

Eastern Mission

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America New Year

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Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 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: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matthew 3:13-17

John preached "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". His baptism was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. So when Jesus walks up to John, He looks like a guy that has something to repent of. John assumes this too, this is why he attempts to forbid Him. "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? It's like he is saying "Lord, I'm the sinner, I need to repent, you're the savior, you're the one who brings forgiveness. You have this backwards." Jesus' response is telling. He says "suffer it to be so now for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Jesus is telling John that He has come to be baptized in order to take part in the baptism that these penitent sinners are undertaking, to join himself to them. This act reflects so perfectly with how Jesus will save his people from their sins. In this, He takes the place of sinful Adam and God is pleased with Him.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Corinthians 5:21

It's no coincidence that after this, Jesus goes and confronts the devil, and defeats him. Where Adam and Eve fell, Christ is victorious. Where sinful Israel turned away, Jesus is obedient. Where you and I sin, He does not. It is here, that Jesus steps into our shoes, joins himself with sinful humanity, and begins to fulfill the law for us. The amazing thing is that in joining himself to us, God's pleasure isn't only directed at Jesus. It's directed to the race that Jesus has joined. God says this to each and every one of us in our baptism. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

God's Peace,
Pastor Nicholas Kandoll