

It was almost impossible for him to live up to his father's legacy. It didn't help that he was the son of one of the most famous physicists ever, a person who documented the theory of relativity, and one of those faces in a picture you can't forget. Everyone wanted to know how he did on the tests at school, expecting him to have a genius mind like his dad and ace the test. Everyone wanted to know which prestigious college he would attend, expecting him to follow in his famous father's giant footsteps. Hans Albert Einstein chose engineering. Not that there's anything wrong with engineering. It just wasn't what everyone expected.

Hans Albert Einstein did become successful in his life as a well-known expert in the field of hydraulic engineering. Even though his son didn't take up the torch and follow him into physics, even though his son never really gained as much fame as he did, Albert Einstein once said that seeing his son's success in his chosen field was one of his proudest moments. Einstein didn't need the kind of son who was a genius, chose physics, or became more popular. He simply wanted his son to be successful in whatever field he picked.

As we begin this in between season of the church year called Epiphany spanning from the miracle of Christmas to the start of Lent we have the opportunity to learn about another famous son. This famous son had all kinds of unique lineage in his family tree, even kings. There were promises about him written centuries before he arrived. This famous son would be the Christ. We study to find out what kind of Christ he would be. The gospel reveals Jesus was...

**Baptized as your kind of Christ
Aligned himself with us
Anointed over us**

John the Baptist was already preaching and teaching in the desert along the Jordan River. A famous son who went much further than his father in fame, John's message was one of repentance. The people coming out needed to hear of their sins. They needed to be shown that turning away from those sins was most important. John also told them the kingdom of God was coming. God's rule as king was always an unseen ruling. Soon that would shift and be present on earth. John spoke with authority his message regarding sins and forgiveness. He did so in a location away from the city. It got the people thinking.

They were waiting for the Christ. God promised this Christ would come and preach with authority. He would have a message about sins and forgiveness. He would not be in the cities and towns, but in the wilderness. Sounded like John the Baptist. **"The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ."** It was a thought John never entertained and never wanted to try and fake. He knew the truth. He wasn't the Christ. He merely prepared the way for the Christ. Like a giant spotlight at a play, John's purpose was to shine his light directly on the Christ. Wasting no time he put down the rumor. **"I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."** In comparison to the kind of Christ the people needed John wasn't able to hold the Christ's shoes.

John baptized people in the Jordan River. No question it was a powerful baptism that changed hearts. John knew his baptism had the power of God in it to bring people to faith and forgive them their sins. But he also was clear that when the Christ came the baptism he would provide would go much further and be more powerful. It wasn't so much that people would be baptized physically by the Christ, but they would receive a baptism into his name. That baptism would be stronger because it would bestow what John couldn't, the Holy Spirit.

Many people came out to be baptized by John. Among all those people Jesus showed up. **"When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too."** Just like all the other people, looking like them, acting like them, aligning himself with them, Jesus appeared and was baptized. Without any show of power, without proclaiming authority, just like all the rest Jesus willingly accepted a baptism to place himself among sinful people he came to be one of. Jesus was your kind of Christ. He was baptized to align himself with us.

Given the choice we probably would like a powerful and authoritative kind of Christ. One who could take control, win battles, and show his power. Ultimately we know Jesus is the Christ. Identification isn't the problem. Keeping him the kind of Christ we need sometimes is the problem. Sometimes we take Jesus from his place as Christ and Savior and we substitute something or someone else in his place. It might be our money that we give power and authority without thinking. It might be a strong military presence, police officers, or powerful leaders. These do what we can't, so we trust them. We trust them at times instead of the Christ with our lives, with our security, even to provide for us.

Jesus walked to the water, received baptism, and stepped out. No force or power shown. Just simple water flowing over him. Didn't appear to be anything special. But that's exactly the kind of Christ we need. He aligns himself with us, not in that he needed baptism. The sinners standing on the shoreline needed baptism for forgiveness and relief from God. We need the forgiveness of sins given through baptism. Jesus was perfect and without sin. His baptism instead showed he was our perfect substitute. He stood where we've stood seeing a strong military but trusting in God's power instead. He walked where we walk with no security detail surrounding him but the angels of the almighty God. He suffered as we suffer facing temptations and potential doubts but never once giving up on God's mercy.

Nothing changed when the water went over Jesus at his baptism. He was still a man who had lived thirty years as the child of Mary. As a human Jesus already was aligned with us in so many ways. But everything changed when he went into that water too. He was baptized as your kind of Christ. Baptism meant that everything Jesus would do, the perfect life he would accomplish, and his perfect obedience would relate to us. The Christ wasn't just human but was also the Son of God. Christ was baptized to be anointed over us.

After his baptism Jesus stopped to pray. With that heaven opened and the three in one God was seen in action. **"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."** Jesus the second person of the three in one God stood with river water still dripping from him. God the Father spoke his words of approval. God the Holy Spirit descended looking bodily like a dove and resting on Jesus. The Son of God got the heavenly seal of approval. The Father spoke it and the Holy Spirit visibly showed everyone that Jesus was the Christ. He was the one promised, the one who would set things right with God again. The life of Christ Jesus must be seen entirely from God's perspective. Jesus is the Christ, the kind of Christ we needed anointed over us to begin his work to save us.

As the Holy Spirit settled on him looking like a dove, Christ was anointed. He was set apart for special work, the work of saving people. As the Son of God he needed nothing. But we do and we get it from Christ and the Holy Spirit who has anointed us. We are set apart as special, people of God. God gives us good things. We receive joy and a comfort in knowing we live at peace with God through Christ. We receive love, love to offer back to God and to show those around us. We receive the gift of forgiveness, kindness, and goodness to put to use in our lives. All kinds of gifts unique to us to use for God's glory. In everything, we give thanks to Christ. He entered the ranks of sinners and was anointed over us to win the victory for us.

For me it happened August 12th, 1979. On that day I received the same baptism Jesus received. I was called into a relationship with Christ that continues. Every day I get to repeat that day. Not physical baptism at the font, but going to those waters and fighting back against the sinful nature which threatens to drag me back into sin. Every day coming back to the memory of those waters and the gift of forgiveness Christ's life earned for me. In my baptism I am connected to Christ who was baptized for me. And you have your day. Your day of receiving **"the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior."**

Thank God he sent his famous son who was baptized as the exact kind of Christ we needed. One who was willing to align himself with us, becoming like us in life so that his perfect life would count for ours. One who was willing to be anointed over us, established as our brother but also our Savior. Jesus is our kind of Christ.