

Unto Fulness #3 - the Way to Fulness

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the call to experience God's fullness through vision, understanding, and spiritual hunger, while addressing the complacency of the Laodicean condition in the church today.

Duration: 1:13:58

Scripture: John 12:23, John 12:25-26, Philippians 2:6-11

Topics: "Gods Love", "Christian Maturity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of love and how it drives believers towards God. When we believe in Jesus, not only does He love us, but He also implants His love within us. This implanted love creates a longing for God and a dissatisfaction with anything less than Him. The speaker emphasizes the importance of having a vision of the fullness of Christ and being joined into that vision as our life's purpose.

Transcript

The burden that the Lord has put upon my heart is on this matter of unto-fullness. At the beginning of this conference, we had two sessions on this matter of unto-fullness. For the sake of those who were not there during the first two sessions, and also to refresh the mind of those who were there but probably have forgotten, I would like just to very briefly go over what we already did in the past in order to lead us to the point we would like to share together this morning.

On this matter of unto-fullness. On the first session, at the first session, we shared together on this matter of the call to fullness. Brothers and sisters, God is calling us.

He is calling us unto His fullness. God's calling is an on-high calling. His calling is a heavenly calling.

His calling is a holy calling. And He is calling us to nothing less than unto His fullness. Why? Because this is in line with His own character.

Our God is a God of fullness. You cannot think of God other than fullness. He is full.

He is forever full. He has no lack. There can be no improvement upon Him.

He is perfect. He is complete. He is whole.

He is full. This is the very nature of God. That's the reason why anything and everything that has any relationship with God, that is related to God, has to be in this realm of fullness.

If it is not fullness, it is an affront to God. Therefore, when God calls us, brothers and sisters, and thank God we are all being called, when He calls us, He calls us to nothing less, nothing lower than fullness. Because this is His very nature, His very character.

But of course here we have a real problem. Because we are finite, even fallen beings. And for us finite beings, to comprehend the infinite God, it is beyond us.

I think we have to recognize at the very beginning that so far as we ourselves are concerned, this calling is beyond us. It's impossible to us. And it is for this reason that we really need vision.

In other words, unless God does reveal Himself to us, unless God opens up Himself to us, we will never be able to know who He is, what He is, how full He is. Vision is basic to our understanding of God and of His calling. I mentioned during the first session that our dear brother T. Austin Sparks, he gives more or less a definition of vision.

What is vision? What does a vision tell us? Now of course by vision I hope that nobody will mistake it as if it is something physical. By vision it simply means the unveiling of God's heart and mind to our spirit by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thank God our God is a God who reveals Himself.

It is His pleasure to reveal His Son in us. And when God reveals, then we see. Revelation comes from God and vision becomes our portion.

Now what does a vision, a real vision, a scriptural vision, tell us about? A vision that is from God will tell us three things. Number one, it tells us of God's purpose. It has to be related to God's eternal purpose.

Number two, a vision tells us the principles that govern His purpose. Number three, a vision tells us why and how we are being distracted, led away from God's purpose. And when these three things become our understanding and our portion, we know that we have received a vision from above.

So in this matter of the fullness of God, we need vision. We need God to reveal His fullness to us. Otherwise, it is always true that we make Christ small.

We make Him as small as we are. And we make the church insignificant because we do not see the church as the fullness of Christ. We need a vision of the fullness of Christ.

As we find in Colossians, all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily. And we are complete in Him. What is the fullness of Christ? How full is our Christ? How big is our Christ? How great is our Christ? All the fullness of the Godhead.

Anything that you can think of the attributes, of the character of God, all the fullness of the Godhead makes its permanent residence in Christ. In other words, the fullness of Christ is nothing less than the fullness of the Godhead. All the fullness of the Godhead makes its home in Christ.

This is how full our Christ is. And that is the reason why it takes us not only a lifetime to enter into the fullness of Christ. It takes eternity for us to do that.

We will never reach the end. It is from fullness unto fullness. Because Christ is so full.

And at the same time we need a revelation of the fullness of the church. In Ephesians we find that God has made Christ head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all and in all. Brothers and sisters, what is the church? The church is the fullness of Christ.

As the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ, so the fullness of Christ makes its permanent residence in the church. This is what the church is. Brothers and sisters, have we ever seen Christ? We may think surely we have seen Him.

We know Him. But do we know Him? Do we know the fullness of Christ? Do we know Him as God knows Him? Do we know the church? Probably we say we do. We know what the church is.

But do we really know what the church is? Have we seen it? It is the fullness of Christ. The fullness of Christ resides, makes His home in the church. And these are the visions that we need to see.

Because we know Christ and the church are the purpose, the eternal purpose of God. And we need to see the principles that govern our Christ and the church. And we need to understand why and how we are being far away from what Christ is, from what the church ought to be.

We need such vision. Now this morning we would like, we have to continue on, and we would like to consider together this matter of the way to fullness. Let's read two portions of scripture.

Philippians chapter two. The letter to the Philippians chapter two. We'll read from verse six through verse eleven.

Philippians chapter two, verse six through verse eleven. Christ Jesus, who subsisting in the form of God, did not estimate an object of replying to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking abominable form, taking His place in the likeness of man, and having been found in figure as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and granted Him a name, that which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal beings, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to God the Father's glory.

And the second portion is in the gospel according to John. John chapter twelve. We begin with verse twenty-three.

We know the background of this verse. Our Lord Jesus came to Jerusalem for the last time, before His crucifixion. And then certain Greeks, they came to Philip, and they asked, Sir, we desire to see Jesus.

In other words, when our Lord came into Jerusalem, a great crowd welcomed Him, and now even the Gentiles wanted to see Him. Humanly speaking, it was the most glorious time to our Lord. But listen to what the Lord Jesus said.

Verse twenty-three. But Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that a son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone.

But if it die, it bears much fruit. He that loves his life shall lose it, and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal. If anyone serve me, let him follow me.

And where I am, there also shall be my servant. And if anyone serve me, him shall the Father honor. May we look to the Lord in prayer.

Dear Heavenly Father, it is always Thy delight to glorify Thy beloved Son. So, our Father, our prayer today is, glorify Thy Son in the midst of Thy own people. We do pray that Thou will reveal to us Thy Son, and reveal to us the way into the fullness of Christ.

We need the spirit of wisdom and revelation, and we need faith and obedience that come from Thee. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

I would like to read to you again something from the writing of our dear brother T. Austin Sparks. As I consider this matter of fullness, I find that I couldn't find any material from any writing by any servant of the Lord, but in the writings of our dear brother T. Austin Sparks. Now, of course, the books that I have are limited.

I have to acknowledge that there might be other writings somewhere in the world that really teaches us about fullness. But unfortunately, I searched my own library, a small library, and I couldn't find any. So I have to quote brother Sparks again, again, and again.

I'm reading an article written by him thirty years ago, called Attaining to God's Full Thoughts. That was in a witness and testimony in 1956. And this is what he wrote.

Let us suppose that God had and has in His heart and mind a certain fullness of purpose which He has determined shall find expression by means of a people on this earth. Now he is putting in a way of supposing. But of course we know this supposing is really a reality.

Because God does have in His heart and mind a definite purpose, fullness of purpose. And this fullness of purpose He has determined that it should be expressed by a people on this earth. Thank God for that.

What do you think? Would He... What do you think would be some of the things that He would do in regard to such a company? Now God wants to find expression to the fullness of His purpose in a people upon the earth. Now what do you think He would do to this people? In the first place, would He sovereignly do something inside them? Would He induce within them a sense of need? A right sense of dissatisfaction? Disappointment? With existing general condition? Producing an inward longing for something? A sense there they should be something more? That this existing state is not what the Lord really means. For His own full satisfaction.

Would He thus reproduce inside these people His own discontent? Dissatisfaction? His own desire for something more in spiritual measure? Do you not think that that is one thing He will do? What will be the first thing that God will do to His people? The first thing He will do is He will sovereignly do something within them. It is not something external. He will stir within them a sense of dissatisfaction.

Disappointment. Over the existing general condition. And producing in them a longing for something more.

There must be something more. And it is that dissatisfaction of our Lord Himself. In other words, God is not satisfied.

And because He is not satisfied with existing state therefore He creates in a people a similar sense of dissatisfaction. It is not a wrong kind of dissatisfaction. You know, we can have a wrong kind of dissatisfaction.

But it is a right kind of dissatisfaction. That which God is not dissatisfied. That will be the first thing He will do.

Then, do you think that possessing perfect foreknowledge He would work sovereignly to provide for this inwrought sense of dissatisfaction and need to be met? To have the provision in existence so that there should be no contradiction or inconsistency in His way. So that He should not be seen to be one who causes a desire and a sense of need but makes no provision for it. These two thoughts surely would go together.

Does it sense likely that that is what He should do in the second place? In the first place He will create in us His own dissatisfaction. And then, being God who knows everything surely at the same time He must have made provision to meet that need. To feel, to take away, to fulfill the hunger and thirst that has been created.

In other words, He must have made provisions. You cannot think of God creating dissatisfaction in us for something more and yet there is nothing more. He must have provided for us.

Thirdly, do you think He would act sovereignly apart from these people so to arrange and govern their experiences, their lives that they were really headed up to His fuller thought? That is, in some way to begin with perhaps without their knowing why and what it meant He will bring them within the compass of that intention and provision of His and will shut all other doors to them so that they were unable to become absorbed in something else. Something more general. I do not mean by the letter something wrong or bad but something that just does not meet God in that measure in which He must be satisfied.

In other words, after He has put His own dissatisfaction in our hearts then He will make known to us that He has made provision to meet our need. And in order to bring these two things together He will do the third thing and that is again He will sovereignly even probably without your knowing He will lead you He will shut you up to a way, to a place where you just cannot be distracted by anything else. You have to stay put with this one thing.

Now, not that the other things are not good there are many many things that are good there are many many things that we can be occupied with but because God has a purpose there so He will not allow you to go to the right or to the left He will guide you and shut you in to the one thing that will give Him full satisfaction and that is what God will do. Dear brothers and sisters we live in the Laodicean period. If you take the seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 from the prophetic standpoint you will see that we today prophetically speaking we are living in the Laodicean period.

Now, what is the feature of the Laodicean period? Loqueness. Neither hot nor cold. In other words today you will find God's people are living in a state of complacency, of indifference.

We do not see our need. On the contrary probably we are like the Laodiceans. We think that we are rich.

We are in lack of nothing. Now in a sense it is true. We have a very rich Christian heritage.

Think that we have received through the twenty centuries all the riches that God has deposited in His church. So in one sense it is true. We have received a very rich Christian heritage.

But is it really ours? Do we have the vision? Do we have the righteousness? You remember our risen Lord? In writing to the church in Laodicea He said you are wretched. You are poor. You are naked.

You are blind. And yet at the very same time these people thought that they were rich. They lacking nothing.

They knew everything. They had it all. And isn't it true that today we are as God's people in the same situation? If our Lord Jesus, and He is, if He is walking into our midst what does He see in us? He will not be deceived by outward appearance.

We do. But we cannot deceive Him with our outward appearance. He knows our hearts.

He tries our reins. He knows exactly what is within you. Now, if the Lord should come into our midst this morning what will He say? Probably at this very moment as we are here even though we do not verbalize it probably this is what we feel about ourselves.

Probably we feel that we are rich. We know so much. We have received so much.

We are in lack of nothing. Probably we are comparing ourselves with other people and think that we are better. We are holier.

But the Lord will look at us. He will see us through. And He says, you do not know how wretched you are.

You do not know that you are poor. You are naked. You are blind.

I have gold for your poverty. I have white garment for your nakedness. I have eyes for your blindness.

But you do not appreciate. In other words, our Lord has much to offer to His people today. He has gold to offer us that we may be delivered from spiritual poverty.

He has white garment, righteousness to give to us to close our nakedness. But we do not even know we are naked. We think we are covered.

He has eyesalve to open our eyes that we may see. But we think that we see. We do not know ourselves.

He offers Himself to us in a full way. But often times we even resent Him. Because we think He misunderstands us.

We are in a state of lukewarmness. Neither hot nor cold. Think of multitudes and multitudes in Christianity who are so contented with the traditions of the Father.

How they rely upon the sacraments as a means to heaven. They do not desire for anything more. They are satisfied.

And think of the multitudes and multitudes of God's people who want nothing but to be saved, to go to heaven. That is their only desire. If they could go to heaven, that's all they want to.

Nothing more. They do not even have the desire, the longing for anything more than just initial salvation. As long as your two feet are within the gates of heaven, you are happy.

If we can see it, see the heart of God. He is to offer His beloved Son Christ to us in great fullness. And yet He finds there is none to accept His offer.

How much it must have hurt His heart. But thank God. Throughout the centuries, and thank God, even in our days, God does sovereignly do a thing.

He does sovereignly stir the hearts of some people on earth. He does put, if I may say, a holy discontent, a godly dissatisfaction in the hearts of some of His own people. We know there are lots of God's people who are not happy, not satisfied, murmur about this and about that.

They are not contented, they are not satisfied. But that is in the wrong sense. But where are those people who are dissatisfied in the right sense? They are more disappointed and dissatisfied with their spiritual condition before God than with the poverty around them.

We usually are dissatisfied with what's around us. But are we dissatisfied with ourselves? Do we see that we are not what we should be? Do we see that we are less than what God has for us? Do we realize that there is something more in Christ? Or do we think that we have it all? There is nothing more He can offer to us. Our spiritual progress is seized.

Dear brothers and sisters, God has to create in us a longing, a longing for something more. Now, we may not be able to know what we are really longing for. But somehow we feel within the depths of our being there is an emptiness.

There is a void that needs to be filled. This does not make us murmurous. No.

This does not make us rebellious. No. But this only stirs within us a searching, a seeking, a longing, a desire for something more of God, for something more of Christ.

Such desire is the beginning on the way to fullness. Our Lord Jesus said, Blessed are those who are hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Unless we have a hunger and thirst after righteousness, Brothers and sisters, do we feel we are pretty righteous? You know, one thing that is a real snare to God's people, especially for those who really seek the Lord and who has received something from the Lord, and that is self-righteousness.

We can be so self-righteous that there is no longer a hunger and a thirst after righteousness. The psalmist, for instance, Psalm 42, the psalm of Korah, and there you'll find the psalmist said, As the heart painteth after the water brooks, so painted my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.

Brothers and sisters, this is the kind of spirit that God has to create within us. That we will paint after God. A heart, chased by a hunter, when he sees a water, he paints after the water with all his soul.

And that is what God has to create in us. Such a painting after the living God. And of course in Psalm 84, you'll find the same feeling.

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jehovah. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Brothers and sisters, do you not think this is the first thing that God will really do within us? If we are people who are so contented, satisfied with what we are, and it is the grace of God, but we are so contented that we just sit there as if there is nothing more, do you think God can do anything with us? If he wants to do something with us, do you not think that he has to create such a dissatisfaction, such a longing for himself within us? That has to be the first thing.

And as our brother has suggested, God will put that kind of dissatisfaction in us is the very one who makes provision for us. And that is when you are really seeking him with such thirst and hunger. Brothers and sisters, he will reveal the fullness that is in Christ.

Do you not wonder sometimes that you have been saved for ten years, but it seems that during the last two years God has never spoken to you, God has never revealed himself to you, and all your knowledge of him is just two years old. Nothing fresh, nothing living, nothing new, nothing more. Do you not wonder why is it? Is it because he has nothing more to offer you? Is it because Christ is that small, that limited? Is it because he does not want you to enter into his fullness? Or is it because there is not that thirst and hunger after him? When you first believe in the Lord Jesus, you have such a thirst for him.

You cannot live without him. You seek after him. And because of that you find that he is always available, he is always there.

He answers your heart's desire. But no more. Oh, that we may cry to the Lord and ask him to create in us a thirst and a hunger for him.

And if it happens, you know revelation is on the way. God does not reveal himself to those who have no desire for him. God will not waste his revelation on those who are indifferent, but to those who seek they shall find.

It is his good pleasure to reveal Christ, the fullness of Christ. And brothers and sisters, actually it is a cycle. You know, sometimes in his condescending mercy, even though we are indifferent, we are not seeking, but in his condescending mercy he gives us a revelation.

He reveals something of Christ to us. And that revelation stirs us up to seek. And at other times you will find when we are seeking he reveals himself.

When you are seeking, you are looking for him, you find him. And it is a cycle. The more you seek, the more you see him.

The more you see him, the more you seek him. The more he gives himself to you, the more you long for him, because he is infinite. That is the way that you gradually enter, enter into his fullness.

To the Corinthian believers, Paul is not able to share with them the fullness of God. Why? Because they are very satisfied with the little of God. And they make that little a big thing.

But with the Confucian believers, Paul is able to open his heart and share with them the whole counsel of God. But you know, when God does give us vision and revelation, it requires obedience. Revelation is a very costly thing.

If you are afraid to pay the cost, don't ask for revelation. You know, sometimes we think, well, revelation, that's glorious. Because you are being taken to the third heaven.

And there you see God. Glorious. But are you prepared to pay the cost for it? Paul, on the road to Damascus, he received the revelation from above.

He was shown the broad outline of the fullness of Christ and the fullness of the Church. But through the years, that vision increases. Why? Because he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

In other words, when the Lord began to reveal to you His fullness, He demands your obedience. And if you obey, then He will reveal more to you. And if you do not, then you will stay where you are.

And maybe go backward. So this leads us to the third point. And the third point is, as God has created in us a desire for His fullness, and He begins to reveal that fullness in Christ, because you cannot find it anywhere else, the Colossians, believers, they want fullness.

But they try to find fullness in something other than Christ. They try to find fullness in philosophy. They try to find fullness in asceticism.

They try to find fullness by keeping certain rules and laws. They try to find fullness in mysticism. But fullness is not there.

All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily. In other words, Christ has the exclusive fullness of the Godhead. It's exclusive.

You cannot find fullness anywhere else. Now, it is true, sometimes we seem to find fullness in the world. It seems as if the world satisfies us.

But that's only for a short time. And then you'll find it's vanity of vanities, all of vanities. That's what the wisest of men have told us.

He had experienced it, and he told us that. You cannot find fullness anywhere else but in Christ. When you find fullness in Christ, that is fullness.

It is satisfying, complete, perfect. But, what is the way to fullness? The way to fullness is by emptying. Emptying is the way to fullness.

Death is the way to life. This is the principle that you'll find in the word of God. You know, when we have a desire for fullness, and God begins to open up our horizon, to see more of Christ, and more of what the church is to be, now we think the next step will be we enter into fullness.

We will experience fullness. No. The next step is you enter into death.

You enter into emptying. And it is the surprise of our life. This is illustrated throughout the word of God.

You take the Old Testament. For instance, Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob. He was given that vase of many colors, which means the birthright.

Any dream, dreams. God gave him dreams. God gave him vision.

But because of that, what happened to him? You'll find that he went lower and lower. Before his father put that vase upon him, probably his brethren were still friendly with him. But after his father put that vase of many colors on him, his brother began to be jealous of him.

Before he dreamed that dream, probably his brother will still try to live with him. But after he dreamed that dream, his brother felt that they had to get rid of him. He went lower and lower.

Not only sold as a slave, but even put into the tower, the prison. He hit the bottom. Before God exalted him to the throne.

That is Joseph. Think of David. Even though he was neglected by his father, sent him to take care of a few sheep, but he lived a very tranquil life.

A shepherd's life is a very tranquil life. And then he was anointed. And after he was anointed, one thing after another came.

We will think that being anointed, he should sit on the throne. But being anointed, he became a fugitive. Humanly speaking, these two things are far apart.

You cannot see the connection between these two things. But this is the way of God. Think of our Lord Jesus.

How He emptied Himself. Of course He could not empty Himself of His deity. That is impossible because that is what He is.

He eternally is. But He did empty Himself of all the glory and honor and position connected with His deity. He took the form of a man and humbled Himself.

Even unto death and then the death of the cross. In other words, it is the death of all death. But God has highly exalted Him.

And given the name that is above every name and to that name every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the Father's glory. So before He went to the cross, when the Greek came to see, wanted to see Him, he said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

In other words, the way to fruitfulness is through dying. And the Lord said, This is not only true with Me, but He who follows Me. This same thing will happen to Him.

If you love your soul life, you will lose it. If you are willing to deny your soul life for His sake, you will gain it to eternity. And He who follows the Father will honor Him.

Now, this is the principle that governs the vision. The apostle Paul, he told us how he was raptured, caught up to the third heaven. How he was caught away to paradise and heard things that could not be shared.

Glorious! But the next thing was a thorn upon his flesh. We thought that vision would make us strong. But when you get the vision, you become weak.

That He may be strong in your weakness. You remember the story in the Old Testament of the widow of a son of the prophets? Her husband died, left nothing, and she was so poor that the predators came, wanted to take away her two sons. A pathetic situation.

How could the widow of a son of a prophet sink to such deep poverty? It reveals the condition of God's people at that time. They did not care about the things of God. They did not take care of the prophets, the sons of the prophets.

Not to say the widows of the prophets. And he came to Elisha and asked what he should do. And Elisha said, What do you have? He said, I have nothing.

There is nothing but a pot of oil. Now sometimes I wonder why. Why is it that she evidently had sold everything, the furniture, anything, everything that can be turned into money, she had sold them.

But why is it she still kept a pot of oil? I do not know if I'm right, if I'm wrong, please correct me. I think because her husband is a son of the prophet. In other words, his son is trained to be a prophet.

And of course, a prophet, oil is very, it's almost like a symbol to a prophet. In other words, a prophet, he used the oil, you know, to pour, say, upon the king, and to do such things. It is his trademark.

So probably for sentimental reasons, you know, because her husband died, and her husband is supposed to be a prophet, he's not yet a prophet, but supposed to be a prophet, but he died. So the wife just kept that pot there as a kind of remembrance. It's for sentimental reasons.

The last link. He said, I have nothing but a pot of oil. And the prophet said, go and borrow empty vessels.

Not a few. Then shut your door, and pour from that pot of oil to these empty vessels. So she and her two sons, they borrowed many empty vessels, shut the door, and began to pour from that pot of oil, and it filled every empty vessel until there was no more empty vessel, and the oil stopped.

And Elisha told her, go and sell the oil, to pay your debt, and live on it for the rest of your life. Abundance. Fullness.

Dear brothers and sisters, the reason why we are not full, we do not know the fullness of Christ, it is because we have no empty vessel. Or to put it another way, we have vessels, but our vessels are already filled. Already filled with something else.

Just like the five foolish virgins. No doubt, these five foolish virgins, they had vessels just like the five wise virgins. But probably these five foolish virgins, they filled their vessels with the precious things upon this earth.

They think that these are important, these are precious. And they filled their vessel with these things, maybe gold, maybe precious stones, I do not know. But evidently, their vessel was already filled with other things, except oil.

But the wise virgins filled their empty vessel with oil, and nothing but oil. Today, people will look at the foolish virgins and think they are wise. They will look at the wise virgins and think they are foolish.

But one day, it will be revealed. Dear brothers and sisters, are we willing to be emptied? As a matter of fact, you do not know what to empty, unless the Lord reveals Himself to you. When the Lord really reveals Himself to you, in His glorious fullness, brothers and sisters, you hurry to empty yourself, that you may be filled.

And this is the way with Apostle Paul. You know, the Apostle Paul, as the great Pharisees, he was filled with the best of Judaism. He made a boast of all these things.

He was filled. But when God revealed His Son in him, and He said, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, He counts all things but loss, but dross. He is willing to empty Himself of all that has filled Him in the past, so that He may be filled with the knowledge of Christ Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, do you have a longing for God? Do you see something more in Christ? And if you do, then your vision challenges you to empty yourself. You know, a vision is always a challenge. The vision will challenge you.

And you will challenge the vision. Why? Because God does not give you a vision of the fullness of Christ just for you to speculate, to meditate. When God reveals the fullness of Christ to you, He means to draw you into that fullness.

He means to fill you with His fullness. In other words, the vision has to become your life, your vocation. Or to put it another way, you must be joined into that vision to be a part of it.

And in order to do that, you will find you have to be emptied, because you are already filled. Every one of us is filled with something. And when God begins to open our eyes to see the fullness of Christ, then the Holy Spirit will convict us and show us why is it that we are not filled with Christ.

And this is a time for us to be emptied. This is the way of the cross. It is the way of death.

Humanly speaking, we don't want to go that way. And the only reason why we are able to go through it is because we are constrained by the love of Christ. Dear brothers and sisters, it is God's love that enables us to be willing to go to death, to be willing to be emptied, to be willing to be purged.

If it is not because of the love of God within you, you cannot do it. Nobody will do it. We love ourselves too much.

We think too much of the things of the world. We will not let go. We cannot deny ourselves.

We cannot. But thank God we can. The love of God.

When the love of God constrains us, then, dear brothers and sisters, there is no cost too costly. The emptying is easy. Because the Lord said, My yoke is easy.

My burden. Finally, you think of the Song of Songs. There you will find a virgin.

The reason why she pursues after the Beloved, because she is constrained by the love of the Beloved. Brothers and sisters, when we believe in the Lord Jesus, it is true. God loved the world and gave His only begotten Son to us.

It is God's love. But do you know that when you believe in the Lord Jesus, not only He loves you, but He implants that love within you. And it is a love that is implanted in you that will drive you towards Him.

Or draws you. And as the love draws you to Him, you find invariably, you experience periods of dissatisfaction and periods of satisfaction. You find that He will create in you a dissatisfaction, a longing for more of Him.

You are not satisfied with what He has already given to you. You want more of Him. You are dissatisfied.

You cry out for Him. You seek out after Him. And thank God He satisfies you.

Then after a period, again you become dissatisfied. He puts another dissatisfaction in you. And you have to cry out to Him again and seek after Him.

And when you are doing that, you find all the time, something of you has to go to death. You will find in the process you are being emptied more and more and more. In order that you may be filled more and more with Him.

So that's the reason why you find Solomon, in the beginning he said, My Lord is mine and I am His. And then he said, I am His, but He is also mine. And then finally he said, I am the Lord and His desire is towards me.

In other words, there is no more of self. It's all Him. When we are filled with the love of God, we are filled with the fullness.

Ephesians chapter 3. Oh, that the Holy Spirit will strengthen our inner man, that Christ may dwell in our heart, rooted and grounded in love, that we may be able to apprehend the width, the breadth, the height, the depth, and to know the love of God that passes knowledge, that we may be filled to the fullness. Brothers and sisters, when you are filled with the fullness of God, you are filled with love. Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, show us Thy way and may Thy love constrain us to walk in the straight path that leads us to Thyself, to Thy fullness.

We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

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