

The Launch

Passage: Luke 3:21–38

Preacher: Cormac Parker Jr.

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Good morning, church. It is so good to see all of you today. I want to add my welcome to our gathering this morning. My name is Cormac Parker Jr., and I serve as one of the pastors here. I'm really glad you're with us.

We're continuing our series through the Gospel of Luke. Last week, we looked at John the Baptist - the opening act to Jesus' public ministry. John prepared the way by calling people to trust God, even in seasons of silence. We saw that God's grace reveals where we truly are, and that real freedom is found in turning toward God - what Scripture calls repentance.

Every Launch Makes a Promise

Every great product launch makes a promise.

In 2007, when Steve Jobs stepped onto the stage to unveil the iPhone, people didn't just buy a phone - they bought a vision of life. More connection. More efficiency. More possibility.

Many of us remember pre-ordering at midnight, standing in line at the Apple Store, holding something we couldn't wait to have. At first, it felt like magic. But eventually, the shine wears off. The product delivers - but the deeper questions remain. *Do you see me? Does my story matter?*

No product - no matter how successful - can answer those questions.

Luke shows us another kind of launch. The launch of Jesus' public ministry. This launch is revolutionary, not because of hype or novelty, but because it offers something fundamentally different. It doesn't promise to upgrade your life. It offers an identity rooted in God.

So the question becomes: *What kind of Savior would God launch into human history?*

Jesus Steps Into Our Story

Luke writes:

“Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened...” (Luke 3:21)

The backstory matters here. John's baptism in the Jordan River was a baptism of repentance - a turning back to God, a reordering of life away from idols and toward faithfulness.

So why is Jesus baptized? Not because He needs forgiveness. Not because He has sin to confess. Matthew tells us it was to "fulfill all righteousness." Jesus is submitting to the Father's will. He is affirming John's message. And most importantly - He is identifying with sinful humanity. Everyone else was asked to step into those waters, and Jesus chose to step in too. He doesn't stand on the riverbank offering encouragement from a distance. He doesn't outsource humanity or delegate suffering.

He gets in line.

The same waters that tax collectors, soldiers, and crowds stepped into - He stepped into. He enters fully into our longing, our waiting, our brokenness. This moment foreshadows the cross, where He will bear it all.

Every other launch says, "Look at what this product can do for you." This launch says, "Look at the God who comes to be with you." Jesus is Emmanuel - God with us.

It reminds me of Dr. King. He could have led only from a podium, but he marched with the people in Birmingham and sat in jail with them in Montgomery. Real leadership requires identification, not separation.

Jesus steps into our story.

He Speaks Over Our Worth

Luke continues:

"And the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form, like a dove, and a voice came from heaven, 'You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.'" (Luke 3:22)

Luke uniquely tells us that Jesus was praying when the heavens opened. Before miracles. Before sermons. At the very start of His ministry, Jesus is listening. If Jesus - the Son of God, wrapped in humanity - needed to pray, how much more do we?

This moment shows us the power of prayer. John Mark Comer, in *Practicing the Way*, describes prayer as talking to God, talking with God, listening to God, and being with God. Often we stop at the first two. But there is deep richness in listening and simply being with God.

And it's there - while Jesus is with the Father - that heaven breaks in. The Father speaks words drawn from Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42, declaring Jesus both King and Servant.

Before Jesus does anything - before feeding crowds, healing the sick, or going to the cross - the Father says, "I love you. I'm pleased with you."

This pushes against our achiever mindset. We don't work for God's love. We live from it.

It reminds me of the first time I held my son Ezra. He hadn't done anything. No achievements. No report cards. I loved him simply because he was my child. Scripture says that all who receive Christ are children of God. Sons and daughters. The same affirmation spoken over Jesus is extended to us in Him.

So the question is: *What voices have you been allowing to speak into your worth?*

Today, hear the voice of the Father.

He Redeems Broken Stories

So far, we've seen that Jesus steps into our story and that God speaks over our worth.

Now, Luke gives us something every good launch needs: an origin story.

And he does it with a genealogy.

I'll be honest - when we come to long lists of names, it's tempting to skip ahead. But in the first century, genealogies were often read aloud. People listened for the story arc.

Luke's genealogy is unique. Instead of starting with Abraham and moving forward, he starts with Jesus and moves backward. It signals that this entire story should be read through the lens of Jesus.

He is in David's line - a king.

He is Abraham's seed - the promise.

But most shockingly, He is Adam's descendant.

That means Jesus isn't just Savior of Israel. He is Savior of the world.

This genealogy is not a trophy case - it's a rescue mission. Adulterers. Liars. Failures. Broken leaders. National collapse. Compromise after compromise.

Luke gives us the unfiltered group photo of humanity - and Jesus steps into it.

We all know how group photos work. Someone blinks. Someone looks awkward. Someone asks for a retake. Luke posts the unedited version. He redeems broken stories. Your story matters to God.

Good News for All

At Jesus' baptism, we see the Trinity fully present:

The Son in the water.

The Spirit descending.

The Father speaking.
Fully known. Fully loved. Fully accepted.

Whether you've followed Jesus for decades or are just beginning to explore faith, this launch shows us who God is and what He offers.

He steps into our story.
He speaks over our worth.
He redeems broken stories.
And He invites us into His family.

Believe today:
He is with you.
He is for you.
Hear the voice of the Father.

Amen.