

Slow Epiphanies

Matthew 3:13–17

God's Beloved

Click [here](#)

Meditative Prayer

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Today's Bible Reading

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Additional Bible Readings

Isaiah 42:1–9

Psalms 29

Acts 10:34–43

**God of every epiphany,
help us to remember
that we begin every
journey drenched in
your love. Our identity,
being, and calling
begins (and ends and
begins again) with you.
Amen.**

In Matthew 3:13–17, we hear how Jesus begins his public life as a teacher, preacher, and healer by requesting baptism from John. What made the baptism of Jesus so important?

John calls everyone – including Jesus – to “repent” (or metanoia in the Greek). Rather than meaning regret or confession, metanoia means “go beyond the mind” or “go into the larger mind.” Scholar Cynthia Bourgeault writes that this “‘high teaching’ was Jesus’ central message: the Kingdom of Heaven means reaching beyond black-and-white dualities, into the larger heart and mind of God.” Rather than “Change your bad ways!” we now hear, “Look! Look! God is inviting you to a new way of seeing! Come into the larger mind, see how God sees!” To “go beyond the mind” or “go into the larger mind” is no easy task, but the baptism of Jesus offers us some clues to how we might take steps to “repent.”

One such clue was the paradoxical nature of it all. As he will do so many times more, all-powerful Jesus is submitting to those to whom he brings the gospel. Thus, his baptism is a rite of passage, not to cleanse, but to embody for himself and the world the seemingly upside-down way he will liberate humanity from the prison of sin and small thinking. Through the universal symbol of water, Jesus models his invitation for all to move from unconsciousness (for which water is an archetype) to consciousness – a deeper awareness of just how deeply loved we are by a good and gracious God.