

## THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY, 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2020

**THEME:** *FULFILLING ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS*

**READINGS:** *ISAIAH 42:1-9; ACTS 10:34-38a;*

*MATTHEW 3:13-17*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Greeting one another for seeing the New Year is still in order, especially for those we are just seeing in 2020. God's grace and mercy brought us this far. Fleeting, eleven days have gone! We praise God for the blessing of the second Sunday. We have started telling ourselves that the walk this year is a walk of faith, nothing less. The only way to build capacity, enlarge coast, expand your business, attain greater heights, tread uncharted path, break new grounds, hear God, love God, grow spiritually, receive spiritual gifts and get God seriously involved is by FAITH. We all need to quickly key into this powerful flow. It is an amazing theme. The season is Epiphany; the manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles. Today is the first Sunday in the Season. Plainly speaking, it is about the revelation of Jesus. To a child of God, there are always fresh revelations if we seek him consistently. "Thou shall find me when thou have diligently sought me" To the heathen, it is eureka, a turning point, translation from darkness to light.

### B. JESUS WAS BAPTIZED TO FULFIL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. Out of awe and respect, John the Baptist was not going to baptize Jesus Christ who came to Jordan for that purpose. If it was that needless, Jesus wouldn't be there. John had said ahead of Jesus that there is one coming after him who had been before him, he is not worthy to untie his sandal lace. That was coming from a place of deep, sincere and humble devotion. Seven (7) things he said about Jesus in Matthew 3:11-12; (i) He is mightier than him, (ii) He is not worthy to bear his shoes, (iii) He will baptize with Holy Spirit, (iv) He will baptize with fire, (v) He will thoroughly purge his floor, (vi) He will gather his wheat into the garner, (vii) He will burn chaff with unquenchable fire.

2. Truly, Jesus did not need to be baptized. John exclaimed in Matt 3:14 "I need to be baptized by you and you are coming to me?! Baptism of John was baptism unto repentance. Jesus needed no repentance. Thus, except for the fact that Jesus' baptism reflected a willingness to obey the Father, there is little relationship between the Lord's baptism and that required of all people today (Mk. 16:16). In the balance, it is important to set forth five reasons for the baptism of Jesus by John.

- It was to identify with John's ministry and approve of water baptism
- It was to publicly identify Jesus as the Son of God at the beginning of his ministry. The voice of commendation by God underscores this.
- It was to quickly present the oneness and unity of purpose of the Triune God. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit were present.
- It was a commencement token of the total dedication of Christ in carrying out Heaven's plan.
- It was a visual precursor to the Savior's ultimate death, burial, and resurrection.

### C. FULFILLING ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS IS PLEASING THE FATHER Matthew 3:17

Generally speaking, fulfilling all righteousness is satisfying the requirements for accessing or achieving something. It means doing the needful.

.....And suddenly, a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased". This was the aftermath of Jesus' baptism. Just after pleasing the Father, there was an acclamation. Simply put, fulfilling all righteousness means doing what is required to please God. It includes humbly conforming to the will of the Father; covenanting with the Father to obey His commandments, following the examples set by Jesus Christ.

### D. HOW CAN I PLEASE THE FATHER? HOW CAN WE FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS?

Let me share some six ways we can be pleasing to God.

**1. Offer yourself as a living sacrifice.** Romans 12:1-2. God loves total surrender. God loves purity. This is how to please him. By yielding to him in sacrifice. Holding our vessels, our bodies to him in holiness.

**2. Praise God Always:** Psalm 119:1-9. Praise is the appropriate response to God. He is worthy of all our praise. We teach our children to be thankful – not for our own sake but for theirs. We are pleased when they are thankful. God teaches us to praise him because it is the right response to him, and because it is good for us. Thanksgiving is an appropriate response to human generosity. Continual praise is the appropriate response to God's generosity. The psalmist repeats over and over again that we should 'praise the Lord' v1. Praise him all day long: 'from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets' v2. Praise him throughout your life, 'now and tomorrow and always'.