



Notes for Adult discussion groups
On-Line@9 Worship Service
13 January 2008

BELONGING

Matthew 3 v 13-17

At that time Jesus arrived from Galilee and came to John at the Jordan to be baptised by him. But John tried to make him change his mind. "I ought to be baptised by you," John said, "and yet you have come to me!"

But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so for now. For in this way we shall do all that God requires." So John agreed.

As soon as Jesus was baptised, he came up out of the water. Then heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and alighting on him. Then a voice said from heaven, "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased."

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Read the Bible passage from the Bibles provided.

Divide the group into four. Ask each sub-group to talk to each other for a few minutes about the importance of the event from the point of view of one of the "characters" in the story - God, John, Jesus, and the crowd.

Then get each sub-group to feed back their thoughts to the others, and capture these ideas on the paper provided.

In the light of the comments, think about some of the following questions, as time permits. Some prompts are offered, to guide the discussion:

- Why did this event happen? Why is it recorded at this point in the Gospel?
 - Marks God's choosing/sending of Jesus as His Son/the Messiah;
 - Public demonstration of who Jesus is;
 - Jesus responds to God's choosing/sending;
 - Shows that Jesus is loved by God as a human being;
 - Shows that Jesus belongs to God's family;
 - Marks the beginning of Jesus' active ministry.

- What is the significance of Jesus' baptism for us?
 - God chooses us as his children, in unconditional love;
 - A sign that we too can belong to God's family;
 - We have the opportunity to respond to what God offers us;
 - This is not just a one-off opportunity, but can be an on-going relationship.

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