



Daily Devotionals

[click here to go to website – stmatthewsrichmond.org](http://stmatthewsrichmond.org)

MATTHEW 3:13-17 FULFILLING ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

At the Jordan River and under the hand of John we learn a lot about God when we read with a Jewish mindset. There is the godly humility of both of the main characters. The prophet who proclaimed himself unworthy, yet still submitted to perform the act. The Messiah, who although he was without sin submitted himself to be baptized by a sinner, so that he might be identified with sinners. Then there is the dove – the symbol of he who hovered over the chaos at creation (Genesis 1:2); the meaning of the name Jonah, the prophet of the Lord to the Gentiles in Nineveh (Jonah 3); and the messenger of deliverance to the passengers of the ark (Genesis 8:6-12). And finally, there is the voice from heaven. The words that are spoken are the words recorded by the Prophet Isaiah when he speaks of the Suffering Servant, the One who would die for the sins of his people (Isaiah 42:1). They are also the words we read in Psalm 2 when the Lord proclaims the future king to be his son who will rule over all the world (2:7-9). The full Trinity is present and involved in the coming of the kingdom into the world and the deliverance of a people to God forever.

Jesus' call to us is the call to follow him and he would have us follow from the very beginning. So the beginning of his public ministry starts at the River Jordan with the baptism of John. Therefore, baptism is full inclusion in the Church which is the community of those who are living under the blessing of God in order to spread that blessing to the entire world. In that manner our baptism is our ordination service. At baptism we pronounce our intention to be God's ministers, to live in love of God and neighbor, and we are commissioned and empowered to go out and do so. That empowerment is not something that the Church provides, but is the power God gives us at baptism through the pouring out of his Spirit. That outpouring is not only an expression of God's love and the seal of our adoption as his first-born sons, but also the gift that enables us to do the otherwise impossible – fulfill all righteousness.

As I look back upon my baptism, may I now see the true meaning of that symbolic act and renew my commitment to repenting of all that keeps me from the righteousness of God and impedes me from living the life of Gospel ministry under the power of the Holy Spirit. My careless attitude and self-assurance must surely grieve you my God. I repent, O Lord, not in order to save myself, but out of love and obedience to you. Restore me as a tool of your Gospel proclamation to the world. Amen.