



Matthew 3v13-17 Look: the Beloved Son!

In these verses, we continue to look at responses to the coming king. Remember, one of the surprises of the kingdom of heaven is that it comes in two stages. Jesus has come. And yet he is still to come. So we find ourselves in a similar situation to those who first awaited the coming of Christ 2000 years ago.

Jesus comes to John for baptism. It is his public unveiling because when he comes out of the water, the Spirit comes on him in the form of a dove, a light shines on him and the Father speaks from heaven. And so at the very beginning of his ministry, God gives us his absolute approval of Jesus, his Son. ***'This is my Son, whom I love, with whom I am well pleased.'*** The Father tells us that he loves the Son. But why? Why does the Father love the Son? Two reasons.

1) Because of the Son's costly obedience

It is a puzzle that Jesus is baptized. Why would the sinless one need the symbolism of a sinner being cleansed? John is confused, but Jesus insists because he is determined to ***'fulfil all righteousness.'*** That is, he comes to bring God's promised salvation. And baptism is key because it represents his willingness to associate with sinners, and ultimately, to pay for sin on the cross. His baptism is a foreshadowing of his death and resurrection.

And the Father knows what it cost. Jesus gave up his glorious life in heaven for the shame of life on earth. And so the Father loves him. Because of his costly obedience. We are called to worship him and to follow in his footsteps. The Father delights in our obedience today. But also...

2) Because of the Son's sacrificial service

The declaration from the Father reminds us of Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42. Jesus is the Christ promised to David and the suffering servant spoken of by Isaiah. He is the king who will rule by giving up his life. He will suffer for his people by taking their sin on himself and dying in their place.

And so that Father loves him, because he is willing to serve others. So we are called to worship Jesus and to follow in his footsteps, knowing that the Father delights in our service.

Here are a few questions that might get things going, feel free to ignore / adapt / add to for your group:

What do people today love and what does it say about us? What might we think God loves?

Why is it so strange that Jesus is baptised? But why does he insist? What does it mean to 'fulfil all righteousness?'

Why was Jesus' obedience in taking on flesh so costly for him? (You may find it helpful to look at Philippians 2v1-11) How is his example of obedience a challenge/ encouragement for us today?

What do Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42 tell us about Jesus and his mission? How is his sacrificial service a challenge/encouragement for us today?

What is the main thing we have learnt from this passage?