

Introduction: I don't think we can overestimate the privilege and wonder for John the Baptist to hear the voice of the Father from Heaven expressing His pleasure in His Son at His baptism. Besides serving to *identify His Son* to John, (by sending the Spirit in visible form upon Christ), the bible records *the delight of the Father* in the obedience of His Son at His baptism. Indeed, this was the first time, (the Transfiguration being the other), that the Father declared, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matthew 3:17). As such, we should stop in our tracks as John did – to consider the meaning of this awesome moment of Fatherly pleasure. May the Lord help us, then, to delight more and more in our Savior as we learn of the Father's delight in what Jesus's saving work.

Mon/Tues: read John 1:31-34; 3:31-34 & Proverbs 8:30. John the Baptist bears witness to Christ by repeating what God the Father told him about Jesus at the baptism: "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." John testifies that the coming of the Spirit *upon* Jesus was the sign that this man was God's chosen servant to save His people. More than that, John goes on to say in John 3:34 that Christ has the Spirit upon Him and flowing from Him *in an infinite and immeasurable way*. **One reason for this overflowing fullness of the Holy Spirit** is because He is the Son of God, and the Spirit proceeds from the Son just as from the Father. Only God Himself, out of the overflowing abundance of His own Spirit, can give sinners newness of life. Peter on the Day of Pentecost confirms this same thing in Acts 2:32-33 & 36, citing Christ's baptizing with the Spirit as *proof* that Jesus is Lord and Christ! Hallelujah!

³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing...

³⁶ ...Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Meditate and Pray: "Father, we thank you that you and your Son have poured out on your church the very delight of Heaven which you shared from eternity. Thank you for the Trinitarian joy at the heart of the Godhead. You, oh Son of God, were 'filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in the Father's presence.' Now, because you by your Spirit bring us into that same fellowship as your adopted children, we too can enjoy your Father's joy! Make us thankful and full of joy as we learn to share communion with you. Amen."

Weds/Thurs/Fri: read John 1:31-34; John 3:34-36; John 5:20 & John 10:17. There is a **second reason** for the Father's delight in His Son at His baptism - besides identifying His Son as the Only-Begotten who was with the Father from eternity. When the Father speaks of His delight in His Son, He is also thinking of His Son's willing servanthood in our nature, as our Savior. For example, we see the Father's delight in His Son as the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 42:1-3:

*Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
² He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
³ a bruised reed he will not break,
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.*

In fact, it is the Father's delight in Christ's obedient suffering which Jesus Himself cites as proof that He has been entrusted with all matters concerning the Kingdom of God – beginning with His laying down His life for His sheep. His critics may accuse Him of being an imposter and blasphemer because He claims to be equal with the Father – but Christ knows the Father's pleasure and has the Father's seal of approval in all He undertakes, as these verses show:

“The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.” (John 3:35)

“For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.” (John 5:20)

Meditate and Pray: Let's give thanks that we have a Representative in Jesus Christ the God-Man who earns our salvation by absolutely pleasing His Father in all that He does. He is the 'straight-A student' which we never could be, earning the full reward which we and our first father Adam lost. We could have no enjoyment of God the Father, and no certainty of His pleasure and blessing were it not for the fact that, in Christ, all the Father's approval and joy are stored up for our benefit! How does the Psalmist David put it, expressing *not just his prophetic delight in the future coming of King Jesus – but also the Father's delight in His Son?* Hear Ps 45:1-4 & 6-7:

My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;
I address my verses to the King;
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

² You are the most handsome of the sons of men;
grace is poured upon your lips;
therefore God has blessed you forever.

³ Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one,
in your splendor and majesty!

⁴ In your majesty ride out victoriously
for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness;
let your right hand teach you awesome deeds! ...

⁶ Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;
⁷ you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.
Therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions!

Sing about sharing your joy in God's Son with David and God the Father, using hymn # 169, especially the last verse, speaking about the devotion which ought to flow from us for such a Savior:

My heart doth overflow,
A goodly theme is mine;
My eager tongue with joyful song
Does praise the King divine.
Supremely fair you are,
Your lips with grace o'erflow;
His richest blessing evermore
Does God on You bestow.

Now gird You with Your sword,
O strong and mighty One;
In splendid majesty arrayed,
More glorious than the sun.
Triumphantly ride forth
For meekness, truth and right;
Your arm shall gain the victory
In wondrous deeds of might.

Your strength shall overcome
 All those that hate the King,
 And under Your dominion strong
 The nations You shall bring.
 Your royal throne, O God,
 Forevermore shall stand;
 Eternal truth and justice wield
 The scepter in Your hand.

Since You were sinless found,
 The Lord, Your God, confessed,
 Anointed You with perfect joy,
 You are supremely blessed.
 Your garments breathe of myrrh
 And spices sweet and rare;
 Glad strains of heav'nly music ring
 Throughout Your palace fair.

Amid Your glorious train
 Kings' daughters waiting stand,
 And fairest gems bedeck Your bride,
 The queen at Your right hand.
 O royal bride, give heed,
 And to my words attend;
 For Christ, the King, forsake the world
 And every former friend.

Sat/Sun: read John 10:17-18 & Zephaniah 3:17. It would be a glorious privilege for us to sing through all eternity of the winsomeness and beauty of Jesus Christ, and of the delight which He gives His Father – both as His perfect Son and as our perfect Savior.

But the amazing thing is that God intends to bestow upon *us* the very same pleasure which He has in His Son! He wants to delight in us with a perfect joy in who *we* are too! How does Zephaniah 3:17 put it?

*The LORD your God is in your midst,
 a mighty one who will save;
 he will rejoice over you with gladness;
 he will quiet you by his love;
 he will exult over you with loud singing.*

But wait a minute! How can God actually have *the same* joy and pleasure in us, in all our misery and proneness to wander, that He has in His ever-faithful and true Son? The answer is that, in granting us the *status* of being His justified and adopted children, saved by free grace, God can look upon us as covered with Christ's pleasing and perfect righteousness – so that God can actually count *us* as *having done* His perfect will in Christ! As John Owen puts it, on pg 155 of volume 2 of his works:

Now that we have communion with Christ in the saving grace which He purchased for us, there is almost nothing that Christ has done ... but we are said to do it with Him. We are "crucified" with Him, Gal. 2:20; we are "Dead" with Him, 2 Timothy 2:11; Col. 3:3; and "buried with Him, Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; we are "quickened together with Him," Col. 2:13; "risen" with Him, Col. 3:1. "He has made us to sit together in heavenly places," Eph. 2:5-6.

In other words, when we are saved by faith, we receive and rest on Jesus Christ in all His wisdom, righteousness and sanctification, (1 Cor. 1:30), and thereby experience the full pleasure of and blessing from God the Father, since He rewards us with what Jesus has earned – even the very whole-hearted approval and pleasure which Jesus Christ so richly deserves, and which we receive in Him! What a thought! May the Lord cause this Good News of free, justifying grace to sound forth from our pulpits again in this land!