

All Righteousness

Matthew 3:13-17

The Baptism of Our Lord, January 8, 2017

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

When Jesus says, "All righteousness," He means *all righteousness!*

So what can be said first about His baptism? The first thing that can be said is that by being baptized Jesus identifies with sinners. Whether it is the baptism of John or the baptism of Jesus baptism is for sinners. A person does not get baptized unless they are a sinner. Baptism is of repentance. Baptism is for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore baptism is for sinners.

Jesus has Himself baptized. There is no sign on Jesus when He goes into the Jordan River that says, "sinless." There is no mark on Him that says, "perfect." Jesus does not whisper to someone on the banks of the Jordan River as He goes in, "I don't really need this." Even when John tells Jesus, "I need to be baptized by You," Jesus does not say, "You are right, but let it be so now." Jesus gives no hint whatsoever that He does not need the baptism that He receives. As far as anyone else there is concerned, Jesus is simply another penitent sinner in need of salvation. Jesus identifies with sinners. In other words He contents Himself to be counted a sinner even though He is not one. And He contents Himself to this position not only before the people who happened to be at the Jordan River on the day He was baptized but also before God Himself.

He does this to fulfill all righteousness. I told you last Sunday that He is here to keep the Law and He is going to keep all of it, the big parts and the little parts. He is going to keep it all. Now He is revealing that He is going to keep it all on behalf of sinners. If you are a sinner, then He is going to keep it on your behalf.

So what can be said second about His baptism?

He receives the Holy Spirit when He is baptized. The Holy Spirit comes upon Him like a dove. He sees the Holy Spirit come upon Him. That means that Jesus is the One upon whom the Spirit of the Lord rests.

Now this would mean nothing at all without Isaiah's prophecy.

Isaiah prophesied long before Jesus and spoke as if he was Jesus when he said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty for the captives and the year of the Lord's favor."

Isaiah prophesied long ago that the Spirit of the Lord would rest upon a righteous shoot from the line of Jesse. This righteous person would receive the Spirit of the counsel and might, the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. This person would delight in the fear of the Lord.

Therefore Jesus is the One with that Spirit. Jesus delights in the fear of the Lord. Isaiah becomes the conduit by which we realize that Jesus is the One who will bring justice to the nations. Jesus is the One who will not judge by what He sees with His eyes or hears with His ears. In other words Jesus will not judge on superficial appearance nor will He judge based upon rumor. Jesus will judge in righteousness. In Him the Gentiles will hope.

Therefore Jesus is the One who will bring about the new creation. He is the One who will make the lamb to lie down with the wolf. He is the One who will make adders so safe that a little child will be

able to stick his hand into their den and not be harmed. He is the one who will make the lion eat straw like the ox. He is the One who will curse the serpent to eat dust.

Jesus is the One who will bring about a new creation so new and so notable and so free from death that if anyone did die in it and he was a hundred years old everyone would mourn over him because he was a mere youth!

Jesus is the judge. He is the judge who when He gets done pronouncing His judgments, there is a new creation.

Jesus is God's Son.

Admittedly Jesus had always been God's Son, but that the Baptism God declares Jesus to be God's Son. Aside from that little incident in the temple when He was twelve Jesus does not do anything that conforms to being God's Son until God declares Him to be God's Son. That is why people in Nazareth are offended by Him when He starts acting like God's Son. Until His baptism He had always acted like Mary and Joseph's Son. Jesus does not take up His vocation as the Son of God until God issues the vocation.

Think of it this way. In a murder trial, the murderer is guilty before he is declared guilty. However, the government will not treat him as if he is guilty until the jury declares him guilty. Once the jury declares him guilty, then the government will begin to act like he is guilty. In a similar way Jesus is always the Son of God. The angel Gabriel told Mary that she would bear God's Son. Mary is a virgin, further indication that Jesus does not originate of human ancestry, but rather is God's Son. But Jesus does not act like the Son of God until God calls Him to be His Son. God issues that call when Jesus is baptized.

Jesus is God's Son.

Ok. Is that a simple ontological reality or does it mean something? Well, in Psalm 2 the Son of God is the King of Israel. That is why Gabriel tells Mary He will have the throne of His father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. All of the kings of Israel were sons of God. All of the descendents of David were sons of God. Most of them were not very good ones. Some of them got B+'s. God was waiting for a good one. He was waiting for a good king of Israel. God had told Solomon, David's son, that if there were a descendent of his that kept all of God's laws and rules and did not fail any of them, then God would establish the throne of David forever and make the Kingdom of Israel an everlasting one. Well, God waited a long time, but finally the Son of God who will keep His laws and rules without fail has come forth.

This is probably why God waits so long to issue His call. Luke's Gospel tells us that Jesus was about thirty years of age when He began His ministry after He was baptized. Jesus waited until He was thirty to be baptized. God waited until Jesus was thirty to announce that Jesus was His Son. Jesus therefore lived for thirty years as the son of Mary and Joseph in order to demonstrate whether or not He would follow God's rules and laws. He apparently did so, because when God calls Jesus He tells Jesus that He is well pleased with Jesus.

So Jesus kept God's laws and rules. Jesus executed God's justice. He did it without failing once. Therefore Jesus is the one who makes Israel's kingdom and everlasting kingdom. Of all the kingdoms of the earth only one is everlasting. Rome was not everlasting. Greece was not everlasting. The Mongols were not everlasting. The ancient dynasties of China were not everlasting. Babylon and Egypt were not everlasting. The United States nor any western power is everlasting. Russia is not everlasting. Only Israel is everlasting. Only the members of Israel are everlasting. Jesus made Israel everlasting when He executed God's justice as Israel's king.

Watch the life of your Lord closely. He will execute God's justice from His throne and when He is upon it, He will be wearing a crown.

Jesus is God's Son.

God is well pleased with Jesus.

When God tells Jesus that He is well pleased with Him, God is quoting a prophecy that He gave to Isaiah long ago. Our translations fool us and so this often gets missed. When God says that He is well pleased with Jesus that is the same thing as God saying that His soul delights in Jesus. In Isaiah God's soul delights in His special servant.

Isaiah sings a series of songs about a servant of the Lord who will do God's will perfectly. When God announces from heaven that Jesus is the One in whom His soul delights, God is saying that Jesus is the servant about whom Isaiah sang 800 years prior.

Isaiah sings several songs about this servant describing the kind of person that He is going to be. The last song that Isaiah sings about the servant goes something like this: He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him. For He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with His wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to His own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. By oppressions and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

When God says that He is well pleased with Jesus He has just issued His call to Jesus to die on behalf of His people. He has just called Jesus to die for you. It happened at His baptism.

If the punishment of our peace is laid on Him, if He was stricken for our transgressions, then when Jesus fulfills His calling to die in this manner, He fulfills not just all righteousness in the sense that He completes His obedience to the summons of the Father, but also He fulfills your righteousness. Your righteousness is all fulfilled.

So Jesus did not get baptized for Himself. That much is obvious. John would have prevented Him had that been the case or Jesus simply would not have gone to the Jordan at all. But what may not have been so clear, which I hope is clear now is this: He was baptized for you.

His heroic course began. He will fulfill, He has fulfilled all righteousness.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.