

Diving into the Water

Matthew 3:13–17 (NRSVue)



The region of the Jordan River wasn't a quiet place that day. The air smelled of wet earth and sun-warmed reeds. People stood along the riverbank, whispering as John baptized one person after another. Then Jesus stepped onto the scene, not with trumpets or a herald, but with the steady footsteps of a person choosing a hard and humbling road. The water rippled around his ankles as he walked toward John, and the whole moment felt charged, like the taste of ozone on a summer breeze before a storm.

Holiness was breaking open.

In Jesus' baptism, God shows us the path of humble obedience, of Spirit-given strength, and of an unshakable identity.

Jesus at the Jordan

Jesus came to the Jordan River and asked John to baptize him. John hesitated because Jesus had no sins to confess. But Jesus said it was the right thing to do, an act of obedience to God's plan.

Jesus walked into the cool water, not because he needed cleansing, but because he wanted to stand with us, shoulder to shoulder, in our human struggle. His humility was a quiet light cutting through our foggy lives—steady and surprising.

Sniff the moisture in the air, invigorating. It prepares you for obedience.

Follow Jesus by obeying God even when the path is unfamiliar, uncomfortable, or unclear.

The Spirit's Significance

Matthew wrote of Jesus' baptism: "And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him" (Mt. 3:16).

As Jesus rose from the Jordan, water streamed along his cheeks. The sky peeled open. The Spirit descended as a dove gliding through the warm air, settling on him with quiet strength. It was a moment filled with movement—wind, wings, water—and it showed how God gives power not with noise or force, but with presence. The Spirit's touch was an invigorating drink for Jesus, strengthening him for every ordeal ahead.

So sip nourishment from God's presence with you.

Trust his Spirit to give you strength to live your calling, even if you're unsure what may happen.

The Father's Affirmation

Again, Matthew wrote, "And a voice from the heavens said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased'" (Mt. 3:17).

Then the voice came—warm and full of love. It rolled across the river, a distant thunder. Yet it carried the tenderness of a parent whispering to a child. God named Jesus as his well-loved Son, and in that moment, he stood in the glow of divine approval.

This same love reaches toward you today. When life shakes you, when doubt creeps in, when you believe you're unseen or unworthy, God's words remind you who you are. You're loved, valued, and held safe.

Let God's love shape how you see yourself, especially when fear or doubt tells you otherwise.

This story invites you to dive into the water with Jesus. Choose humble obedience. Welcome the Spirit's strength, and rest in the Father's voice calling you his loved child.

When you face decisions that stretch you, when you're weak, or when you forget your value, this passage calls you back to the riverbank. It urges you to live with courage, to trust God's presence, and to walk forward knowing you're never alone.

In Jesus' baptism, God shows you the path of humble obedience, of Spirit-given strength, and of unshakable identity.

Like Jesus, accept God's loving care. It prepares you for whatever lies ahead.

Amen