

Justified! The Series: Chapter 1 – I Am Well Pleased

Description

16After Jesus was baptized, He came up immediately out of the water; and behold
Matthew 3:16-17 AMP

This has become chapter 1 of the series, but it's actually the 4th post I've written on this topic (including the introduction). Each time I think that I have an order or plan to the topics, the Holy Spirit will deposit a new direction in my spirit that I have to follow. As I was watching a sermon this morning titled "The Rules of Engagement // Summer Revival Pt. 2" by Dr. Dharius Daniels, he mentioned the verses above and it hit me.....this is foundation for Justified. As Christians our ultimate example and goal should be to reflect Christ in our lives. You may be asking me what do the verses above have to do with justification; my response is that proper understanding and application of these verses may be able to free you.

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist before his ministry began. As a matter of fact, Jesus' baptism is the actual starting point of his earthly ministry. This scene that we're looking at in Matthew is our introduction to adult Jesus (30 years old), who we last saw at the age of 12 when he was left behind at the temple by his parents (Luke 2:41-52). Jesus is approaching the Jordan River where John the Baptist regularly ministers to and baptizes people who are convicted by his message of repentance. As Jesus approaches John to be baptized, John realizing who Jesus was in the spirit, expresses resistance to baptizing Jesus, instead mentioning that Jesus should actually be baptizing him. In this moment we see an important factor of **justification**,,,,,Obedience. Jesus was first obedient to God, and the Holy Spirit which I believe led him to John the Baptist at this time to be baptized to begin his ministry. I say this because everything that God does or instructs has a perfect timing, and part of obedience is being in position to hear God and the Holy Spirit who will lead us to fulfill his will for us in HIS perfect timing. Jesus also displays obedience which led to his justification by ensuring that God's plan was followed as he was instructed to. Jesus could have gotten out of position and baptized John as John asked him to do, or he could have left the water without being baptized if he allowed himself to be shaken by John's request and felt ashamed or awkward in the moment. Jesus however responded with the following words

15But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.3:15 Or
for we must fulfill all righteousness." So John agreed to baptize him.

Matthew 3:15 NLT

You may have read everything up to this point and said to yourself, "all that is good, but where was Jesus **justified**?"

And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am

well pleased.”

Matthew 3:17 NKJV

JUSTIFICATION!!! You might need to read that again. Let’s break it down. Jesus had not began his earthly ministry yet, he had not performed a single miracle, didn’t have a single disciple or follower, hadn’t rebuked a single Pharisee or Sadducee, and had not even given a single sermon; yet God in Matthew 3:17 proclaims before John the Baptist, Jesus, and those at the Jordan River that he is “**WELL pleased**” with him. Let that marinate. Before Jesus does anything “great,” God **justifies** him with words of affirmation that everyone in some form craves from those they love and respect. God is establishing something important that we need to remember when life gets tough, that we are his **BELOVED** children, and that he loves us in **spite** of our actions. God knows that Jesus will be attacked by Satan, he knows that he will be abandoned by friends and family, he knows that Jesus will be misunderstood, and he knows that Jesus will wrestle with the weight of his calling. God knowing all of these things before they happen, yet takes the opportunity to affirm his son, Jesus, **BEFORE** the weight of life, and the standards of others are able to impact how Jesus sees himself, and more importantly how he may feel that God sees him. Therefore, God chooses to affirm and **justify** Jesus as his BELOVED son, and put goes a step further to inform him that he is well pleased with him before he even starts on the journey. This moment is true **justification** because it comes from God, and it is independent of performance; it is solely based on his love for Jesus, like his love for us.

Reflection Time

Do you believe that you are **Justified** by God? Do you believe that God is well pleased with you? If not, why? Is it difficult for you to believe that God loves you? What area of your life, or actions causes you to doubt God’s love for you? I need you to understand that God affirmed you before you were born, he affirmed you even when you were disobedient, and his love for you is still there. Take a moment to evaluate your walk with God, and pray for wisdom and understanding so that you can effectively walk in his will.

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1. Faith
2. Justified

Tags

1. Faith
2. Jesus
3. John the Baptist
4. July2022
5. Justified
6. Matthew
7. New Testament
8. The Gospels

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