

**“The Dispensation of the Mystery — Part 3:
The Fullness of Christ’s Supply Given to Us for Our Empowering”**

Previously:

- ***The Fullness of the Word of God Given to Paul for Our Edification***
- ***The Fullness of the Sufferings of Christ Given to Paul for Our Example***

Today: The Fullness of Christ’s Supply Given to Us for Our Empowering

Review:

Col. 1:19-23

19 For it pleased [the Father] that in him should all fulness dwell;

20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, [I say], whether [they be] things in earth, or things in heaven.

21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in [your] mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

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

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

Col. 1:24-29

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

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

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

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

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

- ***So Paul’s Teaching is Clear that He Fulfilled the Sufferings of Christ in His Body***

Col. 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church

- ***So there is an intimate connection indeed revealed here between the head and the body of Christ. Christ is the head and we are the members of his Body. Such an exalted and wonderful truth to know and a truth that surely does make a difference for us. Amen?***
- ***So Paul could suffer also with Christ and this was his privilege indeed, he writes so often.***
- ***So Paul's Example is Powerful as We are Enabled to Suffer as Paul Did***
 - ***Some conclusions really MUST be drawn from this:***
 - ***Paul writes that his suffering “fulfilled” the sufferings of Christ that remained; additionally, his sufferings were “for us”. If so, the question must be: “how?” In what way were the sufferings of Paul the sufferings of Christ? Verse 27 is the key: “To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”***
 - ***The Head and Body analogy gives us the key here. CHRIST HAS SO SHARED HIMSELF WITH US ALL (1 COR. 15:45!!) AND HAS BROUGHT INTO BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST WITH HIMSELF AS ITS HEAD. Therefore, when one member or part suffers so does all the other members. (see also 1 Cor. 12:25-27)***

These are such profound statements. So Christ himself suffered in the atonement for our sins and now we see that Paul also suffered for our sakes, he says, in some sense. That is clearly stated. And it is my conviction that it can be understood if we have a clear view of the Body teaching that Paul alone reveals. But how can we suffer for his sake? And, is this only something that the apostle could experience? The Body analogy should have convinced us that this is not only for the Apostle.

- ***So we may suffer as Paul did - and we are so exhorted (he is our example)!! This is surely not only Paul but also ourselves as 2 Cor. 1:5-7 states so clearly:***
5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.
6 And whether we be afflicted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual [Gk. energized] in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation.
7 And our hope of you [is] stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so [shall ye be] also of the consolation.
- ***May each of us who hear these words and read these scriptures take to heart what God's greatest work is today in the hearts of his people. And may we not forget that suffering for Christ's sake is our privilege and not a curse. Amen.***

Summary:

Col. 1:24-29 [Paul's example for us]

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

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

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

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

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. [This leads us directly to our subject today, the empowering whereby Paul could write such words about himself and his example for us . . .]

Today: The Fullness of Christ's Supply Given to Us for Our Empowering:

- ***So, that such a great and eternally blessed life and ministry is designed by Almighty God for us is clear. But since this is so far beyond our ordinary human experience, we have many questions without answers — that is, apart from the word of the living God. How then are we empowered for this great ministry is the grand question?***

- ***It is that question that we seek to gain an answer to today as we look into God's precious revelation through his apostle of the Gentiles, Paul.***

Our Key Scripture is Phil. 1:19-21:

Phil. 1:19-21

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 According to my earnest expectation and [my] hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but [that] with all boldness, as always, [so] now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether [it be] by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain.

- ***This is a most amazing statement indeed. Is your spirit moved by it, drawn by it, into a passion to comprehend all the dimensions of it? I pray that it is. There are several key scriptures where Paul answers the question. Through them we may gain the understanding of how God operates today under the fullness of his grace and how we may enter into that working ourselves.***
 - ***1 Cor. 15:45-50 Christ's resurrection life is now ours! Moreover, he is the "life-giving spirit".***
 - ***Rom. 8:9-10 Both the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ dwell in every believer today. This provides the energizing for the Christian Life we are all to live.***
 - ***2 Cor. 4:8-12 & 1:3-7 This resurrection quality of life is Christ's own life as it is now. As we suffer, he suffers and as he suffers, we suffer. And through it all, he supplies our every need and indeed his grace is magnified in our suffering and it is always sufficient. That is his promise to us.***
 - ***Phil. 1:19-21 Our earnest expectation and our hope is a reality. This is summary of what our entire life and experience, our testimony should be.***

I. Newness of Life is Ours Through Christ's Resurrection:

[READ] 1 Cor. 15:42-49

42 So also [is] the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [was made] a quickening spirit.

46 Howbeit that [was] not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man [is] of the earth, earthy: the second man [is] the Lord from heaven.

48 As [is] the earthy, such [are] they also that are earthy: and as [is] the heavenly, such [are] they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

- ***This passage is all about our promised resurrection (or translation, the rapture) that we will experience on that appointed day. In his resurrection Christ has become according to Paul “a life-giving spirit”. This is profound teaching and so important if we would understand our current salvation under grace, and, of course, if we would understand what God is doing today under the dispensation of the grace of God as we will see if we look at our next scriptures.***

II. Christ’s Resurrection Life Has Been Shared with us Through His Indwelling:

[READ] Rom. 8:9-10

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness.

- ***So we see here that is often not taught, namely, that we are indwell by Christ in addition to the Holy Spirit. Yes, we are indwell by the Holy Spirit. But the indwelling of Christ is the basis for our new life since it is through his indwelling that we have a newness of life as Rom. 6:4 indicates. It is clearly stated here that “the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness.”***
- ***This is a restatement of what Paul wrote in Rom. 4:25 . . . Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.***
- ***So it is the imputed righteousness of Christ that makes the difference. Because of that we have been granted newness of life through Christ’s indwelling. It is his resurrection life that we therefore possess. That proves to be essential to the teaching we are enjoying today. Because of this, we possess the life of Christ***

and as he is still suffering today (as we saw in our last lesson), then we also have the privilege of suffering with him and for his sake.

III. The Manifestation of Christ in Us Invites Our Suffering With Him:

[READ] 2 Cor. 4:8-12

8 [We are] troubled on every side, yet not distressed; [we are] perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

[READ] 2 Cor. 1:3-7

3 Blessed [be] God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

6 And whether we be afflicted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual [Gk. energetic] in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation.

7 And our hope of you [is] steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so [shall ye be] also of the consolation.

- *We have reached the depth of the teaching here. We have come full circle. Christ suffers as the head of the Body church. And we also must suffer because of our intimate personal connection to him. He even indwells us with his life by his spirit. This is profound but it is knowable Paul writes here and it is also something that we should be experiencing day by day and hour by hour.*
- *For as we suffer with him, we also are comforted abundantly by Christ. So this is the source of our empowering. And this brings us to our final scripture (which is our key scripture for today):*

IV. **Our Hope and Expectation Always Should Be to Magnify Christ in Our Bodies (Whether by Life or by Death):**

This brings us to our key scripture for today, and a powerful one it is!!

[READ] Phil. 1:19-21

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 According to my earnest expectation and [my] hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but [that] with all boldness, as always, [so] now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether [it be] by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain.

- ***Paul was confident with an earnest expectation of his “salvation”. The salvation here in this context was the constant trials since he had been imprisoned. False brethren and false teachers were doing their work and Paul might have been very discouraged. But he was not. Why not? The answer is here. It was the constant “supply” provided by “the Spirit of Jesus Christ”!***

- ***Another reference would be in Colossians:***

Col. 2:19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands **having nourishment ministered**, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

- ***That constant supply provided what would have been otherwise lacking. It caused Paul to have a great hope and expectation that he would NEVER be ashamed regarding the ministry he had already given. In fact, his great confidence in the Lord extended even to the time he would now serve in prison, even if it resulted in his death!! These words indicate that in Paul “the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” in Paul was effective. He would find God’s grace to be all sufficient, even if death were soon to come. It did not, but he was ready. Are you ready? Am I? May it be so.***
- ***There is no greater manifestation of Christ’s enabling in a believer’s life than this: to be confident and expectant. Always being delivered unto death for Jesus’s sake allowed Paul to demonstrate the resurrected life and glory of his savior, the Lord Jesus.***

Conclusions:

- ***Newness of Life is Ours Through Christ's Resurrection***
- ***Christ's Resurrection Life Has Been Shared with us Through His Indwelling***
- ***The Manifestation of Christ in Us Invites Our Suffering With Him***
- ***Our Hope and Expectation Always Should Be to Magnify Christ in Our Bodies (Whether by Life or by Death)***

Indeed, "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain." Amen and amen. It is so true as Paul wrote in Colossians 3:

Col. 3:1-4

1 If [since] ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, [who is] our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

- ***What is God doing today then? Has the apostle answered this question to our satisfaction in these scriptures?***
- ***What about us today saved by grace and living in newness of life?***
- ***What is our empowering for this life?***
 - ***The "embedded" Christ Jesus!***
 - ***He has shared his resurrection life with us - this is unique for this working of God under the abundance of grace in this dispensation of the grace of God***
 - ***But for this we are delivered to death for Jesus sake. What does this mean to you personally?***
- ***Are we enjoying him as he works out through us the ministration of life?***
- ***What are the many even countless blessings of this?***

Any testimonies?

And the path of newness of life involves our appropriation of his resurrection quality of life, having been identified with him in his death, in his burial and in his resurrection. Paul writes that this may and should be a matter of our experience.

Amen.