

# **MEASURES OF FULLNESS**

**HOW GOD HAS REVEALED, EXPRESSED, AND  
DISPERSED HIS FULLNESS**

*For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in [Christ]...*

**COLOSSIANS 1: 19**

When speaking of God, our Everlasting Father, no analogy will suffice to explain the magnificent, vast extent of His fullness. Visions of water pitchers surely will not do, but even comparing His fullness to all the oceans of earth will not accomplish this feat. We may only agree to this: the fullness of God is inexpressible in human terms (or pictures).

Yet, as we read in Paul's letter to the Colossians, it was God's "good pleasure" for all His inexpressible fullness to be made expressible in a divine word—or more accurately, in *the Word* that has existed since the beginning<sup>1</sup>: Jesus.

Put simply, God revealed His fullness in Christ.

But what happened to the fullness which was once made expressible here upon the earth when Christ walked among us,

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<sup>1</sup> John 1:1-3

fully man and fully God? Did the fullness of God depart this world with the ascension of Our Lord? Praise Him, the answer is no.

After God seated Christ “at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named ... putting all things in subjection under Christ’s feet<sup>2</sup>” something miraculous took place:

*[God] gave [Jesus] as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the **fullness of Him** who fills all in all.*

**EPHESIANS 1:22-23**

We cannot here (nor ever) overstate what transpired between God and man after the resurrection and ascension of our glorious Lord! As God chose to reveal His own fullness through His Son, Christ then chose to impart His fullness to us, His body, the church. As He foretold His own disciples:

*I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.*

**JOHN 16:7**

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<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 1:20-22

Like much spiritual language used throughout scripture, this divine reality of the fullness we express as saints in Christ Jesus is not meant for us to just barely understand or glibly repeat as words void of conviction. Nor is the expression of His fullness meant to serve as a truth that bears no practical application for us as His followers. Instead, in a matter of these very few pages and words, let us explore three aspects of God's fullness in which we might discover significant kingdom treasure:

- God's fullness is revealed in His Son.
- Christ's fullness is expressed in His church.
- The church's fullness is dispersed in its members.

But before we press on, let us pray. Heavenly Father, may we set our minds on the things above, where Christ is seated. We invite the Helper to more fully reveal the grand implications of this reality wherein the fullness of Your Son is being expressed in us, Your church. Amen.

## REVEALED IN THE CHRIST

Translated from the Greek word *plērōma*<sup>3</sup>, “fullness” is a neutered noun which means:

- That which has been filled
- That which fills or with which a thing is filled
- Fullness; abundance

It seems simple enough for the average Christian to understand (at least at a very base level) that God’s fullness was revealed and personified in the Christ. When looking upon Jesus, those who saw Him face-to-face looked upon the very fullness of God. For as the Truth testifies:

*“He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”*

JOHN 14:8

Also, as the apostle Paul declared with conviction:

*For in Him **all the fullness** of Deity dwells in bodily form....*

COLOSSIANS 2:9

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<sup>3</sup> Used 17 times throughout the New Testament.

This face-to-face experience with the Lord was (and likely remains) what the Jews believed marked the pinnacle of favor with God. For it is said of Moses:

*Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face....*

**DEUTORONOMY 34:10**

But this face-to-face experience with the Messiah, beholding the very fullness and glory of God made manifest was not just reserved for a select few prophets or the 33-year period of history in which Jesus walked the earth. Let us rejoice in what scripture promises:

*But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it. For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory. Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our*

*speech, and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. **But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.***

## 2 CORINTHIANS 3:7-18

Let us declare again, “For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it.” There are two aspects of God’s fullness herein this second letter to the Corinthians that we may uncover.

First, we discover that *we may presently behold the Lord’s surpassing glory face-to-face when turning to Christ with the eyes of our hearts.* And what Glory it is which we have now seen with unveiled faces. Behold, the incomparable Christ!

But there exists a second aspect of His fullness that we find in this passage.

## EXPRESSED IN THE CHURCH

Praise the Lord, for we “*are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.*” What is an image but the very representation of that which an artist intends to portray? In this case, God, our Artist has chosen to beautifully and perfectly portray the glorious image of His own Son in us, His church. Whether or not we realize it individually (or even collectively for that matter), the church is the corporate expression of Christ’s fullness. His fullness is being expressed within us as you read these very words, despite anything you do. To reread again:

*[God] gave [Jesus] as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the **fullness** of Him who fills all in all.*

EPHESIANS 1:22-23

This is no small statement. According to scripture, there exists no other aspect of His creation that is said to contain the fullness of Christ. True, all men have been created in God’s image<sup>4</sup> and the

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<sup>4</sup> Genesis 1:27



whole earth is filled with His glory<sup>5</sup>, but except by way of supernatural revelation<sup>6</sup>, His *fullness* is now only made visible upon the earth within His church.

Now, does this mean your individual local church is expressing the fullness of Christ? While some may have differing views on this subject, we must first return to understanding the most essential aspect of God's fullness: His fullness is revealed and personified in Christ. Truly grasping this, could any one of us reasonably contend under the influence of the Holy Spirit that a corporate body of 100, 1,000, 10,000, or even 100,000 passionate saints represent glory as magnificent as Christ Jesus Himself? This author would contend that local churches are but small puzzle pieces placed among the vast, living portrait of God's fullness.

Paul, too, seemed to always reference "all the saints" when speaking (though speaking rarely, mind you) of Christ's fullness:

*For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom **every family** in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that*

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<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 6:3

<sup>6</sup> Acts 9:3-8

*you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with **all the saints** what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to **all the fullness** of God.*

**EPHESIANS 3:14-19**

*He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as [shepherds] and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until **we all** attain to ... the measure of the stature which belongs to the **fullness** of Christ.*

**EPHESIANS 4:11-13**

The gospel of John sequentially speaks first of fullness, and even this apostle who came to be known as “the revelator” also makes clear that Christ’s fullness is a gift we have all received:

*For of His **fullness** we have **all** received, and grace upon grace.*

**JOHN 1:16**

With this definition in mind, let us agree that Christ’s fullness will only be expressed in the church when beholding Jesus within

the church of all nations<sup>7</sup> and all generations, even those still to come. One local church, even as “mega” or “giga” as they might become, cannot possibly contain all of Christ’s glory, let alone His fullness.

But, you ask, how can something as vast as the fullness of the church across all nations and generations carry with it an application for each of us? Where do you individually fit into this living, expanding portrait of His fullness? Indeed, this is a purposeful question we must each ask the Lord.

## DISPERSED IN THE MEMBERS

First, let us read again and contemplate:

*For of His **fullness** we have **all** received, and grace upon grace.*

JOHN 1:16

What specifically “of” His fullness have we all received? Put even more personally, what specifically of His fullness have *you* received? We have already established that His fullness is far too vast to be demonstrated in a local community of believers, let alone in a single saint such as you. The riches of Christ are far too

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<sup>7</sup> In Romans 11:25, Paul writes about the importance of “the fullness of the Gentiles coming in” to the body of Christ.

immeasurable to be contained in a single pot of clay, even one completely surrendered to the Potter's hands.

Yet in scripture we discover that His immeasurable fullness has graciously been measured...*in each of us!*

*But to **each one of us** grace was given according to the **measure** of Christ's gift.*

**EPHESIANS 4:7**

*...Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in **all aspects** into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the [**measured**]<sup>8</sup> working of **each individual part**, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*

**EPHESIANS 4:15-16**

In the simplest terms, we each have a portion of Jesus Christ's own fullness to share with the church and the world. Yes, the Lord's fullness is too weighty for one earthen vessel to contain, but

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<sup>8</sup> Many translations here use the word "proper", but the Greek word is more accurately translated "measured." In other words, each part has been given only a *portion* of what is to represent the full *proper* working of the body. Growth is proper, or natural, but it can only come when each part fulfills its portion, otherwise some areas are stunted.

we each assuredly express beautiful, even glorious pieces of Him. This fullness is represented in our personalities, our spiritual gifting, what we learn of Christ, and all the other unique aspects that comprise those being conformed to His image.

We can liken this to history's largest puzzle. When the church puzzle is completed, fitted together by the every piece crafted perfectly for it, the portrait will reveal Jesus Christ in all His fullness. Each piece has been made uniquely, intended to fill a particular hole or corner within the puzzle that no other piece will fit. We are God's chosen pieces, and Christ is the perfect image we have been designed to display by His grace.

Now, please understand that saying we each express a *portion* of Christ's fullness is not the same as saying we are *imperfect*. Several epistles reinforce this point, which flies in the very face of much popular church teaching today. So long as you have confessed Christ as Lord and believed in your heart God raised Him from dead, you are no longer identified as a sinner. You are saved, a saint made complete in Christ Jesus!

*For in Him all the **fullness** of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete....*

**COLOSSIANS 2:9-10**

The word used here for “made complete” is a Greek word that is most often translated “fulfilled” or “filled.” Consider. Jesus is the fullness of God, but in Him (and by Him, and through Him, and for Him) we have been “filled full” according to the measurement He has apportioned to each of us by His grace. Your piece of the puzzle has been perfectly crafted by and grafted into Christ. Glory to God!

In summary, and for the sake of illustration, let us return to what Paul shared with the Colossians. As it was God the Father’s good pleasure for all His fullness to dwell in God the Son, so too it is with us now:

*For it was [Christ]’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in [His body]....*

**COLOSSIANS 1: 19, FOR ILLUSTRATION**

In application, let us recognize that of Christ which has been dispersed and expressed among us according to His good pleasure. Of course, this is not so that we might glory in ourselves. No! May praise be now and forever to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, He who fills all things<sup>9</sup> ... including us.

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<sup>9</sup> Ephesians 4:10