

Matthew 3vv13-17

We saw last week that John the Baptist has been busy preaching a message of repentance, and baptising people in the Jordan River. But in today's passage we see that one of the people lining up for baptism is Jesus the Christ.

Why?... Why would Jesus need a baptism of repentance? What sin does Jesus need to repent of?

Well the short answer is none!

Nevertheless, Jesus' public ministry begins with him receiving John's baptism. And this occasion teaches us two important truths about Jesus' purpose and his identity.

#1 - At his baptism, Jesus identifies with sinful people

In vv13-14, John is rightly confused by Jesus requesting baptism. John has been baptising repentant people to prepare for the arrival of God's king (Cf. Matthew 3vv1-12), but now the King has arrived and is asking for baptism! As John points out, he needs the baptism Jesus offers, not the other way round.

Jesus explains in v15 that this all part of God's salvation plan. Jesus begins his public ministry by identifying with the very people he has come to save. So whilst Jesus does not need a sinner's baptism, he will face a sinner's funeral on the cross. For Jesus did not come to only identify with sinful people, he came to pay for our sin as well.

#2 - At his baptism, Jesus is identified as God's beloved son

Since the beginning of Matthew's gospel, we have known that there is something special about Jesus, something unique about him. In vv16-17 Jesus is clearly identified as God's beloved Son.

So although Jesus *identifies* with sinful people, we must not make the mistake of thinking he is just like us. He is not. He is the divine Son of God, and as such, he deserves our worship.

And Jesus is even more worthy of our worship, when we understand that the Son with whom God is "well pleased", willingly takes the punishment we deserve, so that we too may know what it is to be a beloved child of God.