

The Fullness of Jesus Christ

John 1: 16-18

Joh 1:16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

Joh 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Joh 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

We could outline these three verses thus:

- 1) We are Empty – He is our Fullness
- 2) We are Unworthy – He is Gracious
- 3) We are Condemned – He is our Deliverer
- 4) We are Blind – He is the Revelation

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1A) We are Empty

The Fall has made us like Creation before Christ filled it!!!

Gen 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

We know from scripture and experience that this is true!

Jonathan Edwards:

“You contribute nothing to your salvation except the sin that made it necessary.”

Therefore Augustus Toplady could write:

Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to the cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.

The psalmist feels his emptiness when he says:

Psa 116:12 What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me?

App:

Q. Do you feel your emptiness this morning?

If so, good!!!

1B) He is Fullness

“And of his fulness have all we received”

Note 1,

It is an **owned fullness!**

It is **His Fullness!!!**

Calvin: “The fulness belongs to Christ personally.”

Q. What Fullness?

Col 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Thomas Manton:

“In the man Christ Jesus, or in that human nature in which He carried on the business of our salvation; as despicable and abject as it was in the eyes of men, **yet it was the temple and seat of the Godhead.**”

Note 2,

It is a Communicated Fullness!

“And of his fulness have all we received”

Q. What does it mean to be the receivers of Christ’s fullness?

First, what it does not mean.

It is not that we have received some of his deity!

Theology speaks of Communicable and Incommunicable attributes of God.

We can never say that we enter into and become part of the essence of God!

There is one scripture which seems to say this.

2Pe 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be **partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**

Albert Barnes gives three arguments against taking this in the sense of becoming part of the essence of God.

He says:

(a) It is in the nature of the case” impossible. There must be forever an essential difference between a created and an uncreated mind.

(b) This would argue that the Divine Mind is not perfect. If this absorption was necessary to the completeness of the character and happiness of the Divine Being, then he was imperfect before; if before perfect, he would not be after the absorption of an infinite number of finite and imperfect minds.

(c) In all the representations of heaven in the Bible, the idea of “individuality” is one that is prominent. “Individuals” are represented everywhere as worshippers there, and there is no intimation that the separate existence of the redeemed is to be absorbed and lost in the essence of the Deity. Whatever is to be the condition of man hereafter, he is to have a separate and individual existence, and the number of intelligent beings is never to be diminished either by annihilation, or by their being united to any other spirit so that they shall become one.

The reference then, in this place, must be to the “moral” nature of God; and the meaning is, that they who are renewed become participants of the same “moral” nature; that is, of the same views, feelings, thoughts, purposes, principles of action. Their nature as they are born, is sinful, and prone to evil [Eph 2:3](#), their nature as they are born again, becomes like that of God. They are made like God; and this resemblance will increase more and more forever, until in a much higher sense than can be true in this world, they may be said to have become “partakers of the divine nature.”

(see context of 2 Peter 1:4 – for support of Barnes’ argument)

Secondly,

What is does mean to be receivers of Christ’s fullness!

Read Colossians 1: 12-22

Note, verse 12 “partakers of the inheritance of the saints” margin – “qualified us”

Also:

Col 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

2A) We are Unworthy

Implied in our need for grace in the words “**and grace for grace**” verse 16.

And:

Joh 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

Joh 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Q. Are we not unworthy of all these blessings?

Indeed we are!!

Note, three examples of those who knew their unworthiness:

Jacob, praying to the God of his fathers said:

Gen 32:10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant

John the Baptist speaking of Christ:

Joh 1:27whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

The Centurion's message to Christ:

Luk 7:6I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

Luk 7:7neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee:.....

Henry W. Baker: (1875)

I am not worthy; cold and bare
The lodging of my soul;

How canst thou deign to enter there?
Lord, speak, and make me whole.

Q. Is it not true that those who are the most worthy in this world feel their unworthiness the most?

Of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 we read:

Heb 11:38 Of whom the world was not worthy.....

2B) He is gracious

“and grace for grace” verse 16

Or:

“grace upon grace”

Compare:

Rom 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. **But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:**

Rom 5:21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Spurgeon relates the following story: (More to Follow)

“There is a story of Rowland Hill, which I have no doubt is true, because it is so characteristic of the man’s eccentricity and generosity. Some one or other had given him a hundred pounds to send to an extremely poor minister, but, thinking it was too much to send him all at once, he sent him five pounds in a letter with simply these words inside the envelope, “More to follow.” In a few days’ time, the good man had another letter by the post, and letters by the post were rarities in those days; when he opened it there was five pounds again, with just these words, “And more to follow.” A day or two after there came another, and still the same words, “And more to follow.” And so it continued twenty times, the good man being more and more astounded at these letters coming thus by post with always the sentence, “And more to follow.”

Now, every blessing that comes from God is sent in just such an envelope, with the selfsame message, “And more to follow.” “I forgive you your sins, but there is more to follow. I justify you in the righteousness of Christ, but there’s more to follow.” “I adopt you into my family, but there’s more to follow.” “I educate you

for heaven, but there's more to follow." "I have helped you even to old age, but there's still more to follow." "I will bring you to the brink of Jordan, and bid you sit down and sing on its black banks, on the banks of the black stream, but there's more to follow. In the midst of that river, as you are passing into the world of spirits, My mercy shall still continue with you, and when you land in the world to come there shall still be more to follow."

3A) – We are Condemned

How?

Joh 1:17 **For the law was given by Moses, but** grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Compare:

Rom 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Augustine:

"The law threatened, not helped; commanded, not healed; showed, not took away, our febleness. But it made ready for the Physician, who was to come with grace and truth."

3B) He is our Deliverer

Joh 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, **but** grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Jerome:

“For [in place of] the grace of the law, which has passed away, we have received the abiding grace of the gospel, and, instead of the shadows and figures of the ancient covenant, truth has come by Jesus Christ.” (Letter 75)

Barnes:

We may learn from these verses:

1. That all our mercies come from Jesus Christ.
2. “All true believers receive from Christ’s fulness; the best and greatest saints cannot live without him, the meanest and weakest may live by him.

This excludes proud boasting that we have nothing but ‘we have received it,’ and silences perplexing fears that we want nothing but ‘we may receive it.’”

4A) We are Blind

Joh 1:18 **No man hath seen God at any time;** the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

Note,

Though the heavens declare the glory of God, man cannot see him!

Consider,

There are two ways this can be understood.

- 1) It is speaking of God the Father.
- 2) It is speaking of seeing God in all his essence.

Gill comments on both possibilities:

1) That is, God the Father, whose voice was never heard, nor his shape seen by angels or men; for though Jacob, Moses, the elders of Israel, Manoah, and his wife, are said to see God, and Job expected to see him with his bodily eyes, and the saints will see him as he is, in which will lie their great happiness; yet all seems to be understood of the second person, who frequently appeared to the Old Testament saints, in an human form, and will be seen by the saints in heaven, in his real human nature;

2) or of God in and by him: for the essence of God is invisible, and not to be seen with the eyes of the body; nor indeed with the eyes of the understanding, so as to comprehend it; nor immediately, but through, and by certain means: God is seen in the works of creation and providence, in the promises, and in his ordinances; but above all, in Christ the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: this may chiefly intend here, man's not knowing any thing of God in a spiritual and saving way, but in and by Christ

4B) He is the Revelation

Joh 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; **the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.**

There are three points to be observed here:

- 1) Who he is
- 2) Where he is
- 3) What he has done

1) Who he is

“the only begotten Son”

Hence he is unique and glorious!

Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, **the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,**) full of grace and truth.

Compare:

1Jn 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

1Jn 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

Also:

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Joh 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Joh 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

2) Where he is

“which is in the bosom of the Father”

Present tense – not was but is!

Gill:

“denotes unity of nature, and essence, in the Father and Son; their distinct personality; strong love, and affection between them; the Son's acquaintance with his Father's secrets; his being at that time, as the Son of God, in the bosom of his Father, when here on earth, as the son of man; and which qualified him to make the declaration of him:”

3) What he has done

“he hath declared *him*”

Hence,

If we want to know God we must come to Christ!!!

Compare:

Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

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App:

- 1) Do you know your emptiness and long to be filled with the fullness of Jesus Christ?
- 2) Do you know your unworthiness and rest alone upon the grace of Jesus Christ?
- 3) Do you feel your condemnation and yet rejoice in his deliverance?
- 4) Do you thank God that though you are blind yet he has revealed himself exclusively in the person and work of Jesus Christ?

May God bless his word to our souls. Amen.