

The Gospel According to Matthew pt 9

(To Fulfill all Righteousness)

Read Matt. 3:13-17

Let me begin with this, the loved of God are redeemed by the blood of Christ. We are born again by the Spirit of God. We are saved by the Grace of God. Baptism pictures and confesses these blessings of grace. But being baptized has absolutely no redeeming, saving merit and efficacy! We are not saved because get baptized, we get baptized because we are saved! We love the Lord, His commands are not grievous to us, it is our hearts desire to do the will of God, stated in his Word! Some like to point out “Christ was Baptized, should we not be also?” that is true, but seeing it is a command; **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”** (Mar 16:16); that is good enough for me! His ways are above my ways, His ways are right and good for me!

Two words of caution are necessary because this ordinance has been so greatly perverted by lost religious men.

(1.) Let us throw away the creeds and confessions of men and simply obey the Word of God as it stands, without addition or alteration. Whenever men begin to tamper with the Word of God souls are ruined.

(2.) We must never attach any idolatrous, superstitious importance to the ordinance of baptism. Baptism is a picture of redemption; but baptism is not redemption. Baptism is a picture of the remission of sins; but baptism is not the remission of sins. Baptism is a picture of salvation; but baptism is not salvation.

The trip from Galilee to the Jordan was more than a days journey, Take note, the Lord Jesus went to the inconvenience to observe this ordinance of worship. Many of those who call themselves believers and followers of Christ quickly justify themselves in the neglect of worship. Lord help us not to fall into that sin.

We will find no justification for our slackness in the Word of God. — The Shunammite woman rode on horseback every sabbath day to hear God’s prophet at Carmel, though her husband hindered her (2Ki 4:23). — In David’s time the saints of God “**passed through the valley of Baca**” to worship God at Zion (Psa 84:6). — In Daniel’s day believers ran to and fro “**to increase knowledge,**” to know more of the Lord God (Dan 12:4). — In Zechariah’s day the inhabitants of one city went to another, saying, “**Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord and to seek the Lord of hosts**” (Zec 8:21). — In the Book of Acts we read of the eunuch who journeyed from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship God (Act 8:25).

Any man or woman who talks about being a Christian, who talks about worshipping God, who talks about being a believer and yet willfully neglects the worship of God ought to blush with shame! And baptism is worship!

We also see in our text, John the Baptist, though bold as a lion, was also a man of true humility. When the Lord came to John for baptism, out of humility, he forbade him. He strenuously objected, not out of a spirit of rebellion, but out of a spirit of reverence and awe; (v11), John knew who Christ is. He knew that the man standing before him was the infinite God, his Redeemer and Savior. And he knew himself, too. He knew that he was a sinner in need of grace and a sinner saved by grace, through the merits of the Lamb of God who stood before him.

Though he was conscious of his personal sin and unworthiness to do so, when the Lord commanded him to do it, John baptized him. No man is worthy to do anything in the worship and service of the holy Lord God. Our only worthiness before God is Christ. It is his blood and righteousness alone that makes us “**meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light**” (Col 1:12).

And it is Christ who makes us worthy to approach our God in all acts of worship. We have no right, in the name of humility, to refuse any command or duty clearly set before us by our God, just because we feel unworthy!

So why did the Lord Jesus insist upon being baptized by John? He had no sins to confess. He had no transgressions of which to repent of. He had no iniquities to be washed away. Yet, He told John that it was necessary for Him to be baptized **“to fulfil all righteousness.”** But what did his baptism have to do with the fulfillment of all righteousness?

We know that our blessed Savior fulfilled all the righteous requirements of God’s holy law for us as our Representative, freeing us from its curse and condemnation by His obedience unto death (Rom 5:18-21) **Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.**

We also Know He fulfilled all the will of God as the God-man, as our Mediator, by which we are forever sanctified (Heb 10:5-14) **Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.**

By His baptism, our Savior symbolically fulfilled all righteousness and established as a standing ordinance in His Church that by which believing men and women publicly confess the fulfillment of all righteousness in Him.

By his baptism the Lord Jesus symbolically demonstrated how He would fulfill all righteousness as our sin-atonement Substitute.

And by our baptism we confess the same. “The baptism of Christ,” wrote C. H. Spurgeon, *“was the picture, the type, the symbol of the work, which he afterwards accomplished. He was immersed in suffering; he died, and was buried in the tomb; he rose again from the grave; and all that is set forth in the outward symbol of his baptism in the River Jordan.”*

Believer’s baptism typifies “all righteousness.” Being fulfilled in Christ Jesus. It is an ordinance full of meaning when rightly observed. It is to be reverently observed by all who follow Christ. If our Lord Himself submitted to it, How can we follow Him and refuse to submit to it? Again Spurgeon wrote. — *“Shall I refuse to follow my Lord? Shall I think that there is nothing in an ordinance of which he has said, **Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness?**”*

Brother Don Fortner wrote; *“When the Lord Jesus was made sin for us, he was slain under the wrath of God, and buried. When he had put away sin, he rose from the dead because he had accomplished our justification. When believers follow Christ into the watery grave, we publicly acknowledge that our only hope before God is that which he accomplished for us in his death and resurrection as our Substitute”.*

Rising up out of the watery grave, we symbolically avow our allegiance to Christ, walking with Him in the newness of life, in hope of the resurrection; **“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin”.** (Rom 6:4-6).

What wonderful Grace that God would give us this ordinance of baptism, symbolizing His death, His burial, and His resurrection.

Folks many have turned this ordinance into a great Lasciviousness, a wicked ritual, they have come to say baptism is a sign of your salvation, or if you're not Baptized, you're not saved, Lord keep us from this evil. As I said in the beginning, the loved of God are redeemed by the blood of Christ. We are born again by the Spirit of God. We are saved by the Grace of God. Baptism pictures and confesses these blessings of grace. But being baptized has absolutely no redeeming, saving merit and efficacy! We are not saved because get baptized, we get baptized because we are saved!

Next we are given a solemn and wonderful sight, the beauty of the Trinity hand in hand.

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (17) And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:16-17).

Here we see the interest of the triune God in the work of redemption. Here is a display of the Holy Trinity, an identification of our Lord Jesus as the Messiah, and a declaration from heaven, **“this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.”**

Here is everything that is solemn, and glorious. The scene before us ought to be considered with utmost care, and awe, — **“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one”** (1Jn 5:7).

Here the three Persons of the triune God distinctly manifest themselves. God the Father speaks by a voice from heaven. God the Son, incarnate in human flesh, stoops to the watery grave. And God the Holy Spirit descends from heaven in the form of a Dove, lighting upon our blessed Savior.

Here we have a most majestic meeting of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity about the work of Redemption.

As in the beginning of creation, the Triune God said, “**Let us make man;**” so in the beginning of redemption, it seems that He is saying, “Let us redeem man!”

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Eph 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Eph 1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Eph 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Eph 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Eph 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Eph 1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Eph 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

Eph 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The salvation of our souls is the united work of the Triune God. It was planned and purposed by God the Father. It was purchased and obtained for us by God the Son. And it is performed and sealed in us by God the Holy Spirit.

And lasty The Lord tells us plainly, It is Christ's works that God accepts, it is the works of His beloved Son that please the Father!

“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”

How significant it is, that the man Christ Jesus is here declared to be God the Son, As He portrays His death, His burial and His resurrection as our Substitute. He is as fully God in His lowest humiliation as He is in His highest eternal glory.

The glory and perfection of our Savior as God in his essential divinity was not even slightly diminished by his incarnation, obedience, and death as our Surety.

Again brother Don Fortner wrote; *“Whenever we read anything about him in the Book of God that appears to limit his knowledge, power, or being, we must never fail to recognize that such limitations only reflect the genuineness of his humanity and his voluntary subjection to the will of God as Jehovah's righteous Servant for the accomplishment of our redemption”*.

He who is God our Savior is God and man in one glorious person. He is truly and fully and perfectly God. And He is truly and fully and perfectly man. It is He, the GODMAN our Mediator, in whom, and through whom, and by whom we have access to and everlasting acceptance with the eternal God.

God the Father is well-pleased with Christ and only with Christ. He is well-pleased with His person, with His obedience, and with His sacrifice pictured in His baptism.

He is eternally pleased and satisfied with His Son as His Servant (Isa 42:1) **Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.**

He is infinitely and eternally well-pleased with the sacrifice of his Son as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8) **And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him.**

He was well pleased with His assumption of our nature, with His obedience to the law, bringing everlasting righteousness, with Him being made sin for us, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, enduring the penalty and curse of His holy law against sin to the full satisfaction of justice as our Substitute.

Yes, the Father is well-pleased with His person, His righteousness, His satisfaction, and His atonement, by which His law is magnified and honored and His justice is satisfied.

But the Voice from heaven did not say, “This is my beloved Son *with* whom I am well-pleased.” The Voice from heaven said, “**This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.**”

How thankful we ought to be for that. The God of Glory is well-pleased with all who are in His Son because of His Son. He is well pleased with us in Christ, for He has made us “**the righteousness of God in him.**”

God is not only well pleased with His Son and in His Son, He is well-pleased with all His people in His Son. In Him, He loves us with an everlasting love. As the Son, our Surety, He was delighted with us from eternity, so the Father took delight in us, rejoiced over us, accepted us, and blessed us with all spiritual blessings in His Son before the world began, as we just read in Eph 1.

He shall rejoice over them with joy and singing forever, resting in His love (Zep 3:17) **The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.**

Robert Hawker wrote this on this passage.

“May the Lord mercifully grant, that the whole church of God, through divine teaching, may be enabled to keep in unceasing remembrance, the Father’s testimony to his dear Son. And while my soul, and the souls of all his redeemed, are thus continually hearing, and receiving, the precious assurance of God’s being well pleased with his dear Son, for his redeeming love to his church, and his finished salvation for his people; oh, for grace to love him, whom JEHOVAH, in all the persons of the Godhead, loves; and to delight in Him, in whom JEHOVAH delighteth. Precious Lord Jesus! I would say”, ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon earth my soul desireth but thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.’ (Psa 73:25)