

Sometimes when we read the Bible, we're left with unanswered questions.

Sadly, (and shame on us), we preachers have a nasty habit of always wanting to appear very knowledgeable, as if we've got all the answers. We don't. And today is a case-in-point.

Today is about the Baptism of Jesus. And the question that immediately comes to mind, is “Why did Jesus need to be baptised?” I mean, as we learned last week, the Baptism of John the Baptist is about “repentance for the forgiveness of sins”, and if Jesus is sinless, why did He need to be baptised?

In the Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus comes to be baptised, John the Baptist says, “No, I can't be baptising you. You should be baptising me.” and Jesus basically says, “Suck it up Cuz, do it”. “This has to be done to fulfill all righteousness”.

What does that even mean?

Well, you might want to dock my pay this week, because your preacher doesn't know...

In the Gospel of Mark, he doesn't tell us anything about **why** Jesus was baptised.

And Luke says very little about the actual baptism. The focus for Luke, is on what happened while Jesus was praying **after** He was baptised.

So, we don't know **why** Jesus was baptised, but I can give you some positives that came from it.

1.

The first positive, is it endorsed the ministry of John the Baptist.

When Jesus submitted Himself to be baptised, He became an example for others. Baptism is a committing of one's self, to a new relationship with God. For Jesus, His baptism marked the beginning of His ministry.

And Jesus, submitting Himself to Baptism, was a lesson that **everyone** needs to be baptised.

If I feel that I've lived a pretty good life:

- I don't get drunk
- beat my wife
- kick the cat
- not a thief,,,

maybe I don't need to be baptised. Oh, yes you do – there's pride right there.

And if baptism is something that Jesus submitted Himself to, that's good enough for me to understand that **every** one of us needs to be baptised.

2.

And the **2nd** positive of Jesus' baptism, is His identification with humanity.

When Jesus was born as a babe in the manger, that was the beginning of His life as a human (well actually it was before

that – from the time that he began as an embryo, He began His life as a human). Jesus didn't come as a God, dressed up (and disguising Himself) as a Human. Jesus stepped down from the throne-room of Heaven, and became fully human.

And so, as a baby, I have no doubt that Baby Jesus did what all babies do. :

- The Holy One would have been soiled in His own excrement as He dirtied His nappy;
- The One who provides, would've cried when He was hungry; and
- The One who heals, would have run a mild fever when He was teething;

Jesus was God, who came to Earth as a man does (beginning as the most helpless of young), and He had normal human weaknesses.

And that's what the very long genealogy was about:

- “So-&-so, the son of
- “Thing-a-me-jig, the son of
- “Whose-a-me-what's it”, the son of
- “old mate”....

It starts off with Joseph, who was the supposed father of Jesus..... But Luke leaves us in no doubt: Joseph was not Jesus' father – he was His step-dad. But even so, Jesus was placed into an earthly family – a family who had a heritage (along with all of its baggage; achievements & failures). He was placed into a family in the line of David.

Jesus had the full experience...

I shake my head when celebrities, fly in to a third-world country in their luxury private jet, visit an orphanage, and then have a photo-opp of them cuddling some adorable children, and them selflessly serving out a bit of gruel to the starving masses,,, and then they hop on to their private jet to eat their lavish meal their private chef has prepared them, as fly home, to their opulent mansion...

And they convince themselves that they've had an 'emersion experience'. And they can feel quite confident, "The world knows that I care for the poor" Seriously...

When Jesus came to Planet Earth, He didn't come as a celebrity looking for a photo-opp. He became fully human, and entered life as one of us...

So, I don't know why Jesus was baptised, but there are 2 positives that I can identify, **from** His baptism.

1. He sets the example – we all need to be baptised; and
2. it's part of Him being fully human.

Now, having said that, for Luke, Jesus getting baptised isn't the issue. Luke focuses on what happened **after** the baptism.

Jesus was praying, and the heavens were opened. Now, I don't know what that looks like, or if it could even be seen. You know, we might picture the clouds parting, and the bright sunlight streaming through... Maybe... Don't know. Don't know if it could be seen or not.

V²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove;

This could be seen. Somehow, the Holy Spirit could be seen, descending upon Jesus, like a dove... Now, does that mean the Holy Spirit looked like a bird that landed on Jesus' shoulder? Don't know.

Or do we think back to the beginning of the creation of the earth in *Genesis 1:2 (ESV)* ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering [fluttering] over the face of the waters.

Or did the Holy Spirit just glide down gracefully like a dove and land upon Jesus? Don't know.

What we **do** know, is at that point, the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus in a new and visible way...

Jesus is fully human, but **now** He is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

But **that's** not the climax either.

The climax, is the voice of God, coming from Heaven:

"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Yes, Jesus is fully Human, but He is also the beloved Son of our God...

Righto Michael, so what's in it for me??? Pardon....
What's in it for me??? ...

What were you hoping to get out of the message today? Why have you come to church???

Or let me put it like this, “For what reason might an unbeliever set foot in this church today?”

I've told you, I don't have answers to a fair bit of this today, but what are people looking for???

Some turn up at church looking for:

- healing;
- hope;
- want help to cope;
- have a marriage that's falling apart and want it fixed;
- miserable and are looking for meaning and purpose;
- anxious and worried and just want to breathe easy;
- want to be lifted to a higher plane so they can excel in life....
and get some really good advice for living

You know what? I don't have any of that to offer you today, because the bible reading today isn't about you, and it isn't

about me... What's revealed today, is completely about Jesus...

What if.... What if, you came today, focused on yourself, focused on your own problems, and what if, instead of hearing about you, you were confronted with the climax of human realisation, “**Jesus is the Beloved Son of God...**”

Jesus is not simply a nice man who lived 2000 years ago and started a movement that does nice things today. – Jesus is:

- the Author and creator of life;
- the King of Kings;
- the Lord of Lords;
- the Alpha and Omega;
- the beginning and the end;
- the saviour;
- the redeemer;

and

- as we learned last week, Jesus is the judge whom we will all have to face; and
- when Jesus returns, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord...

If I come to church, focused on myself, wondering “what's in it for me”, *that would be a bit like visiting the Grand Canyon and watching selfies on my phone while the sun sets over the amazing landscape...*

- *Me with my wife;*

- *me with my 38 super;*
- *Me tormenting a cat;*
- *me patting a cat (when)*

Today is a reminder that it's not about me. It's about Jesus – as it should be, every day.

For some it mightn't be a reminder – it might be a **discovery** – it's not about me – it's about Jesus...

And if everything **is** about Jesus, what then???

How could it be anything, but **total** surrender to Him... And we worship Him.

Now, sometimes we get the impression that worship is about “having a moment” during a song – losing ourselves in the music so we can get carried along... Well let me tell you, if that's what worship is, the godless are very good at worship, because they can be moved by music as the most spiritual of Christians... Do you know why? Because being moved by music, isn't worship – that's an emotional response to art...

True worship, is a life surrendered to God.

In Romans 12, Paul says: (ESV) **12 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.**

And then it goes on to basically give a picture of repentance (which we talked about last week) Don't be confirmed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...

That's the sort of worship that God is looking for. That's the sort of worship that Jesus Christ has the right to receive, because He is the beloved Son of God.

Where are you at with God? Have you been caught up in the "What's in it for me?" movement??? And have you come to understand, "It's not about me. It's all about Jesus."

Maybe today is a day of repentance – a day of total surrender – a time to make life "all about Jesus", because if Jesus is God, what else could our life rightly be about???

As Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew, "The Kingdom of God is like a hidden treasure. Once you discover it, you abandon everything else, to get ahold of that one thing.¹"

A day of repentance – total surrender, because it's all about Jesus.

Will you pray with me. And I don't want you to pray this prayer, unless you're serious about it. It's going to be a prayer that:

- recognises it's all about Jesus;
- repentance;
- repenting of focus on self;
- a commitment to a life of total surrender to Jesus.

And let me add to that,

It's going to be a prayer, that if you are not yet baptised, after you've prayed this prayer, you will know you need to be baptised.

Let's pray,

Lord Jesus Christ,

we recognise that You are indeed the Son of God.

Forgive us for treating You as just another man;

Forgive us for when we've been focused on self,

- our own problems;
- own issues;
- own dreams & ambitions;
- own feelings of fulfillment (whatever)

We recognise that You are the Lord God almighty;

King of Kings

Lord of Lords

And we yield to You in total surrender.

We repent – we turn around –

we change our whole lives.

And this isn't just for a moment

We commit to a life of total surrender to You.

And we ask that by Your Holy Spirit,

You will change us,

renew us,
transform us.
Day by day,
to Your glory,
Amen.

ⁱ Matt 13:44