

Luke 3:15-17,21-22

Meeting in the waters

This is the first time in Luke’s Gospel we meet the adult Jesus, as he comes forward for baptism. John’s call to repentance – meaning a change of mind – made people wonder if he was the promised Messiah. However, John makes it clear that the Messiah is still to come and will baptize with the Holy Spirit. When Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit comes on him and God’s voice names him as beloved – a true sign of who Jesus is.



Bible notes



This passage tells us who Jesus is via the witness of John the Baptist and an Old Testament-style theophany as the voice of God identifies Jesus as his Son (The voice from heaven is fulfilment of Genesis 22:2, Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1).

The plunging of the person into the waters and the raising up again into the new life is intimately related to an experience with God in the Spirit. This is referred to again in Acts 10:38 when Peter recalls the ‘anointing’ of Jesus.

There is also an element of judgement in this passage. The ‘fire’ (v.16,17) relates to the fire of judgement for the sinful who do not repent. We are to expect a divided response to the message and person of Christ. The fire here also suggests Pentecost, and this is linked with the baptism of the Spirit both in the waters for Christ and in the future at the beginning of Acts.

First impressions

- Have you been baptized? Do you remember it?
- How has your faith helped you through ‘deep waters’?
- How can you as a community support those who face difficult times this year?



Pray



(In a clean source of water, a sink, a bowl, or a birdbath outside, put one hand into the water as you pray)

Jesus, like the Holy Spirit came on you in the waters, come meet with me today.

May I discover more of you.

(put your other hand in the water and clasp hands together)

Thank you for all the people that help me to experience more of you.

Help me to touch their lives too.

(shake the water from their hands as you say) Amen!

LISTEN



Listen to ‘Oceans’ (where feet may stand), a song about God’s presence with us in the waters.

Discuss

If members of your family are baptized, find out about their baptisms. Look at photos or talk to someone who was there. Do they remember how it felt? Was it significant for them? What do you think about baptism?

WALK

Grab your wellies, go outside and jump in puddles. What does it feel like to jump in the water? How would it feel to be baptized in a river? Why do you think John baptized people in the River Jordan?

Give

Floods have a negative transformation in the lives in our community. Let us be a positive within this change, showing God’s love to others during this time. Could you donate money to charities who work with communities during flooding, such as British Red Cross or REACT? Or donate to local food banks who help your community during flooding emergencies? If you can’t donate, how could you provide fundraising?