

Baptism: To Fulfill All Righteousness – Mt 3:13-17 (3/6/22)

Mt 3:13-17. 21 people are getting baptized today. 15 adults and 6 students. Each and every one, fulfilling all righteousness, just like Jesus did; in *his* baptism. It's found right here in Mt 3. And I want to take a few minutes to look at it, not only because it's foundational for baptism, but so you know what's going on this morning.

➤ Just prior to the start of *Jesus'* ministry, John the Baptist was busy fulfilling his own. Preaching repentance and preparation for the kingdom of heaven, and baptizing people to show it. To *show* they've repented and are preparing for the Kingdom of God. And in the middle of that, Jesus shows up and takes it to a whole new level. V13.

Then Jesus came from Galilee [a region in northern Israel] to the Jordan [the Jordan River; to the south and east] to John, to be baptized by him. [14] John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" [15] But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. [There was something about that phrase.]

[16] And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; [17] and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." [For fulfilling all righteousness.] (Mt 3:13-17)

Jesus got baptized. And the reason is found in v15 – "*Let it be so now* [baptize me Jesus said], *for thus* [or because] *it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness*." Jesus got baptized *to fulfill all righteousness*. To accomplish all that is right and good. Not to *be* good; not to *be* righteous. He already was. Rather, it was to complete all that God wants and desires. He got baptized to accomplish all that is right and good.

And so do we. Following his example.

➤ The question is, what righteousness did Jesus *fulfill* with his baptism? What was he *accomplishing* that was right and good and necessary?

Well, first, he revealed himself to the world. Basically saying, "Here I am. I'm the one. Lord and Savior." Just like God intended from before the *foundation* of the world. Jesus got baptized to reveal himself.

And we do too. Far more than just being about us . . .

Baptism reveals Jesus to the world.

When Jesus said to John that it's *fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness*, one of the things he must have had in mind was John's God-given purpose to reveal him. Like he says in **John 1:31** – *For this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.* " John baptized Jesus, to put a divine spotlight on him, and reveal him for all to see.

And we do too. When we stand in the waters of baptism, we reveal Jesus to anyone and everyone who's listening. We spotlight him as the Savior of our soul. We point to the one who makes us whole. Lord of all. Baptism revealed Jesus then, and it still does now. Fulfilling *all righteousness*.

Second . . .

Baptism affirms our identity as a child of God.

Just like the baptism of Jesus affirmed *his* identity as the Son of God. V17. After coming up from the water, *a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."* God the Father affirmed his identity.

Likewise, *our* identify is affirmed in baptism. As a *child* of God. Someone *in* Christ; *in* the Son; connected to him. No longer idols unto ourselves, or slaves to sin; we're sons and daughters of God. His children. And baptism affirms it. Just like the baptism of Jesus affirmed *his* sonship. That's a second part of fulfilling all righteousness in baptism.

A third, is that it sets us apart.

Baptism sets us apart publicly.

Once again, just like it set Jesus apart. Not that he *wasn't* already in the eyes of God, but that he wasn't in the eyes of man.

Same for us. When we're saved, we're set apart in *God's* eyes, but not the world's. As far as their concerned "we got religion." Just another thing that people do. No different than bingo or bowling. No different than the guy next door who's passionate about sports.

But baptism changes all that. When we're baptized, there's no *mistaking* who we are and what we stand for. There's no mistaking what flag we fly. There's no hiding; no waffling. We stand dripping wet in a world of dry bones. Set apart for God, set apart for ministry, and set apart for life. Publicly.

➤ Baptism doesn't save us, but shows we *have* been saved. Baptism doesn't forgive us, but shows we *have* been forgiven. Setting us apart for all to see, affirming our identity as a child of God, and revealing Jesus to the world.

If that's news to you, watch and listen carefully. And if your heart burns within you to get right with God, don't wait. Call on Jesus right where you sit. Ask him to forgive you of your sins, save your soul, and make you whole.

For the rest of you, who've already *made* that decision, get ready to celebrate. Because righteousness is being fulfilled, before our eyes.

Pray – Father, reveal your Son this morning. Affirm your children. And set them apart for your glory and our joy.

How To Be Saved

You just heard 10/11 different stories of how God used the circumstances of life, to get their attention and prepare their heart to be saved. To receive the Gospel, the good news of Jesus. That God so loved us, he *sent* Jesus to die in our place. To take the punishment *we* deserve for our sin, and give us new life in exchange. Eternal life. That's the Gospel.

But it only applies if you . . .

Admit you're a sinner

The Bible says – *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* (Rom 3:23) And embracing the Gospel starts by admitting that's you. That in God's eyes, you're a sinner.

And . . .

Believe in Jesus

That when he died, he died for *you*. And rose again so you could too. So you could be spared from an eternity of judgment, and given new life starting right now. Life to the full and life forever.

Admit you're a sinner, believe in Jesus, and . . .

Repent of your sin

Asking God to *forgive* you, and making a commitment to *turn* from your sin.

And then . . .

Receive him into your life

To follow him as *Lord* of your life. Living his way, doing his will, and enjoying his presence forever. Admit, believe, repent, and receive.

That's the only way the Gospel applies. The only way to be *saved* from the consequences of your sin. The only way to enjoy the blessings of heaven.

➤ If you want that, if you need that, pray with me right now.

I admit . . . But I believe . . . So I repent . . . And I receive.

Prayer – Lord, you're so good to us. Thank you for hearing our prayers and saving our souls. Flood those who just prayed with an overwhelming sense of your presence, and solidify their commitment for your glory and their joy. In Jesus' name, amen.

➤ If you just prayed with me, let me encourage you to do 3 things:

1. **Pick up a New Believer's Packet** at the door. Or, if you're online, go to our website.
2. **Tell someone** about your decision. Maybe even before you leave the building. Don't miss the encouragement of that. We're not saved to be silent.
3. **Text "saved"** to the number on your screen. Tell *us*. We'd love to know, we'd love to encourage you, and we'd love to pray for you.

Baptism Recognition

Would those of you who were baptized come down front right now so we can recognize you and praise God for you as a church?

Acts 2:41 says – *Those who received [God's] word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.* Added to the church, the Kingdom of God.

This may not be the day of your salvation, but we sure do want to affirm it.

So right after the benediction, make your way down front, shake their hand, and just say, "God bless you. Thank you for your testimony."

[And now] *to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood . . . to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.* Amen. (Rev 1:5b-6)

You are loved