

Why Was Jesus Baptized?

Matthew 3:13-17

1 Nov 09

Let's take our Bibles now and open to the Gospel of Matthew continuing in our study through this Gospel. Today we come to chapter three verses 13 through 17. Matthew three verses 13 through 17. And while you are turning there, let me just say a word about our service tonight. We are going to be going back into our study of First Thessalonians getting into chapter two tonight which has always been a passage that has interested me greatly. It talks a lot about ministry. And every Christian is called to do the work of the ministry. This passage gives us great insight into what's at the heart of the ministry and what's at the heart of a ministry that's effective and fruitful. So I'm really looking forward to diving into that passage and looking at what we're taught there. I think it will be very beneficial for all of us as we seek to serve the Lord and minister in the church. But for this morning, Matthew chapter three verses 13 through 17, let me read those verses as we start. It says, "Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?' 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. 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, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'"

Every once in a while as you go through life you come across something that causes you to stop and to look. You come across something that stands out and demands your attention. Roberta and I had a moment like that last month. We were able to spend a few days in North Carolina and we got to take a drive along a part of the Blue Ridge Parkway, that works its way through the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Western part of North Carolina. And as we were driving along there was a turnoff and you went up this long winding road to the highest point of the Eastern part of the United States, Mt. Mitchell, almost 6,700 feet in elevation. Just a little higher than Comanche Lookout Point right up Judson road here! And when you get to the top of Mt. Mitchell, you stop the car, you get out, and you take it all in because what you see is mountain ridge, after mountain ridge, after mountain ridge, as far as you can see. And they're all blanketed with trees. Tall trees. It's just a blanket of trees on all of these mountain ridges as far as you can see it. You just stop there and it's hard to take it in. It's overwhelming. You're not used to seeing something like that. And Mt. Mitchell has capitalized on this. They have a nice restaurant there on the top of the mountain that has a spectacular view of all of this and some pretty good peach cobbler in case you're ever there. But that's something you stop and you take notice of. You stop the car, you get out, and you have to spend some time just taking it all in because it's so overwhelming. And I say that by way of introduction of our text today because before us today we have a text that we really need to stop and consider carefully what exactly is being said here. It demands our attention. There's something here that really stands out. This is a mountain top text because of what we learn about our Savior as we look at it. Now think about what we've learned so far in these early chapters of Matthew's Gospel. We're seen that Jesus is the son of Abraham, the son of David. He's the one who fulfills all of the

promises. He's the rightful heir to the kingdom. We saw that He was born of a virgin which eliminates any sin issues and prepares the way for Him to be the sin-bearer. He was worshiped by magi from the East. He's the fulfillment of all the scriptures. John has come as the promised forerunner. He's come on the scene preparing the way for the ministry of Christ. And now Christ appears to inaugurate His ministry. The One who is the son of Abraham, the son of David, the One who was born of a virgin, the One who was worshiped by magi, the One who fulfills scripture, the One proclaimed by John. But we know that in his ministry of preparation, John had been calling people to repentance and baptizing them as they confessed their sins. Well, Jesus shows up one day at the Jordan where John is baptizing and He too wants to be baptized by John. What? How can that be? This is one of those times, I mean you bring the car to a screeching halt. You get out and you say, what? What is this? We need to take a good look at this. Why is the One who's the son of Abraham, the son of David, the One who was virgin born, the One worshiped by magi, the One who fulfills scripture, the One announced by John as the Lord; why does this One want to be baptized? Why does this one need to be baptized? You'll notice that that was John's question that day. He was caught completely off guard by Jesus coming to him to be baptized. Now look at what it says there. We're told in verse 13 that as John was conducting his baptizing ministry Jesus travelled the 70 miles or so from Nazareth up in Galilee down to the lower Jordan River where John was doing his baptizing. You're familiar with the geography of Israel, two main bodies of water, the Sea of Galilee in the North, the Dead Sea in the South, the Jordan River connects the two of them. Nazareth is up in the North just Southwest of the Sea of Galilee a little bit. John is down baptizing in the lower part of the Jordan River near the Dead Sea. So Jesus travels from up in the Northern part down the Jordan River valley no doubt, to where John is baptizing. And He did so, He made this trip with the purpose of being baptized by John. He came to John, verse 13 says, to be baptized by him. He made this trip, He went to where John was, for the purpose of, because He wanted to be baptized by John. Well you can see from what we're told in verse 14 that John was shocked by this. And John tried to prevent Jesus from being baptized. And the picture here is of a repeated action. John kept trying to prevent Him. It's a repeated action. Now we're not sure exactly what that looks like. Maybe there's a line of people to be baptized and Jesus makes His way to the front of the line and John said, no, this isn't happening. Jesus went back to the back of the line and worked His way back up again, and John said, no, still is not going to happen. We don't know exactly how this all worked out, but we do know John did not want to baptize Jesus. He felt that he should be baptized by Jesus. That's what he said. "I have need to be baptized by You." That's completely understandable in light of John's statement that's recorded back in verse 11 when he says, "As for me I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I. I'm not fit to remove His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Jesus is superior to John. Jesus' baptism is far more significant than John's. John knew that he was a sinner. John knew that he was in need of baptism. But Jesus wasn't. Jesus, as John would say, is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John 1:29. So John says, it's recorded there in verse 14, "And do you come to me?" That's an expression of complete surprise. He wasn't expecting this. This catches him off guard. And we know that John was a very humble man. We saw previously that he would not baptize the Pharisees and Sadducees because they weren't worthy, because they weren't repentant. But, John didn't want to baptize Jesus because John doesn't feel worthy to baptize Jesus.

So that raises the question, why was Jesus baptized? That's the question of the day, that's the question John's asking. Why was Jesus baptized? Well, before we look at the Biblical answer, let me deal with one wrong answer. There was a heresy in the early church known as Gnosticism. That's a heresy that keeps popping up in different times in church history. There are forms of it around today. One of the teachings of Gnosticism was that Jesus was just an ordinary man prior to His baptism. That He was sinful just like everybody else. But at His baptism He was endowed with deity. The Christ Spirit came upon this man named Jesus. Therefore, they would say that's the reason why Jesus' baptism was necessary, because He's just a guy, just like us. But when they teach that they clearly overlook what the scripture teaches. Remember the angel that came to Mary and told her that she was going to have this child. This is what he says about that child. It's in Luke 1:32. It says, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David and He'll reign over the house of Jacob forever and His kingdom will have no end. Mary said to the angel, how can this be since I'm a virgin. The angel answered and said to her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most high will overshadow you. For that reason the Holy Child shall be called the Son of God." He wasn't just an ordinary man. He wasn't just like everybody else. His conception was miraculous. It was a demonstration of the power of the Most High God and the Child is a holy Child.

And we saw earlier in Matthew's gospel in chapter one verse 23. It says, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, 'God with us.'" The Child was God with us. He didn't become God with us when He was baptized. He's holy. He is God with us. He was worshiped by those magi as an infant. So the Gnostic view of Jesus' baptism is in error and that is true of all false religions and all cults. They will always have a lower view of Christ than the exalted view presented in scripture. That's the consistent view of false religions and cults. They want to lower the person of Christ. That's not the right answer to why He was baptized. So what is the answer? Why was Jesus baptized? Well, this passage provides two answers to that question, and both answers have to do with the true identity of Jesus Christ. So let's look at the two answers to the question, why was Jesus baptized. Let's stop the car. Let's get out. Let's take a careful look at this one.

Reason number one, answer number one, to the question why was Jesus baptized. Because He is the humble servant. He is the humble servant. Verse 15, "Jesus answered John and 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." Here you see Jesus giving an answer to the befuddled John the Baptist. And the answer on the surface might not seem satisfactory to you and me. You might on first reading say, well, I don't really get what He's saying there. But it was evidently clear to John the Baptist because as soon as Jesus gave this answer John said, well okay then. And they did the baptism. So let's think carefully about what Jesus says here. He says, permit it at this time. Jesus getting baptized by John or anybody might seem inappropriate for a whole lot of reasons. But it was appropriate and it was important at that time. Permit it at this time. It's appropriate that we do this at this particular time. And why is that? Well, because He says it is fitting, for in this way it is fitting. It's right, it's proper. What is it right and proper for? To fulfill all righteousness. In other words, to do what is right. John we need to do this at this time because at this time and in this place this is the right thing to do. This is God's will that we do this. John was calling men to be baptized. Jesus as a man fulfilled the requirement. He fulfilled all righteousness. God was calling men through

John the Baptist to be baptized in preparation for the coming kingdom. Jesus as a man did what was required. He fulfilled all righteousness. In doing so He did something very significant for you and me. Jesus here is identifying with people in their need for forgiveness of sin. He's voluntarily identifying Himself with us and in so doing He's taking upon Himself the obligation to fulfill all righteousness in our place. So that He could be the perfect substitute for us so that our sins could be placed on Him and His righteousness could be placed on us. He's identifying with us through this act of baptism. Identifying with us in our sinful condition, our need to forgiveness. He's fulfilling all the requirements so that then when He dies in our place, our sins can be placed on Him, His righteousness on us. When you're saved, what is happening is that God is treating Jesus like He had lived your life, and He's treating you like you had lived Jesus' life. And Jesus in His life fulfilled all righteousness. He did everything right. He did everything required. He lived the life of a man perfectly. That's what makes Him the perfect substitute. Baptism is all about identification. In our baptism as believers we identify with Jesus. We're baptized in His name proclaiming the fact that we identify with Him. In His baptism He identifies with us. Jesus humbled Himself in becoming a man and He identifies Himself with man and He came to be the servant of man. We're going to see when we get to chapter 20 in a couple of weeks from now. Verse 28. That was a joke. It will probably take more than a couple weeks. I just wanted to see if you guys were awake. In Matthew 20:28, Jesus said, "The Son of Man didn't come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many." He came to serve. He's the humble servant. He identifies with those who He came to serve. He came in humility. In His baptism He identifies Himself with those He came to save and fulfill all righteousness in their place. Notice something else there in verse 15. He says, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us." You and Me John. It's fitting for you and Me. John and Jesus had unique parts in God's plan. In submitting to John's baptism, Jesus is validating it. And this act marks the transition from John's preparation to Jesus' fulfillment. So, why was Jesus baptized? Because He came as a humble servant and He voluntarily identified with the sinful people that He came to serve so that He could be a righteous substitute and stand in their place and take the judgment that they deserve. That's something that should cause us to bring the car to a screeching halt. It should cause us to get out of the car and fall on our knees in worship. That this one would humble Himself to serve us. That this one left heaven, came into the world and identified with us sinful people. We can't ever take this for granted. After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples, but one of them was missing. You know which one? Thomas. That's why we call him doubting Thomas because he said, well I didn't see it so I'm not convinced. I need to see Him, I need to see the nail marks in His hands. I need to see the mark in His side from where they pierced Him with a sword. I'm not believing until I see the evidence. A week later, Jesus appeared to them again and graciously said, Thomas, check it out Thomas. Look at My hands, look at My side. What did Thomas do? He stopped the car, he got out, he fell on his knees and said, my Lord and my God. He was absolutely, completely, totally overwhelmed that God would die in his place. That God would identify with him. That God would satisfy His own wrath on His own Son so that I could be set free. That this one, the one who created everything and holds it all together, that this one would humble Himself and identify with us in order to serve us; that's worth stopping the car and pitching a tent and thinking about that one. But that requires that we like John have a right view of ourselves. That John said, I need your baptism. John recognized that he was a sinner in need of salvation. We're the ones that stand in need to baptism, a baptism only Jesus can give. We're the ones that need to repent. We're the ones that need to confess. He doesn't. We need to have a right view of ourselves and if we do we'll be

overwhelmed by that fact that He would identify Himself with me. That he would want to identify with me. That He would save me. That should absolutely overwhelm us. And it says an awful lot about Him, not me because I'm totally unworthy of all of this. It says an awful lot about Him. He is the humble servant. Why was He baptized? Because He's a humble servant and He came and identified with those whom He would serve.

There's a second reason. A second answer to the question, why was Jesus baptized. And it's because He is the anointed Savior. He's the humble servant, he's the anointed savior. Verses 16 and 17. "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, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'" Not only was John's ministry validated by Jesus being baptized, but at that time the identity of Christ as the anointed savior was confirmed by both the Spirit and the Father. As you can see here, immediately after Jesus was baptized by John, some amazing events took place. Both worthy of a behold. Now, just as a foot note here, it says that after being baptized, Jesus came up from the water and Mark 1:10 says He came out of the water. John and Jesus had both been in the Jordan River. That's where John had baptized Jesus. The fact that they were in the river, in the water, and the fact that the word baptize means to immerse, indicates that John's baptism, the baptism that Jesus received, was one of immersion. He got dunked in the Jordan River. What's the point of going into the river and coming out of the river if you're not going to get dunked in the river. Now I don't want to make a big issue out of that, but that's the only way to make sense of that passage. It's the only way to make sense of what we're told here. It's the only way to make sense of all the things that we're told about baptism in the New Testament.

But be that as it may, as soon as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened as verse 16 tells us. Now that doesn't happen very often, that the heavens are opened. Every time it happens it's to reveal something significant. For example in Ezekiel 1:1 the heavens opened and Ezekiel received visions of God. In Acts chapter seven verse 56, Stephen is giving his defense before the Jews and they are just about to kill him. In fact, after he says what I'm about to tell you, they did kill him. He said that he saw the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. Heavens opened, Stephen saw that. It doesn't happen every day. Revelation chapter four verse one, John saw a door opened in heaven. He was given visions of heaven. It doesn't happen very often but it's very significant when it does. It's so significant that in Isaiah 64:1 Isaiah cries out, "Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down." Well that day when Jesus was baptized, the heavens were opened and the Spirit of God came down. The Spirit of God descended. Specifically the Spirit of God descended was some kind of physical manifestation that could be seen and His descent was like that of a dove. Hard to know what that's like exactly. It's the only time the Holy Spirit is represented by a dove. In the scripture a dove was a familiar bird. Apparently this was a way of descending that was familiar. The Spirit descended in a way similar to the way a dove does. The thing to take note of is that in some kind of visible form, the Spirit came down from heaven and we're told that He was lighting on Jesus. That speaks of a permanent and peculiar union between the Spirit and Jesus. And John saw this happening. And he tells us about it. It's recorded in John chapter one starting in verse 32. It says, "John testified saying, 'I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained up on Him.'" This is what happened and John

says, I saw it. Verse 33 of John one he says, "I did not recognize Him." Which means that when Jesus first came to him he didn't recognize all that was true about Jesus. He didn't recognize all that was involved in who He was. He says, "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.'" He says, "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God." The Spirit descended in some kind of visible way, kind of like a dove. John saw it and he said that when he saw that he knew who that person was because God had told him that when this happens you'll know that this is the One. The visible act is confirmation of who Jesus is and John bears testimony to the reality. The Spirit comes upon Jesus as a formal anointing and an inauguration of His public ministry.

In fact, the very next thing you're going to read in chapter four verse one is that Jesus was led by the Spirit to go into the wilderness. You see the ministry of the Spirit in the life of Christ. In John 3:34 we're told He received the Spirit without measure. In Matthew 12:28 it says He cast out demons by the Spirit of God. Talking about the union of the Spirit in Christ and the work of the Spirit in the life of the man, Christ. In Acts chapter 10 verse 38, Peter is preaching and he says, "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." So this visible act identifies Jesus for who He is. He is the Christ. This is the confirmation. And this is in harmony, this working of the Spirit is in harmony with all the Old Testament had foretold regarding this coming Messiah, this coming Savior. For example in Isaiah chapter 11 verses one and two it says, "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit." That's speaking of Christ. Verse two says, "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him." So there's a prophecy of when the Messiah comes, the Spirit will rest on Him. Here's the fulfillment of it at His baptism when the Spirit physically, visibly descended upon Him. In Isaiah chapter 61, again, referring to the coming Messiah, it says, "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." The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, He has anointed me. We know that is a reference to Christ because in Luke chapter four we're told that Christ went to a synagogue one day, He read from the scripture. He read this very verse and He says, today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. In other words, I'm the one being talked about here. And you see the connection there of the Spirit of the Lord anointing Him.

So the heavens opening and Spirit's descending upon Jesus confirms His identity as the anointed Savior. That would be pretty convincing all by itself. That ought to clinch the deal. But that's not all that happened that day because verse 17 says, "And behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'" A voice descended out of heaven. The voice is obviously of the Father. And you need to take note here in this passage we have a clear reference to the trinity. We see the Son, we see the Spirit, we see the Father. We see all three of them. We see them acting distinctly from each other, separately from each other, but they're all three here in one place at one time. And the Father refers to Jesus as His beloved Son which means that they have a deep, rich, profound affection. He's the beloved Son. And in this beloved Son the Father is well-pleased. There are no imperfections in this Son. The Father confirms Jesus as the Son of God. He's My beloved Son and I am well-pleased with Him. They enjoy a distinctly unique relationship. And this statement again echoes

statements out of the Old Testament. We had read for us earlier Psalm chapter two, Psalm two, which a couple of times makes reference to the Son. In fact, Psalm 2:7 says, "You are My Son." Similar to what the Father said that day as Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River. And to the careful student of the Old Testament, those words that the Father spoke regarding the Son that say would sound very similar to some words that were spoken on another occasion recorded in Genesis 22 verse two. This is God talking to Abraham about offering his son Isaac. And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." There's a picture there of what would happen with Christ the Son giving His life as a sacrifice, but the words here sound so familiar. Take your son, your only son, whom you love. That's what the Father is saying about Jesus. He's My Son, My only Son, My beloved Son, the One in whom I am well-pleased.

All of this is all wrapped up, the work of the Spirit, the Father being pleased with the Son in Isaiah chapter 42 in verse one. It says, "Behold, My Servant." There's the idea of Him being a servant. He's the humble servant. "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights." In whom I'm well-pleased. "I have put My Spirit upon Him; He'll bring forth justice to the nations." There's the whole thing right there. He's a servant. He's the one in whom the Father delights. And He's the one in whom the Spirit came. Here at the baptism of John, with all the events that are taking place, Jesus is clearly recognized as the Son of God which, by the way, becomes the very basis for Satan's testing of Jesus which we'll see when we get into chapter four. When Satan comes to tempt and to test Jesus, Satan knew who He was because in chapter four verse three he says, "If you are the Son of God." And again, in verse six he'll say, "If you are the Son of God." This is My beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased. Same words spoken by the Father at Jesus' baptism would be said again at another significant time. We call it the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, James, and John went up with Jesus onto a mountain. They saw Him in all of His glory revealed there on that mountain. They saw Moses and Elijah appear and talk with Jesus on that mountain. And the Father spoke on that occasion. It's recorded in Matthew 17:5. It says, "While He was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!'" This is My beloved Son.

God's voice would come out of heaven one other time during the ministry of Jesus. This time He spoke in the shadow of the cross as Jesus is anticipating giving up His life as a sacrifice. And it says this in John chapter 12 starting in verse 27. He says, "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour?' But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name. Then a voice came out of heaven: 'I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.'" So again the Father speaks. These acts, Spirit descending, the Father speaking, they answer the question "Why was Jesus baptized?" Those are the kind of things you would expect. You would expect the anointed Savior, you would expect the Spirit would do something special and unique. You would expect that the Father would say something in confirmation. Those things wouldn't be surprising. But what is surprising is that He also identified Himself as a humble servant willing to fulfill all righteousness. And, interestingly that proceeded and led to the heavenly confirmation that He's the anointed Savior. First He identifies Himself as the humble servant. And then the confirmation comes. This clearly shows the significance of

Jesus' ministry. Nobody has any excuse for missing who Jesus is. His identity couldn't be any clearer. And His identity which is presented here might appear as a paradox to us. He's a man and He identifies Himself with men. But yet He is God. He identifies with men as a man, He identifies with God as God. He is the unique God-man. He is a man. He was a man, 100% man. He's the son of Abraham, the son of David. In Matthew 8:20 we'll see Him refer to Himself as the Son of Man which was His favorite title for Himself. He began life on this earth as a baby. He was born just like us. And he grew and developed just like us. He went through teething. He learned to talk. He crawled. He learned to walk. He developed and grew just like us. He displayed human emotions. Outside the tomb of Lazarus he wept. He had a normal appetite. You see Him all through the gospels eating just like everybody else. He had certain limitations. In John chapter four, He's sitting at a well, where you know He has that meeting with that woman, Jacob's well in Sumneria, and it says that He sat there because He was tired. The disciples went into town to get the burgers and fries, He waited at the well because He was tired. And then right, He said to the woman, "Give Me a drink. I'm thirsty." He experienced like just like us. And in the end He suffered and He died. Jesus was a man, 100% man. But Jesus is also God. One hundred percent God. And He demonstrated all the attributes of deity. He was called God. "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He's eternal. He was in the beginning. He's always existed. He doesn't change. Hebrews 13:8, "He's the same yesterday, today and forever." He's the unchanging one. He's all-knowing. Frequently in gospels you read that He knew what people were thinking. You only think you know what people are thinking. He knew what they were thinking. He was all powerful. He could say to a raging storm, hush be still, and boom, it stopped. He's perfect, holy, and righteous. In fact, He challenged people on that. In John 8:46 He says, "Who among you convicts Me of sin?" None of us are going to ask that question. He could because He was perfect, holy, righteous. He created things. He turned water into wine. When Peter chopped off the ear of the servant of the high priest, a man named Malchus, Jesus gave him a new ear. He created sight for people who had been blind from birth. Only God can do that. And He forgives sin. In Mark chapter two, when they brought the paralytic man, the four friends brought the paralytic guy and they dug a hole in the roof, and they lowered him down to Jesus, Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And that threw the Pharisees into a tizzy because only God can forgive sins. Exactly! He's God. And, He gives life like only God can. He called Lazarus out of that tomb who had been dead for four days. Christ is 100% man, and 100% God. In this one unique person we see this union of the human and the divine. And that union departs divine power to the human. This man could do all of these powerful things because He's God in human flesh. But also as a human he experienced all that we do. And he did that not only so He could fulfill all righteousness on our behalf, but so He could be a sympathetic Savior.

In Hebrews chapter two, verses 14 through 18 it says, "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted." He came just like us, 100% man, experienced all the things we do, so the

He could offer help, be a sympathetic Savior. He's been there. He's experienced it. He's a humble servant. And most significant for you and me is that this union of divine and human makes it possible for Him, this one person, to be the mediator between God and man. **First Peter 2:5** says, "There is one God and one mediator also between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." He's the only one that can be that mediator because He's the only one who's God and man. He's the only one who can be the mediator between God and man, because He's both God and man. This truth is meant to impact us as we think about our Savior. It should cause us to turn our eyes from everything else and to fix our gaze on Him in absolute wonder and amazement. To pull the car over and get out and take a good look. Our thoughts should be fixed on Him. Our words should speak of Him. In your conversations, do you speak of the Son, the Servant, the Savior? Our words should speak of Him. He's the most compelling person to ever walk on this earth. More has been said and written about Him than anybody else. More songs have been sung about Him than anybody else. His words, His life, His death, His resurrection have impacted and transformed millions of lives. This act of His baptism reveals His identity. He's the humble servant who identifies Himself with the sinner He came to save, and save them He will because He is the anointed Savior. That fact was confirmed by the Spirit and the Father. The Father declared that He was well-pleased with the Son. Are you well-pleased with Him? Is He beloved to you? Do thoughts of Him make you stop? How could we ever consider seeking our greatest pleasure somewhere else? Or demonstrating a greater love for anyone else than this one? There's no super-practical application to this sermon. Just the greatest truth for you to chew on. Pull over the car, get out and take a look at the Savior. Take a look at Him even as He's revealed in His baptism. That He is the humble servant. He is the anointed Savior. To remind you of these basic things is no burden for me. And it is for your joy that even as you ponder the question, 'why was Jesus baptized?', you would take the time to pull over and take a good look at this One who is our Savior. Let's pray.

Father, this is such a familiar account, many of us have learned about it in Sunday school at the youngest ages, but yet it's so profound in what it says to us. And what it says about the identity of this man, Jesus Christ. What it tells us about Him and what He came to do. We're overwhelmed by the fact that He would humble Himself and become a servant to us, that He would identify with us and our need for salvation that He Himself would come to stand in our place to fulfill all righteousness in our place and become the perfect substitute in our place to be the one who would be the mediator between us and God. We're overwhelmed. We're humbled by that great truth; that this One would humble Himself to serve us. We recognize that He's the anointed Savior. He's the one that the scriptures pointed to. He's the one that is the fulfillment of all the promises. He is the one that is the Son of the Father, that is beloved, that is well-pleased, identified by and anointed by the Spirit. This is the one. Lord, help us to put aside all of our idols. Help us to realize how frequently we look somewhere else other than to our Savior. The one who became just like us suffered things just like we do, so that He could sympathize with us. Help us to be quick to go to Him. Help us to fix our eyes on Him. Help us to follow after Him. He's the one who came out of heaven in order to take us there. Help us, Lord, to fix our eyes, to fix our hope, to fix our love on this one. Lord, I pray particularly that you would help us. We live in such a busy world, we're on the run all the time. Help us, Lord, to frequently stop, pull over, get out, and think deeply about the Savior. We pray this in His name. Amen.