

*I have* heard the story of the baptism of Jesus many times, and I wondered, why did Jesus need to be baptized? The dogmatic theology has insisted since the beginning that Jesus was sinless. If Jesus were a sinful human being, how could he be the savior that saved the multitude from their condemnation?

Okay, that makes sense. You cannot wipe the dishes clean with a dirty rag, that is for sure. If Jesus was sinless, it is odd that Jesus wanted to be baptized John. Does this mean that Jesus just wanted to verify his purity by redundancy? Like a lab tech sterilizing the Petri dish twice?

If you are saved once, do you need to be saved one more time, just to make sure you are saved? If you are baptized elsewhere, do you need to be baptized here one more time, just to make sure your baptism was done correctly the first time? That sounds like a silly theology to me.

*Then why* would Jesus volunteer to be baptized? The wild

theological guess is that Jesus wanted to stand in solidarity with the sinners for whose salvation he was called. Jesus chose to be identified with the sinners, rather than with the righteous, the saints, and the angels who did not need to repent. Jesus chose to stand with the repentant. But still, another question lingers: why did Jesus say, "It is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness."?

All righteousness? Did he mean that this act of submission to baptism fulfills all righteousness? It would mean, then, that there are other components to the whole of the righteousness. What are the other components to this "all righteousness," besides standing together with the repentant sinners?

*So I* pondered about all righteousness that Jesus was aware of, the righteousness that he needed to fulfill. To me, this intent of fulfilling all righteousness rings more affinity to the general humanity as the rightful image of the Messiah. It

makes a better sense of the theology than the argument that calls for the sterile sinlessness as the prerequisite for the Messiah.

Jesus is the Messiah who does not stay aloof as a sinless being, but one who struggles to fulfill all righteousness as one of our own. This solidarity with the sinners and the commoners found its expression in the compassion for the poor and the despised.

Since the poor and the despised are the ones who always fall victim to injustice, Jesus focused his ministry on them with the strong sense of justice and compassion. Prophet Isaiah prophesied who the anointed one would be like in chapter 42. He is the compassionate one who will bring justice. Jesus is on the side of the sinners, the poor, the weak, and the oppressed. This was one aspect of all righteousness Jesus intended to fulfill.

*As a* human being, Jesus needed to be prepped. We do not know much about his personal training.

But we can know as far as the Bible gives us the clue. At age 12, he was able to debate with the top scholars of his time, and amazed them with his brilliance (Lk. 2:47). Jesus must have been a genius who was educated in the subjects relevant to his time. He must have done well in school, or in the subject studies available to him at the time.

A smart person can pretend to be a stupid person, but a stupid person can never pretend to be a smart person. A "C" average student can be elected the president of a nation, but the same can never earn the degree of Ph.D. Would you want a "C" average student who partied his way through the college to be your, doctor, president, or the Messiah?

I know the birthers want to see the actual birth certificate of the President Obama. But I want to see the actual high school transcript of any one aspiring for the Oval Office. I want it to be the law. Call me a transcriber. I solemnly declare myself the first

Transcriber. Jesus was a bright and diligent student who poured his energy into developing his God-given gifts. This was another aspect of all righteousness Jesus intended to fulfill.

*Since his* childhood, Jesus had the clear understanding of who he was. He seemed to have been surprised by his mother's question: "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously (Lk. 2:48)." Jesus knew who his father was, and he knew Joseph was not his biological father. So he answered like a child would: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house? (Lk. 2:49)" To the young boy Jesus, his father had been always the Abba Father, and it was puzzling to him that his mother had been worried sick about him.

This clear understanding of the self-identity leads to the clear understanding of the purpose of his life. By the time he was 30 years-old, Jesus was aware of his calling to the life of ministry. He

nevertheless submitted himself to the harsh test in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights at the onset of the ministry. He knew well that he was called, but he needed to make certain that his body and spirit could take the pain, and not bail out when things got rough. Jesus never claimed for himself any special exemption or privilege. That was another aspect of all righteousness Jesus intended to fulfill.

*Once he* passed this test in the wilderness, Jesus knew that he was sufficiently committed to this purpose of his life, and had the courage necessary to commit his life onto death to God's calling. Jesus walked to Jerusalem, knowing that death awaited him there. This was another aspect of all righteousness Jesus intended to fulfill.

*In order* to go on with the ministry, Jesus was given power and authority. For the vast majority of righteous and ethical people, given enough time, they

eventually abuse their power and authority. Their ego grows unchecked. They corrupt absolutely, when they wield the absolute power.

Although Jesus was given such power and authority, power and authority never consumed Jesus, and Jesus never abused the power and authority. Jesus never suffered from the bloated ego. Jesus never sought self-aggrandizement or self-enrichment. Jesus never harbored the selfish agenda. That was another aspect of all righteousness Jesus intended to fulfill.

*Many have* changed the course of the human history. But all of them did it by resorting to weapons and violence. Their ideologies may have been lofty, great, and justified. But they did not hesitate to shed other people's blood, in order to achieve their own goals. Those hard-won achievements barely last the conqueror's life span, and the same cycle of violence begins afresh by others who seek their

own turn in the limelight.

Jesus had the courage to give up his life for his calling, but he did so, without resorting to weapons or violence, without shedding others' blood. He warned those who are willing to shed blood: "...for all who take the sword will perish by the sword (Mt. 26:52)." He also taught: "To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also (Lk. 6:29a). These are very hard teachings to follow, but Jesus lived by his own teaching, and died by the same. That was another aspect of all righteousness Jesus intended to fulfill.

*Jesus was* deeply pious, and he found time to pray, even when he was constantly surrounded by disciples, followers, and the crowds of people. Luke shows us the vignette of such practice in 5:16:

<sup>15</sup> But so much the more the report went abroad concerning him; and great multitudes gathered to hear and to be healed of their infirmities.

<sup>16</sup> But he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed.

Jesus often retreated from the secular world, in order to find his center and reaffirm the purpose of his life. That was yet another aspect of all righteousness he intended to fulfill.

**Finally, Jesus** was constantly harassed by his opponents and enemies who were jealous of his popularity and the great following. Many from the establishment came to him, challenging him, and baiting him to entrap him. He was often angry, but did not let that anger lead him to sin. Inside, Jesus completely lacked any trace of malice. Instead, he forgave those who insulted him, tortured him, and nailed him to the cross: And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments (Lk. 23:34). That was another aspect of all righteousness Jesus intended to fulfill.

**When Jesus** walked out of the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And

a voice from heaven said: "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

God is pleased with the person who intends to fulfill all righteousness. And that all righteousness is the blueprint for the authentic image of the humanity. Jesus is the archetype of the true leader of the humanity.

Imagine: every one of our presidents intends to fulfill all righteousness. What would the United States government look like? Imagine: there are 10 individuals in the leadership that intend to fulfill all righteousness. What would the United States look like? Imagine: there are 100 people in the world who intend to fulfill all righteousness. What would the world look like? How many individuals are there who intend to fulfill all righteousness?

Being a Christian is to be like Jesus. Trying to be like Jesus is to fulfill all righteousness, just as Jesus did. I hope that the day would come, when the Christians try to fulfill all righteousness.