TITLE: The Fullness of God

TEXT: 2nd Co. 5:17; Phil. 3:14 & 16; Ro. 8:1, 7:14-25; Colo. 2:9; Jn. 14:10-14; 2nd Co. 5:18-20

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to expand on part of what we talked about two weeks ago, what I believe is one the most important concepts for us to come to understand as a Christian.

 Just what It means to be “In Christ” and the full implication of that statement.

 we talked about how that being “In Christ”, is a position that we are to take up.

 That to be “In Christ” is not something that automatically happens at salvation, but that Salvation is when Jesus places Himself “In us” and by so doing He enables us to place ourselves “In Him”. These are two separate things that God never meant to be mutually exclusive of each other, but the first making the latter possible

“In Christ,” is a phrase used by Paul more than 160 times in various forms (“In Christ”, “in the Lord,” “in him,” etc.). It emphasizes the spiritual position that we as believers are to take.

 We are given the ability to place ourselves “In Him”, given the ability to reside “In Him” because he first places Himself In us.

But if we are “In Christ” it is because we have chosen to take up that position. It is an act of our will.

In short, we choose whether we will position ourselves “In Christ” or not.

 It is in this context that the Scriptures, that have this admonition, make perfect sense and can become a reality to us.

 Let me illustrate with a few of those passages this morning….

2Cor 5:17 (NIV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Here we find the promise of becoming a new creation “In Christ”, where the old is gone and the new has come!

A promise that is for every Christian!

 This speaks of a change, a turnaround in life and lifestyle. We don’t live the way that we used to live but we live a new way..

 This is not speaking of initial salvation. Initial salvation is when Christ takes up His residence in us whereby He makes it possible for us to position ourselves “In Him”.

 Example: We accept Christ yet we still live a life pretty much the same as we did before we accepted Christ…There is no dramatic change in our life or lifestyle…possibly no outward manifestation evident at all….Why?

 The promise of Scripture here is: if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

If the old hasn’t gone and the new isn’t happening then what is the problem?

The problem is…Even though we may have invited Christ in us, we have failed to place, to position ourselves “In Him” so we do not experience our becoming a new creation as God intends.

 This term, “In Christ” in the Greek is: “en Christos”

**1722 en {en}**

**a primary preposition**

**denoting (fixed) position**

**(in place, time**

**or state).**

**5547 Christos {khris-tos'}**

# Christ = "anointed"

**1) Christ was the Messiah,**

**the Son of God**

**2) anointed**

The phrase “En Christos” “In Christ” means to take up a fixed position In Jesus!

 It implies to stand firm in Him, to be obedient to Him, following His lead..

Example: Military--- In a defensive sense--take a fixed position, dig a foxhole and hunker down to hold that position at all cost…

 In an offensive sense—to take over a fixed position of the enemy….take over ground that the enemy has secured.

Paul speaks of both of these aspects of the position that we are to take “in Christ”!

**Phil 3:14 (NIV) I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.**  (Taking ground the enemy holds in our life) (Offensively placing oneself in Christ)

**16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained.**

(Defending ground that we have already taken)

(Defensively placing oneself in Christ)

 God has to be true to His Word!

 If His Word says that if we are “in Christ” we become a new creation where the old goes and the new comes, and if we find that we still struggle with the old and the new isn’t coming, then the answer to the problem is not due to Gods Promise, but it is due to our not meeting the condition to receive the promise!

 We are not truly positioning ourselves “In Christ”, Choosing to take up a fixed position in Him, if our life is not reflecting, not becoming the new creation that God intends for us to become, where the old self is passing away and we are becoming, being transformed into something new, something different then we were before, something better, something more like Jesus!

If that isn’t happening in our life then the problem doesn’t lay in Gods promise, it lies in our meeting the condition to receive the promise! In this case our failure to position ourselves “In Him”.

**Roma 8:1 (NIV) Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!**

Does everyone know what condemnation is?

**Webster**: to say (or feel) that a thing is wrong or bad; to declare to be (or feel) guilty, conviction; to declare (or feel) to be unfit for use.

 How many here this morning have ever felt condemnation?

How many have felt condemnation sense you have come to Christ?

 Why? Scripture says that there is now no condemnation for those who are “in Christ Jesus”!

 Again, If the term “in Christ” was talking about Christ coming into us at Salvation then why do so many of us who are saved feel condemnation at times?

Because the term “In Christ” is a position that we take up subsequent to Salvation! Salvation is what makes it possible for us to position ourselves “In Christ.”

 If we are saved, we have Christ in us, and if we still have times when we feel condemnation, guilt, conviction, then it is at those times, anyway, we have not positioned ourselves “In Christ”!

 Because as long as we position ourselves “In Christ” the promise of God is that there is no condemnation when we place ourselves in Him!

 Let’s go to the Scriptures immediately preceding this one in Ro. 8:1 to see from what context Paul is speaking here…

 Whenever a sentence starts out with words like “therefore” you need to go back and read what was said previously to see what caused the use of the word therefore…

 **Roma 7:15 (NIV) I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.**

**16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.**

**17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.**

**18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.**

**19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.**

**20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.**

**21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.**

**22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law;**

**23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.**

**24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

**25 Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

**So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.**

Can anyone else identify with this struggle that Paul was going through here?

**I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.**

**19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.**

**24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

Paul was a Christian when he was going through this struggle!

Does it sound like, in his life at this time, that the old had gone and the new come?

 Does it sound like Paul is living a life free of guilt and condemnation when he says…

 **I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.**

24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

 What in the world is Paul’s problem here?

 Paul recognizes his problem and gives his own answer**!**

**24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

**Roma 7:25 (NIV) Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

**So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.**

**8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,**

**2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.**

 This is one continuous writing with no separation in the original language! No Chapter or verse divisions!

In the Western style of literature we use paragraphs and chapter divisions. That is not the same literary style that was used in Scripture.

 Often when we take a western literary approach to mid-eastern literary style we chop up thought patterns that shouldn’t be chopped up!

There is continuous flow of thought from Romans 7 into chapter 8!

**24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

**Thanks be to God—Through Christ Jesus my Lord! Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.**

What is the law of the spirit of life? Positioning ourselves “In Christ”, allowing the Holy Spirit control of our life!

 When we feel like Paul felt in Ro. 7 our problem is that we are not positioning ourselves “In Christ”!

Paul’s answer to not doing what he wanted to do but doing that which he didn’t want to do—Paul’s answer for not feeling condemnation and guilt---Paul’s answer to becoming the new creation that God had called him to be—was to place himself, position himself, “In Christ” on a moment by moment basis!

 Because in positioning himself in Christ the law of the Spirit of life, the Holy Spirit of God, as he placed himself “In Him”, under His control, set him free from the law of sin and death, the law of his own flesh!

 But before Paul could enjoy that freedom he needed to take up the position in which that freedom could be realized!

 He needed to position himself “In Christ”! Place His life under the control of the Holy Spirit! Yield his life; yield his will to the will of the Spirit of God that had taken up residence in his heart..

 You see folks, the Holy Spirit of God is a gentleman and He will never force His will upon us. We need to willingly yield our will to Him..

 We see the supreme example of this willing submission of the spirit of man to the spirit of God in Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He went to the cross..

 Scripture says that Jesus was tempted in every way just as we are, yet He was without sin!

 Jesus knew what was about to happen to Him on the cross, the sinless Lamb of God is about to become the sin sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

 As Jesus is praying in the garden he starts to feel the weight, the guilt, the condemnation, of not just sin, but all sin come down upon Him! In anguish the humanity of Jesus cries out**—“Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me!**

 Then Jesus showed us what it means to position oneself “In God” “In Christ”!

**None the less, not My will but Thy will be done…**

 Do you realize the full potential that we have as believers when we position ourselves “In Christ”?

 **Colo 2:9 (NIV) For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,**

**10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.**

How are we given the fullness of the deity in these bodies of ours? That fullness is given us “In Christ”!

 As we choose to position ourselves “In Him”!

This statement crowns Paul’s argument! Because Christ is fully God and fully man, believers, in union with him, “are made full” that is, share in his fullness. “In Christ” (lit., “in him”), a phrase denoting vital union with Christ , is by its position in Greek emphatic.

**For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form!**

This is a twofold truth here…

#1. In Jesus all the fullness of the deity, all the fullness of the Godhead lives in bodily form! Jesus is the fullness of God!

#2. When we place ourselves, position ourselves “In Christ” then all the fullness of the Deity, all the fullness of the Godhead comes to live in (our) bodily form!

 **10 and you have been given fullness “in Christ”, who is the head over every power and authority.**

When we choose to position ourselves “in Christ” we are given the fullness of Christ!

 Before Jesus went to the cross as He was trying to prepare His followers for His soon coming departure from this world Jesus said:

**John 14:10 (NIV) Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.**

11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.

**12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.**

**13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.**

**14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.**

 When Jesus uses the phrase “in Me”, “In my Father”, “In My name” it is synonymous with Paul’s phrase, “In Christ”.

 It means to position oneself “In Him”.

**For “in Christ” all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form!**

 It is only when we have the fullness of the deity operating in our lives that we will be able to do the things that Jesus did and even greater things then He did! Because it is in fact Him that is doing them through us if we completely yield our will to His will!

 It is only as we position ourselves “In Christ” that we can ask God and have the assurance that our prayers will be answered, that we will get whatever it is that we ask for!

 Because if we are truly “In Him” then we are not asking our will but His will because we have surrendered our will to Him. His will then becomes our will.

 Church, this is powerful stuff! For us to realize the position that we can have “In Him”. To realize the potential that we have as we position ourselves “In Christ”.

 That as we position ourselves “In Him” that all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form!

 As we take up our position “In Him” We will become manifestations of Christ to the world in which we live..

But don’t get a big head…..

 2Cor 5:18 (NIV) All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,:

**19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.**

**20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.**

 In Fact, we can only be ambassadors of Christ to the world in which we live as we position ourselves “In Christ”!

This morning, are we becoming the new creations that God has called us to be? Is the old passing away and are we being made new?

Are we living a life free from condemnation and guilt?

Is all the fullness of the deity living in bodily form within you and I?

 Have we positioned yourself “In Christ”?

 Have we surrendered our will to His and are we living in the victory that He has secured for us?

The realization of the promise is only found in one place---And that is as we position ourselves “In Christ”.

 Are you living your life as a Christian “In Him”.

Are we daily positioning our self In Christ allowing the fullness of the Deity to live and function and operate within us?