delivered from that same judgment. How? Just like everyone else in the Old Testament. Through faith in God's covenant promise. And through union with God's covenant mediator, that covenant mediator being the Lord Jesus Christ. And so I think what you see in John's baptism, I'm not saying John's baptism represents any of this, but Jesus in being baptized by John, he was showing us that. He's showing solidarity with sinful man, and he's showing how God saves sinful man. How God saves us through judgment.

He saves us through the judgment that we deserve. Jesus bore in our place on the cross. All that's wrapped up in Jesus' baptism. And that's why it's important. And that's why you can't understand what Jesus came to do without understanding his baptism. A couple more, we don't have as much time for these, but after Jesus is baptized. You see the Holy Spirit, oh I'm sorry. I forgot. If you think I'm crazy, some of you do. Because I never saw this until I really looked at it this week. This is the same way Jesus talks about his own baptism.

I'm sorry, this is the same language that Jesus applies to his own death on the cross. In Luke chapter 12, verse 50, Jesus talking says, I have a baptism to undergo and how it consumes me until it is finished. What is he talking about? He's talking about his death on the cross. And then there's this day where the disciples are bickering about who's going to be great in the kingdom and who's going to sit where in you know, the positions of power. And Jesus rebukes him and says, You do not know what you're asking.

Are you able to drink the cup that I drink? Or are you able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? What's he talking about? He's talking about his death on the cross. And so when what does baptism symbolize? It b baptism symbolizes a death. You go under the water, dying to a former way of life, and then you come up out of the water, symbolic of new birth. A new way of life except Jesus didn't need to die to sin because he had no sin. He was dying for our sin in our place.

And then being raised up from the water is God's stamp of approval saying it's sufficient paid in full and those of you, those of my creation who are united to this covenant mediator through faith in my covenant promise. They too will be dead to sin and alive to righteousness. They too will rise from death. They too will experience the resurrection. So if you're taking notes, it shows us how Jesus saves sinners from the coming judgment. Now we don't have as much time for these other two, but when the Holy Spirit descends from heaven, I think that's symbolic of Jesus being sealed by the Holy Spirit.

We had this debate in my small group. When did Jesus receive the Holy Spirit? Was he born into the world, filled with the Holy Spirit, or did he receive it at his baptism. And the New Testament, for whatever reason, makes a special emphasis of Jesus receiving or the Spirit affirming or kind of publicly identifying with the person of Jesus at his baptism. Where you go beyond that, I think, is an interesting conversation. But suffice it to say, Matthew emphasizes it here because this was God's way of confirming for John the Baptist, this is the guy.

This is the Messiah. This is the one you've been preparing everything for because the Spirit of God descended over him like a dove. By the way, that imagery of a dove, why a dove? Why not, you know, a raccoon or something else? When Noah the flood waters came in the Old Testament and Noah's going to go check, is the new creation ready yet? Is the new creation ready? What did he send? That's right, he sent a dove. The Spirit of God hovering over the waters, kind of like that. Similar anguish, Jesus is bringing a new creation.

And this is I think, a reminder that Jesus did what he did in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was God in the flesh, but he didn't cheat, okay? It's not like he had tapped into his superpowers whenever he needed a cheat code. Okay, that's not the way the New Testament talks about the life and ministry of Jesus. He was tempted in every way that we are. Which means that his resisting of temptation was in the same power that you and I resist temptation, which is in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And he received that power for ministry at his baptism. And you and I experience the same thing. When you become a Christian and Jesus baptizes you into the Holy Spirit. You receive a seal of sorts. You receive a stamp that says, this child is my child. God says, this is my son, this is my daughter, and they will be empowered for the life that I've called them to live by

my spirit. By the way, this is why Jesus, when he resurrected and ascended, he says, I want you to wait until you receive the promise from my Father.

He was talking about the Holy Spirit. And so they're sitting up there waiting. And waiting, and on that day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit falls like tongues of fire, and they do all that they do in the book of Acts. The church advances the mission of Jesus. In the same power that Jesus advanced the mission of the kingdom, which is in the power of the Holy Spirit. One of our big verses at Broadview is Acts 1. 8. And Acts 1. 8 says, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.

And so baptism symbolizes that. That's what I'm saying. Baptism symbolizes the sealing of the Holy Spirit for the ministry of Jesus, and that same is true for me and you. And then the last thing it symbolizes is in that voice from heaven. The heavens are rent open language of Ezekiel 1 and a voice comes from heaven that says this is my son I'm sorry this is my beloved son that's an important word with whom I am well pleased. This has Old Testament echoes of messianic passages, one of which has already been quoted by Matthew, which is Isaiah chapter 40, verses 1 to 3.

If you're not familiar with the prophet Isaiah or the prophecy, the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament, there is this figure, this messianic figure in the book of Isaiah called the servant. Of the Lord. Sometimes we'll call him today the suffering servant. And that the this the deliverer, this Messiah figure. He's not just a king who rules and liberates God's people, but he's also a servant who serves humbly the will of God the Father and he atones for sin in Isaiah 53 He by his stripes we are healed, he's wounded for our transgressions, etcetera, etcetera all that's wrapped up into Isaiah's prophecy.

But when Matthew quotes this passage of this is my son with whom I'm well pleased, it's coming right out of Isaiah forty. Isaiah 42, this is my servant. I strengthen him with the Holy Spirit. He is my chosen one. I delight in him. Same language. I have put my spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. Being not just gent, not just Jews, but Gentiles as well. The whole world. Will experience justice and righteousness through the person and work of this servant who I will send. And that servant is the Lord Jesus Christ.

But he's not just a servant, he's also the Son. This is my beloved son. This comes from Psalm chapter 2, which was another very popular messianic psalm in the first century. Messianic community. They were waiting for God's Messiah. It says, I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain. I will declare the Lord's decree. This is the Messiah speaking. He said to me, Yahweh said to me, You are my son, and today I have become your father. Except Matthew adds the word beloved. You're my beloved son, which is interesting.

It's a unique word in the Greek New Testament. I think the best illustration is if you have like a one-of-one baseball card, only one ever made, do those exist? Are they like one in ten? Imagine if you had a one in ten, but it wasn't ten, it was one of one print, and you possessed it. It's worth millions and millions of dollars. The significance of that card is not just that there's one and no other. It's that it represents something to you that is treasured. It is unique. There's nothing else like it.

You love that card like you don't love any other card. And that's the kind of love that the Father has for the Son. God the Father has that love for the Son. And Jesus in his baptism, not only is God the Father saying, this is how I feel towards Jesus who is my son, but it's Jesus saying this is how I submit to you who are my Father. You are my father, and I'm going to submit to your plan. And Jesus' baptism reveals that. Just like your baptism, if you've been baptized, it's a symbolic expression.

That you believe Jesus stood in your place for your sins. That you believe Jesus saved you from sin through his atoning death on the cross. That you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and empowered to live a Christian life by that Spirit, and that you are fully submitted to the plans of your heavenly father, just as Jesus was submitted to the plans of his heavenly father. So much of New Testament ethics and New Testament theology really is wrapped up in this phrase, union with Christ. We are united to Christ.

And what Jesus is doing in his baptism is he is creating solidarity with sinful man for whom he came to save, and he is inviting us to ourselves die to sin. And be raised to new life, not through our best efforts or our hopes and dreams, but through his person and his work that he accomplished in obedience to his father. And when you repent of your sins and you put your faith in Jesus for salvation, God's fatherly relationship with the Son becomes your relationship with God the Father. You become his beloved Son You become his beloved daughter.

He looks at you and doesn't see your brokenness or your sinful past or all of the baggage that that that you hide from everyone else around you He sees Jesus because of your faith and union with him. And that's New Testament salvation. And that's what Jesus came to do. And that's why his baptism reveals all of those things. And so if you want to understand Jesus, you need to understand his baptism. And if you've understood his baptism this morning in a in a unique way, and you would maybe say, I've come to realize I'm not united to him.

I'm not walking with him behind the Red Sea. I'm not like I'm the one destroyed by the flood waters. I'm the Egyptian that's going to be crushed by the Red Sea. I'm not in union with Jesus, then this morning the Holy Spirit may be calling you to put your faith in Him. And salvation isn't something that you earn or that you say a magic prayer or any magic word. It's really just as simple as is faith and trust. Trusting that Jesus did the work for you, that Jesus is who he said he is, and he came to do what he said he would do.

And if you would like John Even though it's a little shocking and even though it's unlike anything you've maybe ever heard before, if you would allow Jesus to stand in your place. And if you would receive and accept believe by faith that that he's done the work and all that's required of you is to surrender your life to him. As Savior and Lord. I say all as though it's a small thing. You're giving everything to Him because He's given everything to you. Then this morning you can you can become a Christian.

You can be someone who becomes a follower of Jesus, united with Him in His death and raised with him in his resurrection. And if that's something you want to do this morning, you can indicate that on your connection card. The band's going to come up or somebody's going to lead us in a time of response. And just right there where you're seated. You can respond to the Lord, how the Lord leads. I'm also going to be available here at the front. If there's something unrelated to the message today that you just want prayer for.

Or you got something burdening your heart that you just want to leave at the altar sometimes symbolically, that can be a powerful way of meeting God in this sanctuary and being strengthened by his grace. I'd be happy to pray with you, intercede for you. You may just want to come with some friends and lay it before the Lord. But let's use this time of response to respond to the Lord as he leads and we'll see what the Lord does with that. So heavenly Father, we thank you for this passage and this reminder that you are for us and not against us and that you have sent your son to do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Thank you for men like John the Baptist who have a humility of heart to say, I don't necessarily understand, but I'm willing to accept it. I'm willing to allow it. I'm willing to see what the Lord does in this and through this. And I pray a similar kind of spirit for every person in this room as you call us to a response of your word and calling us to build our lives around this truth about who Jesus is and what he came to do. Would you give us wisdom to know what that looks like, and courage and faith to step out and to do what you're calling us to do.

We give you this time and pray you would work in it and through it. And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.