

(Spiritual Fullness #2) Have This Mind in You

by Dana Congdon

Spiritual fullness is the experience of being completely filled with Christ, resulting in a life of humility, gentleness, patience, and love.

Duration: 1:18:33

Scripture: Acts 4:23-31, Ephesians 4:1, Ephesians 4:3, Colossians 3:12, Colossians 3:14-16

Topics: "Mind of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living a life worthy of the calling we have received in Christ. He encourages believers to walk in humility, gentleness, patience, and love, showing tolerance for one another. The speaker highlights the unity of the body of Christ and the individual gifts that each member has received by grace. He shares a personal experience of evangelism and encourages believers to step out in faith and share their testimonies. The sermon concludes with a reminder to continue seeking spiritual fullness and hunger for a deeper relationship with God.

Transcript

Well, we've been talking about spiritual fullness as the theme for this weekend, and I think probably many of us feel pretty full already. It's hard to imagine we have a few more ministries to go, but may the Lord give us a continued hunger to know more of Him. You know, I went up to Toronto at the end of the summer, and they have a particular trick they play on you there.

You basically eat about five meals within eight hours. I don't know what happens there, but anyway, I went to the Sunday morning meeting they had, and afterwards we went out to a very nice lunch, and of course they brought all of these dishes by, and of course I ate every one. And, oh, I guess we got home 3.30, four in the afternoon, and I said, oh, that's really good.

They said, okay, well, five o'clock, we're going to eat. I thought to myself, you know, I'm just too full. There's no way I can eat.

Well, five o'clock came around, and we drove to the place, we met the other people, and I wasn't hungry at all. But, you know, that first dish was awfully good smelling, and I found I could eat it. And then, you know what, they brought a second dish that looked even better, and I ate that too.

And before you know it, they tricked me. I went through the whole seven courses again. It's amazing what a little fragrance can do to initiate our thirst and our hunger all over again.

And if we think that Christ wants to meet with us, speak a word to us, allow us to experience his presence, maybe that thirst, that hunger will revive us and quicken our mortal bodies for the duration of this afternoon's meeting. I'd like to read three passages that you'll see, I think, the connection of immediately in Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Let's start in Philippians, and chapter two.

We want to read now this great thought, Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. We want to just expand the context just a little bit more, because we want to share in this matter of spiritual fullness in the corporate expression. Philippians, chapter two, then, beginning in verse one.

Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in the love of Christ in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourselves. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bondservant and being made in the likeness of man. Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself further by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And then we want to read in Colossians in chapter 3. We'll begin reading in verse 12. Paul has been talking about the corporate dimensions of the new man and now he makes some practical exhortation. Colossians 3 beginning in verse 12.

So as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things, put on love which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body, and be thankful.

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. And then in Ephesians chapter 4, beginning in verse 1. Here again, practical exhortation based on the tremendous vision of the objective corporate Christ that Paul has been displaying.

Chapter 4, verse 1. Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit. Just as you were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But to each one, to each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, when he ascended on high, he led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men. Now this expression, he ascended, what does it mean except that he also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is himself also he who ascended far above all the heavens so that he might fill all things.

And he gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, to the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness and deceitful scheming. But 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 proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

And Father, again we come to you this afternoon standing before the Word of God so objectively clear and practical. But we ask that the Holy Spirit would make real to us in our personal experience this matter of spiritual fullness in our corporate gathering. Lord, we thank you that the Spirit has invested tremendous power and revelation and patience in bringing us into such a reality.

O Lord, help us pay attention, quicken our mortal bodies, give our hearts a hunger to hear, to receive and to understand. We pray together in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

Last time we tried to initially focus this matter of spiritual fullness by looking at the Apostle Paul and his testimony throughout his letter in the Philippian Letter. And I tried to focus upon one particular phrase, namely that Paul was absolutely confident of the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This was the essence of his life as his life focused around Christ.

Christ my life, for me to live as Christ. Christ my gain, Christ my goal, Christ my provision. His life more and more was centered around Christ and all that Christ was doing.

He was absolutely confident whether he was in jail or out free and ministering about, whether a situation was in his hands or completely out of his hands. He trusted the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ to do that which needed to be done. He was captured by Christ and he was pursuing Christ, as his testimony is clear there in chapter 3, in jail but still running after Christ.

Still running, leaving things behind, leaving resentment behind, leaving failures and victories and pressing on in a very personal real pursuit and hunger after the Lord Jesus. And so we looked at that spiritual fullness and tried to define it in certain terms last time. And we saw that Paul came to something in his life at the time where the Spirit of God was divesting him of all that he formerly thought was who he was, what made him important.

His whole Jewish heritage and his whole self-righteous attainments and his whole background, the Holy Spirit began to pull away and say, Paul you don't need that anymore, you need Christ. As he experienced this emptying process somewhere in the midst of this experience, he saw the great emptying of Christ himself, who though he was in the form of God, didn't grasp that. So why should Paul grasp being a Pharisee? And as he saw how Christ became a man and then worse, he became a slave and then worse,

he died the worst kind of death, he just kept emptying himself and emptying himself.

And as a result, now he's exalted above everything. Paul not only saw that this was the great love of Christ, but he saw the fullness of it in the glory of Christ. And in his own life, he came to see something.

What did he see? The more I give away of my self-importance the more I gain Christ. The more I stopped trusting my own mental gymnastics, I mean he was obviously a very intelligent person. I wish I could have been there to hear his first witness he did in Damascus when he got together in the synagogue.

It was probably the most intellectual proving that Christ is Jesus that you've ever heard. However, it was all from his head pretty much. And then to hear him witnessing years later on the streets in Ephesus and to see how much fuller of Christ was his testimony than all about himself and the way he used to be and what was happening to him and even his sins.

This tends to be our testimony. But now Paul later on in years, realizing those things aren't that important to the testimony anyway, let me share with you, I have found a life, I have found a purpose, I have found a goal, I have found somebody who meets all of my needs, I have found somebody I can talk to day and night. And he starts testifying in an experiential relationship to Christ.

Which testimony do you think was more powerful? Well, the Lord uses all testimony. Even as Paul said, some of those who are testifying for wrong motives, the Lord even uses that. But you see, Paul began to see the more he was being emptied, the more he was being poured out.

He even said to the Philippians, you know, even if I'm poured out as a drink offering for your sakes, you know, it's just something I rejoice in. That's a very unnatural place to come to. But what had happened is a renewing of his mind brought him into this kind of thinking, this unnatural thinking.

The more I lay down for Christ's sake, the more I gain. And so Paul became a testimony of spiritual fullness. My, my, what a testimony.

There he is in jail and, you know, if I were writing a letter from jail, I'd say, you know, first let me tell you about the crummy color paint on the walls. This is bugging me. And then, you know, the rats come around at night.

And then this one guard, you know, he keeps putting his finger in my meatloaf. And there's this and there's that. Where is that in Paul's letter to the Philippians? Where's the complaints? Oh, you know, my arthritis is kicking up because of the cold weather.

They don't have heaters in the prison. Do you hear anything like that? You know what he says? He says, you know, I'm almost drunk with the fragrant aroma of your offering. It was such a sweet incense.

Oh, what you gave me, what you supplied me, I'm more than full. I'm overflowing. I'm rejoicing.

Thank you, Philippians. Now let me help you in some of your circumstances. I want you to be encouraged to keep preaching the gospel.

There's Paul. There's Christ in Paul, expressing a mind that is wholly given over to those Philippians. You know, when I first, as a young Christian, began to read kind of statements like Paul, where he says, you know, I pray unceasingly for you.

I would always sort of think, yeah, yeah, sure. Now that's a preacher hyperbole if ever I've heard one. You know, don't you think that? Especially when he says that and then there's 14 other churches that he's been to and spent time with.

How can he do that? But actually, when the mind of Christ begins to infect us, we find the strangest thing. We don't think continually about ourselves. Other people actually come into our minds and our hearts.

We find ourselves praying for them going down the road, isn't it true? We're walking along and suddenly somebody's name comes up and we begin to pray. So Paul, we see, is a wonderful example of this matter of spiritual fullness. And then, of course, you know, what Stephen said this morning, that's what I wanted to say yesterday.

You know, as that expression is said today, when people hear something they like, but they never said it, they say, that's what I'm saying. What you heard this morning. Well, so I hope you keep, I'm going to put Stephen's message in a simple little thing about the secret of spiritual fullness, the ode of spiritual fullness.

O-D-E, the ode. Obedience, diligence, emptying. It was just a wonderful message and of course he used Paul's life.

That's what I'm saying. Now we want to look at this matter of corporate fullness. Now, let me say one more thing about the individual.

You know, I was around during the charismatic movement and I also was infected by such. And I remember going to meetings and after about five or six years of circulating around, I saw the same people at all these different meetings sometimes. And they were always seeking to be filled with more of the Holy Spirit.

Now, maybe they had two gifts, but now they wanted three. Or maybe they never had one and they were tarrying for their gift or whatever it was. And they were just obsessed with this thing of being filled with the Holy Spirit, you know.

But you couldn't help but feel it was sort of like for personal gratification. Now, I was one of those people. But when I look in the book of Acts and see, in fact, gifts of the Spirit being poured out and the Holy Spirit filling people, I don't see any of them sitting back and saying, oh, that feels good.

Let me go to another meeting where I can get that feeling. I saw people who were filled with the Holy Spirit for outpouring service. And you don't find this.

This is a 20th century, now 21st century phenomenon. This tremendous emphasis on our own self-awareness. I want the Holy Spirit.

I want the self-awareness of the Holy Spirit. Well, let me ask you a question. What if you were filled with the Holy Spirit and never felt a thing? But when you ministered to others, there was a power.

Now, would that satisfy you? You see what I'm saying? Now, the reason I bring that up is because it's amazing how we can turn things to our own personal self-awareness. I sometimes wonder when we say, oh, fill me with Christ. I want more of Christ.

If we're not almost saying the same thing. Could I have some goosebumps? Could I learn some new little thing? I know we love Christ. But what I'm saying is, we're filled with Christ in order that we might be the

outpouring of Christ.

It isn't something where we just become a bigger tank, as I said yesterday. Now a 20-gallon drum full of Christ. And hopefully next year, by going to nine more meetings, a 25-gallon tank full of Christ.

No, no. All you need is just a little supply of Christ and then pour it out. And you see that supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ coming right in and giving you more.

It's the emptying that brings in the more. So we need to be careful we don't get very selfish about this Christ we have. Oh, no, no, no.

Don't start talking to me about that. Don't jostle Christ out of me now. I've got Him in my container but He's like water and I don't have a top on securely.

If you jostle me, some Christ is going to fall out. Please. I need some time alone.

Get the cap on my tank. You see? We don't gain Christ for personal profit and gratification. We are to be the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

The fullness being the full expression of Him poured out to the world even as He fills us and fills us and fills us. So that just is a little observation. Now, we want to move on to this corporate expression of Christ because I don't think I need to make much a case of it here but you realize that most of the time Paul talks about fullness.

He has the corporate in view. It's not a matter for the individual but he has the corporate in view. So that very verse I just quoted from Ephesians chapter 1. The church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

That fullness has to do with the corporate body of Christ. And again from the passages we just looked at or let's look at some in Colossians chapter 2 verses 9 and 10. These verses have been read this weekend.

For in Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form and in Him you have been made complete. Now one great thing about the King James version you've got to say is, you'll always know whether the you is singular or plural. And unfortunately in English we don't know that right away but in King James English you always know.

If it says ye, it's plural. If it says thou, it's singular. And when we read verse 10 as we sang it yesterday I believe, it says and ye are complete in Him.

This fullness of this completion that he's talking about is again a corporate matter. He says and you all are complete in Him. You see again this is a plural expression.

Or we could take another verse in Ephesians 4 and 13 that we just read. And here we see where it talks about the fullness of Christ in verse 13. Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Here again this mature man is a corporate man it's talking about. The church has become this corporate man that can express the fullness of Christ. And even in Ephesians 3 all these verses that we've been reading this weekend.

Just look at verses 17-19. So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith and that you being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, length, height and depth. All the saints have to gather to comprehend these dimensions of His love and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

And here again this tremendous expression about the fullness of God is applied to the corporate. As it were as we're sitting together comprehending the dimensions of Christ in His fullness. We can experience that when we're together in a corporate way.

And then in Ephesians chapter 4 there we read those passages already but I want to start today as we think about this corporate thing by sharing this beautiful, beautiful picture of spiritual fullness in the church. Now there's several wonderful dimensions to this spiritual fullness which we should look at together. The first thing we see is there in verse 13.

This wonderful corporate man. This church that Paul sees has been gathered together and has been established in the Lord. It's a stable community.

They're not tossed about with up and down with every wind of doctrine but there's a stability about them and there's a maturity about them. They have the measure of the stature of the character of Christ. Oh what a wonderful corporate man this is.

You know they've lived together, they've prayed together, they've exercised faith together and they've come to a unity of the faith you notice there. Until we all attain the unity of the faith. And furthermore they all have as they've been joined together and built together a common experience, practical experience of Christ.

Because this word knowledge of Christ does not mean that they all attain to some kind of great sort of understanding doctrinally of Christ. But they've come to experience Christ in their assembly. They know the real Lord Jesus Christ has a personal experience together.

You know later on in church history you know that the church tried to deal with heresies and false teachers by coming up with creeds. But this is the antidote for false teachers. The church corporately has come to the place where they know Jesus, they know what he smells like, they know what he talks like, they know his character in such a way that if somebody comes with something that's of another spirit or something that's not Christ the people know it together.

There's a discernment among them because of this wonderful knowledge that they've gained walking together in Christ. And look how it says there in verse 15. They're growing up in all aspects into him who is the head.

Wow. What a beautiful church. Look at them down there.

We're looking from the heavenly viewpoint of course. Paul's letter in Ephesians is often up in the heavenlies. He's looking down on this corporate assembly that's come to this beautiful unity, this beautiful maturity, this beautiful experience, this beautiful growth.

A growth that's from God. They're growing up even more and more in maturity. How wonderful that is.

Now, we have to take our little telescopic lens and click it up one notch and we get a closer view. You know, it's like Google Earth. You take it up another notch and you see the individual members moving.

And this causes us to worship because we see a synchronizing. We see a coordination in the movements of the body of Christ. It's just so beautiful to see such an expression of Christ.

When we look at the members, the first thing we see is that each one has some gift given by grace. Notice what it says in verse 7 of chapter 4. But to each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ. Therefore, he says, when he ascended on high, he led a host of captives and gave gifts to men.

And here is every member of the body having received by the grace of God some gift, some enabling. And you know what? They're all functioning. What a blessing.

Look what it says in verse 16. It's fitted together, it's held together by what every joint supplies. Every joint, every bone, every muscle, every organ is functioning properly.

What a beautiful coordination this is to see. You see them in their times of fellowship. Maybe it looks something like Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14.

Somebody has a hymn, somebody has a revelation, somebody has a prophecy, somebody has a tongue or an interpretation, somebody discerns something. Oh, there's such life there. And especially when it's led by the Holy Spirit, it's decent and all in order.

So full of life. Somebody has a need, but wouldn't you know, somebody has an extra room in their house, they can go stay. Somebody is sick, but there's some sister who has some gift of healing and praise and this person is healed.

Oh, the beauty of the body of Christ when it's coordinated in every joint of supply. Those fellowship meetings are such precious meetings. There's psalms and hymns and then somebody has a spiritual song inspired by the Spirit and they sing it out.

Even as our brother Alan did yesterday with his family. It's such a blessing. Something that comes from God.

A little expression of who he is. Oh, this lovely fellowship together. It's so great.

Or perhaps it's a prayer meeting. And they're coming together for prayer. But it isn't a prayer meeting where we list 16 things up on the chalkboard.

But there's something of the burden of God in the meeting. And we pray, perhaps like in Acts chapter 4. After John and Peter were released and they came back to the saints and they all joined together and began to worship. And somebody read a scripture from Psalm 2. Why do the nations rage? And the heathens imagine a vain thing.

They've come against Christ. God's anointed. And then somebody else said, Lord, you see the threats of the leaders of Jerusalem.

And then somebody else says, Lord, take note of their threats. Somebody else prayed, Lord, give us boldness to preach the gospel. And the house was shaken.

Oh, what a prayer meeting. When it's directed by the Holy Spirit. When there's a binding and loosing and executive prayer and something is done.

And then, of course, they prayed for Aunt Nellie and this and that. But God heard the whole thing. Because it was in His life.

Oh, to be in the body where this prayer meeting is so full of life. And then to break bread together with them. Well, you see, maybe we touched that a little bit this morning.

It's such a marvelous time. You know, I'm sitting back over there and as we're worshipping, a sort of a prayer thought comes to my heart and I wonder, well, should I pray? And then I think, no, you know, these people hear me too much anyway. And then just about that time somebody prayed basically what I wanted to say.

You know, it's all coordinated. Even a song I wanted us to sing, somebody asked for that song. Do you know what I'm saying? It's so wonderful to be in a place where there's some spiritual fullness when we're together in worship.

And there's somebody expressing my heart and somebody expressing our love for the Lord in a way I couldn't think of. And then just the right song at the right time. Oh, what a wonderful life in this body of Christ.

And then we see the body functioning. Go up one more Google Earth dimension. And we see as we look more closely, not just this gathered assembly, functioning in beautiful coordination, but we see that there are some people ministering.

Actually, we see some little things darting out. Because this is in fast speed, you see. Why? It's these apostles.

It's these prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. But they're not separate from the church. They're all coordinated and one with the church.

And you know, these brothers are sharing things in season. Why? You know, Peter came here just at the right time. It was harvest time.

And he came here and there were a hundred souls saved. And then wouldn't you know, Apollos came just at the right time and helped us see some precious little things in the Old Testament where nobody usually digs. He was such a Bible scholar.

Then along came Paul just at the right time, coordinated by the spirit. One would come and plow and one would plant and one would water and one would cultivate and one would harvest. But these workers would come and go, led by the spirit.

And every time they came, it would bring fullness. You see, because we don't have one worker, because we have all God's workers and they come here and then according to the will of God. What a wonderful thing.

And they're all one together. Why is that? Because they all preach Christ. They preach Christ.

The apostles teaching. What is that? They spoke about Christ. Can you imagine them on Solomon's porch? Do you think they said, well, today we want to look at the doctrine of a preterite grace, something like this, you know, these big words.

No, Peter stood up there on Solomon's porch. He said, you know, this morning I was praying and I thought about the time that Jesus was in our home synagogue in Capernaum and those men tore up the roof. And he tells the story of the healing of the man, the lame man.

And he makes an application about it. They told, they preach about Christ and they laid a foundation of Christ. And what they spoke with Christ is the foundation and Christ is the head and Christ is the life.

All those apostles, they were all one because they all preach Christ. But if a prophet came along, what all he did was reveal some of the mysteries of Christ and his exalted state. Now he brought revelation to the saints and people saw, wow, he's so much more than just the man who walked on earth.

Why he is exalted and at the right hand of the father. Then the evangelist will come by and preach those simple messages. Those Billy Graham messages that Christ is the way, the truth and the life.

And everybody's refreshed. Even those who are getting saved, even those who didn't save, want to get saved again, just because Christ is the way, the truth and the life. It's so precious to hear an evangelist just preaching Christ, not preaching doctors, preaching Christ.

And then the pastors, the pastors stand up. Now, what did they do? Did they set up a discipleship program under them? No, they point people and direct them to the good shepherd. They get people connected.

They get the lambs to begin to hear the voice of the good shepherd. This pastor leads people to Christ. Do you have a problem? Let's go together to the Lord and find out the answer.

Oh, how wonderful, how these shepherds build up the body by bringing people to Christ through every situation, through every problem, just showing them the good shepherd, showing them the good shepherd. Then the teacher, the teacher stands up, but maybe they teach something that we would call doctrine, of course. But what they do is they take that objective revelation of the apostles and the prophets and they make it real to us.

How can we make this real to us? Even as our brother shared this morning, let's make this objective truth subjective to us. How can we lay hold of Christ and his life? And those teachers would share these things. My, my, my.

What a beautiful picture. What a beautiful church this is. But wait, there's somebody in this whole proceeding that you can't see, but his fingerprints are all over.

Of course, it's the Holy Spirit. How do you think the church in this full state is coordinated? Do you think some man sits over in control central saying, okay, let's send this guy over there. Let's take this one over here.

Let's move this. Let's not take this guy anywhere. Let's throw him out.

Is this coordination that brings fullness? Anything that man does? Well, you know, sometimes Paul said, Timothy, bring that to me, will you? And I'm sending Epaphroditus to you. And you know, Paul coordinated things, but you know what? The workers always did what seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us. And

so maybe Paul says, Apollos, you really should come.

But Paul says, I shouldn't come right now. You see, they weren't being directed by some kind of man's organization thing. There was a coordination by the Holy Spirit.

Someone came and shared just in time in your assembly. Do you remember that? Absolutely. The Holy Spirit, his coordination, even in the body.

Why is it that that one member of the little toe in the worship meeting shared that little offering of love to the Lord and everybody started to weep? I heard one this morning. It just made me cry. They're so precious.

It was the Holy Spirit that arranged that. Why does a brother ask for a song? Well, you see, I don't want us to get too over spiritual here, but I'm showing you a picture of the church in fullness. The Holy Spirit is just the Lord who's giving liberty in the church or the church to be a full expression of Christ.

We can see Christ's love. We can see Christ's power. We can see Christ's ministry one to another.

We can see Christ's mind. This is the spiritual fullness that is meant for the church. And then beyond all of that, we turn the camera right around to the person by our side.

As we read here in chapter four, verse 10, the Lord himself. And it says that he who descended is himself. Also, he who ascended far above all the heavens so that he might fill all things.

And here we see in light of the spiritual fullness of this mature church, we see, could I put it this way, a happy Christ able to pour out and fill all of these members who are giving themselves one to another for the sake of Christ. You know, Christ has so much to give. He's only happy when he's unhindered in his pouring out.

And he sits up in the heavenlies with so much to pour out, just waiting for vessels emptying for one another. Vessels who want to love one another. Vessels who want to minister to one another.

Vessels who want to see more of Christ. And he just fills the whole thing. Oh, what a happy Lord this is.

He's filling the least member to the greatest member. They're all working together and there's nothing divisive. It cuts off the flow.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the truth of scripture, not a dream. Do you believe the church is that? I think the, perhaps the thing in one sense I could say that changed my life in ministry as, you know, I was a pastor of various different groups and, and I was seeing, I was reading, you know, books like the one that really got me was the Normal Christian Church Life, because everything that I saw in there, I couldn't refute. It all made sense analytically so.

But somehow I had to see the beauty of the church in its fullness. And then the Lord said to me, do you believe? And when he said, do you believe it went against all I knew by experience of the ambition of workers, of the divisiveness among the people, of seeing members in the body who don't contribute just because they have an attitude and they just sit there like this. And people who minister out of personal ambition or do things to cut somebody else down and squabbling that goes on almost continually.

And the Lord says, do you see that? Or do you see the truth? This is the church that the Lord has poured his life out for. And when I believed it, then I knew that I couldn't settle for any compromise. You know, I was in a position where I sort of said, well, I see what God wants ideally, but I've never seen a church that does it.

So I know every church is compromised. So I might as well just say the pastor. I mean, I know being a pastor isn't quite right in the sense that I'm the head honcho and everybody says the buck stops at me, but you know, that's just the way it is.

I was so pragmatic, but then the Lord says, you want to be pragmatic or do you want to be what I want? You will have to lay down your life for me or lay down your life for what you think. And there comes a time when you say, okay, Lord, no compromise. And it ends up costing you your career.

And all that does is bring in life. So I resigned as a reverend, you know, the pastor, but I became the strangest thing called me. I became Dana, you know, uh, and there's a certain kind of Liberty in just being Dana because you don't have to kind of wear somebody else's coat.

You know, uh, the, the, the reverend or denominations idea of what I should be. I just sort of need to be formed by Christ. Now I'm not at all condoning Danaism because I am a strange bird and, uh, the Lord still has to do much work in me.

But all I'm saying is, do you see, do you see, do you see what Christ has done? Do you see the church in its spiritual fullness? Any piece of compromise prevents that fullness. He's got to root it out of us. Every time workers are divided, every time there's division among workers, it's because there's too much self.

Somebody is full of themselves, not full of the Lord, but every worker who stands and divides said thinks he's full of Christ. So we deceive ourselves every time a member doesn't function because of some grievance or some unforgiveness or some issue or, or some distraction. They're robbing the body of that portion that they've been given from the Lord.

Every time members share the truth, but not in love, it doesn't help. It hurts. And so we have to learn how to keep our mouths shut until we can share truth in love, which brings us now having shared this heavenly vision, which I want to say, I absolutely believe.

I absolutely believe that's the way the church is. And I think that the Lord has to give us that kind of vision that looks beyond the childish divisions and problems in the assembly and sees the higher reality. Christ in his fullness expressed in his body.

This is what the Lord really wants. Well, but how, how can we get practical about this at all? Well, you see, as we raise this question before perfection, we have a right to ask the question in light of the truth of the church and its fullness and its oneness and its coordinatedness and its overflow of Christ. How can there be a uotia and syntyché? We're back in Philippians.

If you're, if you're not aware of that, we just moved to Philippians chapter four. There's these two ladies whose Greek names mean sweetie and lucky. Now, I know this is a bad example of women arguing in the church and women very seldom do that humble things that they are, you know, being full of self goes beyond gender, doesn't it? Well, here we have uotia and syntyché, but you pick the other churches.

You can just pick some men. It's the same deal. There's somebody who's forgotten that all their life is just because of the grace and mercy of God.

And they don't deserve anything. And if they have a disagreement with somebody, they should let it go, forgive the person or else do what they say and obey. You know, let's just say for the sake of argument, let's read this verses two and three of chapter four.

I urge uotia and I urge syntyche. Now he puts that urge verb before both of those names, just so they both know he's urging both of them individually to live in harmony in the Lord. Indeed, true companion, I ask also help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life.

Now, let's just we don't know about sweetie and lucky what their situation is. But let's just say that uotia, since her name is mentioned first, is an older sister and syntyche is a younger one. And being younger, she's a little bit more rambunctious and uotia is a little older and more traditional.

And they're working together in the gospel. Maybe they're like Bible women. They're going from home to home and they're sharing the gospel or something like that.

And they get into a little bit of a spat somewhere. And uotia tells syntyche to shut up. Now syntyche being the younger should obey.

But this is the last straw because uotia has done that a whole number of times. And finally she's had it. And so uotia starts a little Bible group in her home and syntyche has a Bible group in her home, but they still meet together with the saints and break bread and everything's cool.

Everything's not cool. If workers are not united together, they can't be coordinated by the Holy Spirit. How do we think we can stop our union with other workers and be coordinated by the Holy Spirit? He just puts his hand back.

Okay. And uotia and syntyche for whatever reason needed to empty themselves and be joined together. And so Paul says, you know, my fellow worker, we don't really know exactly who that is he's referring to, perhaps Epaphroditus who's bringing the letter himself.

But he says, oh, my dear fellow worker and Clement, will you take hold of these two sisters and help them to see that they are co-workers in the noble task of preaching the gospel. And their responsibility in ministry in the church is so noble and so important that they can't let this strain between them be any kind of blockage to the supply and to God's will. Help them to see that.

You know, when we're with each other a lot, we sometimes lose a perspective on how precious the other one is to the Lord. And even gospel ministry. You know, I don't know, I think about a lot of things.

I'm thinking right now back in India when I would be in India and, you know, the brothers were preaching the gospel and they love to preach the gospel. But the ones that got me were the sisters who were there at a compound and about 10 of them twice a week would just take a taxi out into the center square there in the city, hand out tracts and Bibles and preach the gospel. And I was surprised to find out they paid their own taxi fare and these women live on nothing, really.

But they were willing to go share together and somehow they sensed this was an important ministry that they had. Now the brothers kind of got after them because they didn't always think what the sisters did was very important. You know, we have that kind of blind spot sometimes.

I'll tell you the truth as I saw it, I think the sisters were more faithful in gospel preaching than the brothers there. But leaving that aside. And you know, there needs to be a recognition of the importance of everyone's service.

And not to belittle anybody. To be sure that they're walking together. Because I'll bet you, this is my final bet on this UOD and Syntyche thing and I'll leave it alone.

I'll bet you they were some of the best tag team evangelists you've ever seen. Working together, they were great. Apart, they were so-so.

They just had that thing, you know, UOD being sweetie. She would share about the love of Christ and then Syntyche would say, don't you know you're a sinner? And they just worked together. They were so good together.

Oh, but don't you know the enemy's always trying to split up that which God has joined together. But how are they going to come back together? And here's where we find this phrase, have the mind of Christ, here in this passage. So I want us to go through Philippians, just look at a few passages that this phrase is mentioned.

Because here he says, again we read in verse 3, Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of the fellow workers whose names are written in the book of life. He's talking about them in verse 2. It says in my version, I urge you, Odia and Syntyche, to live in harmony in the Lord. But actually it says to have the same mind.

Now there's this word, funeo, a Greek word. It's the same word as in Philippians 2.5. Have this funeo, have this thinking, have this way of thinking, of emptying yourself. Many people say Paul is exhorting the saints to be humble.

Certainly it's that, but it's more than that. It's being willing to empty yourself for the sake of your brother and your sister. Have this thinking in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Now he applies this right here in Philippians 4 verse 2. Odia, Syntyche, have this same thinking that was in Christ Jesus. Now let's look at the other passages because you'll be surprised. It's in there eight times, and probably the translation is not the same in these eight, at least in my translation.

I'm surprised to see what kind of different things they come up with here. First we find, of course, in chapter 2 verse 5, let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus. And in chapter 2 verse 5, let's note two things.

It says, let this mind or this thinking be in yourselves, plural. So he's implying that this kind of thinking, this self-emptying, loss of self-ambition kind of emptying should be the experience of the assembly together. Let this thinking be in yourselves as was also in Christ Jesus.

But notice, let's go back to chapter 1. I'll show you the first time it's mentioned. Verse 6 and 7, it's in verse 7. For I am confident of this very thing that he who began a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus. For it is only right for me to feel this way about you.

But the word is *froneto*. It's only right that I have this thinking about you because I have you in my heart. Do you see the kind of thinking he's referring to? And then we notice in chapter 2 and verse 2 as he's making his appeal for harmony among the Christians.

And he says, make my joy complete by being of the same thinking. It's that same word once again. And then we look in chapter 3 and verse 15.

And after sharing about his own particular spiritual pursuit of Christ, he says, let us therefore as many as are perfect have this thinking. And if anyone has a different thinking, God will reveal also that to you. And then in chapter 4, verse 2, I urge you, Odia, and I urge Syntyche to have this thinking, the same thinking in the Lord.

And then in chapter 4 and verse 10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your thinking for me. Indeed, you were thinking before, but you lacked opportunity.

It's that same selfless thinking. It's that same how can I help Paul? And it had been revived and Paul was mentioning it. And then the one time it's mentioned negatively in chapter 3 and verse 19, where it talks about the circumcision party.

And he says, whose end is destruction, whose God is their appetite, whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. And here again, it's whose thinking is on earthly things. And this is the same word, by the way, that's used in Romans about setting our mind on the spirit or setting our mind on the flesh.

And it's the same word that's used in Colossians 3, when it says, set your mind on things above. There is a mind, there is a thinking that indeed the life of Christ can bring into us. And this thinking is a selfless thinking.

It's unnatural to us. But you'll find in your spirit, a thinking that desires to give away, that desires to let go, that desires to be emptied for the sake of others. This has been put there by Christ himself.

This is the thinking of Christ. And so when we see this thinking, we have to define it by going back to these little passages, which we don't have time to look at in its fullness, but let's look at least in chapter 2 of Philippians. We began by reading passages in Philippians, Ephesians, and Colossians that were all exhortative, practical passages, all having to do with what it means to have this kind of selfless thinking.

So let's read this passage here in Philippians 2, beginning in verse 1. This is the thinking that Paul is talking about as he refers to Christ. Therefore, if there's any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if there's any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same thinking. Maintain the same love.

Be united in spirit, intent on one thinking. That's the word again. Sorry, I missed it the first time through.

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourself. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of

others. You remember here in chapter 2 later on when he talks about Timothy, what he says about Timothy.

This is not the word *funeo*, but in verse 20 after Paul says, I'm hoping to send Timothy to you, he says in chapter 2, verse 20, for I have no one else of kindred spirit. Actually it says of the same soul. I have no one else of the same psyche, the like soul, who genuinely is concerned for your welfare.

Now listen to that. What is about Timothy that's so precious about him? He has the same thinking, the same mind that I have, and he's genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ.

But you know of Timothy's worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. Timothy's so precious. You know why? Because he's got that same concern for others, whereas he has to admit there's many workers who are thinking of nothing except their own interests.

And so there in chapter 2 as he's talking to the whole church, he says, don't merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have you discovered that in your prayer, when you truly lay hold of concerns and burdens the Lord puts on you for others, that the Lord often takes care of your own need? It's like one of those backdoor vacuum responses. And when we come together for the prayer meeting and we assemble together corporately for prayer, you know, sometimes the Lord has some things for us to take up that has nothing to do with the size of our group or our welfare, but it has something altogether to do with perhaps this Harvey Cedars conference.

And so you give a good half hour and you're praying for the conference here in Harvey Cedars and it's doing nothing for your assembly, but oh yes it is, because you're praying what the Lord wants you to pray. Your interests are for the interests of others and the Lord knows your needs before you even ask. Sometimes I feel that our best prayers are when we frankly spend much of our time praying for others and then we just say, oh Lord, you know what I need.

Amen. And he does. But sometimes our prayers are almost the desperate scratchings of self-seeking people.

We need to come to our prayer meetings with this mind in us, this fuller mind. So Paul exhorts this in Philippians and Paul exhorts the same thing in Ephesians. You know those first verses in chapter 4. He talks about the same lowliness, the same humility, and then he puts together this experience that they should have in their calling with the objective reality of the oneness that's within the Godhead.

There's one body, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, so on and so forth. Those seven onenesses. So we should be one together.

He connects this mindset with the oneness that's within God's work itself. And then in the Colossians where we read again this passage about loving one another, forgiving one another, bearing with one another, being humble with one another. And then he applies it to the assembly life with all wisdom admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, speaking to one another in the Lord, giving thanks for all things.

You see, this mind translates into life. This mind that thinks of others translates into life, into edification, into building up in the assembly. How we need to have this mind.

It's very practical. I mean, and here's the fact. If we know the Lord, if we're born of Christ, in fact, we have that mind within us, within our spirit.

And we have to learn to lay down our own self-centeredness, our own self-concerns, our own self-interest in, oh, how the cross has to do work in our lives. I don't think Paul just gave it up easily. I don't think we can give it up easily.

But I think the Spirit is faithful to apply the cross to our lives and to show us that our self-interest is a dead-end street. When we're full of self, we're in trouble. And the more we find that we have the thinking of Jesus and are willing to lay down our ambition, the more we'll experience life.

This is true in assembly life, whether it's the young people working together. You know, the young people, they've got a lot of heebie-jeebies. And so there's a lot of disputes and arguments and, you know, the older ones telling the younger ones to shut up and all that kind of stuff.

But you know, if you're going to be part of what God's doing in a coordinated way, you've got to learn how to submit, how to go along with what the older ones or the ones in charge are saying, even when it's wrong, maybe. You need to be willing to lay down your own selfish interest, ambitions, rights. I know what's right.

You're not doing what's right. Why don't you lay it down? I remember one time I was a part of an assembly and there were many things going on, many things to do. And they said, Dana, would you hold a young people's meeting in the assembly? And I thought, oh, that's all I need, you know, something else.

But, you know, they kind of twisted my arm and I said, well, OK, I need to do it. Obviously, they think it's important. You know, we had the most blessed year that year.

So many young people came, so many got saved. It's a wonderful thing. And I have to truly say it was none of my doing.

I didn't want to be any part of it. But that was actually one of the first young people's meetings I ever did in any assembly. I didn't know, I didn't want to be gifted with young people.

I wanted to be an old person. I wanted to grey prematurely, you know, be a regular saint. But, you know, so for years now, as you know, I've been locked in the basement with the kids.

And maybe you think, oh, well, it's because he loves being with the kids. He just loves it, he loves it. Well, I've gotten to the place where I love to die on it because there's such life there.

And the kids are so precious. But I still have to deny myself when it comes to doing things. You know what I'm saying.

You know, so many times the Lord just asked us to empty ourselves of something we don't think we want to do. As soon as we do that, the Lord honors it. There's so many opportunities, big and little opportunities.

I think there's a sister here. I won't mention her name so I don't embarrass her. But occasionally we go out in Queens and preach the gospel.

And it's so wonderful because 15 or so saints come from the assembly and go out there and hand out tracts and preach. They take turns. One person preaches in Chinese and somebody preaches in English.

Somebody preaches in Portuguese and we sing songs in between. Sometimes the songs are good, sometimes the preaching is terrible. But you know, we're out there together.

It's a wonderful experience. We're out there together. It's wonderful to have 15 other people willing to go and do that with you.

It really is. It's wonderful. Well, there was one sister who was gladly handing out tracts.

But I said to her, we were nearing the end of one of our times. I said, would you be willing to share your testimony? Oh, no, I could never do that. I've got nothing to say.

What could I possibly say? But I could tell she was caught. So she thought about it and I asked her a little later after somebody else had shared it. I said, well, now sister, we're almost getting ready to close now.

Are you willing to share your testimony? Well, I don't know if I can do it. I just don't know what's going to happen. So finally, she gave up on herself.

She said, OK, I'll do it. You know, I have to say now, of course, I'm at disadvantage because she spoke for 10 minutes in Chinese. Now, I have no idea what she said, but she stood there under an anointing from God and some of the Chinese young people sitting around, standing around by the library who'd been talking to each other, just chattering, stopped and listened to every word she said.

They didn't listen to me. I even tried to sing some silly songs. They didn't listen.

Other people listened to this and that, you know, listening to different people. But she had these girls right in her radar and she gave, I think, a very good testimony. Well, of course, the blessing was to see her afterwards.

She was full of Christ. Oh, it's so wonderful. I can't believe I had anything to say.

I mean, she actually spoke too long. Oh, how wonderful it is when we're just willing to sort of deny ourselves. But the Lord has to work on us.

The Lord has to empty us. One of the great tragedies in the assemblies when we have been together for a while is when people become offended with one another. And this is something that happens, and yet I want to say this.

If you've seen Christ in your brother and your sister, and they've been faithful and laid down their life many years, and then they do something that offends you, can't you forgive? Don't you respect who they are in the Lord? I know the problem, you know, because when you're married for a long time, you love your spouse more than you ever did at the beginning. But you could leave them faster than ever before. They really get on your nerves.

But, you know, how can you not love your spouse that's been with you for years, has been with you through thick and thin, and when you were nasty and they stayed, you know you can't leave. You've got to forgive and be one and learn to love despite those things that are irking you after so many years. But it's the same way in the assembly.

How can we take offense at somebody who was a blessing to us for years? I just don't understand that. What is the capacity in us that's so short that we have no history of trust? Even if somebody has done

something wrong, can't we recover them and pray for them and stand with them? Is it so easy to cast off those who have given their lives and serve and care? Oh, how we need this mind of Christ in our life. Because God is after a spiritual fullness that's even larger than your assembly, wherever you gather.

You know, the Lord is after something so large. His love, He wants to pour out in new and fuller dimensions out into the world. How He loves, how He wants fullness, and He wants to coordinate by His Spirit even some matters larger than just the assembly.

It is just a real blessing to come to Harvey Cedars. You know why? It's because there's no human agenda really in this thing. The Lord gathered us together many years ago and seems to be desiring to do that at least for this year.

We don't know about next year. But you know how man's agenda can get into something and suddenly the preciousness, the largeness of something is lost? Oh, may that not happen here. Because when we come together, we're able to touch a certain fullness.

We have people from different assemblies. We had people pray this morning, I didn't even know who they were. It's a wonderful thing, isn't it? There's such a largeness to Christ.

And perhaps you're here and you're visiting here, but you're not part of, you don't even know who is South Jersey. You don't even know who they are. Well, praise God you don't know who they are.

But there are brothers and sisters here, many of them have sacrificed a lot of time and hours to prepare and organize our conference together. This isn't a conference about a fellowship growing, or gaining more members, or advertising something. No, no, no.

But you know what? There's a burden for Christ to be shown in His fullness to hungry people. And some people are here from, no, a big assembly, or maybe just some little church in the community or something like that. But you have hunger and that's why this is here.

You see, the Lord cares for many saints beyond us. Do you believe that? And He wants us, so many of you, I love these kinds of testimonies. I love people who go to work and at lunchtime, once a week, they lead a Bible study.

And for some people, they're a virtual lifeline. There's some Christians out there who love the Lord, but they have only this much light, only this much fullness. They've heard so little at their own little church, but they go to a Bible study and they're so thirsty.

And you're the lifeline. Oh, pour yourself out in those little Bible studies at work. Those little contacts you have with Christians beyond your own assembly and concern.

You see, our spiritual fullness in the end, ultimately, is connected with all the saints. Even if we have a blessed sort of fullness within our assembly, with this picture I shared in Ephesians 4, we still don't have it all yet. Because we're still connected to our dear brothers and sisters beyond us.

And some of them so hungry, don't you think the Lord wants them to receive those rivers of living water and come and receive that spirit? Oh, the Lord has such big and precious things. We need to learn how to share these riches. And we need to share the riches of our brothers with one another.

It's a precious thing to have some brothers from here go over and visit this assembly and some brothers from there go over and visit this assembly. The cross-pollination of these bees. Isn't it a blessing? Isn't it a fullness to us? Well, let's be careful not to humanly coordinate that thing, but it's so wonderful if we can share that kind of fullness one with another.

It's one of the joys of going to these young people's conferences, like in Toronto or up in Flushing. When you get together with the young people, they're from here and there and everywhere, but they get together and they experience something, some kind of fullness. It's like, wow, it's more than just me and Charlie and the fellowship.

There's other teenagers who love the Lord and they experience a kind of a fullness that touches them and helps them to get on as they go back to school. Oh, the Lord wants to do big things and He wants to express His spiritual fullness even beyond the borders as we presently understand it. I think, despite our own weaknesses in the assemblies and everything, you know, it's wonderful for me to see.

I think the Lord is raising up some young people today that are very precious and I just really pray that they can see spiritual fullness and settle for nothing less. That they can minister, not out of a sense of personal ambition or status or ministry or something like that, but minister out of a willingness to empty themselves in order to build up and help others. That they can have that mind of Christ in them as the Lord begins to do in them and that they can learn that spiritual coordination of doing things in God's time and in God's way.

All of that is learned as we join together in the assembly to express that fullness. It's a precious thing that God has called us together to be coordinated by the Spirit as our Lord fills us with all things. I just love that expression.

What is it? It's almost like circular logic. The church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all things. You just can't get away from it.

We want to be His fullness. Oh Lord, how can we serve you? How can we help you? How can we help your people? Lord, help us to pour out ourselves for their sake. Then here's the Lord pouring Himself on top of you, pouring it out on you, pouring it out on you.

He fills all things and we're to be His fullness. By the grace of God, we're just part of the whole chain of His life that He's pouring out in these days. There's a corporate fullness which we experience at various times, I think even here this weekend to some small degree.

May the Lord convict us of our need to empty ourselves and claim nothing for ourselves. Oh, it's so hard for people who have a certain status, responsible brothers, leaders, workers, all this kind of thing, to just be willing to let go of that. Be a brother, be a sister, be a contributor, be somebody who's willing to lay down their lives for one another.

And when we empty ourselves, we experience life, life, fullness of life that comes from His throne. May the Lord help us to live in fullness according to the vision that He has given us in the Word of God. Let's pray.

Lord, You are full, we are empty. You are the source, we are just a channel. But Lord, we thank You that when we gather together, Your Spirit begins to move and begins to synchronize us together in something that's so rich and precious that young and old can taste and see that the Lord is good.

We pray that this fullness would be known more completely in our local assemblies and even that we can learn how to spill over beyond our assemblies with an expression of His fullness that is rich enough to give away to those who are hurting and those who are broken and those who are sick and those who are hungry and thirsty. Oh, Lord, let Your fullness be fully expressed in our lives. Lord, we come to You.

All we can do is bring these little channels and empty ourselves of any pride that stands in the way. Lord, we pray for anybody in this room who has an issue with somebody else in their assembly and they're hiding it, going around it, going underneath it, but it just won't go away. Oh, Lord, bring us into that kind of unity that You can again begin to coordinate our lives by Your Spirit.

Oh, how You treasure this unity of the Spirit that You've given us by Your death and resurrection. Help us to live in that fullness as You bring us to the unity of the faith. Lord, this is Your way in our lives.

We acknowledge that Your Holy Spirit has been given to us to do these things. We say, Thy will be done. Have Your fullness.

Oh, Lord, let it be. When we gather together, two or three, not an issue of numbers, but an issue of emptiness, You can express Yourself through us. Lord, make it real in our own local place, we pray in Jesus' name.

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