

Identifying with the Lord in Baptism and the Lord's Supper

My least favorite part of HS were situations where there was no formal structure. I mean times in school when **kids had freedom** to sit where they wanted, with who they wanted to, etc.

- Therefore, I did not like **pep rallies**....everyone in the gym! Sit where you want.
- Same with **lunch**....get your lunch, sit where you want.
- **Football games**.....i did not go, until I was on the team. And then there was structure....go in, run this play. When you are not in....stand near the coach, etc.
- I liked that all of **my classes had assigned seating**.
- I did not like **riding on the bus**. I did like when I could drive....that was an assigned seat.

Now, the reason for this, as has been well documented over the years with the teenagers, **is in HS I was a misfit**. Now, of course, I am very cool, which is apparent to all.

ill. But in HS, I **did not like lunch** because I did not have a group of people that I identified with. Or more importantly, that identified with me. If I sit down with this crowd, they all look at me like, "**um, what are you doing here?**"

I remember 8th grade....**T Riley**.....once he became cool, he no longer sat at my table. He no longer identified with us.

Anyway, **don't feel sorry for me**. It makes for **good illustrations** at the Wednesday night youth/parent meetings.

Fast forward a bit, and by a miracle of God's grace, I managed to find an intelligent, **attractive, normal woman** who loved me, and consented to marry me.

July 1, 2000 she stood on some ugly red carpet at the front of a church in Herndon and identified with me. She took my name. She became mine. I became hers.

One of my **absolute favorite things** about being married is that I now had someone who was **happy to identify** with me in social situations that lacked structure. No more worrying about standing alone in a large room; sitting at a lunch table by myself. My wife was happy to sit with me; stand with me; identify with me.

And **the reason that I tell you all of this** is that I am preaching a topical message today on Baptism and the Lords Supper. I think **my adolescent woes and**

subsequent marriage illustrate our need to identify with Christ through Baptism and then subsequently, the Lords Supper.

Both B and LS communicate this issue of identification.

In baptism, we publicly identify with the Lord, as our own. Through baptism we say, **I want to be with him**. I am his. He is mine. I need him. I love him. I'm going to **sit at his lunch table all my days**.

Its **like all of our lives we were orphans with no one to identify with us**; no lunch table to sit at; and then **he made us his own**. To switch the metaphor: **he made us his bride**, and baptism is the wedding....the public ceremony where we say—**I'm with him**.

And **in the Lords supper** we do the same thing in an **ongoing, regular way**. We keep making this same **confession---Jesus is mine**. I am his. I love him. I fail him, but I cling to him.

ill.If we go with a **sports analogy** it would be like this: All of your life you lived with a **jersey with the Team name** stamped across the front was **World, Flesh and Devil**, #12.

Baptism is putting on God's uniform. Jesus stamped across the front. It's publicly identifying yourself as being on his team.

And then the **Lord's Supper** is where you **gather with the rest** of the Team Members, Jesus Jersey's on, and together we say, "we are on His Team."

Those are the main points that I want to flesh out this morning in our time together.

We will treat them in the order that they should occur in the Christian life---baptism, and then the Lords Supper.

Baptism

Let's begin in **Matthew 3**, and we will read the entire chapter.

John the Baptist holds a **unique place in salvation history**. In **Matthew 11.11** Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist."

700 years before his birth, **Isaiah foretold of the ministry of John the Baptist** who would **come before** the Messiah, **announcing that the kingdom** of God was at hand, and that all men, everywhere, had to **repent** in order to enter.

We only have a brief amount of time to spend here, but let me just **point out a couple of really amazing things** about this passage.

1. The first is that **Jewish people are getting baptized** here. This is a truly radical step. Only Gentiles who were converting to Judaism were ever baptized before the ministry of John.

But here in Matthew 3, it is Jewish men and women that are being baptized. And the reason that this is so important is that in being baptized they are saying, **“our Jewishness does not make us a part of the true people of God. There has to be personal confession and personal repentance** in order to become a part of God’s people.”

This becomes really **clear in verse 7-9. Read....**

2. But then the **second really surprising thing** that happens here is that Jesus himself is baptized.

If anything is clear in this passage, its clear that the people that were baptized by John were **repenting and confessing** their sin....**verse 6**, “they were baptized by him....confessing their sins.”

And then **verse 11 John says**, “I baptize you with water FOR repentance....”

A **recognition of sinfulness was the reason** to be baptized. These people recognized that their sin kept them out of the family of God, and that no amount of Jewishness was going to solve that. So they were repenting.

But Jesus gets baptized. And **verse 13** says that he came to be **baptized BY John**, the preacher of repentance.

Does that mean that Jesus is sinful?

Well no. He was not. He was **perfectly righteous**. He **always obeyed** the commands of God in the power of the Spirit of God....in heart and action. From **birth till death**. He was perfect. He was sinless. He **remains so, and will forever**.

In verse 15 Jesus says that he **came to fulfill all righteousness**—meaning he came to obey God perfectly. To live the perfect life that Adam failed to live.

And **John senses the inherent contradiction** in the Messiah being baptized.

Notice verse 14, “John would have prevented him saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me.’” In verse 11 John says that he is not worthy to carry the sandals of Jesus.

So here is the **greatest man ever born to a woman**; the **greatest man in the history** of the earth saying that compared to the righteousness and worth of Jesus, he is not worthy of playing the part of slave—carrying the sandals.

So, no, Jesus was **not baptized because he needed to repent**. Or confess. Or be cleansed. **He is the water** that cleanses. **He is the perfect judge** to whom we give our repentance.

So, then, why was he baptized?

The reason that Jesus presents himself here for baptism along with all of these sinners....and notice **he does this publicly**.....this baptism is no private event....

The reason Jesus presents himself here with them is in order to identify with them.

The **spotless lamb of God**....the Word of God.....the Creator and Sustainer of all things is walking down **this muddy embankment** into a river he created to be **baptized by a sinful man, along with other sinful men**.

So that he can identify with them. In order **to say, “I’m with you.”**

Here is how commentator **Leon Morris** puts it, “It is at first sight puzzling that Jesus should have accepted baptism at the hands of John, for this baptism was a ‘baptism of repentance.’ Since Luke depicts Jesus as without sin it is not obvious why he should have undergone this baptism. But Jesus saw sinners flocking to John’s baptism. *Clearly he decided to take his place with them*. At the outset of his ministry *he publicly identified himself* with the sinners he came to save.”

Baptism marked the beginning of Jesus identification with sinners during his earthly ministry.

In his baptism, we see that our **Savior does not attempt to keep his distance** from us. He **comes down into the river** with sinners. He says to John, **“put me in there with them.”**

He identifies with us.

ill. Its like the **richest, kindest, smartest, most handsome man** in all the world standing at the alter and identifying himself in marriage with the poorest, ugliest, most unfaithful woman, and gladly taking her as his bride.

And I want you to see that the **Father approves of this**. The **Holy Spirit rejoices** in this.

Verses 16 and 17.....The Father was pleased that Jesus, his perfect Son, identified with sinners.

The **Trinity is all in here**, bringing you to God through Christ. Identifying with you. Taking your sin.

As Jesus has identified with us through His baptism, so also we identify with him in ours. A couple of different things about the NT teaching on baptism point us in this direction.

1. In the NT, **salvation and baptism go together**. When NT Christians believed in Jesus for the first time, they were **baptized promptly**. Do you remember the **Ethiopian eunuch**? He hears the gospel as he travels along in the chariot. He repents. And he says, "Oh, here's some water.....can I be baptized?" yes, stop the chariot. They walk down the hill and he is baptized.

****Its like saying, I'm leaving that life behind, and I'm now going in life with my Savior.****

2. Two baptism texts....**Romans 6 and Colossians 2**....**use the words of identification. Of union**. The language goes like this in **Col 2.12**, "having been buried WITH him in baptism, in which you were also raised WITH him through faith in the powerful working of God." And then in **Romans 6.2**, "all of us who have been baptized INTO Christ Jesus were baptized INTO his death."

Do you **see how there is this union between us and Christ that happens at baptism**?

*ill.*Its very similar to a wedding, "Corey, do you take this woman....yes!! She is mine....I take her..." She does the same. **That's union; it's identification**.

And so **some might object**, "well wait, I **think I was joined to Christ when I believed**. You are making it sound like you have to be baptized to be saved." Ok, I hear you. **And I agree we are saved by faith alone** through grace alone. Baptism is **not necessary for salvation**. But the **NT assumes that people who have believed**, have been baptized.

If you are **one without the other** for very long at all, you are **out of sync** with the NT. And so I'd just urge you—**demonstrate your salvation by doing what Christians do—obey and be baptized**. Its really that simple.

To those of you who are professing Christ as your Savior, but have not been baptized, please lend me your ear especially now.....

Teenagers. 4-6th graders.....no Grace Juniors today right? Adults. **Jesus has identified himself with you. He has come to the wedding alter. Will you identify yourself with him? Or will you leave the Lord there alone at the wedding?**

Keep in mind, when you are baptized you are **NOT saying that you have arrived spiritually**. Please don't think you have to reach some level. You have to repent and believe. You have to **come, failing though you are, and take the Savior's hand**.

If you won't, are you really his? Are you really saved?

If that sounds too strong, hear me out.

How does one become a Christian? They repent of their sin and believe in Jesus. And in the Bible **repentance and baptism go together**.

In **Acts 2** unsaved people hear the gospel for the first time and then they say, **"What should we do?"**

And in **Acts 2.38** Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."

You see that? Repentance and baptism go together. But **what is repentance?**

The classic definition is still the best. **Repentance is turning**.

ill. It's like you are **walking along on your merry way**, and you encounter Jesus going the opposite direction and he says, "Come follow me," and you turn and go with him.

To become a **follower of Jesus, you follow him. That is repentance**. But see we have made this thing up where we are walking along our way. We encounter Jesus going the other way, he says, "Come follow me," and we say, umm, actually could you come follow me....and, oh by the way can I have that **ticket to heaven?** And now we have Jesus in our back pocket, which makes us think that all is well.

And then we come to the baptism question thinking we have repented, when we may not have really repented, but it makes perfect sense to us to not be baptized because in all of our life we **don't really think of ourselves as following Jesus**. We think of ourselves as having a Jesus ticket in our pocket that gets us into heaven.

Are you tracking with me here? **What I'm saying is if you think you have repented and are saved, but won't be baptized, it may be that you have not genuinely repented.**

Now, I'm **not judging you**. I'm really not. I'm just trying to express a **loving concern**. Because I don't know your standing before the Lord. Its not my job.

I'm just trying to make this thing **really simple**—if you are a Christian....and great for you!!! Then **do what Christians do. Obey**. Follow Jesus into the baptismal waters. Show that you are a Christian through obedience. Its so simple.

In **John 15.14** Jesus says, "You are my friends IF you do what I command you."

ill.To be a Christian, and refuse baptism is to keep your old jersey on. The captain of the team has handed you the new jersey, but you are refusing to put it on.

And how weird is it to stand there on the sideline with a red jersey on when everyone else on "your" team is wearing blue.

And so this really just **becomes a relational question**. **Do you want Jesus?** Is he yours? I know you **still have hang ups**. But are you **clinging to Jesus?** Then come. Obey him. Be baptized.

He has invited you to this wedding ceremony. **Don't leave the Lord up there by himself**. **You are not even worthy of being invited**. Wouldn't it be crazy to stand him up?

I think of that **text in Jeremiah 2** where God is speaking and he's talking about how his people have abandoned himself for worthless idols and he refers to them like this, **"what wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthlessness?"**

What is wrong with Jesus that you won't identify with him?

Is that really the decision you want to make?

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Now, I just want **to pause at this point**. We are almost ready to move on to the LS.

But first, I have been sort of talking to 2 categories of people this morning. I've been talking to people who are baptized....I've been wanting them to rejoice in how Christ humbled himself and identified with sinners like us.

And then I've been talking to folks who are Christians, but for whatever reason have left the Lord in the baptismal waters alone.

But its likely that there is a **3rd category here**, and I just want to speak to you quickly. It may be for you that **you've never considered baptism because you've never repented of your sin**. You have never trusted in Christ for forgiveness.

And I just want to invite you. **God is the author of life**, so he has the **right to tell** you how to live. And he **does not abuse that**. He uses that for your good. But you have spurned him. And so hell awaits you if you spurn him until you die or he returns. But God does not want that for you. He loves you.....

Lord's Supper

In the minutes that remain let's talk about the Lords Supper.

When it comes to the Lords Supper, **much of what is true about baptism is true there as well**. Its just that **baptism is the initial, unrepeated** event where we identify publicly with our LORD. The **LS is the repeatable, ongoing rite where we continue to identify with him**.

ill.**The marriage analogy fits here**. At the **wedding ceremony I took Kristy** as my wife. I identified with her. I said to all who would attend, "I'm taking this woman. I want to be with her."

But its **not as if that is the last time I will do this**. In fact I'm **happy to continue doing it. I'm eager to continue identifying with her**. So we go on **dates**. I hold her **hand, not yours**. She lives in **my house, not you**. We **file jointly**. We take on **life together**. You get the picture.

And in the LS, in an ongoing way, Jesus identifies with us as his people, and we identify with him as our God.

1 Corinthians 11.23-26, "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "[Take, eat;] this is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." [25] In the same way also he took the cup,

after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." [26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Now there are **many things we could say about the deep, complex meanings** that are built into the LS. I'll only draw attention to **one**:

Verses 25.....this is the NEW COVENANT in my blood.....

So, the LS is a time to savor the new covenant. **What does that mean?**

The **key text** is **Jeremiah 31.31-34**, "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt [the Mosaic Law], my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: **[and here is a series of promises that make up the new covenant]** I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. **[here's the promises I most want you to see this morning]** And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

In the New Covenant (which the LS celebrates) God promises to forgive our sins, and write his law on our hearts and....TO BE OUR GOD, AND TO MAKE US HIS PEOPLE.

Jesus invites us to the LS, "Take eat," he says.

And **one of the key things that he invites us to taste of and enjoy** is all that he promises to be to us in the New Covenant.

And **what is the new covenant?** Well a significant piece is that **God promises to us that he will be our God, and that we will be his people.**

Do you see how that it is an identification? "You are mine," and "I am yours." It is so by the blood of Jesus.

It's a **Father to an orphan**....you are my son now, and I am your Father.

It's a **groom to the bride**....I take you as my own.

And it's a **coach to the player**—you are on this team. We have a spot for you here.

In the **LS, God is saying to us—I am your God. You are my people.** Called out from all the peoples of the earth....you are **uniquely mine.**

The longer you meditate on that simple little truth, the more spectacular it becomes. Later in Jeremiah (chapter 32), **Jeremiah tells us what it means.** He quotes God: "They shall be my people and *I will be their God* . . . I will not turn away from doing good to them . . . I will rejoice in doing good to them . . . with all my heart and with all my soul" (**32:38–41**).

Can we even put into words what it means for the Creator of the universe to rejoice to do good to you **with all his heart and with all his soul?** If God is God *for you* then all of his power and knowledge and wisdom and love are engaged in the activity of bringing you good in all of your life.

That is the **meaning of God identifying with us through the New Covenant.** And we celebrate that in the LS.

And **then in return, by faith, as we take the bread and cup**, we **say back to him**, "Lord, because of your body and blood, I am your son. Your daughter. You are my God. There is no other."

This **reciprocal, spoken, public identification** is the **capstone of all history.** Read Revelation 21 and 22: God proclaims over his people: you are mine, and I am yours. And his people respond: we are your people, and you are our God.

That's heaven. That is joy. That is peace.

And we get a **little foretaste of it here in the LS by faith.** So as you come today here the Savior's invitation, "take eat...."

And then by faith you fellowship with him. Lord I am yours. You are my God. Thank you for the blood that made it so.

Thank you for the blood.

Thank you for the blood.