

Fullness - Expressed in Practical Life

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of experiencing and expressing the fullness of God in practical relationships through Christ.

Duration: 1:13:54

Scripture: Colossians 3:12-20

Topics: "Christian Living", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of believers putting on the characteristics of being chosen and holy by God. He encourages the audience to be open to God's dealing and speaking, and to go forth in His strength and light to engage with the world in various relationships. The preacher also highlights the significance of living a life of fullness in Christ, based on the letter to the Colossians. He addresses the need for perseverance in prayer, wisdom in interactions with non-believers, and maintaining proper relationships in order to experience blessings in life.

Transcript

For those who came in last night and those who came this morning, probably it will be necessary for us to just mention what we have covered thus far during the afternoon session. Our main burden during these afternoons is centered upon one word and that is fullness. From the letter to the Colossians we find that Paul's thought in that particular letter is the thought of fullness.

He had heard of these things in Colossians, how they had believed in the Lord Jesus, they had faith in Christ Jesus and how they had love towards all the saints and even to Paul whom they had not seen in the flesh, but they loved him in the spirit and also how these people had hope laid up in the heaven. In other words, Paul heard that these people had a good foundation in the grace of God. The grace of God was evident in their midst.

It was expressed in faith, in love and in hope. And probably when we hear of such conditions, we will feel very happy and Paul felt very happy too, but probably we will feel well that's very good and we only hope that such condition can continue to the end and that will be all. But with Paul who has the mind of God, he was on the one hand most thankful for what God has done among these people and yet on the other hand he was even more burdened than ever before.

Because he saw that God had begun in these lives and he longed to see that the work which God had begun will be perfected. So you remember how he gave himself to prayer. He could not be with them in person because he was in prison in Rome.

He could only wrestle heaven eyes before the Lord with one supreme purpose and that these saints in Christ, these believers may be filled with the full knowledge of God's will. Throughout this short letter you'll find that Paul repeatedly used these words like feel, whole, wholeness, fulfill, complete, perfect and so on and so forth. The one prevailing thought is wholeness.

So dear brothers and sisters we feel burdened with this burden of God concerning his own children. God's concern for his own is that we may be unto fullness. We may not stop short.

We may enter into the fullness of God. That we may be filled with the fullness of God. This is God's purpose concerning his people.

And then secondly we mentioned how this fullness of God is in Christ. All the fullness of the darkness, the totality of divine attributes and power make its home, permanent home in Christ and in nowhere else. Christ is the fullness of God.

If you ever want to find the fullness of God it is to be found only in Christ. And then we continue to see in Colossians chapter 2 it is said in him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily and you are complete in him. So far as our union with Christ is concerned his fullness is our fullness.

You cannot be united with Christ without sharing in his fullness. That's the reason why you'll find Apostle Paul says all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily and you are complete in him. And yet when we come down to our experience we find that we are progressively led into the experience of his fullness by way of the cross.

As the cross works deeper and deeper in our life, in every and different area of our life, we find that his fullness is being experienced more and more in these areas. But the fullness of Christ is the church, is the body. We remember in Ephesians chapter 1 it says the church which is his body.

The fullness of him who fills all and in all. This afternoon we would like to go on a little bit. The Bible tells us that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him, in Christ, bodily.

That is bodily wise, in bodily form, in a form that can be seen and heard and touched and known. The fullness of God is in Christ. But this is not just something intangible.

This is something that is very real. That can be seen, heard, touched and known. Because it dwells in him bodily.

It is available. It can be communicated. It is most real.

That's why you'll find in the Gospel of John chapter 1 verse 14, and the word became flesh. And dwells among us. And we have seen his glory.

Even the glory of the only begotten Son with the Father. He dwells among men, full of grace and truth. And out of his fullness we receive grace upon grace.

Then again in the first letter of John you'll find John says the same thing. That which is from the beginning, that word of life, that light has been manifested to us. And we have seen him.

We have heard him. We have known him. We have touched him.

And because we have fellowship with him, therefore we can fellowship him with you all. So dear brothers and sisters we find the fullness of God in Christ is in bodily reality. In bodily form.

You'll find when our Lord Jesus was on earth in human form. How he walked in the land of Judea, of Galilee. And he walked 33 years and so.

And as he walked on this earth, people saw him, heard him, even touched him. Here you'll find the fullness of God is literally manifested in this body. In Christ Jesus.

So it is not just a vague idea, a theory. It is a reality manifested in life. A life on earth.

And that is Christ. Now dear brothers and sisters if this is true of Christ who is the fullness of God. It must be true with the church.

With us. The body of Christ. Which is the fullness of Christ.

So when we talk about the fullness of Christ. The church as the fullness of Christ. We should not have the impression that it is just a good theory.

Yes it is very good. The church, the body is the fullness of Christ. Oh how full must be the body.

And we have a very good feeling of it. Now brothers and sisters this is not the will of God. The church, the body as the fullness of Christ must also be expressed bodily.

In other words it must be seen and heard and touched and known by the world. It must be in our daily practical living. Unless the church expresses the members of the body of Christ.

Manifests the fullness of Christ in their various relationships of life. It is not real. It is not true.

It is not a real thing. It has to come out in our daily life. So this afternoon we would like to move on to this practical expression of that fullness which dwells in the church.

Now may we turn to Colossians chapter three. Colossians chapter three. We'll read from verse twelve.

Colossians chapter three verse twelve. Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, vows of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another. If any should have a complaint against any, even as the Christ has forgiven you, so also do ye.

And to all these add love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts, to which also ye have been called in one body and be thankful. Let the word of the Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.

And everything whatever ye may do, in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him. Wives, be subject to your husband, as is fitting in the Lord. Husband, love your wives and be not bitter against them.

Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing in the Lord. Fathers, do not bet your children, to the end that they be not disheartened. Gorman, obey in all things your masters, according to flesh, not with eyes, surfaces, as man pleases, but in simplicity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Whatsoever ye do, labour at it heartily, as doing it to the Lord, and not to man, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance. Ye serve the Lord Christ, for he that does a wrong shall receive the wrong he has done, and there is no respect of persons. Masters, give to Gorman what is just and fair, knowing that he also hath a master in the heaven.

Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving, praying at the same time for us also, that God may open to us a door of the world to speak the mystery of Christ, on account of which also I am bound, to the end that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom for those without redeeming opportunities. Let your word be always with grace, seasoned with thought, so as to know how ye ought to answer each one.

We will just read this portion. We find here in this letter to the Colossians, when Paul deals with this noble and lofty subject of fullness, after he has brought us in a sense to the third heaven, to see how the fullness of the Godhead is in Christ, and also to see that we as his body is joined to Christ, and here in his fullness we are like people who are being lifted to the third heaven, and there we have heard things almost unspeakable. But dear brothers and sisters, Paul does not leave us there.

You find that after he has led us to the third heaven, now by the Spirit of God he has led us back to this earth. You remember the story which we have mentioned before, the three disciples who went to the mountain with our Lord Jesus, and there our Lord was transfigured before them. It was the glory of the Kingdom of God coming in power.

And how these disciples longed to just remain there forever, and never to come down. You know, in a sense, this scene at the Mount of Transfiguration is a scene of great critical moment, because here you'll find our Lord Jesus, after he has walked on this earth for some time, and he has demonstrated a life that is in perfect harmony with God, after he has revealed the Father and declared the Father, after he has shown the world what the wholeness of God was, our Lord has led a life that was perfect, in perfect decoration and demonstration of the Father and of his fullness. There was nothing short in him.

And there he went to the mountain, and he was transfigured. He seemed as if it was the crowning of his days on earth. And there Moses and Elijah appeared.

And what they were talking about? They were talking about his departure, his exodus. How was he going to leave the world? So far as our Lord himself was concerned. He could leave the earth at that moment.

He was ready. He had come to this earth to declare the Father. And he had declared the Father in such perfectness, by life, by word, by deeds.

And there he was on that mountain, transfigured. He could well just depart it from earth and went back to the glory that he had with the Father even before the foundation of the world. There was nothing standing in his way.

He could just depart and went back to the Father. He could do that. So far as himself was concerned.

And if he should do that, where will be you and me? Thank God. Even though he was able to depart just like that, and yet when Moses and Elijah talked with him about his departure, he had a very different departure in his mind. He would depart and exit from this world by the cross.

He would rather depart in this way, by the cross. Because only when he departs in this way there is redemption for the world. So here you'll find our Lord Jesus on the mountain of transfiguration.

In such glory. This is a glimpse, a full taste of the kingdom of God in power. And no wonder Peter and James and John, oh how they longed that this will be it.

That they needed not to go down from that mountain and face the multitude and all the problems and the difficulties in this world. The temptations and the trials. Now if this is the kingdom of God and we are already in it, well let it be so forever.

You cannot blame these disciples. Because if you were there you would do the same thing. Oh how we walk on this earth surrounded with temptations and trials and difficult people and many problems, sufferings and so on and so forth.

Now if we could be taken up and away and there be with Christ in glory, you would not want to come back again. But the Lord came back. And he brought his disciples back to the valley.

And there in the plain, in the valley was a need to be met. Our Lord came back to manifest the fullness of God in healing this little child. Dear brothers and sisters, in like manner, we who have been taken up in a sense by his spirit into a glimpse of the fullness of God, the fullness of Christ in the body, oh how we long that we may just remain there.

It's a beautiful thought. Let's remain there and forget about everything else. Very often in a conference or a convocation, if the blessing of the Lord is there, oh how we long that it will continue forever.

I remember this morning, one sister who sits behind me whispered and said, oh I hope this convocation will last two weeks instead of one week. It's just too fast. Brothers and sisters, I would say, oh that it may last forever.

That we need not go back to our various places. We need not go to our various homes. We need not go to our various occupations.

We need not face the world and all the problems and difficulties in the world. Now let's remain here forever. Be in the third heaven.

How good that will be. But dear brothers and sisters, this is not God's way. God's way is that after you have ascended, now you must descend.

Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved. Oh therefore, therefore, after we have been brought to the Lord, to be face to face with Him, and to be open to His dealing and to His speaking. Dear brothers and sisters, now therefore, we must go forth in His strength, in His light, to meet the world in its many full relationships.

And if there is anything real down in us, it will be expressed and manifested when we are met with all these relationships. And only then and there truth. Whether this week here means something real to us, or they are just words that pass.

We do not expect Paul to write to these saints at Colossae about these detailed and small matters. Brothers and sisters, very often in reading Paul's letter, sometimes we find that he in the beginning has led us up and up and up and up to the third heaven, and suddenly he dropped us into the bottom of the earth. Because he touches upon husbands and wives and children and parents and bondmen and masters and these things.

Now these things are not spiritual. How can Paul be so unspiritual as to leave the heavens and come into earthly relationships? But dear brothers and sisters, with Paul and certainly with the Holy Spirit, he does not think this way. The spiritual is the most practical.

In this portion of the word that we have read, we find that at least they can be divided into three areas. Life is mainly composed of relationships. Aside from Adam, maybe for a short while.

I do not know how long after Adam was created that Eve was made. I do not know. Some people try to compute to the very hour.

And try to find out that Adam was created on a certain day at a certain hour, then after a few hours Eve was built. Now I do not have this mathematical mind. But after Adam was created, there was a short period while he was alone.

Aside from his relationship with God of course. That came from the very beginning. But aside from this man Adam, no one in this world can remain alone.

Our life is just composed of relationships. And if we have the right relationship, whether it is in the church or in the home or in the business, in the world, if we have the proper relationship, then we experience blessing. If the relationship is out of order, is chaotic, then you'll find it is almost like hell upon the earth.

Our life is mainly composed of relationships. How are we to maintain our relationship with others? This is not ethics. There is a great difference between ethics and life.

Ethics tries to help people to a right relationship. You know in China, in our Chinese classics, it is emphasized very much about this matter of human relationship. Oh the relationship between the king and his subjects.

The relationship between the parents and the children. The relationship between the teacher and the pupils. You'll find that in the Chinese classics, it emphasized greatly upon this matter of relationship.

This is education. To educate us into a right relationship on every side. And if you can do that, you are a moral person.

But dear brothers and sisters, here you'll find it is very different. The beginning and the source is very different. When you look at it outwardly, it may appear as if there is no difference.

And yet the source is different. Is different. Paul does not start out with right relationship.

Paul does not start out to correct and try to improve and try to teach and try to inform us as to how we must be related to one another and so on and so forth. No. Paul starts out to relate us to God.

To receive the life of Christ in us. And after we have received from him grace upon grace, then Paul began to instruct us how this life should be seen and heard and be related in all these different areas of life. So

brothers and sisters, we are not here trying to teach so-called Christian ethics.

We are just here to tell you that the church which is the body of Christ, in which the fullness of Christ dwells, now this fullness of life must be manifested in the various areas of our life. Otherwise it is not real. So it is not a matter of education.

Not a matter of trying. Not a matter of self-improvement. It is a matter of flowing in the life of Christ.

And if we, as our brother mentioned, if we abide and dwell in him, and he in us, out of this life of abiding, the fullness of Christ will overflow into the various relationships that we have on this earth. Now this is what Paul is really speaking about. Here you'll find he mentions three areas.

First, church life. Second, home life. And third, social life.

We who are the beloved children of God, first of all, we have a relationship with our brothers and sisters. That is church life. Paul begins with church life.

He begins with his body life. You know, I have met people who put great emphasis in their home life. That is good.

I'm afraid some people do not emphasize home life enough. There are people who just leave their home in disorder and try to go out and preach the gospel and visit house after house and gossiping. I do not think this is of the will of God.

But, on the other hand, it grieves my heart when I see those who are really the Lord. And yet, it seems as if their home life is first. There is very little church life.

Very little church life. Very little body life. Often, I ask myself this question.

I have heard people use that word church life. Oh, we want church life. We want to live church life.

I ask myself this question. What is church life? Is church life just having meetings every day? We say now, if we only meet on Sunday, oh, that is no church life. Because only once in seven days you meet and for one hour.

You cannot say this is church life. Oh, but brothers and sisters, if we should meet every day, and if we should meet twice a day, you may think that is impossible. But I have seen it.

In 1942, when I went to India, there was a company of the Lord's people in Madras, and they had been meeting together twice a day for a whole year. Before they went to work, they came and meet. They met together.

And then in the evening, after work, they came together again. Of course, that is very good. That is very good.

If it can be done, that's very good. But dear brothers and sisters, my point is this. Is church life just meeting together day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, and that is church life? Certainly.

Church life includes that. Because if we do not assemble, how can we have church life? Oh, some people are so spiritual, they don't need to be assembled because they assemble in the Spirit. Now I believe that.

I believe that. I have heard people telling me, now brother, I am with you in the Spirit. But sometimes I long to say, now can I see you in the flesh too? Church life does include this matter of assembling.

That is true. But mere assembling does not represent church life. Brothers and sisters, we may be assembled month after month, year after year, and yet we are worlds apart.

We are never really organically united into one. And sometimes you think, the less you meet, the better. Oh, if only we meet on Sunday.

Everybody puts on his or her best clothes. And not only the best clothes, but the best behavior too. Oh, we all come in smiling.

And we all leave smiling. We shake our hands and are very happy. But if we shall meet day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, and twice a day, brothers and sisters, before the month is out, you will find that we are at odds with one another.

Oh, we need to exercise great patience. It is not that easy. What is church life? How can the fullness of Christ be expressed in church life? Other people say, church life is being active in the church.

That's church life. Or if you just go to the church on Sunday and listen to a sermon, and develop the skill of being a higher critic, that is not church life. But if you want to have church life, you must be active.

Oh, be a Sunday school teacher, be an usher, or even be a supervisor, superintendent. Oh, you have to be active in church works. If you are active in the church, then you have church life.

Not necessarily. Maybe the more active you are in the church, the less lively you will become. The less of life you will become.

Your zeal, your enthusiasm, and all these things gradually abating. What is church life? What is body life? How is the fullness of Christ being expressed in body life? You'll find here Paul says, put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. What? This is church life? This is the overflowing of the fullness of Christ in the body? It is.

First of all, a church life, a body life, is a life of heart. Here you'll find the word bowels, and as you read on you will find verse 15, and let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts. Church or body life is a life of the heart.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is not just an assembling of many people. All we meet together and try to have a good time, and if we does not have a good time, we go away down pat, and try to point the finger at somebody else. He or she must be the cause.

This is not body life. Body life is a life of the heart. Bowels, heart.

It is nothing superficial. It is nothing just outward, in appearance. All we may be together in the physical appearance, but are we really together in our heart? We can be very courteous to each other, but are we really kind to each other? There's a great difference.

Is there that reality of the heart? You know, this world lies under the wicked one, and the wicked one is the liar. In other words, the whole world is a big lie. To put in another word, it's a falsehood.

Everything is false. Pretend. Are you weary of pretending in the world? Try to be true and honest in the world, and you know what will happen to you.

Are you weary of being, of pretending? Not real? Not opening your heart? The more you live in the world, the less real, in a sense, you become. You cannot afford to be real. The more you hide yourself under a heavy wall, like a castle.

You build that castle, and you hide yourself in it, because you know you need that protection. But dear brothers and sisters, when you come to the church of God, do we need that? Should we still continue in that pretense? Oh, I often feel I'm tired of pretending. I do not want to come to the house of God and put up a front again.

This is a place of rest. We can be true to one another. We do not need to hide ourselves.

We do not need to be on the watch all the time, as if everyone is our enemy, trying to get us. Oh, we can call our hearts, and be related to our brothers and sisters' hearts. In the body there is that reality.

Vowels of compassion and kindness. Oh, that we may go out to one another in love. As Paul said in Romans, in brotherly love, kindly and affectionately, one to another.

That we may go out to our brothers and sisters in compassion. Just as Christ is compassionate towards us, let us be compassionate to our brothers and sisters. Give them a warm heart, not a cold one.

A soft heart, not a harsh one. Be kind to one another. And kind here means, whatever he may do to you, you repay him in kindness.

Brothers and sisters, what is church life? What is body life? God has so put us together God has so joined us together, that we are members one of another. And being in such unity and such closeness. Oh, if we do not have a heart of compassion and kindness, how can we go on? It's impossible.

If my hand is not compassionate towards my mouth, when my mouth wants to eat and the hand refuses to pick up the food, what will happen? Dear brothers and sisters, God has tempered the body together. God has set us in the body as members of that one body. Now how are we going to live if we fight against one another? If we devour one another? If we stand on our rights? If we insist upon our opinion? How can we live? There is no body life.

There is no church life. But dear brothers and sisters, in his sovereignty, God has put us together. And there you'll find, unless we know the fullness of Christ, overflowing in compassion and kindness, it is just an impossible loneliness, meekness, long silence.

These are the attitudes of our hearts within ourselves. Lonely. Not only look ourselves as little, very little, but as nothing.

Oh, our Lord is lowly and meekly learned. He is lowly. He never thinks of himself.

He not only thinks little of himself, but he does not think of himself. That's loneliness. That's humility.

And meek. He never harms. Oh, you may do anything to him, but he never returns.

Incomprehensible. Maybe you will say, well, that's not necessary. If you live among your enemies, you need all these.

Oh, if you live in the world, surely you need that. But if you live in the church, in the body of Christ, live with your brothers and sisters, try to be related properly with your brothers and sisters. You don't need these.

Your brother will never step on you. Your sister will never treat you. You need not suffer.

They will not make you suffer. Oh, you don't need these things. Dear brothers and sisters, Paul knows what he is talking about.

There is no place on earth that you need more loneliness, meekness, and long suffering. As in the church. How often we say now, if this comes from an unbeliever, I forgive him, because he doesn't know.

I cannot expect anything better. But if it comes from your brother or from your sister, you begin to question. And if it comes from a big brother or a big sister, you are really offended.

That shouldn't be. Dear brothers and sisters, there is nowhere the fullness of Christ can be manifested so brilliantly as in real church life. Real church life is not just outward activity or outward meetings.

Real church life is in our inward relationship. Oh, there is an inward relationship of love, of compassion, of kindness, of loneliness, of meekness, of long suffering. Dear brothers and sisters, when you see these things coming up, you know you are living in the church.

You are experiencing the fullness of Christ in the church. I often, since I become a believer, when I read 1 Corinthians chapter 13, I often have a question. I think Paul is too negative.

We often say that 1 Corinthians chapter 13 is a chapter on love. Yes, it is. But you read that chapter.

You cannot but feel that Paul is too negative. Love suffers long. He begins with a negative note.

Love suffers long. Can't he give us a better definition of love? Isn't love something aggressive? Something active? Something positive? Something outgoing? No, that is love. But Paul said love suffers long and is kind.

I don't understand it. I have trouble many, many years in reading 1 Corinthians 13. I do not understand why Paul begins with such a negative note.

Until one day the Lord began to show me. Where is this chapter on love? It stands between 12 and 14. And chapter 12 speaks of the body.

Chapter 14 speaks of the functioning of the body. And there in between is love. Ah, love.

In the body of Christ is first suffers long. Now I know. Dear brothers and sisters, do not be shocked when you find your brother or sister make you suffer.

They will not only make you suffer, but make you suffer long. And love suffers. This is body and heart.

Forbearing one another and forgiving one another. If any should have a complaint against any. Even as Christ has forgiven you, so also do you.

Dear brothers and sisters, how we need to forbear one another. Not only to forbear, but to forgive. This is the overflowing of the fullness I often use this illustration.

Because that was my experience. And it still is. Sometimes I'm very quick.

I like to do things quick. And even in eating, I do that. And because I eat so quickly, I often bite my tongue.

Yes, I pull all my teeth off. I have false teeth now. But even these fool teeth bite my tongue.

No neighbors are so close as the teeth and the tongue. They live together. And they serve together.

We often say that we eat without teeth. But do you know if you have no tongue, how can you eat? You need the tongue to move the food around so that the teeth can bite. It helps the teeth to fulfill its function, you know.

And the same thing with your tongue. We use our tongue in speaking. But suppose you lose your teeth.

I remember when I pulled my teeth. And I was teaching in a school. I had all the upper part of my teeth pulled away.

I went to class. I began to talk. And you know what happened.

Yes, you talk with your tongue. But you need the help of your teeth. Only with the help of your teeth, the functioning of the tongue is perfect.

Oh, how we need one another. But because they are so close, sometimes one bites another. When this happens, oh, the tongue throws up and says, now I'm finished with you.

I won't forgive you. Dear brothers and sisters, what happened to that man? Oh, the forbearing and the forgiving. The same thing is true in the church life, in our relationship with one another.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is true we cannot do that. You remember once the disciples come to the Lord? Because the Lord said, if your brother sinned against you seven times in a day. Oh, that's even worse than what Peter had experienced.

I don't know if it's after many years that Peter accumulated seven times against his brother Andrew. But here you'll find the Lord said, if someone came and they ask a question, if someone comes and sinned against you seven times in the day, and each time he comes back and says, I'm sorry. All right, you're forgiven.

And then after an hour, again and again, seven times in a day. And they ask the Lord, Lord, what about that? The Lord said, forgive. Seventy times, seven.

And you know what the disciples say? Oh, Lord, give us faith. They do not say, Lord, give us love. They say, give us faith.

Not that, not only they do not have the love, but they don't even have the faith. Brothers and sisters, we can't do it. We cannot.

No one can. No matter how patient you naturally are, you just can't. The Lord will see to it that you will be tested beyond your measure.

It's only when the fullness of Christ is enough. We draw upon his fullness. Then you'll find forbearance and forgiveness.

That is love. And if there is love in the church, there is love among the members of the body of Christ. If love prevails, then the peace of Christ presides.

You know, we believers, or us, as our brother says, the springs is another species of mankind. That is very true. In this world, the more you are in the upper hand, the more you oppress people, the more you can revenge, the happier you are.

But in the church, among believers, very different. If ever you oppress anyone, you lose your peace. If ever you do not forgive, you lose your peace.

But if you forbear and forgive, strange, the peace of Christ presides in your heart. Haven't you experienced such things? When you have an unforgiving spirit, or when you have a revengeful spirit, you lose your peace. You cannot pray even.

God, when you tell the Lord, O Lord, I cannot. But by thy grace, out of thy fullness, I draw thy forgiving spirit. And you'll find that thing is gone.

And strangely, even though outwardly you seem to suffer, and yet inwardly the peace of Christ. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the way to live church life. But more.

In verse 16, Let the word of the Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching, admonishing one another, in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to God, and everything, whatever ye may do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father. On the one hand, you'll find love prevails. We live in love.

Love one another, brotherly love. If we love one another, then God is seen. The head is seen in the body.

This is our testimony. And then you'll find Paul turns to another thing. How we need to have the word of the Christ dwell in us richly, and in all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing one another.

In other words, we must minister one to another. Out of that love, we minister one to another. Our brother mentioned last night about ministry.

I have to make a confession. I had that in mind for this afternoon. But our brother has done it so ably, I could never do that.

And I thank the Lord for that. The ministry, the real ministry, is the ministry of the body. This is ministry in fullness.

No matter how able you are, how gifted you are, if you are the only one who is ministering to the body, the body suffers. But when all the members of the body function in ministering one to another, according to the measure that God has given to each, you'll find there is fullness. We may have experience of sitting under the feet of a great teacher of God.

Oh, we say how rich is his ministry. And how we have been helped. But dear brothers and sisters, in comparison with that of the body, teaching and admonishing one another, oh, the fullness of truth is experience, is ministry.

It is not God's will that we should be just sitting there receiving and receiving and receiving. That would end up in badness, in barrenness. But it is the will of God that as members of one body, this is church life, as members of one body, we according to the grace and the gift of Christ, we minister one to another in love.

Just like the teeth and the tongue, they work together in love. And the man is full. The fullness.

But in order to minister, you have to have something real in you. That's why the word of Christ dwells in you richly. We need to have the word of Christ dwells in us richly, in all wisdom.

Why? Because it is not just a mental knowledge of the word. It is the word of God that is constituted, digested, absorbed, and becomes even our very life. So it comes out in psalms and songs, spiritual songs and hymns.

Now what are hymns, psalms and spiritual songs? We know that these are not the product of the mind. These are the product of the mind. When you sing a hymn that is written out of one's deep experience, dear brothers and sisters, that hymn touches you.

If you read a treatise, a paper, that is the collection of research of your mind, well, it nourishes your mind, but it does not nourish your heart. So here you find, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in what? Not in the word, but in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs. In other words, it is after you have a hymn, it becomes your life.

And they are out of the grace of God in you. You pour out into the body. And as each member pour out into the body that which they have received of Christ, what happens to the body? The body increases with the increase of God.

That's fullness. This is body life. This is church life.

Now this is just one area where the fullness of Christ is manifested in church. Of course, we find Paul goes on to home life. Wives and husbands, parents and children, I do not need to comment on this because our brother from time to time give us a good piece of, not advice, but good piece of experience, leading us into a proper relationship.

Oh brothers and sisters, every time when I marry a man and a woman, I feel that it is more than a physical union. It is a spiritual union. In that union, the mystery of Christ and his church must be represented.

In the relationship between husband and wife, it is just more than just to have a happy home life, a happy married life, but it must be the overflowing of the fullness of Christ in that relationship between the husband and the wife. And that is why Paul says, wives be subject to your husbands and husbands love your wives and do not be bitter against them. It's all because of this.

And if the Lord gives you children, here children must obey their parents in all things. This is well pleading to the Lord and the parents should not discourage their children that they be disheartened. Now, I do not need to go into this because it is evident.

And then thirdly you'll find Paul enters into this social life. We are not hermits. We live in this world.

And yet we are not of this world. Now how are we to live in this world? To express the fullness of Christ in this world. First, persevere in prayer.

Watchful in it with thanksgiving. Dear brothers and sisters, we live in a very dangerous world. It is full of temptation.

How easily we will be led astray, deceived. So we must pray, watch and pray that you do not enter into it. Pray that the purpose of God may be fulfilled in you.

Pray that door may be opened for the, speaking of the mystery of Christ, that many may be brought into the fullness of God. Walk in wisdom towards those without, redeeming opportunity. We are in the world yet we are not of the world.

Because we are not of the world, we are sent into the world. There is a mission. We must seize opportunity for Christ.

Let your word be always with grace, seasoned with salt, so as to know how ye ought to answer each one. I have troubled in this verse for many years. Let your word be always with grace.

I can understand that. Let your word be always with grace. Gracious word.

Word that brings grace to people. But I cannot understand seasoned with salt. It is true that in our cooking, in our food, we want to season it with salt to make it more tasty, more effective.

But I cannot understand this verse. Let your word be always with grace. Isn't that enough? Seasoned with salt.

What is that salt? How do you season it? I'm not an expositor, a commentator. But one day, it seems to satisfy me. But if that doesn't satisfy you, I'm perfectly happy.

One day it came to me, seasoned with salt. What can that mean? Ah, the Lord said ye are the salt of the earth. We are the salt.

There is a salty taste in us. If the soul should lose its taste, the soul is useless. Brothers and sisters, what is this? This is life.

Life. Our life in Christ. Our life with Christ.

The fullness of Christ in us. Christ in you. The hope of glory.

This is salt. We are the salt. No matter how gracious you speak, if your life does not season it, it's not effective.

It's not effective. You have to season it with your life. And when there is a lie behind the gracious word, you'll find effectiveness there.

Effectiveness in your witnessing. In your answering the question. It is the outflowing of the fullness of Christ.

So dear brothers and sisters, we find that the body which is the fullness of Him who fills all in all, and that fullness is ordained to be seen, heard, touched, and known by the Church. May the Lord be merciful to you.

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