

How Jesus Makes You Blameless

It's sheer panic on their faces, when I tell them they're going to learn over 700 Spanish sentences during the year.

"I cannot do that," they say to me with their eyes. Can't blame them, can you?

But what they don't know is how much sleep I've lost thinking about how to help them succeed. While you were waterskiing and playing in the park this summer, I was holding a coffee cup and staring into space—plotting a detailed course for how to get students from being able to say "taco" and "hola" to fluently speaking 700 sentences.

I've taken all the weight of student success onto my own shoulders, even in creating ways to motivate students to do the work that will fall on them.

That brings me to my morning Bible reading, during which I paused long over Matthew 5:20. Jesus tells his disciples:

"I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." (NIV)

Perfect righteousness? Way harder than learning 700 sentences. Way.

"We cannot do that," we say to Jesus with our eyes.

But if we back up to Matthew 5:2, we find hope. We read that Jesus "began to teach them." He was a teacher. He had been staring long over a cup of coffee, too, I suspect. He wanted his students to be perfectly righteous—an outlandish goal but one he was determined they would reach.

Jesus took all the weight of success on himself, even in creating ways to motivate his students to do the work that

would fall on them.

How would Jesus' students be able to meet this impossible objective of complete righteousness?

1. He would die to erase all their failures, creating the safest learning environment ever. (What a teacher!)
2. He would move into their hearts and tutor them, one-on-one. (What a teacher!)
3. He would constantly encourage them and give them abundant resources to do what he was asking. (What a teacher!)

So it's September, and many long months of work stand between my students and their 700 sentences. But we'll get there. I'm going to see to that.

Now about your heart? Jesus is going to get you to blameless, so have hope and buckle down. Hay que ponernos a trabajar. (Let's get to work.)

Because every good teacher needs a good student, eh?