

Title:       **COMPLETE IN CHRIST**  
Text:       Colossians 2:10  
Subject:   *The Believer's Fulness, Completion,  
                  And Perfection In Christ*  
Date:       Sunday Morning—May 11, 2003  
Tape:       #X-59a  
Introduction:

Many of the saints in the region of Phrygia, where the churches of Colosse and Laodicea were located, had never seen Paul's face or heard his voice. And it now seemed very unlikely that they would ever meet in this world. Paul was a prisoner at Rome. He knew his end was near. But the apostle dearly loved the people of God in these places. And he was very concerned for their spiritual welfare. Many had crept into the church who denied the gospel of Christ and, with great subtlety, endeavored to turn the people of God away from "*the simplicity that is in Christ*" (2 Cor. 11:3).

**In Colossians 2:1-15, Paul communicates his concern to the Colossians and instructs them to be steadfast in the faith of Christ.** The instruction Paul gives in these verses is most applicable to the church today. Many today would turn us away from the simplicity that is in Christ. They tell us that we must have more than Christ, do more than simply trust Christ, experience more than the grace of God in Christ, and seek more than the fulness that is in Christ. I am concerned for your souls. Any **doctrine that turns you away from Christ, any doctrine that turns your eyes away from Christ, is not of God.** I admonish you to flee from such doctrine as you would flee the plague. **That doctrine that turns you away from Christ will land your soul in hell!**

**"I would that ye knew what great conflict (fear and concern) I have for you"** (v. 1). My concern is that your hearts might be "**comforted** (strengthened and sustained), **being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and** (both) **of the Father, and of Christ"** (v. 2). I want you to know the living God by faith. And I want you to enjoy the full comforting assurance of your knowledge of God in Christ. If you know Christ, if you are in Christ by faith, all is well.

**"In (him) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"** (v. 3). This is what Paul is saying: God has put all the riches of grace and glory, all the treasures of divine wisdom and spiritual knowledge, in his Son, the

Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior. Do not look for God's mercy, grace and righteousness anywhere but in Christ. All the knowledge of God, and everything pertaining to salvation, is in Christ (1 John 5:12, 20).

**1 John 5:12** "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

**1 John 5:20** "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

**"And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words"** (v. 4). Satan tries to sow seeds of error wherever the gospel of Christ is preached. His messengers do not openly deny Christ and salvation by grace. They mix the work of Christ with the works of men. They mix law and grace. And if Satan can get you to look to yourself and trust your own works, experiences, feelings, or emotions even partially he has ruined your soul altogether (Gal. 5:2, 4).

Though Paul was absent from them physically, his heart was with the people of God. Their orderly manner of life, orderly worship, and steadfastness in the faith of Christ caused him great joy (v. 5). These men and women had not yet been moved away from the hope of the gospel. And Paul was very concerned to do what he could to promote their continued steadfastness. His instructions are very simple and clear, but vital to the interests of their souls.

**"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him"** (v. 6). How did you first receive Christ? You received him by faith alone, without any works whatsoever of your own. You had no experiences, upon which to lean, no works, no feelings, no resolutions. You had nothing to bring to Christ but your sin. You received Christ alone as the sum and substance of all truth, the fulfillment of all promises, the fountain of all grace, the singular object of faith and love, and the only foundation of your hope before God. You trusted his blood alone for atonement, his righteousness alone for acceptance, and his intercession alone for salvation. In exactly the same manner as you first received Christ, now walk in him.

Continue living by the same faith, as a sinner trusting Christ alone for all things. If you get above this, you will forsake Christ altogether! We do not begin with Christ, and then go on to perfection in the strength of the flesh. The true believer begins by faith, lives by faith, and dies by faith, trusting Christ, only Christ, and nothing but Christ, all the way from the gates of hell to his entrance into glory. If you would live in faith, constantly trusting Christ, you must be...

**"Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving"** (v. 7). Like a tree, deeply rooted in the ground, faith takes hold of Christ, draws all strength, nourishment and life from him, and bears fruit by the constant supply of his grace. As a building is built upon and shaped according to its foundation, the believer is built upon Christ alone, and his life is molded to Christ. Child of God, see to it that you abound in this faith. Never forsake it. Never weary of it. Never look for any other source of comfort, strength, hope, or assurance than faith in Christ. Trusting Christ alone, you have abundant reason for thanksgiving before God. But there are many who would turn you away from the simplicity of the faith.

**"Beware lest any man Spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"** (v. 8). Do not allow anyone to turn you away from Christ by a show of intellectualism, philosophy and human reason. Your faith must be ruled by the Word of God alone. We build our doctrine only upon "Thus saith the LORD."

Let no one impose upon you the traditions of men, no matter how impressive and popular they are. There is no place for human tradition in the worship of the living God. Exactly in proportion as we receive the traditions of men, we depart from the worship of God. (Infant Baptism Baby Dedications Religious Entertainment Christmas Plays - Easter Rituals, etc.)

And you must never allow anyone to bring you back under the "rudiments of the world", the Mosaic ordinances. The rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, circumcision, abstaining from certain meats, sabbath observance, and all such things, were altogether typical. Christ has fulfilled them all! Any observance of such things today is sinful. All true worship is spiritual. God is not worshipped where dead men and women who observe dead, carnal ordinances. There is absolutely no need for men

to observe these things, seek any other foundation of hope before God, or look anywhere else for acceptance with God. Christ is all we need!

**"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"** (v. 9). Oh, how I wish I could communicate this one blessed truth to you! All that God is is in Christ, for he is himself God. All that God requires of sinners is in Christ. All that God gives to men and women is in Christ. And all that we can need, or desire, for time and eternity, is in Christ. All grace, all mercy, all love, all peace, all wisdom, all righteousness, all redemption, all sanctification, all salvation, all life is in Christ alone! And it is all in him in all fulness. You cannot add anything to his fulness! Now get these next words...

**"And are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power"** (v. 10). The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of all things. By virtue of his obedience to God as our Mediator, Christ has been given the place of supremacy, dominion and rule over the entire universe. And all who believe are complete in him. That is my subject this morning: **COMPLETE IN CHRIST**. I pray that God the Holy Spirit will enable me to preach effectually to your hearts, as I endeavor to show you both the fulness of Christ and the fulness of all true believers in Christ.

**PROPOSITION:** As all the fulness of the triune Godhead resides in Christ our Mediator, so all the fulness of Christ, the Mediator, is ours by faith; and we are complete in him.

### **DIVISIONS:**

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE IN CHRIST?
2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE COMPLETE IN CHRIST?
3. WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL RESULTS OF OUR BEING COMPLETE IN CHRIST?

### **I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE IN CHRIST?**

There are many answers given to that question in the Word of God. We who believe are in Christ by God's elective purpose. We are in the heart of our Savior's love, in the hand of his protective power, and in the eye of his constant care. But let's just stay with our text. Here Paul tells us what it is to be in Christ experimentally.

**A. TO BE IN CHRIST IS TO BE REGENERATED, BORN AGAIN, BY GOD'S SOVEREIGN GRACE** (v. 11).

**Colossians 2:11** "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."

Here the new birth is represented by the picture of circumcision. Circumcision was instituted by God as the token and seal of his covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17:10-13). It was a mark by which Israel was distinguished from all other nations. And it is a picture of what happens in a man's heart in regeneration (Rom. 2:28-29; Phil. 3:3).

**As circumcision symbolically cut away the filth of the flesh, in the new birth the Spirit of God cuts from the heart the body of sin.**

The believer does not cease to sin. But his heart is now made to detest his sin. He no longer loves sin. And he is no longer under the dominion and rule of sin. He has a new heart, a new will, a new nature. He is a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). In regeneration a righteous nature is imparted to him. And now he loves what once he hated, and hates what once he loved.

1. **In the Old Testament a child was named at the time of his circumcision** (Luke 1:59; 2:21). And in regeneration we have been given a new name. We have been made the sons of God (Gal. 4:6-7; 1 John 3:1-3).
2. **Circumcision gave the children of Israel the right to eat the passover** (Ex. 12:48).

The one thing required before being admitted to keep the passover was circumcision. And the new birth admits us to the Lord's Table. When we come together to celebrate redemption at the Lord's Table tonight, only one thing is required of you. Are you born of God? Do you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, you are welcome. The table of the Lord's is for the Lord's children only. But it is for all the Lord's children.

4. **But this spiritual circumcision is made without hands.** It is altogether a matter of the heart. It is the work of God the Holy Spirit.

**5. Circumcision was a mark.**

- A Painful Mark
- An Identifying Mark
- A Distinguishing Mark
- A Covenant Mark
- A Permanent Mark

**B. TO BE IN CHRIST IS TO TRUST HIM (v. 12).**

**Colossians 2:12** "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

All who are born of God are given faith in Christ. The one certain mark of the new birth is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And faith in Christ is publicly confessed by believer's baptism. Baptism is the ordinance of God by which we confess the faith of the gospel.

**1. The ordinance of baptism is described by Paul as a burial and a resurrection.**

There is no question that the only biblical mode of baptism is immersion. It is not possible for a person to be buried by sprinkling a few drops of water on his head, or pouring a cup of water on him. In order for a person to be buried in the waters of baptism, he must be covered with water. And the very word "*baptism*" means "immersion". It cannot be made to mean anything else, without considerable dishonesty.

I frequently hear and read things like, "The amount of water is not important, but only the attitude of the person being baptized," or "It is not the mode of baptism that is important, but the thing it represents." I fully agree that the heart attitude of the one being baptized is far more important than the amount of water used to baptize him. But if a person's attitude is right, he will be obedient to the Word of God. And if the thing symbolized in baptism is the believer's death, burial and resurrection with Christ, the only proper symbol is immersion.

**2. In baptism, we confess to the world our faith in the finished work of Christ and our allegiance to him as our sovereign Lord.**

Christ's death was my death. As I died in him at Calvary, I now acknowledge to the world that in him I am dead to the law, dead to my sin and dead to the world, and that by the Spirit of grace I have been raised in Christ from the death of sin to eternal life. In symbol of my death under the penalty of sin with Christ my Substitute, and of my resurrection to life by the Holy Spirit, I am buried with Christ in the watery grave of baptism and raised up from the watery grave to walk in the newness of life.

### 3. And baptism is an act of faith.

We are not baptized in order to get faith, but because God has given us faith in Christ. When the believer comes to the waters of baptism, he is performing an act of faith.

- Faith obeys God, and Baptism is the answer of a good conscience before God (1 Pet. 3:21).
- Looking back on the finished work of Christ, we trust him for complete atonement through his blood and perfect righteousness through his obedience.
- Looking up to Christ upon the throne, we trust him to keep us by his grace, so that we may persevere to the end, walking in the newness of life.

### 4. This faith in Christ, which we confess in our baptism, is the gift of the operation of God.

Faith is not something the sinner decides to do by his imaginary "free-will." Faith is not something the preacher talks a sinner into doing. Faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8), the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22) and the effectual work of his mighty power in regeneration (Eph. 1:19).

If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, it is because the Holy Spirit has given you faith. You are born again. You are a child of God. Come, confess Christ in baptism, determined to walk in the newness of life from this day forward by the grace of God.

To be in Christ is to be born again. To be in Christ is to trust him. And...

### **C. TO BE IN CHRIST IS TO BE THE OBJECT AND RECIPIENT OF GOD'S IMMUTABLE, SAVING GRACE IN HIM** (vv. 13-15).

**Colossians 2:13-15** "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

When God raised his Son from the dead, he was raised as our Representative. Christ lived, died and rose again as the Representative and Substitute of God's elect. And, as the result of his finished work, the blessings of God's saving grace have been effectually secured to his people. We all by nature are born dead in sin, because of our sin and fall in our father Adam (Rom. 5:12). But God has been gracious to us through Christ. Look at what he has done for us.

**1. He quickened us, gave us life and raised us up, together with Christ.** That means two things:

- a. When Christ arose from the dead, we rose in him representatively.
- b. In the new birth, we were raised from spiritual death to spiritual life by the power of Christ, our risen Savior.

**2. God has freely, completely forgiven us of all sin, through the merits of Christ's righteousness and shed blood.**

All our sins, past, present and future, all our sins, sins of youth and old age, sins of omission and sins of commission, sins of deed and sins of heart, all are freely and eternally forgiven by God through the merits of Christ our Substitute.

**3. And God's forgiveness of our sins is a just and righteous forgiveness.**

He does not simply ignore or excuse our sins. He removed our sins entirely from us by punishing them to the full extent of his own justice in Christ (Rom. 3:24-26).

(Romans 3:24-26) "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: {25} Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; {26} To



declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

The oracles and ordinances of God's holy law, being broken by us, were against us. The law of God demanded our execution. But Christ, by his blood, blotted out the law's accusations, and blotted out all our sins, nailing them to his cross (Isa. .43:25; 44:22). Blessed be God! "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 8:1).

**Are you, or are you not in Christ?** If you knew the value of your soul, if you knew the riches of his grace, if you knew the love of Christ, you would give no rest to your eyes until you found yourself to be in Christ. God help you to seek him. If you seek him with all your heart, you will find him. If you are in Christ, it is all because of God's free grace toward you. And if you are in Christ, "**Ye are complete in him.**"

## **II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE COMPLETE IN CHRIST?**

The word "*complete*" means "entire, finished, made full, perfect." Essentially, it is the same word used in verse 9, where Paul says, "*In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*" As all the fulness of the eternal God is Christ's, all the fulness of Christ as the Mediator and for sinners is yours and mine. This is astonishing grace indeed!

Today, men talk about "the fulness of the Spirit". But those men who were inspired by the Spirit of God wrote about "*the fulness of Christ*" who is "*the fulness of God*" and the fulness of all his people.

You can be sure of this fact: Men who are always talking about the Holy Spirit and telling men to seek the Holy Spirit, do not have the Holy Spirit. Those who are moved by the Spirit of God speak only of Christ. The Holy Spirit always speaks of Christ. He never speaks of himself. Never one time in the New Testament are men and women exhorted to seek the Holy Spirit. We are always exhorted to seek Christ. We love the Spirit of God and worship him. But we do not dishonor him by seeking anything other than that fulness which is in Christ.

I tell you, again, upon the authority of God's Holy Word, that anything which turns your eyes away from Christ to yourself, or even to the Holy

Spirit, is not of God. The Father and the Spirit always honor the Son and receive honor only by the Son.

Now, let me briefly show you from the Word of God a little of what it means to be complete in Christ. I cannot begin to explain the full meaning of our text. But if the Lord will enable me, I hope to give you great cause for faith, joy and praise.

**A. IF I AM COMPLETE IN CHRIST, I HAVE IN CHRIST ALL THAT GOD REQUIRES OF MAN** (1 Cor. 1:30).

**1 Corinthians 1:30** "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:"

Whatever God, in his holiness, righteousness, justice and truth, requires of fallen men, we have in Christ. God cannot require more than he has given us in Christ. When he gave us his dear Son, our heavenly Father freely gave us all things in his Son.

1. **CHRIST IS OUR WISDOM.** In ourselves, we have no wisdom. But the One who is our Savior is the very embodiment of wisdom (Pro. 8:12).

**In great wisdom, Christ, being one with the Father and the Spirit, devised a means of redemption for his people.** In the eternal covenant of grace, before the worlds were made, the three Persons of the holy Trinity devised and agreed upon the means of redemption and salvation. In that covenant, our dear Savior secured our eternal salvation with great, unerring wisdom. Volunteering to come into the world as a man, obey the law of God as our Representative and die under penalty of the law as our Substitute, Christ set into motion the great work of redemption, so that God might be both just and the Justifier of all his people. Only divine wisdom could have devised such a holy and merciful, just and gracious plan. And this wise God is made unto us wisdom.

**Christ is our wisdom efficiently,** because he is the Author and Cause of all true wisdom. He is the One who makes us wise unto salvation, gives us understanding in divine truth and grants us wisdom to know and do the will of God in this world.

**Christ is our wisdom objectively.** He is the Object of our highest wisdom. The fear of God, salvation, is the beginning of wisdom. The wisest person in all the world is the one who knows himself a sinner and knows the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, blood and intercession. If you know Christ, you are truly wise. If you have a saving interest in him, he has been made unto you wisdom.

**And the Lord Jesus Christ is our wisdom representatively.** He is our Head in whom all wisdom lies. Christ acts for us as our wisdom before God. He is our Counsellor and Advocate. He pleads our cause before God in the court of heaven and makes intercession for us, according to the will of God. And he makes the children of God wise as we walk before men in this world. We are all ignorant in spiritual matters by nature. But Christ gives babes in his kingdom the mouth of wisdom to confound the wise acres of this world.

**Illustration:** In my senior year of high school we had an English teacher who liked to poke fun at those of us who believed the Word of God. One day he said, "The crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel was all a myth. The Red Sea was really the Reed Sea. It was just a swampy marsh, only twelve to eighteen inches deep at the most." A young girl in the class responded immediately, "If that is so, perhaps the miracle was greater than we thought. It would be miraculous, indeed, for God to have drowned an experienced, well trained, well equipped Egyptian army in twelve inches of water!" Thus the Lord fulfilled his promise, "It shall be given you what ye shall speak" (Matt. 10:19).

**And, having the tongue of the learned, our Lord knows how to speak a word in season to his own.** When we are weary, distressed, or disconsolate he speaks to us by his Spirit through his Word to our hearts. And his word revives, strengthens and comforts our hearts. Christ our Wisdom directs our paths through this world and guides us with his counsel in the way we should go. He, with great wisdom, leads all his children safely to heaven.

## **2. CHRIST IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

We have no righteousness of our own. Christ is "*THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*" (Jer. 23:6). And we who believe are perfectly righteous in him (Jer. 33:16).

(Jeremiah 23:6) "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

(Jeremiah 33:16) "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness."

The Lord Jesus Christ, by his life of perfect obedience as a man, brought in an everlasting righteousness for his people. He magnified the law and made it honorable (Isa. 42:21). By the holiness of his nature, the obedience of his life, the sufferings of his death and the infinite merit of his divine Person, Christ has both removed all our sins and made us perfectly righteous in God's sight. This righteousness is freely and completely imputed to every sinner who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, just as our sins were imputed to him (Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:21). In the matter of Wisdom, we lack nothing. In the matter of righteousness we lack nothing.

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

When from the dust of death I rise,  
To take my mansion in the skies,  
E'en then shall this be all my plea,  
"Jesus hath lived and died for me!"

Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
For who aught to my charge shall lay?  
While through Thy blood absolved I am  
From sin's tremendous curse and shame.

This robe of Christ the same appears,  
Though ruined nature sinks in years;  
No age can change its glorious hue,  
The robe of Christ is ever new.

As Christ gives us complete wisdom and complete righteousness, he also gives us complete sanctification.

### **3. CHRIST IS MADE OF GOD UNTO US SANCTIFICATION.**

Righteousness has to do with our justification before God. Christ's righteousness has been imputed to us, and we have by that imputation been made accountable for his righteousness, just as he was by imputation made accountable for our sins. In sanctification the righteousness of Christ has been imparted to us. We have been given the holy nature of Christ by the new birth. This is that holy seed implanted in us, which cannot sin (1 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 3:9).

(2 Peter 1:4) "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

(1 John 3:9) "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

**The law of God required three things of us:** satisfaction for sin, perfect obedience and a perfectly holy nature. And God has provided for us in Christ all that he required of us in Christ.

**This sanctification is entirely the work of grace.** It is not in any measure the work of man. It is not a progressive thing. It is perfect. We grow in grace, but not in holiness. Christ is our holiness. We grow in faith, but not in righteousness. Christ is our righteousness. We grow in love, but not in purity before God. Christ is our only purity. The old man of nature is sin, nothing but sin. He cannot do good. And that old man never gets better, only worse with age. The new man created in us is holy, perfectly holy. He cannot sin. He struggles daily with the old man of sin. He rules over the old man. But we will never be free from that old man until death sets us free (Rom. 7:14-24; Gal. 5:17).

### **4. AND CHRIST JESUS IS MADE OF GOD UNTO US REDEMPTION.**

The word "*redemption*" is used throughout the Word of God to describe the whole work of salvation by grace. We usually think of it only as it relates to the price of ransom being paid to the offended justice of God.

But it speaks of much more. Redemption is the effectual accomplishment of salvation by Christ. Let me show you.

- Christ redeemed us out from under the curse of God's holy law by pouring out his life's blood unto death as our Substitute (Gal. 4:4-5; 3:13).

He did not merely make redemption possible. He effectually redeemed his people, satisfied justice for us, and put away all our sins.

- Then, in the fulness of time, Christ redeemed us out of the hand of our enemy by the power of his grace (Ps. 77:15; 106:8-10; 107:2; 136:23-24).

**Psalms 77:15** "Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah."

**Psalms 106:8-10** "Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known. 9 He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. 10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy."

**Psalms 107:2** "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."

**Psalms 136:23-24** "Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever: 24 And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever."

In regeneration, by the effectual call and irresistible grace of the Spirit, Christ sets his redeemed ones free from the bondage of sin, the curse of the law, and the dominion of Satan. All who were redeemed at Calvary, by the price of his blood, are in time redeemed by the irresistible power and grace of his Spirit.

**Illustration:** *A.J. Gordon and the Two Black Birds*

- And there is a day soon coming in which the Lord Jesus Christ shall redeem all his people from the grave (Hos. 13:14; Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; 4:30)

**Hosea 13:14** "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."

In that great resurrection day, our redemption shall be complete. All who were purchased at Calvary shall have been regenerated by the Spirit, and at one great moment they shall all be called up out of the grave to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord!

Children of God rejoice. "*Ye are complete in him!*" All that God requires of us we have, completely, fully and perfectly, in Christ. He is made of God unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. And our final redemption is now nearer than when we first believed!

**B. IF I AM IN CHRIST I POSSESS ALL THAT GOD CAN OR WILL BESTOW UPON MAN** (Eph. 1:3).

**Ephesians 1:3** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

God is the Author and Giver of all blessings. He alone can bless. If he blesses not, none can bless. But if he blesses, we are blessed indeed. And Paul tells us plainly that God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

1. **The blessings bestowed upon us in Christ are spiritual blessings.**

These are the things craved by the renewed heart. We seek not temporal things, but eternal things. These spiritual blessings are the eternal blessings of God upon our souls, by which salvation and eternal life in heaven are secured to us (2 Tim. 1:9-10).

(2 Timothy 1:9-10) "Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, {10} But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

2. God has, from eternity, blessed us with all spiritual blessings.

Note the word "all" Nothing good, nothing of real spiritual value, nothing we require is omitted. All the fulness of grace, all the blessings of the covenant, all the sure mercies of God, all things pertaining to life and godliness, in this world and in the world to come, have been bestowed upon all who trust the Son of God.

This is what it means to be complete in Christ. In him we have been given justification, sanctification, peace, pardon, eternal life and title deed to heaven. And all these blessings were given to us irrevocably, by the gift of God's sovereign grace in Christ, before the world began!

3. These spiritual blessings were bestowed upon us in heavenly places.

God who blessed us is in heaven. Christ, in whom we are blessed, is in heaven. We are blessed in heavenly places in Christ. And our blessedness will find completion in heaven, where our hope is, where our inheritance awaits us.

4. The blessings bestowed upon us are heavenly blessings.

They are secure, out of the reach of our enemies. Sin, Satan, and the world cannot rob us of that which God has given us in Christ.

Our covenant blessings in Christ came from heaven. They were given to us in heaven before the worlds were made. And they shall bring us to heaven in the end.

5. The blessings of God bestowed upon us are all in him who is our Head and Representative.

We are members of Christ. He is our Head and Representative-We are members of his body and partakers of him. We are blessed in him, through him, and for his sake. And Christ himself is the Substance of all blessing and blessedness.

- Christ received the blessings of grace in our name in the covenant of grace.



- All the blessings bestowed upon us are dependent upon Christ's obedience, not ours.
- And we already possess every blessing of grace in Christ (Rom. 8:28-30).

**Romans 8:28-30** "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."

We may not yet enjoy all the blessings of the covenant experimentally, but they are all already ours in Christ. And as surely as he has received them for us, we shall in time receive them from him.

This is the glorious heritage of the sons of God. **"Ye are complete in him!"** There is nothing lacking. Everything God can or will give to man he has from eternity given to all who are in Christ. And every blessing of grace in Christ is secure to all God's elect forever.

**C. IF I AM IN CHRIST, I AM COMPLETE IN HIM. THAT MEANS I HAVE IN CHRIST ALL THAT I NEED TO CARRY ME THROUGH THIS WORLD AND BRING ME SAFE TO HEAVEN** (Isa. 40:29; 2 Pet. 2:9).

**Isaiah 40:29** "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."

**2 Peter 2:9** "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

I do not know what lies ahead, what forces of darkness lay in wait for me, what trials or temptations shall meet me. But this I know—**My Lord's grace is sufficient!**

- No matter what I need of earthly good, my God shall supply my need (Phil. 4:19).

- No matter what temptation I meet, my God shall give me grace to escape it (1 Cor. 10:13).
- No matter what trial I face, my God shall sustain me with grace to endure the trial (Isa. 41:10).

(Isaiah 41:10) "Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

- No matter how I may fail him, sin against him, and dishonor his name, as I often do, my faithful Savior shall not fail me.

Fail him, I often do. Fail me, he never shall! He will lift me up when I fall. He will pray for me when I am tempted. He will plead for me when I sin. He will preserve me and keep me to the end and bring me safe to heaven. If left to myself, I know, I would forsake him. But, blessed be his name, Christ will not leave me to myself! (Jer. 32:38-40).

**Jeremiah 32:38-40** "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: 39 And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: 40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

**D. ONCE MORE, BEING COMPLETE IN CHRIST, I SHALL HAVE ALL THAT I NEED TO SATISFY MY HEART IN THE WORLD TO COME** (Pro.10:24).

**Proverbs** 10:24 "The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted."

### **Child Of God, what do you desire?**

- Do you desire to be free from all sin? It shall be granted.
- Do you desire to be perfectly obedient to Christ? It shall be granted.
- Do you desire to know, love and worship Christ perfectly? It shall be granted.
- Do you desire to be like Christ entirely? It shall be granted.
- Do you desire to be free of all fear? It shall be granted.

- Do you desire to be free of all trouble? It shall be granted.
- Do you desire to see the glory of God your Savior? It shall be granted.
- Do you desire to glorify your beloved Lord? It shall be granted.

Whatever it is that your renewed, sanctified heart desires, shall be granted to you in heaven's eternal glory. If even one small desire were left unfulfilled, would not be complete in Christ. But "*ye are complete in him.*"

### **III. WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL RESULTS OF OUR BEING COMPLETE IN CHRIST?**

Are you in Christ, united to him by a living union of faith? If you are, you are complete in him. I want you to know that before God, in the sight of God, you are complete, perfect, full, and entire. You lack nothing! Let no man set as judge over you, beguile you with false doctrine, bring you into bondage, move you from your steadfastness, or turn your eyes away from Christ.

#### **A. IF WE ARE COMPLETE IN CHRIST WE ARE ENTIRELY FREE IN HIM** (Col. 2:16-23).

**Colossians 2:16-23** "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. 18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 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. 20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."

1. We are entirely free from the curse of God's holy law (v. 14).

2. We are entirely free from the rule of the Mosaic law as a system of life government or motivation for service to God.

God's people are not godless, lawless rebels. But our hearts and lives are not ruled by law. We are ruled and motivated by our faith in, love for, and gratitude to the Lord God our Savior. If you ask for me to give you a rule to live by, the only rule of life I would ever lay before is this—**LOVE CHRIST**.

I heard **Bro. Maurice Montgomery** say this at one of our conferences: "If you love Christ, do what you want to."

3. And, being in Christ, we are entirely free from the traditions, commandments, and doctrines of men (vv.20-22).

We are complete in Christ. What do we care for the opinions of men? Christ is our only Lord, Master, and Lawgiver. We obey none but him. Christ is our only Prophet. We get our doctrine and practices from no one but him. Our religion is the religion of Christ. We have no regard for the religion of men.

**B. IF WE ARE COMPLETE IN CHRIST, WE SHOULD BE STEADFAST IN HIM** (vv. 8-9).

**Colossians 2:8-9** "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (9) For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Though others are carried about with every wind of doctrine, seeking new, deeper, more emotional experiences, we are content to seek the old paths and walk in them (Jer. 6:16).

**Jeremiah 6:16** "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Nothing is more exciting to our hearts than that which is most substantial. Only those who have no sure foundation for their souls need to be constantly seeking some new experience.

**C. BEING COMPLETE IN CHRIST, WE HAVE A SETTLED ASSURANCE OF OUR ACCEPTANCE AND ETERNAL SALVATION IN HIM.**

Our assurance before God is not based in any way upon anything done, felt, or experienced by us. We delight in times of reviving, in the sweet manifestations of Christ to our hearts, those blessed times of spiritual communion with our God. We delight in those times when the Spirit of God comes upon us enables us to worship and serve him with exceptional liberty. There is no experience on earth so delightful to my as that of being enabled to preach the gospel with the power of the Spirit, or worship God in the Spirit. But our hope and assurance rests in none of these things. Our assurance is Christ alone (2 Tim. 1:12).

**Application:**

1. If you would be complete in Christ, trust him, just trust him.
2. If God has given you faith in Christ, if he has made you complete in him, come and confess him publicly in believer's baptism.
3. Let all who are complete in Christ praise, honor and magnify him, and only him for complete, eternal salvation.

*"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 24-25).*

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<sup>1</sup> See Sermon #741 “Complete In Christ” - preached at Danville 7-12-87 **This Message Preached at:** Philippsburg, NJ 4-7-99—Danville (AM 03/28/99)—Danville (AM 05/11/03)  
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