

Prayer for Enablement – Part 4
Filled with all the Fullness of God

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AM Service

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Text:

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; 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 passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20: Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21: Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Introduction

This morning we come to **the climax of the apostle Paul's prayer** for the Ephesian believers, "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." This is the **final purpose clause** and it's what the whole prayer has been leading up to. As I mentioned last time the four prayers in this passage are **interconnected**. In other words, they are **not isolated requests**, they are connected to one another. The commentary of Warren Wiersbe regarding this passage bears repeating, "*One request leads into the next one, and so on. He prays that the inner man might have spiritual strength, which will, in turn, lead to a deeper experience with Christ. This deeper experience will enable them to "apprehend" (get hold of) God's great love, which will result in their being "filled unto all the fulness of God."*

"That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." What a prayer! This is something we need to pray for ourselves and for others. This is God's plan and desire for us believers. God's plan for His people is not emptiness, nor hollowness, but fulness. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones has said, that "*there is no more staggering statement in the whole range of Scripture than this.*" Adam Clarke expressed similar idea, "*In my opinion there is no greater prayer than this. Among all the great sayings in this prayer, this is the greatest. To be filled with God is a great thing; to be filled with the fulness of God is still greater; but to be filled with all the fulness of God, utterly bewilders the sense and confounds the understanding.*"

So, we have here in **verse 19b**, the grand purpose and result of this interlinked prayer, "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." How rich and glorious a prayer this is! "Filled with all the fulness of God" what is it and how is it obtained? That's what I invite you to focus on this morning.

I - What is it?

What does “filled with all the fulness of God” mean? What is Paul praying here? Negatively, **Paul is not praying** that we might **become gods**, nor is he praying for **another Pentecostal experience**. No, that is not what Paul is praying. What he is praying is that the believers would be filled with all the fulness of God. **Just like the love of Christ, the fulness of God surpasses knowledge**. Who can comprehend and then explain all that this prayer implies?

How can this even be possible? Just think of who God is and how great He is. Do you want to know who God is and how great God is? Look into the heavens, for “**the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge**” (Psa 19:1-2). If you want to know how great God is, consider the heavens, the work of God’s fingers, the moon and the stars, which God has ordained. (Psa 8:3). As someone has said, “*Who can stand at night and gaze upward to yonder distant worlds without saying, “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.”* Really, who can stand at night and look at the sky filled with stars and not ask, “**What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?**”

At the dedication of the temple he built for God, Solomon asks, “**But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!**” (2 Chro 6:18)

That’s how great our God is! Even the heaven, the heaven of heavens, the Universe cannot contain God. God the Creator is bigger, infinitely bigger than the Universe He created. **If the vast Universe cannot contain God, how much more, we who are puny little creatures** be filled with all the fulness of God? How can creatures like you and me, who are here today and gone tomorrow, be filled with all the fulness of God?

Can this become a reality in our lives? The answer is yes, because remember this is the apex of Paul’s prayer. If Paul asked God for this in prayer, he is **not just waxing eloquent**, but **he is sincere** and he really meant this prayer. Furthermore, this prayer is **recorded in the inspired Word of God**, and so we know that this can become a reality as we shall see later in this message. So, whatever “**being filled with all the fulness of God**” is, **I want this in my life**, and I pray this for each and everyone of you here this morning.

But what exactly did Paul mean when he asked God to fill the saints at Ephesus with the fulness of God? **What is the fulness of God?** Who can define this? Even well-abled Bible commentators have a hard time defining the fulness of God, how much more this preacher, and in the words of the apostle Paul, “**who am less than the least of all saints.**” So, I will need help from those who have studied and wrestled with this glorious and profound truth, such as “Got Question.” Listen to how they describe the fulness of God: “*The fullness of God is the totality of everything God is—His attributes, His character, His perfection, His holiness, His power, His love, et cetera. The fullness of God is His complete nature; it is who He is.*” To which I agree.

And as John Eadie puts it, “*All the fulness of God*” is all the fulness which God possesses, or by which He is characterized... the entire moral excellence of God—the fulness and luster of His spiritual perfections. Such is the climax of the prayer...” To both, I say AMEN! I believe the fulness of God is **the perfection of God**. It is the excellencies of God. Paul is praying that the saints in Ephesus might be filled with the perfection of God. That is, **that our lives would be controlled by the fulness of God**. That our lives would be dominated by the fulness of God. **Whatever fills you, controls you or dominates you. Whatever fills you will shape and mold and direct your life.**

I am sure we cannot fully know and comprehend what this means but we can know something of this truth. And thankfully, we are not left without a clue, **the apostle Paul will help us understand what this prayer is about.**

Please turn to ...

[Colossians 2:9](#) For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

According to this verse, who is filled with the fulness of God? Jesus Christ! In Him all the fulness of the Deity dwells in bodily form. **Jesus Christ, being fully man and fully God, in Him dwells the fulness of God.** That’s why our Lord could say to Philip, “[he that hath seen me hath seen the Father](#)” ([John 14:9](#)). And in [Hebrews 1:3](#), Jesus Christ is described as “[being the brightness of his \(God’s\) glory, and the express image of his person.](#)”

Then in [Ephesians 4:13](#), Paul writes, “[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 fulness of Christ.](#)”

And so, Paul is praying **that they may be conformed to the image of Christ in whom the fulness of Godhead dwells**. He is praying that they may be Christlike; that they might be image bearer of Christ to reflect the beauty and the love of Christ. Yes, this is an amazingly bold prayer for the Ephesian believers but isn’t this what we are encouraged to do.

[Ephesian 3:20](#) Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, [21: Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.](#)

This is a very important prayer because when we are filled with all the fulness of God, we will begin to **love like Him**, we will begin to **give like Him**, we will begin to **reach out to the lost like Him**, etc. What a glorious way to live—surely this is life abundant! May we pray this for ourselves and for our fellow believers. Imagine what would happen to families, to churches, to our community, to our country if we earnestly pray this prayer? In the words of C. H. Spurgeon, “*Give us a church that loves Jesus Christ much. You will have mighty prayer-meetings; you will have a holy membership; you will have liberal giving to the cause of Christ; you will have hearty praising of His name; you will have careful walking before the world; you will have earnest endeavors for the conversion of sinners. Missions at home and abroad will be set on foot when love is fervent. When the heart is right, everything is likely to be right; but when the heart goes wrong, oh, what a fatal thing it is! A disease of the heart is looked upon as the*

worst of mischiefs that can happen to a man. One old doctor of my acquaintance used to say, "We can do nothing with the heart." God keeps us from a diseased heart: a fatty degeneration of the heart, or an ossification of the heart towards the Lord Jesus Christ."

II - How do we obtain it?

Now, the question is, how is being filled with the fulness of God obtained? What can you and I do and should do if we would be filled with all the fulness of God.

First, we must pray for this as the apostle Paul did.

Being filled with the fulness of God is a result of prayer. This is something we obtain **by seeking God in prayer**. This doesn't come automatically and in any other way. You can have instant noodles, instant coffee, instant rice, but you cannot have instant fulness of God. **There must be a setting of the heart and soul to seek the face of our God.** *"Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually" (1 Chr 16:11).* If you want to be filled with all the fulness of God, you must seek God's face in prayer. Someone observes, *"Many church people make the mistake in looking to the latest conference, latest seminar, the famous preacher or evangelist, the new worship CD, cool and trendy churches, and experiences promising "encounters." Nothing necessarily wrong with some of these but they don't deliver. They may seem to work for a while, but the result doesn't last. So, they go from one conference to another; one worship CD to another; one church to another but nothing seems to last. But if we only look to the Bible for answer it will liberate us from wearisome and endless search."*

Again, notice the progression of Paul's prayer, one prayer that leads to another—that God would grant them, 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 their hearts through faith; and that they, 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 they may be filled up to all the fulness of God.

Secondly, we must be in the Word of God.

Please don't get me wrong, I am not against Bible conferences, Revival Meetings, Youth Camps, Preaching Services on the Lord's Day. These have their place, and these are good ways to receive the Word of God, but if these are the only occasions that you receive the Word of God, you will still not be filled the way God wants you to be filled with the fulness of God. The intake of the Word of God must not just be once a week or occasional but must be a daily thing.

By the way, this daily intake of God's Word is not just for preachers or Sunday School teachers, this is for every believer. Our Lord Himself said, *"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"* (Matt 4:4).

If you want to be transformed into the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ, listen to what the apostle says in *Romans 12:1, 2*, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable*

service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

There must be a renewing of the mind. And the renewing of the mind will take place as we daily saturate our mind with the Word of God. In another place Paul writes, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord “(Col 3:16).

So, being filled with all the fulness of God is granted by the Spirit of God through prayer and the faithful use of God-ordained means, the Word of God.

Thirdly, we must be planted in the house of God.

Back in Ephesians 2:19-22, we read this, “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

God wants to dwell in us and among us! He has chosen us to be His habitation. He wants us to be planted in His House. God wants to fill us with all His fulness. But we will not grow in this experience of the fulness of God unless we are firmly planted in the House of God.

A tree in order to grow and flourish must be planted. A seed cannot grow to its potential unless it is planted. Stored in a bag or sitting on top of the soil will not do it. Christ followers cannot grow to their potential unless they are planted in the house of God. A Christian planted in the House of God is just as absolutely necessary as a tomato plant planted in good soil. Neither the Christian nor the tomato plant will survive without being planted in the right location. To the tomato—good ground; to the Christian—the House of God.

You do not need to scream at a tomato plant to get tomatoes, all you need to do is plant it in rich soil and water it properly. Even so is the child of God, if he is planted in the House of God, he will flourish and bear fruit and be filled with all the fulness of God.

Closing Exhortations

Though this prayer may seem to be too incredible, I believe that it can be a spiritual reality, but only to those who want it. If this is to be a reality, we must come to God in prayer. It's my prayer for all of us here, including myself. We have to pray through this progression in our own life and for others. That God would grant us, 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 their hearts through faith; and that we, 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 we may be filled up to all the fulness of God.

But you and I cannot be filled with all the fulness of God if we are full of other things. In the physical realm, air and water naturally flows and fills empty spaces but never on already filled places. The same principle is at work in our spiritual lives. God only fills those who are empty.

This means that if you and I are to experience being filled with all the fulness of God, we have to empty ourselves. Then and only then can we enjoy the fulness of God in our life. Oh, brethren—there is much treasure here for us. *“You got to release your handful of pebbles so your hands can be made full of God’s diamonds and treasure.”* Now, if we are full of ourselves; full of our wills and wants, full of our personal plans and ambitions; full of our schedule, God cannot fill us, for there is no room for Him. C. H. Spurgeon puts it this way *“You will never know the fulness of Christ until you know the emptiness of everything but Christ.”*

Understand that it is God who fills us with His fulness. He has to grant this. But now, the question is, are you putting yourself in the place that this can be a reality in your life? Are you faithfully using the God-ordained means to obtain this, such as the Word of God, prayer, and the House of God? You alone can answer this question.

AMEN!