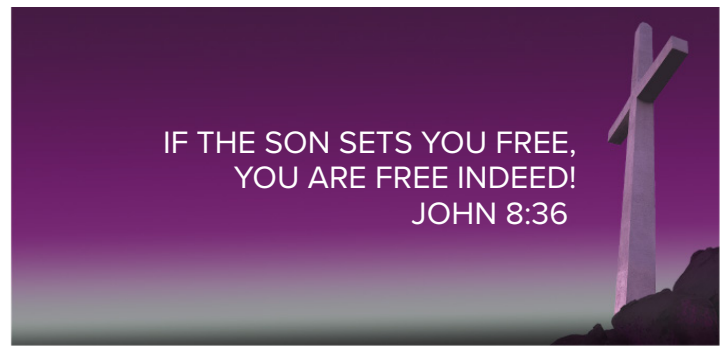


Jesus IOI

“Grace Thoughts”



A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

“In this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” —Matthew 3:15

Since my childhood, I have been fascinated by the story about the little slave-girl from Israel who was a servant of Naaman's wife (2 Kings 5). Through her witness, the captain of the army of the king of Aram was healed from leprosy when he followed the prophet's directions and immersed himself in the river Jordan for seven times. What I didn't know then is that the story of Naaman's healing in the waters of the river Jordan is the only instance in the Greek Old Testament where the notion of baptism by immersion is mentioned.*

It is with amazement that I see how this story continues to unfold centuries later, when Jesus arrives at the same river in order to be baptized by John (Matthew 3:13). Initially, John tried to dissuade Jesus from doing it because he understood that Jesus was greater than him and would baptize His followers with the Holy Spirit (verse 14; see verse 11). In this exchange, recorded only by Matthew, Jesus answers John that it must be so, “for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (verse 15). Jesus was baptized not because He was sinful but because He was, and is, our Representative and Substitute. He came to fulfill the law and the prophets (see Matthew 5:17) through His perfect life, death, and resurrection in our place. It is through His righteousness, not ours, that we are assured of salvation. Through Jesus' fulfillment of the law we find grace, peace, and healing, as Naaman did. We all have things that we wish were not part of our biography. We all know that we don't deserve salvation. If you find yourself, or your loved ones, in a season of despair about mistakes / sins of the past (or present), remember that Jesus lived a perfect life in our place. When we accept Him as our Savior, His perfect life is credited to us; we are declared righteous on account of His righteousness, not ours. Isn't that the best news ever? This is what we call “Righteousness by Faith”: “The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe” (Romans 3:22; see verses 23-26). Thank and praise the Lord for His perfect righteousness, accredited to us as His gift!

*2 Kings 5:14, LXX. Baptizō.