

Title: **CHRIST'S FULNESS**
OUR INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLY

Text: John 1:16
Subject: *Christ's Meditorial Fulness*
Date: Sunday Morning — February 10, 2008
Tape: John #6
Reading: *1 Kings 17:8-16*

8. And the word of the LORD came unto him (Elijah), saying,
9. Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.
10. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman *was* there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.
11. And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.
12. And she said, *As* the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.
13. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.
14. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.
15. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days.
16. *And* the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

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INTRODUCTION

Let's go to John 1:16. My subject is **CHRIST'S FULNESS** — **OUR INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLY**. Elijah's words to the widow of Zarephath would also be a good title for my message. — This "*barrel of meal shall not waste*" (1 Kings 7:14).

(John 1:16) "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

Actually, verse 16 should be understood as a continuation of John's description of our Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 15 is a parenthetical insertion, in which John the Apostle tells us, as he did in verses 6 and 7, that John the Baptist preached the same message he preached. So, let's read verses 14 and 16 together.

(John 1:14, 16) "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth...And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the revelation of the triune God. In him we behold the glory of the triune God. I mean by that that in his crucifixion, his resurrection, his ascension, his session at the right hand of God and his Second Advent, beholding him as our all-sufficient Savior, we behold his glory, "*the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*" — And "*of his fulness*" all God's elect, in all ages past and in all ages to come, receive an inexhaustible supply of grace. That is the meaning of John's words in these two verses. Now, let me expand that.

OUR GLORIOUS SAVIOR

First, John's words direct our hearts and minds to the person of our glorious Savior himself, the Word who was made flesh and dwelt among us. I feel like old John Newton, who once said...

"I am well satisfied it will not be a burden to me at the hour of death, nor be laid to my charge at the day of judgment, that I have thought too highly of the Lord Jesus Christ or labored too much in

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commending and setting Him forth to others, as the Alpha and Omega, the Lord our righteousness, the sufficient atonement for sin, the only Mediator between God and men, the true God and eternal life. On the contrary, alas! My guilt and grief are that my thoughts of Him are so faint, so infrequent, and my commendations of Him so lamentably cold and disproportionate to what they ought to be.”

Others are mentioned here, but they are insignificant. — “All we” are mentioned; but we are mentioned only as receivers “*of his fulness.*” All honor is reserved for Christ alone. — “*Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake*” (Psalm 115:1). — “*Of his fulness have all we received.*” Christ is, and ever must be, preeminent!

He is “the Word,” the Speech of God, the distinct, intelligible Declaration and Revelation of the eternal God, the Unfolding of the Father's being, character, thoughts, will and heart. Would you see God? Behold Christ, for he is God's Word, the Revelation of Deity. He declares, “*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*”

But our blessed Savior is much more than a mere word, a mere expression of God's thoughts. He is God the eternal Son, from whose fulness we receive all grace. Look at verses 1-5.

- “**In the beginning was the Word.**” With those words the Holy Spirit asserts Christ's eternity.
- “**And the Word was God.**” With those words our Savior's deity is declared.
- John also ascribes to our Savior the acts of God. — “**Without him was not anything made that was made.**”
- He declares that Christ is self-existent, which is but another way of saying he is God. — “**In him was life.**”
- In 1 John 1:5, John declares, “*God is light, and in him is no darkness at all;*” and he tells us in verse 9 that the Word is “*the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*”

He could have been more explicit in his declarations of the fact that he from whom we receive grace and salvation is himself God, over all and blessed forever.

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And John is quick to assert that he who is God our Savior is bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh, a real man. “The Word was made flesh.” He did not merely assume our nature, but was “*made flesh.*” John does not even say the Word was made a man. He says, “*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*” He pitched his tent with the sons of men. He dwelt among sinners and sufferers, among mourners and mortals, completing his pilgrimage among us by becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross.

I have said all that to say this: — The triune God has treasured up the fulness of his infinite grace in a person so august that heaven and earth tremble at the majesty of his presence, and yet in a person so humble that he is not ashamed to call us “*brethren.*”

“A Man there is, a real Man,
With wounds still gaping wide,
From which rich streams of blood once ran,
In hands, and feet, and side.

‘Tis no wild fancy of our brains,
No metaphor we speak;
The same dear Man in heaven now reigns,
That suffered for our sake.

This wondrous Man of whom we tell,
Is true Almighty God;
He bought our souls from death and hell;
The price, His own heart’s blood.

That human heart He still retains,
Though throned in highest bliss;
And feels each tempted member’s pains;
For our affliction’s His.

Come, then, repenting sinner, come;
Approach with humble faith;
Owe what thou wilt, the total sum
Is cancelled by His death!

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His blood can cleanse the blackest soul,
And wash our guilt away;
He will present us sound and whole
In that tremendous day.”

Joseph Hart

Have you ever noticed that, throughout this chapter, John seems to purposefully take our thoughts away from any other, and points us to Christ alone, as if to say, “Christ alone is important.” Others are mentioned, but each one as he is introduced, is immediately followed with a disclaimer.

- He mentions John the Baptist, the greatest of all the prophets, several times, but each time with a disclaimer. John came “*to bear witness of the Light*” (v. 7); but “*he was not that Light*” (v. 8). — John was the forerunner of Christ; but he declared, “*I am not the Christ*” (v. 20).
- Moses is mentioned (v. 17); but he bows before the Lamb of God because, though “*the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*”
- Andrew, Simon, Phillip, Nathaniel and even the angels of God are named in the chapter; but everything ascends and descends upon the Son of Man, our all-glorious Christ.

That is as it should be and must be, because God has ordained that in all things he must have the preeminence. Prophets, Apostles, all men and all angels must decrease and be decreased before him, and he must increase and be increased by us. Nothing and no one shines in the light of the Sun of Righteousness except the Sun himself. — **Christ stands alone!**

- As the Word of God.
- As Life.
- As the Light of Men.
- As the Infinite Fountain of all Grace.

Oh, that we might so see the Lord Jesus Christ in his glorious majesty and greatness as our Savior, that like the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration we may see “*no man, save Jesus only!*” — Make much of Christ and little of everything else!

HIS FULNESS

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God the Holy Spirit teaches two things in verse 16 that are indescribably precious to those who, by the grace of God, have experienced them.

(John 1:16) “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”

First he tells us that all fulness is treasured up in this glorious person, our Lord Jesus Christ. Second, he tells us that all the fulness treasured up in Christ is an inexhaustible supply of grace from which all God's elect receive all grace.

“His Fulness” — First, think about the fulness that is treasured up in the Lord Jesus. — “*His fulness,*” What a subject! — “*His fulness!*” If I had no other text given me to preach from until I have drawn my last breath, this might suffice. — “*His fulness!*” Here is a fulness which cannot be measured. John is talking about “*the fulness of him that filleth all in all!*” It is an infinite fulness (Colossians 1:18-19; 2:9-10).

(Colossians 1:18-19) “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. (19) For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell.”

(Colossians 2:9-10) “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (10) And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”

I am talking about “*His fulness.*” The fulness from which we receive grace is in Christ, in him alone, in him and nowhere else! — There is no fulness to be found...

- In Any Man.
- In Any Church.
- In Any Religious Ritual, Ceremony, or Ordinance!
- In Any Experience!

Paul tells us “*it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.*” **“His fulness” is “all fulness!”** All fulness is in him, infinite, incomprehensible, divine, saving fulness, all of it is in Immanuel! God has

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placed all fulness in his Son. Where else could he put it? All fulness is in Christ radically. It cannot be had anywhere else.

- It is not in his doctrine, but in him.
- It is not in his Word, but in him!
- It is not in his blood, but in him!
- It is not in his righteousness, but in him!

Listen to me. — It is the Person of Christ that gives worth, weight, merit and efficacy to his Word, his offices and his work, not the other way round! Would you get grace? Would you get salvation? You must get Christ! You must receive it from “*his fulness.*” Christ alone is...

- Great enough to contain all fulness!
- Immutable enough to retain all fulness!
- Suitable enough to distribute all fulness.

I repeat, “*His fulness*” is “*all fulness!*” What a superlative wealth of meaning there is in that statement! **What a word of comfort this is for us poor, bankrupt sinners!** By nature we are all emptiness and vanity; but “*all fulness*” is in Christ. In us there is an utter lack of merit before God, a total absence of power to gain merit with God, and a complete absence of will to obey God, even if we had the ability to do so. But in Christ there is “*all fulness!*”

O my heart, Rejoice in this! O my soul, Dance before the Ark of God! Everywhere else in this universe there nothing but barrenness and emptiness. — “*Vanity of vanity all is vanity!*” But, blessed be our God forever, he has provided all fulness in Christ. In us there is all emptiness and utter vanity. — “*In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing.*” But in Christ there is “*all fulness!*”

As I said, in us there is a lack of all merit, an absence of all power to procure any, and even an absence of will to procure it if we could. Our nature is a desert, empty and void and waste, inhabited only by sin, darkness and death. **We are all emptiness; but in Christ dwells all fulness!**

- Are you dead? – Christ is Life!
- Are you sin? – Christ is Righteousness!
- Are you naked? – Christ is Clothing!
- Are you hungry? – Christ is Bread!

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- Are you thirsty? – Christ is Water!
- Are you dirty? – Christ is Cleansing!
- Are you blind? – Christ is Light!
- Are you weary? – Christ is Rest!
- Are you a debtor? – Christ is Ransom!
- Are you helpless? – Christ is Strength!
- Are you guilty? – Christ is Pardon!
- Are you a prisoner? – Christ is Liberty!
- Are you condemned? – Christ is Deliverance!
- Are you emptiness? – Christ is Fulness!

Christ is substance, not the shadow of fulness. — Fulness, not the foretaste of fulness. — The reality, not the picture of fulness! Let me show you what I mean. — The Old Testament types are instructive, but not saving. The ordinances and ceremonies of the law pointed us to One who would put away sin; but they could never do so. Those sacrifices were beautiful, costly and impressive; but they could never satisfy the justice of God, silence a guilty conscience, or put away a single sin.

1. **Christ is all the fulness of all the Old Testament types and pictures** (Hebrews 10:1-14).

(Hebrews 10:1-14) “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. 4 For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first,

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that he may establish the second. *10* By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. *11* And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: *12* But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; *13* From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. *14* For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace
Or wash away one stain;
But Christ the Lamb of God
Takes all our sin away,
A Sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they!

You can be sure of this. — If those rituals and sacrifices ordained by God could never put away sin, what you do certainly can't! **Christ is all fulness!**

2. **Christ is all the fulness of the law.**

(Romans 10:1-13) “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. *2* For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. *3* For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. *4* For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. *5* For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. *6* But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*;) *7* Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) *8* But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; *9* That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou

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shalt be saved. *10* For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. *11* For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. *12* For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. *13* For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

3. **Christ is all the fulness of all God's eternal purposes** (Romans 8:28-31).

(Romans 8:28-31) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. *29* For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. *30* Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. *31* What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?”

4. Let me give the bell another ring. — **There is in the Lord Jesus Christ all the fulness of the Triune Godhead** (Colossians 2:9-10).

(Colossians 2:9-10) “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. *10* And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”

Jesus Christ the Man is the eternal God, possessing all the attributes of divinity. Obviously, his manhood is neither eternal, omnipotent, nor omnipresent! Yet, his manhood is so united with his Godhead that that Man who sits in glory is himself God. He is “*the mighty God!*”

Still there is more. — **All the fulness of the infinite, triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, resides in the body of that Man who died at Calvary and now reigns over all things.** Jesus Christ is God! Jesus Christ is all of God we now know, and all of God we shall ever know! Jesus Christ is all there is of God! We are Trinitarians (1 John 5:7). However, all fulness

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of the triune God resides in and is known only by Jesus Christ, in whom all fulness dwells.

4. Yet, there is more, and this, I am sure is both John's and Paul's primary intent. — **All the fulness of grace is in Christ!** This "*all fulness*" is in Christ mediatorially. It is in Christ for us! "*His fulness*" is the fulness of the one Mediator between God and men.

As the result of our Lord's mediatorial work as our Surety, Substitute and Representative before God, as the result of all that he has done in bringing in everlasting righteousness, in putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and in the redemption he accomplished at Calvary, all fulness dwells in him. — All fulness for us toward God — And all fulness for us from God!

All fulness for us toward God dwells in Christ. I mean by that statement that all that God almighty requires of us dwells in Christ, perfectly and perpetually.

(1 Corinthians 1:30-31) "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: *31* That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

And all fulness for us from God dwells in Christ. — "*Of his fulness have we received, and grace for grace!*" I say to you, saints and sinners alike, everything you need, everything your soul requires is in Christ, our all-glorious, all-sufficient Savior! With confident joy we sing...

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find!

(Romans 8:32) "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

(Ephesians 1:3-7) "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: *4* According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame

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before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

What do you want? What does your soul need? It is in Christ. All fulness dwells in Christ! Go to Christ for your soul's need!

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| * A New Heart? | * A Broken Heart? |
| * Faith? | * Repentance? |
| * Life? | * Preservation? |
| * Cleansing? | * Comfort? |
| * Assurance? | |

What mortal tongue can express this infinite bounty? All fulness is in Christ! And this Christ is ours! — *“The LORD is the Portion of your inheritance and your cup!”* Try to get hold of this. — If you are in Christ *“his fulness”* is yours! — Infinitely yours! — Eternally yours! — Presently yours! — What can you lack?

(1 Corinthians 3:21-23) “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.”

“His fulness” is the fulness of grace. It was a fulness of grace in him that made him enter into the eternal covenant and undertake suretyship engagements for us. — It was a fulness of love and grace which sustained him in the discharge of his liabilities as our Great Surety. — It is the fulness of grace that yet constrains him to persevere in his work, saying, *“For Zion's sake I will not rest, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not hold my peace.”*

In Christ there is a fulness of grace to bestow upon needy sinners.

- a fulness of pardoning grace, so that no sin can ever exceed his power to forgive;
- a fulness of justifying grace, so that he *“justifieth the ungodly;”*
- a fulness of converting grace, so that he calls to himself whom he will;

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- a fulness of quickening grace, for “*He quickeneth whom he will;*”
- a fulness of purifying grace, for his blood “*cleanseth us from all sin;*”
- a fulness of comforting grace, for he will never leave you comfortless;
- a fulness of sustaining grace, for “*he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep;*”
- a fulness of satisfying grace, for with Christ as our Shepherd we shall not want;
- a fulness of restoring grace, for “*he restoreth my soul;*”
- a fulness of sufficient grace, for he has said, “*My grace is sufficient for thee!*”

He is never limited in any gift or grace, but always full. Drink of “*his fulness!*” Dive into this vast ocean of “*his fulness,*” and you will know far more than I ever preach to you.

INFINITE FULNESS

“*His fulness*” is infinite fulness, an inexhaustible barrel of fulness. Look at out text one more time.

(John 1:16) “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”

Mark those words “*all we.*” “*All we,*” John says, “*have received grace for grace.*” Yet, he calls it “*fulness;*” and, as we have seen, in Colossians 1:19 the Spirit of God calls it “*all fulness.*” It was a fulness before the first sinner came to it to receive pardon — before the first sinner drank of that river the streams whereof make glad the city of God; and now, after myriads of blood-bought sinners, have drunk of this life-giving stream, it is just as full as ever. Christ is still an infinite ocean of fulness! — This “*barrel of meal shall not waste!*”

FULNESS RECEIVED

I can only give you a few brief thoughts about the second thing taught in our text. That is this: God’s saints have all “*received*” of “*his fulness*” “*grace for grace,*” heaps upon heaps of grace. The word “*received*” is the same word as is used in verse 12. It is not a passive verb, but a verb of action. It refers to the act of faith, believing in Christ.

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(John 1:12-14) “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (14) And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

(John 1:16) “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”

1. All God’s elect who have believed on the Lord Jesus have received and are receiving of “*his fulness*” heaps upon heaps of grace.
2. If you would have grace, you must receive it of “*his fulness*,” too.
3. But you will never receive of “*his fulness*” until he has filled you with emptiness.

(Psalms 107:9) “For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.”

(Proverbs 27:7) “The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.”

(Matthew 5:6) “Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

How I pray that the Lord will graciously empty you, that you may be filled. And I am certain of this fourth thing...

4. If you are empty, it is because Christ has come to fill your hungry soul with the fulness of his grace; and you shall receive “*of his fulness*” heaps upon heaps of grace!

“What comfort can a Savior bring
To those who never felt their woe?
A sinner is a sacred thing;
The Holy Ghost hath made him so.
New life from Him we must receive,
Before for sin we rightly grieve.”

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5. If you have received of “his fulness” heaps upon heaps of grace, you shall yet receive more of the same until grace brings you to glory.

May God so bless his Word to you that you may leave this place rejoicing, and saying with the Apostle John, — “*Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*” — This “*barrel of meal shall not waste!*”

Amen.