



Part 9: Identification, Identity & Purpose

Matthew 3:13-17

Jesus identifies with us in our sin so that we can identify with him in his Kingdom identity and purpose.

I. The Big Moment

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.” Matthew 3:13

Jesus was far away up North from the action up in the Galilee. He was apparently living a quiet and faithful life as a carpenter. Only a small group of people knew him up there, and he had not yet become the man who would eventually become the most famous person in history.

Jesus had a lot of time to think about who he was, what he was going to do, how he was going to do it. There must have been an enormous amount of temptation to stay quietly tucked away up North and lead a quiet, obscure life. Why not take the easy way through life?

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”
2 Corinthians 8:9

II. The Great Exchange

A. In Humility and Love, Jesus Identifies with Sinners

“But John tried to deter him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ Jesus replied, ‘Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.’”
Matthew 3:14-15

Jesus is referring to his role to play in God's saving activity, which will lead him to his crucifixion and resurrection.

"After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life, and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." Isaiah 53:11

His first step as our Savior is to identify with the sinners he has come to save.

"Jesus might well have been up there in front standing with John and calling on sinners to repent. Instead he was down there with the sinners, affirming his solidarity with them, making himself one with them in the process of the salvation that he would in due course accomplish." Leon Morris (quoted in *The Matthew NIV Application Commentary*, 140).

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:21

By submitting to John's baptism of repentance for sinners, Jesus is taking the first public step to identify with us in our sin. In the language of the writer of Hebrews, Jesus is the "pioneer" of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-3).

Jesus is taking the first public step to reconcile us to the God the Father through the forgiveness of our sins (Matthew 1:21). Heaven is being opened giving forgiven sinners access to the riches of God the King (Matt. 3:16).

B. Jesus Gives us a New Identity in Him

"And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'" Matthew 3:17

God the Father affirms Jesus' identity from two Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.

"He said to me, 'You are my Son, today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will give the nations as your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.'" Psalm 2:7-8

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations." Isaiah 42:1 (See Matthew 12:17-21)

When you and I come to Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we are identifying with him as he has identified with us. Our baptism reflects this identification in Jesus' life, death and resurrection (Romans 6:4-10).

One of the gifts of our salvation is a new identity as sons and daughters of God the Father.

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ...because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’ So you are no longer a slave but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.” Galatians 3:26-27; 4:6-7

With our new identity, we can live from a place of security and love united to Jesus. The most joyful and fruitful disciples of Jesus are those living securely in their Kingdom identity.

C. Jesus gives us a new purpose in Him

The Holy Spirit comes upon Jesus to empower and guide him on his Kingdom mission. It is the same for us when we receive the Holy Spirit.

“We are buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Romans 6:4

“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.” 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

“But seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever considered the possibility that Jesus could have stayed in obscurity rather than publicly identifying with us? What do you imagine it was like for Jesus as he grew older contemplating the call on his life to identify with sinners?
2. Have you ever faced a challenging temptation to avoid doing something hard that you believed the lord was asking you to do? What was that experience like?
3. Look at Galatians 3:26-27; 4:6-7. What has been your experience with the witness of the Holy Spirit to your heart that you are a child of God? What do you desire?
4. Look at Romans 6:4 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. How much does your Kingdom identity as a son or daughter of the King shape your vision for your life? Are there decisions you have made as a result of this?
5. Pray for one another for the Holy Spirit to give a deeper witness of your Kingdom identity and purpose.

Resource: *Living Fearless* by Jamie Winship (Revel 2022)