

# MY BELOVED SON

unit 20 | session 2



## CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus completely obeyed God and identified with sinful humans by being baptized. His baptism points to His death on the cross and to His resurrection from the grave. For those of us in Christ, the words spoken over Jesus at His baptism are also true of us: We are the Father's beloved children with whom He is pleased.

# **O**BEDIENCE **AND IDENTITY**

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Matthew 3:13-17; John 1:29-34

## **JESUS'S OBEDIENCE REVEALED HIS IDENTITY**

### **MATTHEW 3:13-17**

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to stop him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?" 15 Jesus answered him, "Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then John allowed him to be baptized. 16 When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased."

## **OUR OBEDIENCE REVEALS OUR IDENTITY**

### **JOHN 1:29-34**

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I told you about: 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.' 31 I didn't know him, but I came baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he rested on him. 33 I didn't know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The one you see the Spirit descending and resting on—he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

## MAIN POINT.

When we're devoted to following Jesus, we will live in obedience to God's Word.



## THEOLOGY CONNECTION



### BAPTISM

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony of faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Baptism is a church ordinance and comes before the privileges of church membership and taking part in the Lord's Supper.

# DISCUSSION



## JESUS'S OBEDIENCE REVEALED HIS IDENTITY

MATTHEW 3:13-17

- How important is fairness to you? How have you seen life be unfair?
-  • Jesus was sinless, so why did He insist on being baptized?
-  • When have you needed someone to back you up or support you? Why was it important that God confirmed Jesus's identity at His baptism?

## OUR OBEDIENCE REVEALS OUR IDENTITY

JOHN 1:29-34

- What causes us to act pridefully or arrogantly? How do you keep this in check?
-  • How do we know what John believed about Jesus? How will people know what we believe?
-  • What does it mean to be devoted? What are things people can tell you're devoted to right now?



**HOW COULD YOUR LIFESTYLE CONFUSE PEOPLE ABOUT YOUR BELIEF IN JESUS? WHY DOES YOUR OBEDIENCE TO GOD MATTER?**

## CULTURAL CONNECTION

What's the big deal with baptism? Can we skip that step? First, baptism doesn't save us from sin or make us clean. When we confess Jesus as Lord (confessing and turning from sin) and believe He was raised from death, we are saved (Rom. 10:9). But Jesus commanded us to follow His example in baptism (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus, who had not sinned, was baptized to show us the way of obedience. Baptism is a declaration of our salvation: Our old self is buried and we're new creations, able to walk in a totally new way because of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:3-5). Many times, people resist baptism because they're fearful of being in front of others or because they don't feel it's necessary. But Jesus commanded it, so we're called to obey. We must ask ourselves how we can inwardly commit our heart yet outwardly refuse to obey Him in this matter—in any matter. Jesus didn't command us to do anything that He didn't do too. He showed us how. We can obediently follow Him and trust His example.



## DAY ONE

# 1 PETER 3:21-22

People wear jerseys to show they are fans of an athlete, specific colors to show support for a school or team, and rings if they get married—all examples of ways that people can publicly display their loyalty to someone or something. For example, if you decided to wear someone else's wedding ring for the day, would that make you married? No way! What makes someone married is not the jewelry they wear but the covenant love two people enter into before God and others. A wedding ring, as precious as it might be, is still just a symbol for the commitment made. Baptism works in a similar way. It is a powerful act of obedience that tells the world who you are loyal to, but it is still a symbol to show the work that Jesus has already done in your life.

When Peter said that baptism “now saves you,” he did not say that the act of being submerged into water automatically made you a Christian, but he explained that baptism is a symbol that shows others you have been saved by placing your faith in Jesus. To be very clear: We are forgiven of all sin and saved only when we repent, believe, and surrender our lives to Jesus, who died on the cross and rose from the dead to reign victoriously as King forever. This gift of salvation was always meant to be shared with others as an act of obedience. We obey God when we not only commit to follow Him for the rest of our days but also when we share with others that we have been made new by God and are now loyal to Him alone. If you have called on Jesus for salvation but have not been baptized, talk to a trusted adult today about this step of obedience!

- **IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS BAPTISM? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**
- **IF YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN BAPTIZED, WRITE OUT A PRAYER REFLECTING ON THAT DAY AND THANKING GOD FOR SAVING YOU. IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN BAPTIZED, WRITE OUT A PRAYER ASKING GOD FOR COURAGE TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT TAKING THIS NEXT STEP.**

PRAY

**GOD, THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME BY THE DEATH  
AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS. GIVE ME THE  
COURAGE TO CHOOSE OBEDIENCE. YOU ARE ALWAYS  
WORTH FOLLOWING AND SHARING!**



## DAY TWO

# ROMANS 6:1-11

Every time we watch someone get baptized, we watch the gospel demonstrated. If we aren't careful, we can get so used to watching baptisms that we treat them as normal and miss the beauty, hope, and power each baptism declares. Someone going under the water symbolizes death—Jesus's death and ours. Salvation is only possible because Jesus first laid down His life for us on the cross. We also died to sin and our old ways of living when we surrendered our lives to Jesus. Then, someone coming out of the water symbolizes life—abundant life now and eternal life forever, all because of Jesus.

Because of God's great love and mercy, death is never the end of the story for anyone who loves God and truly walks with Him. Baptism reminds us of an important truth: Resurrection and new life come only after death. Abundant and eternal life are only made possible by Jesus first dying on the cross. New life is only made possible by us first dying to our old self and our sin. God's Word promises that because of Jesus, sin and death have been defeated. When we surrender to Jesus, we put to death our old ways and are made alive in Christ permanently. Praise God! Here's the thing—when we follow Jesus, sin no longer has power over our lives because Jesus defeated sin and death, but for the rest of our days on earth, sin still has presence in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin, which is great news. But, we still need to practice daily repentance and self-control, considering ourselves dead to sin and instead alive to God.

- **HOW ARE YOU PERSONALLY ENCOURAGED BY THE TRUTH THAT SIN NO LONGER HAS POWER IN YOUR LIFE BECAUSE OF JESUS?**
- **WRITE OUT A PRAYER TO GOD THANKING HIM FOR DEFEATING DEATH AND SIN ON YOUR BEHALF AND FOR CALLING YOU TO ABUNDANT LIFE NOW AND IN ETERNITY.**

PRAY

**GOD, MAY WATCHING SOMEONE GET BAPTIZED NEVER GET OLD BECAUSE OF ITS PICTURE OF THE GOSPEL. THANK YOU FOR DECLARING ME FREED FROM THE POWER OF SIN. HELP ME TO REPENT AND RUN BACK TO YOU.**



## DAY THREE

# 1 JOHN 3:1-3

Earlier this week, we studied Matthew's and John's accounts of Jesus's baptism, when God declared that Jesus was His beloved Son. Today's passage shows us that through Jesus, we are also declared God's dearly-loved children! The fact that we get to be called children of God is further proof of His great love. We did nothing to earn His love, and we can do nothing to lose it. While we can receive His gift confidently, we must also steward it wisely. We don't obey God to earn His love; we do so in response to the perfect love He has already given us.

John said that "everyone who has this hope in [Jesus] purifies himself just as he is pure" (v. 3). In other words, when you understand that you are already dearly loved by God as His child, you can't help but respond in gratitude. We are then compelled to purify ourselves just as God is pure, meaning that we seek to become more like Him day after day. The beautiful promise of the gospel is that the more we look to Jesus, the more we will look like Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18). We take part in purifying ourselves by repenting of sin and following His Word; God does the actual work of transforming us. May we keep our eyes focused on God, live as His children, and walk in obedience to become more like Him each day.

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU THAT YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD— PERFECTLY LOVED AND SINCERELY DELIGHTED IN? THANK GOD FOR HIS GREAT LOVE THAT YOU COULD NEVER EARN OR LOSE!**
- **WHAT IS A CHARACTERISTIC OF JESUS YOU NEED TO FOCUS ON TODAY IN ORDER TO BECOME MORE LIKE HIM?**

## PRAY

**GOD, THANK YOU FOR YOUR WONDERFUL LOVE THAT I CAN NEITHER EARN NOR LOSE. HELP ME TO LIVE AS ONE WHO IS LOVED, WALKING IN OBEDIENCE AND TRUSTING YOU TO MAKE ME MORE LIKE YOU.**



## DAY FOUR

# ACTS 1:8

Acts is the second book written by Luke and is a continuation of his Gospel account—how the work of Jesus persists through the Holy Spirit. When we pick up in Acts 1:8, Jesus has already died on the cross, resurrected, and defeated death forever. These are the final moments before His ascension, when He returned to heaven to reign and rule (Luke 24:50-53). Acts 1:8 is a pivotal verse for all believers, as Jesus gave both a miraculous promise and a missional command. First, the miraculous promise from Jesus is that “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you.” This is God’s power to equip believers to follow Him and accomplish His plans. In John’s Gospel account, Jesus described the Holy Spirit as the Counselor (or Advocate, Comforter) and Spirit of truth, who will be with believers forever (John 14:16-17). When you surrender your life to Jesus by repenting of sin and recognizing Jesus as Lord, you are completely forgiven and made new, and God gifts you with the Holy Spirit, who guides you, empowers you, and forever marks you as His (Eph. 1:13-14).

Next, the missional command from Jesus is to “be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” If we look at a map while we read this verse, we see how Jesus commanded the disciples to share the good news in their hometown, surrounding areas, and also the whole world. A witness is someone who tells others what they have experienced firsthand. Those who walk with Jesus and experience His grace, mercy, and compassion should tell their experience to everyone around them. When you have the Holy Spirit through a relationship with Jesus, you also have the power to go wherever God leads, to do whatever He tells you to do, and to be a witness all the days of your life so that others also encounter the miraculous power of God for themselves. Let’s go!

- **WHAT IS SO MIRACULOUS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVING YOU POWER TO DO EVERYTHING GOD LEADS YOU TO DO?**
- **WHERE CAN YOU LIVE AS GOD’S WITNESS TODAY? WHO DO YOU NEED TO HAVE A GOSPEL CONVERSATION WITH TODAY?**

## PRAY

**GOD, THANK YOU FOR FILLING ME WITH YOUR HOLY SPIRIT. REMIND ME THAT BY YOUR POWER, GRACE, AND TRUTH, I AM ABLE TO BE A WITNESS FOR YOU AND ACCOMPLISH EVERYTHING YOU CALL ME TO DO.**



DAY FIVE

## PSALM 71:15-19

The life of John the Baptist is a powerful example of boldly proclaiming who God is no matter the cost. Until his last breath, John magnified the name of Jesus and pointed everyone to Him. When you have truly experienced for yourself the miraculous power and compassion of God, you can't help but share the news. Today's passage is part of a psalm that shows this same idea. The psalmist encountered God's righteousness, salvation, and mighty acts over and over again, to the point that he couldn't count them or fully understand them. When we can't understand this good news or fully comprehend God's kindness toward us, we often think, "How can this be?" We can let this question lead us into either unbelieving suspicion or humble submission. Unbelieving suspicion says, "If I can't fully understand something, it can't be true," while humble submission says, "I may not be able to fully understand, but praise God that my faith is so much bigger than what I can grasp and that I am safe in the hands of the One who understands it all."

Even when we know God is wildly kind to save us, we can grow comfortable, distracted, or numb to the gospel. But if we will fight against the temptation to get "used to" the good news and the miraculous mercy God has shown all of us, we will find ourselves like the psalmist who can't help but proclaim the goodness of God all the days of his life. Even if you are a follower of Jesus who is afraid to face rejection, unsure of what to say about God to others, or currently numb to God's goodness, the Holy Spirit will awaken you, fill you, and empower you. If God is as good and worthy as we say that He is (and He is!), let's make sure every breath we are given tells others about Him!

- **WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM BOLDLY SHARING GOD'S GOODNESS? WRITE OUT A PRAYER CONFESSING THESE FEARS.**
- **WHAT IS ONE CHARACTERISTIC OF GOD THAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED RECENTLY?**

PRAY

**GOD, WHILE I MAY NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND YOUR GOODNESS AND POWER, I KNOW I CAN HUMBLY SURRENDER AND PRAISE YOU ALL MY DAYS. GIVE ME THE COURAGE TO PROCLAIM WHO YOU ARE TO A WORLD THAT DESPERATELY NEEDS YOU.**