



Consecrated for the Mission

Summary and Goal

Jesus' baptism marked the beginning of His public ministry. All members of the Trinity were present as the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, the Son, and the Father's voice spoke words of affirmation. As Jesus would soon face testing in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13), He began His ministry knowing His identity as a beloved Son. All followers of Jesus can have this same assurance as we go on mission, because we have been adopted into God's family and are His daughters and sons.

Main Passages

Luke 3:21-22

Session Outline

1. The Righteousness of Christ (Luke 3:21)
2. The Identity of Christ (Luke 3:22)
3. The Mission of Christ (Luke 3:21-22)

Theological Theme

In the account of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist, we are given a glimpse into the identity of Christ which undergirded His mission on earth.

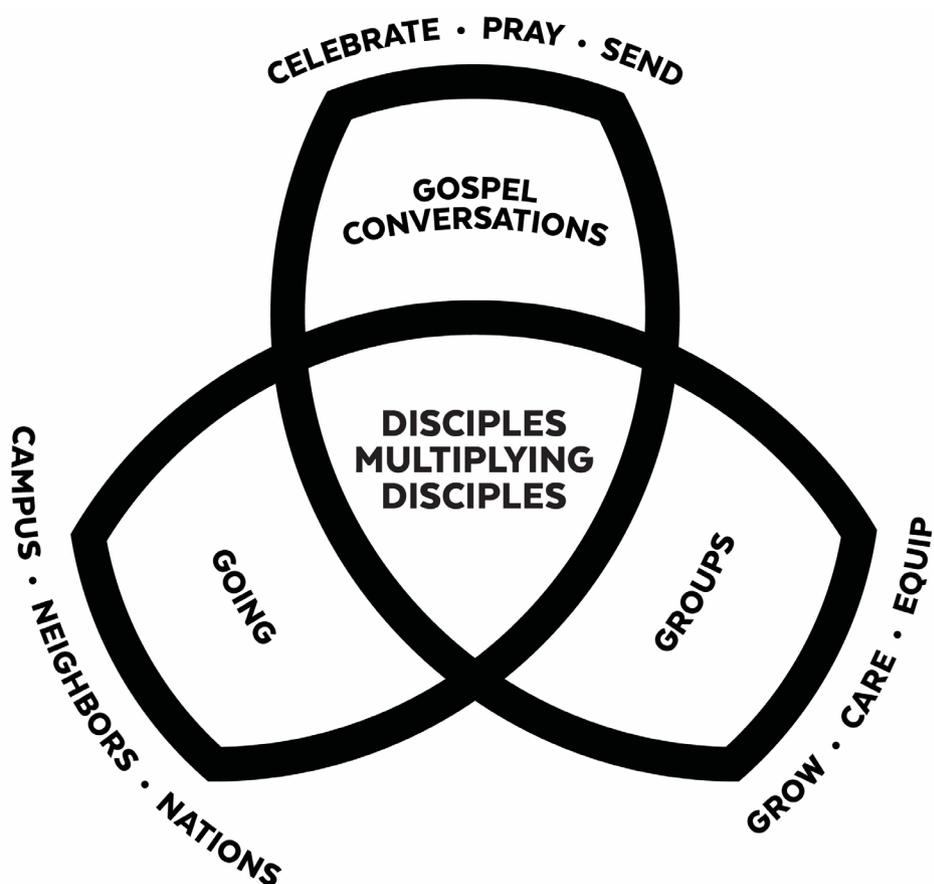
Christ Connection

Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, was sent by the Father (John 20:21) to carry out the mission of bearing the sins of all those who look to Him with faith and repentance.

Missional Application

This passage brings comfort to sinners because it signals the beginning of their Savior's march toward Golgotha.

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



DxD This Week

For the Leader

Have group members share about a unique experience during the holidays.

Zoom Groups: Ask everyone to bring their favorite gift or most unique gift they received during Christmas.



Session Plan

Consecrated for the Mission

Introduction

- ❓ Have you ever witnessed a symphony performed by a live orchestra? If so, what do you remember about it?
- ❓ What has to be true about an orchestra for its efforts to be successful?

The life of Christ was like the feature musician in a symphony. God the Son willingly submitted Himself to the Father and played His piece of music to perfection as the conductor brought all of the pieces together in perfect harmony in relation to the Son. In this episode, we are given information about Jesus' nature, identity, and mission. The baptism of Jesus was evidence of His righteousness. This event was the launching pad for Jesus' public work that would eventually lead to the culmination of His mission, namely death on a wooden cross for the sins of the world. In His baptism, Jesus was consecrated for the mission.

1. The Righteousness of Christ (Luke 3:21)

Luke recorded, "When all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized." We must be careful not to confuse what happened here. John had been offering baptism to the masses as a way for them to express repentance for sin. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that Jesus underwent baptism as a sign of His repentance for sins that He committed. This was definitely not the case. In fact, Matthew recorded that when Jesus came to John for baptism, He said, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?" (3:14).

- ❓ What was the purpose of Jesus' baptism if not to show repentance for His own sins?
- ❓ Why should Christians rejoice that Jesus obeyed His Father perfectly in every way? Why does this matter to people today?
- ❓ Application: Only the righteous can see God and enter heaven. Are you currently relying on your own righteousness or the righteousness of Jesus? Why is this a crucial difference?

2. The Identity of Christ (Luke 3:22)

Heretical teachings and sects often begin with a false claim regarding the identity of Christ. Christians today have two thousand years of careful study of the Scriptures regarding this matter. All of the fundamental false teachings of Christ have been dealt with before in one form or another. That doesn't mean, however, that the church isn't in danger of falling into those same errors today. Pastors must be diligent to know what the Scriptures teach regarding Christ and teach it to the church.

- ❓ What clues do we find in this passage about the identity of Jesus?
- ❓ Why does it matter that Jesus is fully God and fully man? Does Jesus' humanity make Him less divine? Explain.
- ❓ Application: How should you respond to a Savior who has walked in your shoes and faced your temptations, but overcame every single time? How does this encourage you to also pursue faithfulness?

3. The Mission of Christ (Luke 3:21-22)

Jesus' baptism marked the beginning of His earthly ministry. From that moment, His face was set toward Jerusalem, and He knew what awaited Him at the end of the road. He had a mission, and He was determined to carry it out according to the will of the Father.

- ❓ Why is it significant that Jesus has sent Christians to go and make disciples of all nations instead of this being their own idea?
- ❓ How does this being a command of Jesus change our motivation for obedience?
- ❓ Application: How are you seeking to live your life in submission to the authority of Christ? How are you fulfilling the Great Commission?

Conclusion

- ❓ How often do you consider the righteousness of Christ that has been credited to you? If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, how does this idea impact you?
- ❓ What can we learn about living together in the church through the relationship between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit?
- ❓ How are you pursuing the mission of Jesus in daily life?



Expanded Session Content

Consecrated for the Mission

Introduction

- ❓ Have you ever witnessed a symphony performed by a live orchestra? If so, what do you remember about it?
- ❓ What has to be true about an orchestra for its efforts to be successful?

An orchestra is made up of many different sorts of instruments playing various pieces of music. Each piece of sheet music, however, fits perfectly with all the others and, when played correctly, creates elaborate, beautiful music. A conductor directs all of this. The conductor oversees the whole production. He or she knows how each part should sound and also how all the parts fit together. The conductor sees the big picture, even if the individual players can't.

The life of Christ was like the feature musician in a symphony. God the Son willingly submitted Himself to the Father and played His piece of music to perfection as the conductor brought all of the pieces together in perfect harmony in relation to the Son. Today God, the conductor, continues but with the Son seated at His right hand. As His children, we are reading the sheet music and seeking to play in obedience to Him, trusting that He will bring His purposes to fruition in and through them.

Session Summary

John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ. It was inevitable and right that his unique ministry would be eclipsed by the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate Son of God. Jesus' public ministry began with His baptism by John the Baptist.

In this episode, we are given information about Jesus' nature, identity, and mission. The baptism of Jesus was evidence of His righteousness. Jesus was tempted in every way that we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). His identity was clarified as well. God the Father testified that this indeed was God the Son. Furthermore, God the Holy Spirit was present as well, so we are given a picture of the Trinity. Finally, this event was the launching pad for Jesus'

public work that would eventually lead to the culmination of His mission, namely death on a wooden cross for the sins of the world. In His baptism, Jesus was consecrated for the mission.

1. The Righteousness of Christ (Luke 3:21)

Luke recorded, “When all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized.” We must be careful not to confuse what happened here. John had been offering baptism to the masses as a way for them to express repentance for sin. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that Jesus underwent baptism as a sign of His repentance for sins that He committed. This was definitely not the case. In fact, Matthew recorded that when Jesus came to John for baptism, He said, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?” (3:14).

 What was the purpose of Jesus’ baptism if not to show repentance for His own sins?

Jesus wasn’t baptized for sin. He did so because it was God’s will, and He always does what is right and in accord with the will of His Father. When John initially resisted, Jesus said, “Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15).

Jesus lived a perfectly obedient life to God the Father. He always did what His Father commanded, and He never did what His Father prohibited. Jesus said, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me” (John 6:38). Jesus’ singular focus was to do the will of God. He said, “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me” (John 5:30). He even likened His obedience to the Father’s will to being as fundamental as eating food: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work” (John 4:34).

We also notice that Jesus prayed after His baptism (as well as throughout His ministry). The reason that Jesus submitted to baptism and lifted His voice and heart in prayer was because it was the will of the Father that He would do these things. Jesus was perfectly obedient to the Father. He was perfectly righteous. He truly deserved the title “Jesus Christ the righteous one” (1 John 2:1).

 Why should Christians rejoice that Jesus obeyed His Father perfectly in every way? Why does this matter to people today?

Jesus’ Baptism

Jesus was not baptized for the forgiveness of sins, as were all the other people whom John baptized. Rather, Jesus was baptized to identify himself and his ministry with the ministry and message of his forerunner.

This is the good news, and it is almost too good to be true. Can you imagine turning on the television to see that some sacrificial, hard-working doctor had been awarded a gift of 5 million dollars for his extraordinary service only to hear your doorbell ring. And when you open the door, there he is with a check made out to you for 5 million dollars. That would be absolutely ridiculous, undeserved kindness. That's a glimpse of the grace that has been shown to Christians in Christ.

Jesus was “tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). He earned unspotted righteousness. It is this righteousness that clothes those who are in Christ. Jesus’ perfect, sinless obedience to the Father (His righteousness) is what God sees when He looks at those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. The righteousness that Jesus earned in the flesh is what has been credited to our account (and our sin to His). This is what Paul meant when he wrote to the Corinthians, “He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21).

God the Father ordered the steps of God the Son, and God the Son perfectly obeyed God the Father in every way despite being tempted in as we are. And He did this on our behalf—for our benefit—so that we might come before the Father without fear.

 Application: Only the righteous can see God and enter heaven. Are you currently relying on your own righteousness or the righteousness of Jesus? Why is this a crucial difference?

2. The Identity of Christ (Luke 3:22)

Heretical teachings and sects often begin with a false claim regarding the identity of Christ. Christians today have two thousand years of careful study of the Scriptures regarding this matter. All of the fundamental false teachings of Christ have been dealt with before in one form or another. That doesn't mean, however, that the church isn't in danger of falling into those same errors today. Pastors must be diligent to know what the Scriptures teach regarding Christ and teach it to the church.

 What clues do we find in this passage about the identity of Jesus?

To develop a robust Christology, one would need to consult the full counsel of Scripture in order to gain a complete picture. In this passage, however, we do have some helpful information. First, God the Father said, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well-pleased.” Thus, Jesus is the Son of God. Further, Luke reported activity of the Father, the Son, and

the Holy Spirit relating to one another. This is one of the key passages that serves as a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity. The true and living God is One. God is one essence, but three Persons—three Persons, but one God. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are God, equal in power and glory. They are not, however, the same. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Spirit. The Spirit is not the Father. Yet, all three are God.

The second key aspect of Christ that we see in this passage is His humanity and divinity. His divinity is proven by the Father's words. His humanity is seen in the fact that He was clothed in flesh in clear view of everyone present that day and all the other days of His earthly sojourn.



Why does it matter that Jesus is fully God and fully man? Does Jesus' humanity make Him less divine? Explain.

Jesus is fully God and fully man. Because Jesus, the Savior, came in flesh, God can be both the just and the justifier. This is possible because God justly condemned sin by placing it on Christ and removing from sinners the wrath that they were due. To be the true mediator between God and man, Jesus had to truly take on flesh and live as a human being. He shared human nature with us except for one thing—His flesh was not tainted by inherited sin. No, He was completely sinless, and yet the Father placed the sins of the world upon Him. Because Jesus was truly God and truly man and lived a life of perfect righteousness in human flesh, He is the only sacrifice able to satisfy the demands of God the Father.

Jesus remained fully divine even in His incarnate state. This fact is critical because to deny Jesus' divinity is to deny two thousand years of orthodox Christian teaching and, more importantly, fundamentally change the gospel to a message that is powerless to save. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ in flesh is God. Evidence for the full deity of Jesus Christ is at every turn in the New Testament. For example: Titus 2:13; Colossians 1:19; 2:9; Hebrews 1:6; Acts 7:59-60; John 1:3; Mark 2:5; and Acts 10:42 to name a few.



Application: How should you respond to a Savior who has walked in your shoes and faced your temptations, but overcame every single time? How does this encourage you to also pursue faithfulness?

3. The Mission of Christ (Luke 3:21-22)

Jesus' baptism marked the beginning of His earthly ministry. From that moment, His face was set toward Jerusalem, and He knew what awaited Him at the end of the road. He had a mission, and He was determined to carry it out according to the will of the Father.

Jesus' mission was tied to both His identity and His righteousness. His righteousness was a key part of the mechanism through which He would save sinners. After all, sinners can't be saved if there is no righteousness to credit to their accounts. His identity was crucial because only a man could suffer death and punishment, and only the Son of God could carry the weight of divine wrath. Jesus did this.

Just as Jesus was sent to accomplish this mission, Jesus sends Christians to complete the mission that they have been given. Jesus told His disciples, "As the Father has sent me, I also send you" (John 20:21). And "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

-  Why is it significant that Jesus has sent Christians to go and make disciples of all nations instead of this being their own idea?
-  How does this being a command of Jesus change our motivation for obedience?

As Christ obeyed the will of the Father, Christians are to obey the will of Christ. This fact makes all the difference in the world. For some, it may feel constrictive and binding. For others, it is comforting. The fact is this: The Christian mission has already been laid out in the Word of God. There is no room for opinions or amendments when it comes to the work and mission of Christians on this earth.

Matthew 28 clearly lays this mission out. We are sent to make disciples of all nations. Jesus gives two directives in Matthew's commission that help us understand what it means to make disciples. First, we are to share the gospel with those around us (baptizing them). Second, we are to help them grow up into their salvation (teaching them). Jesus said it this way in Acts 1:8: "you will be my witnesses."

While the mission is crystal clear and set in stone, it is quite malleable in its execution. It is possible (not to mention necessary and fitting) for Christians who work in any field to complete this mission. True, some are called to the full-time work of disciple making, but all are called to a lifestyle of being Christ's witnesses, sharing the gospel, and teaching fellow believers all that Jesus commanded.

-  Application: How are you seeking to live your life in submission to the authority of Christ? How are you fulfilling the Great Commission?

Conclusion

The baptism of Jesus reveals several important truths to the diligent student of God's Word. First, Christ's righteousness was on full display as He walked in humble obedience to God the Father. He always did what God commanded and never did what God forbid. He pleased God 100 percent of the time. This is why God the Father said He was well pleased with Jesus. We also see Jesus' identity in this account. Jesus of Nazareth was no mere man. He was fully God and fully man. He was one of the distinct persons of the Triune God, which we see on full display in this account. Finally, we recognize this event as the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry that would culminate with His death. Jesus pleased the Father with His obedience in His immersion in water, and He would please His Father with His obedience in His submission to the thorns, the nails, and the spear.

Christians rejoice in Jesus' righteousness, identity, and mission. Furthermore, Christians recognize that the great salvation that He has worked in their lives means that they are now on mission as well to share the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone.

- ❓ How often do you consider the righteousness of Christ that has been credited to you? If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, how does this idea impact you?
- ❓ What can we learn about living together in the church through the relationship between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit?
- ❓ How are you pursuing the mission of Jesus in daily life?

Prayer of Response

Begin your time of prayer by giving thanks for the amazing grace that you have found in Christ. Worship Jesus for His perfectly righteous life and His sacrificial death on your behalf. Pray for protection for yourself and your church from false teaching concerning the person of Jesus Christ. Finally, pray that the new life that you have found in Christ would compel you to fulfill the mission of Christ.

Additional Resources

- *Be Compassionate* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Luke* by Darrell Bock
- *Luke* by J. Vernon McGee

For Next Week

Session Title

- Mission Revealed

Main Passages

- Luke 4:16-22

Session Outline

1. The Setting (Luke 4:16)
2. The Message (Luke 4:17-21)
3. The Response (Luke 4:22)

Memorize

²¹ When all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. As he was praying, heaven opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in a physical appearance like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well-pleased."

- Luke 3:21-22

Daily Readings

- Monday - Luke 3:1-6
- Tuesday - Luke 3:7-9
- Wednesday - Luke 3:10-14
- Thursday - Luke 3:15-20
- Friday - Luke 3:21-22
- Saturday - Luke 3:23-38

Historical Context of Luke

Purpose

The Gospel of Luke is a carefully researched (1:3), selective presentation of the person and life of Jesus Christ, designed to strengthen the faith of believers (1:3–4) and to challenge the misconceptions of unbelievers, especially those from a Greek background. Its portrait of Jesus is well balanced, skillfully emphasizing his divinity and perfect humanity.

Author

The author of the Third Gospel is not named. Considerable evidence points to Luke as its author. Much of that proof is found in the book of Acts, which identifies itself as a sequel to Luke (Ac 1:1–3). A major line of evidence has to do with the so-called “we” sections of the book (Ac 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–37; 28:1–16). Most of Acts is narrated in third-person plural (“they,” “them”), but some later sections having to do with the ministry of the apostle Paul unexpectedly shift to first-person plural (“we,” “us”). This indicates that the author had joined the apostle Paul for the events recorded in those passages. Since there are no “we” passages in the Gospel of Luke, that fits with the author stating that he used eyewitness testimony to the life of Jesus (1:2), indicating he was not such an eyewitness himself.

Since Luke wrote both the Third Gospel and the book of Acts (Ac 1:1–3), it is relevant to consider the dating of both books together. The events at the end of Acts occurred around AD 62–63. That is the earliest point at which Acts could have been written. If Acts was written in the early AD 60s from Rome, where Paul was imprisoned for two years (Ac 28:30), the Third Gospel could date from an earlier stage of that period of imprisonment. The other reasonable possibility is during Paul’s earlier two-year imprisonment in Caesarea (Ac 24:27). From that location, Luke would have been able to travel and interview the eyewitnesses to Jesus’s life and ministry who were still alive.

Setting

Traditionally, the Gospel of Luke is believed to have been written after both Matthew and Mark. Those who date Matthew and Mark in the AD 60s or 70s have tended to push the dating of Luke back to the AD 70s or 80s.

Special Features

The Gospel of Luke is the longest book in the New Testament. Focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, this Gospel is part one of a two-part history, the book of Acts being part two. Both were dedicated to “most honorable Theophilus” (Lk 1:3; Ac 1:1).

Extended Commentary

Luke 3:21-22

3:21. Jesus identified with the crowds, and implicitly against leaders like Herod, by joining the line for John's baptism. For him baptism became an hour of prayer. For God the baptism became opportunity to testify, as he opened heaven to speak to earth. Modern disciples seek answers to the Bible's unanswered questions. Why was Jesus baptized? How could a person who had no sin identify with those whom he knew were sinners? How did the sinless Son of God relate to a baptism for repentance and the forgiveness of sin?

3:22. God did not answer our question. He chose to testify to the greatness of Jesus. He sent his Holy Spirit to Jesus incarnate as a dove, where Jesus was incarnate as a person. Jesus is the Son of God, loved by God and pleasing to God. Other questions need no answers when you see who Jesus is and what he is up to. Of course, he did not need to repent. He did not need forgiveness. He did need the Spirit's power. Now he could fulfill his task and baptize with that Spirit and with fire.¹

References

1. Butler, Trent C., and Max Anders. *Luke*. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000.

Author Bio

Trent Butler (Luke)

Trent C. Butler is a freelance author and editor. He served ten years on the faculty of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and for twenty-two years as editor and editorial director for Holman Bible Publishers and LifeWay. He wrote the Word Biblical Commentary volume on Joshua, the Layman's Bible Book Commentary on Isaiah, the Holman Old Testament Commentaries on Isaiah and Hosea through Micah, and the Holman New Testament Commentary on Luke. He served on the editorial Board of the Holman Christian Standard Bible, and edited the Holman Bible Dictionary. Dr. Butler has a Ph.D. in biblical studies and linguistics from Vanderbilt University, has done further study at Heidelberg and Zurich, and has participated in the excavation of Beersheba.

Max Anders (Luke)

Dr. Max Anders is the author of over 25 books, including the bestselling *30 Days to Understanding the Bible*, and is the creator and general editor of the 32-volume Holman Bible Commentary series. He has taught on the college and seminary level and is a veteran pastor. Max provides resources and discipleship strategies at www.maxanders.com to help people grow spiritually.

Warren Wiersbe (Be Compassionate)

Warren W. Wiersbe, former pastor of the Moody Church and general director of *Back to the Bible*, has traveled widely as a Bible teacher and conference speaker. Because of his encouragement to those in ministry, Dr. Wiersbe is often referred to as “the pastor’s pastor.” He has ministered in churches and conferences throughout the United States as well as in Canada, Central and South America, and Europe. Dr. Wiersbe has written over 150 books, including the popular BE series of commentaries on every book of the Bible, which has sold more than four million copies. At the 2002 Christian Booksellers Convention, he was awarded the Gold Medallion Lifetime Achievement Award by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Dr. Wiersbe and his wife, Betty, live in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Darrell Bock (Luke)

Darrell L. Bock (PhD, University of Aberdeen) is research professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. He is the author or editor of many books, including the two-volume commentary on Luke in the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series, *Jesus according to Scripture*, and *Studying the Historical Jesus*.

J. Vernon McGee (Luke)

Dr. J. Vernon McGee (1904-1988) spent more than 50 years teaching the Bible on his “Thru the Bible” radio broadcast. He pastored for more than 40 years and has authored many best-selling books, including *Doctrine for Difficult Days*.