

Text: Matthew 3:13-17

Theme: Fulfill all Righteousness

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation today is the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew the Third chapter, verses thirteen through seventeen.

Boys and girls, I pray that you are doing well today. Do you know what I have here? I have a glass of water. Water is very important, our bodies need it to grow and become strong. Our bodies need water daily to survive. We also use water in a wide variety of ways, to wash dishes, to make water balloons, to swim, even to wash away all the dirt and grim from our bodies whenever we take a shower or bath. Did you know that even our souls need water as well? Yep, in the waters of Holy Baptism, God uses water to wash you and me clean, not from the outward dirt and grim, but the inward, to wash away every single one of our sins. He makes us clean using water and His Word. In our text for today though, we see Jesus being baptized, well, Jesus has not done anything wrong, right? So why is He baptized? Ponder that question as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

Jesus perfectly fulfills all righteousness

We know why we need Baptism. We need it for the forgiveness of our sins and the salvation of our souls. We need to be washed clean of Adam's, and thereby ours as well, original sin against God, as well as all of our own sins. Our sins of thoughts, words, and deeds. All those times when we have broken the Ten Commandments. When we have thought ill of the person who cut us off on the highway. When we have disrespected those in authority over us by being lazy at our jobs and cutting corners to get things done. Our sins of placing our own thoughts and desires in the place of what God has commanded us to do. Our sin of desiring money, fame, authority, and power

rather than trusting in God to provide for all our needs of body and soul, now and unto eternity. Through the waters of Holy Baptism, God grants us the forgiveness of every single one of our sins by connecting us to Jesus Christ, to His death and resurrection for us.

Yet, what has Christ done wrong that He needs Baptism? As the eternal Son of the Father, Jesus has done nothing wrong, ever. There is no sin that He has done that He needs forgiveness for. So why be baptized? Our Lord gives us the answer in order to fulfill all righteousness. The Torah and Levitical Law included no requirements about baptism, so Jesus could not have had in view anything pertaining to Levitical **righteousness**. But John's message was a message of repentance, and those experiencing it were looking forward to a coming Messiah who would be righteous and who would bring in **righteousness**. If Messiah were to provide **righteousness** for sinners, He must be identified with sinners. It was therefore in the will of God for Him to be baptized by John in order to be identified (the real meaning of the word "baptized") with sinners." He does not need forgiveness, but we desperately do! In His baptism, our Lord identified as One with Humanity by the very nature of His incarnation, the second person of the Holy Trinity in flesh and bone.

Here, Jesus begins His public work as the Son of God. What is that work? Preaching and teaching that the Kingdom of God is at hand to bring people to repentance, doing miracles as proof that He is God in the Flesh for us. Ultimately, His wondrous work, as the Obedient Son of the Father, to bear our sins in His holy flesh and take them to the cross. His current baptism is a picture of His future baptism on the cross when "all the waves and billows" of judgment would go over Him for your sake.

Gives us His righteousness as the Beloved Son

There, as the One proclaimed as the Beloved Son of the Father, Jesus does what you could never do. Having lived a perfect life in your place, Jesus sheds His precious blood while being mocked, scorned, and abused. He dies your death under the judgement of a righteous and holy God, making full and perfect atonement for every single one of our sins. He takes your sin, your pain, your punishment upon Himself, in exchange Jesus gives to you His

perfection and His righteousness. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection from the dead, when God looks at you, He no longer sees a poor miserable, rotten sinner. Rather, He sees Christ Jesus and calls you His own beloved Son.

Gives HS to do good works

Through Christ Jesus, in your baptism, the Father gives you the Holy Spirit that as beloved sons of God, you can do the good work He has called you to do. That you no longer live lives of sin but ones of glory that glorify His holy name. The Spirit empowers you to resist sin and the Devil, to no longer abhor the Ten Commandments but strive to live according to them. When you fail, and you will, He calls you back to the remembrance of your baptism, to confession, to hear the blessed words of absolution, to receive His forgiveness again. Thereby restored, and strengthened, we continue to live out our lives. The Christian life is one of daily recalling our baptism, drowning the old Adam, that the New Adam may arise.

Let us always live lives of repentance and grace, found in the wonderful working of our Lord in His Word and Sacraments, until that day when we shall see the Beloved Son Face to Face forever.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.