

# Fullness of Christ

(Transcript)

By Warren Zehrung 7/26/2014

There seems to be a widely held view within the Churches of God that is not very far removed from the protestant's erroneous belief, "Once saved – always saved." You give your heart to the Lord – and you never have to look back on the kind of life you are living... They believe that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross and need not be kept.

Within the Church of God, the similar belief goes something like this, "I was baptized and converted, and I go to church every Sabbath – I'll be in the Kingdom of God. I've got my foot in the door – I've got it made."

Brethren, that is not the way it works. Going to church services is **not** enough! Certainly, with our repentance, faith and baptism, a conversion ensues that places us within the body of Christ, and makes us children of God. Yes, that places us in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Even though we deserved to die because of our own sins – Jesus saves us. Our salvation is contingent upon our repentance of sin, and faith in Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross and achieved the victory for us. His gracious gift justifies us before God.

Justification is God's acceptance of Christ's righteousness in our stead because of faith on our part. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us – though we do not earn it nor deserve it. We are justified and the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imparted to us.

But that is not the end of our **spiritual journey**—there is much more to it.

The specific purpose of this sermon is to demonstrate that on the day we were baptized we were not fully **complete** – and that the Scriptures show that we must continue throughout our lives to develop in Godliness.

The title of today's sermon, **Fullness of Christ**, comes from this verse.

**Ephesians 4:13** Till **we all come** in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the **fullness of Christ**.

First of all let's consider this word, "**Fullness**." It means repletion and completion. You know what **completion** means. Totally complete!

**Replete** or repletion means – crammed packed, jammed packed. Have you ever had your suitcase so full that you could not get another thing in it? And then you find something else that you have to take with you so you put it in your suitcase and you have to **sit on** your suitcase to get it closed.

That is what this word "fullness" or repletion means – crammed packed, jammed packed. Not just **full**, but jammed packed full! King David expresses this concept of "fullness" of the spiritual things of the Lord.

**Psalm 23:5** Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my **cup runneth over**.

**6** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

“My **cup runneth over**,” means that the fullness of the Lord cannot be contained! Do any of us think for a moment that we measure up to Jesus Christ? We see here that we are not to remain in the state of conversion of our baptismal date.

This verse clearly shows that we are all to come ...to a unity of the faith, ...and of the knowledge of the Son of God, ...unto a perfect man, and ...unto the measure of the stature of the **fullness of Christ**. That is a tall order. Jesus said:

**John 10:30** I and my Father are one.

**John 14:9** ... he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.

### **Fullness of God**

There is another phrase in the Scriptures that we need to take a look at: Fullness of God.

**Ephesians 3:14** For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

**15** Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

**16** That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the **inner man**;

It is this “inner man” that must continue to grow to the fullness of Christ through the process of **sanctification**.

Simply going to church services week after week and year after year will never suffice.

**Ephesians 3:17** That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

**18** May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

**19** And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that ye might be **filled** with all the **fullness of God**.

Not just **full**, but jammed packed full! And that thought is used **twice** in Ephesians 3:19.

“That you might be **filled**...” Brethren, that is a huge concept – Let’s ponder how we can be **filled** with all the **fullness of God**. How complete is God? He is perfection and wisdom personified.

**Matthew 6:9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, **Hallowed** be thy name.

**Luke 11:2** And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, **Hallowed** be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

Hallowed be thy name is antiquated language that needs some clarification. The significance of the word Hallowed is lost on many people who repeat it often. Hallowed is simply old English for "holy." "Holy," means **set apart** in a unique category or spiritual class of its own.

As it is used here, "Hallowed be thy name" would best be rendered "Father, Your Name is the **Holiest**;" or "Your Name is set apart in a class all its own, held in the greatest respect;" or "No other name **compares** to Your Holy Name."

God tells us that His ways and thoughts are completely different from ours.

**Isaiah 55:9** For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."

In Ephesians 3:19, incredibly, Paul expresses his desire – and shows the possibility that we – you and I – are able to be jammed packed full as God is! ...To know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge, that you might be **filled** with all the **fullness of God**. We'll get to this concept more fully in a few moments. Let's go back to the concept of the fullness of Christ: God the Father...

**Ephesians 1:22** And hath put all things under [Jesus'] feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

**23** Which is his body, the **fullness** of him that fills all in all.

We see clearly here that we – the Church brethren – are the Body of Christ. And since Jesus is the **fullness** of the Father – our duty is to aspire to be like God is – in the fullness of God. That is a big thought. Speaking of Jesus:

**Colossians 1:18** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

**19** For it pleased the Father that in him [Jesus] should all **fullness dwell**; Jesus is not lacking anything. In Christ lives all the fullness of God in Jesus Christ – even when He was a man – nothing was withheld of God. If Jesus did not possess the fullness of God – then we would not be able to be the fullness of God – but we are able.

**Colossians 1:20** And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

God the Father is reconciling us to Himself through Jesus Christ.

**Colossians 1:21** And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

**22** In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

**23** If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

**Colossians 2:9** For in Him [Jesus] dwells all the **fullness of the Godhead** bodily.

That means that the totality of God the Father is in Jesus Christ—every attribute and characteristic of the Father is in Jesus.

But we are to understand that this applies equally to us – also.

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

Being complete means being supplied with all things necessary for salvation. We, the Church brethren are to be absolutely complete in Jesus Christ. That is what **repletion and completion** mean – crammed packed, jammed packed. Not just **full**, but jammed packed full!

In the same way that Jesus is the fullness of the Father, we the Church brethren, are the fullness of Jesus – through God's Spirit dwelling in us. The Church brethren are to be absolutely **complete** in Jesus Christ. That is why Paul wrote:

**Colossians 1:23** If **ye continue** in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

**24** Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and **fill up** that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

**25** Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to **fulfill** the word of God;

**26** Even the **mystery** which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

We are the saints! Brethren, we are the holy ones!

**Colossians 1:27** To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this **mystery** among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**:

One of the brethren who responded to this week's Countdown wrote: "When we first come into the Church and get baptized and have hands laid on us, they like to start calling us "saints." But the definition of the word saint is: sacred - pure - blameless, a condition that takes **time** to acquire. Paul speaks of those things that "becometh" saints. That word "becometh" is a verb meaning: "to tower up" - "to become suitable or proper" ... a condition that takes action, takes time, takes growth. "There is a process that is entailed." End Comment.

And he is so right. The process is **sanctification**. Sadly, we have not spoken much of it within God's Church – not near enough anyway.

**1 Peter 1:15** But as **He** which hath called you **is holy**, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

**16** Because it is written, Be ye holy; for **I am holy**.

God wants us to be partakers of his divine nature and live lives that are enriched and empowered by his fullness.

**2 Peter 1:3** According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

**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.

The Scriptures speak of this process variously described as **sanctification**, ... holiness, ...going on to perfection, ...growing in grace and knowledge, and ...being filled with the fullness of God. This is the **sanctification** process!

It has not been emphasized enough in our traditional Church narrative. Brethren we are to grow in holiness! There is a societal pressure to have nothing to do with righteousness or holiness. Church people will say, "What are you, some kind of goody-goody two shoes?" It is a term commonly used as an **insult** towards those who precisely obey God and His law.

There is a bias and prejudice against those who walk the strait and narrow way. If you don't have one foot in the world – you are viewed as some kind of weirdo – even by Church people.

Brethren, it is the new heresy within God's Church. "Love people in their sins." "Be understanding of their faults." "Commiserate with them because it is too hard to overcome their sin."

Overt and obvious sin is allowed to continue in the congregations of the larger groups – rather than "put sin out" and teach the people to be a holy people as the Bible so plainly shows us we must do.

**1 Corinthians 5:13** ... Therefore **put away** from among yourselves that wicked person.

What does Jesus say?

**Revelation 3:21** To him that **overcomes** will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

**Hebrews 6:1** Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, **let us go on unto perfection**; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

That is the process of sanctification. It is a lifetime long process after we are established in the first six basic doctrines:

**Hebrews 6:2** Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

We understand that on the day we were baptized we were placed into the Body of Christ – but we must go on to perfection through the process of **sanctification**, being set apart, or made holy.

To what extent do we strive to attain to the perfection or holiness of Christ?

The definition of sanctification is to **set apart** for a sacred purpose – for God’s purposes. We are to be holy, clean, pure, living a life of overcoming.

**John 17:17** **Sanctify** them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

**Luke 4:4** And Jesus answered [Satan], saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word of God**.

God’s word shows us how to be holy and set apart from the world.

Sanctification must be sought after and worked toward all of our natural lives. After baptism, we are to become a **new creation** in Jesus Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **new creation**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

We are to become like Jesus, and like God the Father. Loyalty to God and His Truth must be the central theme for members of God’s Church today. It now falls to all of us, as brethren, to take up the mantle of true Christianity. So many prominent leaders have not done so. There exists a morbid state of self-satisfaction of, “having it made,” in many of the groups.

This gives us the opportunity to be Christ-like and build fellowship among God’s children. It is a salvational requirement.

**Hebrews 12:14** Follow peace with all men, and **holiness** [sanctification], without which no man shall see the Lord.

None of us is anywhere near being like God is—we have our work cut out for us—with the help and guidance of God’s Holy Spirit. Are we pursuing this course of sanctification with all our might?

**1 Corinthians 15:49** As we have borne the image of the earthy, we **shall** also bear the image of the heavenly.

This verse does not mean that we wait until after death for this to take place. We must begin at our baptism – and then continue to grow into the **fullness of Christ**. Christ's sacrifice begins the process of godly character growth – a perfection that proceeds to sanctification which is holiness. We are sanctified when we grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ.

**1 Corinthians 1:2** Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are **sanctified** in Christ Jesus, **called to be saints**, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

**1 Corinthians 6:11** And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are **sanctified**, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

We are made holy – sanctified by living the word of God. We are sanctified over time by God's Spirit working within us.

**1 Peter 1:2** Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through **sanctification of the Spirit**, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

The sanctification of the Spirit shows the working of God's Spirit in us that not only separates us from the world, but brings us to the fulfillment of the salvational process. Daily, true Christians are actively **absorbed** in the process of sanctification – moving towards the fullness of Christ.

Do not be side tracked by the many substitute religious practices being foisted on God's people. Some believe that theirs is the True church because they are preaching the gospel to the world better than anyone else. Some believe that theirs is the True church because follow the apostle or pastor general who heads up the government of the Church.

Salvation is found no other way than through the sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth. God gives us His Holy Spirit so that we might grow in the **fullness of Christ**.

Yes, on the day we were baptized we were placed into the Body of Christ – but we must **go on to perfection** through the process of sanctification and being set apart for the **fullness of God**.

Sanctification follows forgiveness, baptism and justification. Sanctification is our spiritual makeover brought about by Jesus Christ after our initial repentance and justification.

**Hebrews 2:10** For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons **unto glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

**11** For both He [Jesus Christ] that sanctifies and they who are **sanctified** are all of **one**: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them **brethren**.

Look at the incredible emotions Paul expresses with regard to the shared love the brethren have for one another because of this "fullness" God has given us.

**Colossians 2:2** That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the **full assurance** of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God [**Christ in you, the hope of glory**:], and of the Father, and of Christ;

**7** Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, **as ye have been taught**, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

**As ye have been taught** – not what passes for religion today in God's Churches. We touch on it often – and Jude expresses it so well – live the fullness of Christ as it was taught by Jesus and the apostles.

**Jude :3** Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the **faith** which was **once delivered unto the saints**.

It is God's will that we go on to perfection.

**Ephesians 4:13** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the **fullness of Christ**:

**John 1:16** And of his [**complete**] **fullness** have all we received, and grace for grace. [replete - crammed jammed packed]

**James 1:4** But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be **complete** and entire, lacking nothing.

### **Go On to Perfection**

God has mercifully given us this present time to go on to perfection. Jesus has made it clear that many who look forward to the marriage of the Lamb will **not** be prepared.

At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom comes; go ye out to meet Him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out... And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut." (Matthew 25:6-10)



Most of the brethren in this final Laodicean Church era will go into the Tribulation because of their half-hearted approach to their faith.

Though we have been the recipients of bountiful peace, fellowship, and doctrinal truth, there are serious lessons that we still need to learn, so as to put on the required Godly character (Revelation 3:18).

One of the most prevalent sins of the Church of God today – the most characteristic defect in the lives of the brethren is the belonging to a church group without making the weighty principles and profound tenets of true Christianity their number one priority. "Going with the flow," is not what God expects of His people.

**1 Peter 5:10** But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you **perfect**, [**complete**] establish, strengthen, settle you.

End: **Fullness of Christ**