

Read: Luke 3:15-17,21-23

What's Jesus Doing Here?

Luke 3:21-22

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"What's he doing here?" When someone shows up in a place you'd least expect them, that's the thing to say. You'll find stories about A-list Hollywood celebrities spotted in all sorts of places other than the big screen—shopping at Costco, attending a middle school basketball game, or even serving drinks at a cousin's wedding. What's he doing here?

That may be the question John the Baptizer was asking himself as he saw Jesus of Nazareth coming toward him at the Jordan River to be baptized. "What's he doing here?" John knew what he was supposed to do. His work was to prepare the way for the Lord, to make straight paths for him, to get everyone ready for the arrival of the promised Savior from God. So, John called people to turn away from their sins and gave them a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of their sins. But Jesus didn't have any sins. So, what's he doing here? He doesn't seem to belong!

Jesus doesn't seem to belong in many of the places we see him in the gospels—the eternal Son of God placed in a manger as a newborn; having dinner with tax collectors and sinners; reaching out to touch and heal the sick and unclean; hanging on a cross and dying like the worst criminal. What's he doing here? The answer: saving you! There, on the banks of the Jordan River, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, revealing him to John, to the crowds, and to us as the Son of God. From his baptism, Jesus would go on to undo the damage of sin—with each healing and every miracle, until he would go to the cross of Calvary and the empty tomb of Easter to do away with sin and its punishment once for all for you.

In his baptism, Jesus, the holy Son of God, was united with sinners so that we, sinners, are united with him in our baptism. Because of our sins, we don't deserve to be anywhere close to God's presence. But because of our Savior, Jesus, God our Father doesn't look at us in surprise and ask, "What are you doing here?" He looks at us and says the very same thing he said about Jesus, "You are my son, my daughter, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Who baptized Jesus?
- Ask your parents to show you a picture of your baptism day and tell you about it.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Who descended on Jesus like a dove?
- What does it mean that Jesus “took our place”?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How can God say that he is “well pleased” with you?
- What’s one way that you can remind yourself of your baptism every day?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Father, thank you for sending Jesus to take away all of our sins. Help us to remember our baptism and treasure the promises you have made us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.