

Like Jesus

He didn't have to.... In reflecting on Jesus' baptism and our pastor's teaching on it from last weekend, that is the thought that keeps coming back. Jesus didn't need to be baptized, He was perfect and sinless. He had nothing to repent. He was not like the other people coming to John the Baptist and seeking baptism. Can you imagine what might have been said along the shoreline of the Jordan River? "Did you see who went to get baptized by John today? I wonder what they did that they are feeling so guilty?".

While baptism was not "new" in Jesus' day, it was a new idea for Jews to be baptized. Previously, it was only "sinful" gentiles who would seek this purification. "Good Jews" didn't need to worry about baptism.

Now, John was preaching something new — a baptism of repentance, for all, regardless of lineage. An acknowledgement on the part of all sinful human beings that they had strayed from God and needed forgiveness. And here was Jesus publicly stepping into the river!

It was a humble thing to do. In this gracious act, he identified with us. I am sure people looked at him and wondered, "What is he guilty of? What did the new preacher do?" This is not unlike the nasty rumors that surely followed he and Mary and Joseph around after the unusual timing and circumstances of his birth. Yet, Jesus stepped into that river and took another step toward identifying with his creation. Another step which allows us to look into the face of Jesus and know he has "been there".

Compare that to our world. Folks on both sides of the political aisle seem ready to shout at, belittle or flare up in anger with those who disagree. "Humility" is not the correct word to describe much of our social discourse at this point in history. As followers of Jesus, we are not called to add our voices to the angry mobs, but to be in step with Jesus. We must seek to identify with others, especially those who are hard for us to love, and show humility and compassion.

We need to be like Jesus.

After he stepped into the river and was baptized, God spoke for the world to hear: "You are my Son whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Because of what Jesus has done for us, we too are called children of God. May he be well pleased with how we follow his Son and share His love and humility.

If you or anyone in your home is not baptized and would like to be, please contact one of our pastors about this amazing gift God has given to his people.

~ Eric Gerken, Director of Family & Youth Ministry
1.13.2021