

# Receiving His Fullness

John 1:16-17

Halifax: 22 December 2019 PM

## Introduction

This afternoon's sermon is very much related to this morning's.

As with this morning, I am doing a sermon about the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- In fact, I am going to read the same passage to you that I read this morning, John 1:1-18.
  - However, this morning we focused on John 1:14 and the message was called "Beholding His Glory."
  - This afternoon, we will focus on John 1:16-17. The message is entitled "Receiving His Fullness."
- I am sure you can see how these are related.
  - This morning we focused directly on the glory of our Saviour that is revealed by Him as the one who came in our flesh.
  - This afternoon, we will look at how His glorious fullness benefits us.

Listen now as I read John 1:1-18 to you once again.

- This is the word of God, so be sure that you receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God that effectively works in those that believe.

**John 1:1-18:** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. <sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. <sup>8</sup> He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. <sup>9</sup> That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> But as many as

received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" <sup>16</sup> And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

May the Lord bless the reading of His holy word.

As you can see, verse 16 and 17 speak of how those who beheld the glory of Christ also received His fullness.

- John shows us in verses 10-13 that there were many who did not behold His glory.
  - They did not see anything in Christ to make Him stand out as anything special.
  - It was only those who were born of God that were able to receive Him as the light of the world—
  - They are the “we” that John talks about when he says “we beheld His glory,”
    - And the *we* who behold His glory are the only *we* who received His fullness.

This is how it has always been.

- Unless you behold the glory of the Word made flesh, you do not receive His fullness.
- It is only those who behold His glory who receive the fullness of His salvation.

So as we look this afternoon at receiving His fullness,

- I will begin by reviewing how we behold His glory... my first main point will be a review of this morning’s message...
- And then we will look at what we need from Him, as shown by the law of God that was given by Moses...
- And then at how the Word made flesh actually gives us what God requires.

So to simplify the outline:

- First: beholding the glory of the Word made flesh
- Second: What God requires of us
- Third: How the Word made flesh provides for us

## **I. Beholding the Word made flesh.**

A. Who is the Word made flesh?

1. The Word is the One who existed long before He became flesh.
  - How else did He *become flesh* if He was not already in existence?
  - Indeed, we are told that He was with God in the beginning when God made the world.
2. In fact, we are told in verse 1 that He was God... “the Word was God.”
  - He is fully God, yet He is also the Son of God.
    - Verse 14 calls Him the only begotten Son of God.
  - He is called “the Word” because He is the Son of God who comes forth from God from all eternity.
3. Creation and redemption are both ascribed to Him.
  - Verse 3 says unequivocally that all things were created by Him.
  - He is called the word because He is God who comes forth from God (the triune One) to create and to redeem...
  - He is the source of light and life—
    - As God, He has light and life in Himself.
      - *Light* by which God is known...
      - And *life* by which He is consciously responded to.
    - The Word endowed creation with light and life at the beginning by giving light and life to man—
    - And then after we fell, He is the one who comes to redeem those the Father has given Him by restoring light and life to them again.

- B. John tells us in this opening to his gospel that this life-giving, light-giving Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us.
- You can see that in verse 14: **The Word become flesh and dwelt among us.**
1. It is remarkable that He who created us should Himself become flesh.
    - He is a pure spirit and the creator of all, but He became what He created.
    - Of course He did not cease to be God, but He became also fully man.
    - He did this two thousand years ago when He dwelt among us as v. 14 says.
  2. All this means that we now have God the Son in our human nature—in flesh.
    - By this we are able to see what God is like as a man.
    - We are able to see His character at our level—as one having human limitations and as one who is under the law of God.
  3. John tells us that His glory was not hidden by becoming flesh—it was actually revealed.
    - The outcome for us was, as 14 says, that **we beheld His glory.**
    - At least, we beheld His glory if we are among those who have been born of God.
- C. And what is the glory that we behold in the Word made flesh?
1. First, it is the glory of His character as seen in Him as a man—
    - His virtue, excellence, and beauty can be much more readily seen and appreciated by us when we see Him as a man.
    - I spent a lot of time showing you how glorious He was in His speech and behaviour, in how He lived before God and man as a man.
      - We see Him standing under temptation, worshipping the Father, loving His neighbour, obeying even when obedience involves suffering, being compassionate toward His enemies... the virtues shown forth in Him.
  2. And then secondly, it is the glory of Him (the Word made flesh) as our provision.
    - As the one who is both God and man, one person with a divine and human nature, He is able to be the Saviour of fallen man.
    - As such, He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and He is the living water and the bread of life and the resurrection and the life.
      - This is very much related to our focus this afternoon—how we receive His fullness that we might be saved. So I will have a lot more say about this.
  3. And then thirdly, it is the glory of Him as the One who was willing to become flesh for us.
    - What great love that He should become flesh, all that He might redeem those who had rebelled against Him... all that He might restore life and light to us!
    - We see the glory of God's justice and mercy...
      - *Justice* that required the Word made flesh crucified...
      - And *mercy* that was willing to send the Word to be made flesh and to be crucified for sinners like us.

TRANS> And now, this afternoon, we will look further at how we have received His fullness—how we have received all that we need for our salvation through Him.

- As verse 16 and 17 say: **And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

**II. To get an appreciation of what we He provided, let's begin by looking at what we need—at what God requires.**

- Our text tells us that “the law was given through Moses.”
  - In other words, Moses told us what was required of us.

A. Do you remember how Moses started out? The first thing he did with Israel?

1. He started out by calling Israel out of bondage, not so they could be free to do whatever they wanted, but so that they could serve God.
  - They were slaves in Egypt, doing the will of Pharaoh.
    - God came to deliver them so that they could be His servants. So they could worship God and live as His people—as those who respond to Him.
  - He brought them out of Egypt and He gave them their own land in Canaan—all that they might live as His people, under His rule.
2. This teaches us that we need to be delivered from bondage to sin and Satan and the world.
  - We need to repent of our sin and come to follow the Lord...
  - To cease living apart from Him and to come to Him to live for Him.
    - It is a new way of life.

B. And what did Moses next reveal to Israel of God's requirements for them as His people?

- He brought them out of Egypt and He appeared to them at Mt. Sinai, where He gave them His moral law.
1. He gave them the Ten Commandments.
    - a. He showed them that they were to love Him with all their being—with every part of them.
      - They were to have no other gods—to be totally loyal to Him.
      - They were to worship Him only as He commanded, not by images of God like the nations, or by traditions and customs of men.
      - They were not to profane His name—never to put themselves on level with Him as those who pronounce curses—f bombs and such like—or who show disrespect to His glory and majesty in their worship.
      - They were to observe all His Sabbaths—especially they were to set apart the seventh day to remember Him as Creator and Redeemer...
        - To thank Him as the one who first gave them light and life and who has now come to give them light and life again because of the fall.
    - Their whole life was to be lived for His glory... in love to Him.
    - b. And they were also to live with one another in ways that please God...to love their neighbour as themselves...
      - To honour father and mother, children being brought up in His ways.
      - To abstain from murder and all that is related to it—hatred, malice, provoking others, injuring them, carelessness... they were to love.
      - To abstain from all sexual immorality—living in marriage and only in it having sexual intimacy, retaining family for Him.
      - To respect each other's property, in love seeking to bless others with our gifts and calling instead of trying to get something for nothing.

- To speak the truth, each one to his neighbour, avoiding all slander and gossip that attacks others.
  - And finally to be content and thankful—not coveting what others have or what we don't have, but living joyfully and generously with God's gifts.
- This moral law actually describes how Christ as the Word made flesh lived among us. He was beautiful in His moral excellence.
2. But do you remember how God presented these commandments under Moses?
- a. It was terrifying—
    - Before He appeared to them, He told them that they were defiled and told them to ceremonially wash themselves.
    - He strictly warned them that if they were to so much as to touch the mountain where He appeared, they would be pierced through.
    - He spoke with a booming voice that was accompanied by thunder and lightning and clouds of thick darkness and the shaking of the earth.
  - b. It was so terrifying that the people begged Moses afterward that God would never speak to them in this way again lest they die.
    - We are told that even Moses was filled with terror that made him tremble.
  - c. God did this to show them clearly that they did not at all live up to the standard that He was giving them.
3. We must all admit that we too have come short of what God requires.
- Any honest person who knows that God sees into our hearts would have to admit that that we fail.
  - We are all unclean. We all come short.
    - If any of us were to be judged by this law, we would be forever condemned and consigned to the eternal punishment of God.
    - We don't face the reality of our sin very often—we avoid it—but who among you can truly say that you are pleased with your virtue? with how well you love God and your neighbour?
  - We are used to our sin because we fell into it 6000 years ago, but the fact that it is acceptable to us does not make it more acceptable to God—it makes it less acceptable...
    - He is holy and He will never tolerate our wickedness...even though we do.
    - As far as He is concerned, we are unclean before Him.
- But that is still not the end of all that Moses showed them was required of them...
- Not only must we repent and come under God's authority as our God...
  - Not only must we obey His moral law...
- C. Moses also gave the people ceremonial laws to show them what was required of them for their purification before God... as those who had come short of God's requirements.
1. There was much that was appointed, all to show them that they were defiled and in need of divine cleansing.
    - There were priests appointed, each of these having to go through all sorts of cleansing ceremonies because they too were defiled.

- And then those priests had to make offerings for the people on an altar in a tabernacle that also itself had to be cleansed...
  - And the offerings were for the people because all the people needed to be cleansed, being defiled...
2. It is helpful to summarise the sacrifices that were required to make the people acceptable to God for the ritual service of the Old Testament.
- This ritual cleansing was appointed to teach us about the actual cleansing we need from Jesus, the Word made flesh.
- a. There was the burnt offering or the dedicatory offering.
- In this, an animal was taken to represent the worshipper—an unblemished animal—and it was entirely consumed upon the altar.
    - That is why it was sometimes called a whole burnt offering—it is completely given to God.
  - And it was called a dedicatory offering because it represented the requirement of complete dedication to God.
    - Since we come short of complete dedication ourselves, the animal represented the dedication that we ought to have... it stood in our place.
    - It shows that we need a substitute to stand in for us who is wholly dedicated to God.
- b. Then there was the sin offering.
- This offering was also one where an animal stood in the place of the worshipper... the sacrificed animal represented the worshipper, as if it were dying in the worshipper's place because of the worshipper's sin.
  - In this offering, the blood, the life, was poured out to atone for the worshipper who himself deserved to die.
    - The animal took death for the worshipper so that the worshipper was ceremonially cleansed.
- c. Then there was the fellowship offering or the peace offering.
- With this offering, the worshipper ate a portion of the sacrifice and the other portion was given to God.
  - The idea here was that the worshipper received life-giving nourishment from God—through a substitute that was virtuous.
    - It was as if that peace offering was blameless and the worshipper was then able to obtain virtue by it... like a branch draws virtue from a vine.

TRANS> So there are three things that are required

- Repentance that brings us under the authority of God.
- Obedience to God's moral law.
- And a substitute for us who is truly dedicated to God, who is sacrificed as an atonement for sin, and who is a provider of life-giving virtue.

### **III. Jesus, the Word made flesh, gives us what is required for our acceptance with God.**

- A. Take a look at our text again. What does it say?
- John 1:16-17: **And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**
1. When verse 16 speaks of *His fullness* that *we have received*, it is talking about the Word made flesh.
    - It is not Him as the Son of God only.
      - Nor it Him as man only.
      - It is Him as both God and man... as the Word made flesh—as God the Son who became flesh and dwelt among us.
    - He is the only one who has the “fullness” that God requires.
      - No one besides Him has all that we need.
      - Your own goodness is not fullness, your excuses are not fullness, your sincere heart is not the fullness that God requires, your baptism or your church attendance—these are not the fullness.
    - The word *fullness* refers back to verse 14 where it says, as we have seen of our Lord Jesus, that **He was full of grace and truth**.
      - *Grace* refers to help for us, and *truth* refers to help that is not symbolic but real... it is not like the rituals Moses gave Israel...
      - The ceremonies are representative of real helps, but they themselves are powerless to give us what we need.
        - An animal offered symbolised atonement, but only Christ crucified actually atones for sin.
        - It is His fullness that we have now received. Nothing else is sufficient.
  2. His *fullness* is described as coming to us like an ever-flowing river.
    - Verse 16 describes it as **“grace for grace.”**
      - This is a good translation, but what does it mean... *grace for grace*?
      - It means that one grace comes and then another comes in its place... like a river that provides and provides and provides so that there is never a deficiency.
    - That is how Christ’s fullness comes to us—as grace for grace—one grace after another, giving us all that we need.
      - There is an ever-flowing succession of His fullness.
      - What an encouragement this is for sinners who know their need!
        - In Christ, there is one grace after another.
  3. Notice how verse 17 compares what Moses gave us with what Christ (the Word made flesh) gave us:
    - Verse 17: **For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**
      - Moses gave us the law, as we have seen. He told us what is required of us if we are to be God’s people.
        - But Moses had no way to provide what was required.
        - The commandments and ordinances and ceremonies that came through him only showed us what we need... what is required...

- **But grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**
    - The Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, actually provided what God requires of us.
    - Of His fullness, we have all received and grace for grace...
      - An ever-flowing river of grace that connects us to God.
- B. Consider what fullness we have received from Him...
- He has given us all that is required of us as fallen sinners before God.
1. First, that He, as the Word made flesh, brings us under the rule of God.
    - He commands us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him.
      - He says that we will find our life by doing that.
      - He says that He will bring us to the Father.
    - He is our leader and our redeemer.
      - As the Son of God made flesh, He had to go (in human flesh) head to head with Satan, with the world, and with the sin...
        - And overcome them all and He calls us to turn from them and follow Him.
    - When we do, we find life and light in Him.
      - Putting ourselves in His hands and following Him brings us out of sin, death, the world, and bondage to Satan,
        - and brings us to the Father.
        - He brings us out of bondage and under the rule of God forever.
      - Satan cannot hold us, sin cannot hold us, the world cannot hold us, once we have come to follow Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.
        - Sin no longer has dominion over us.
        - We are no longer of our father the devil, we are brought to God.
  - Moses not only brought Israel out of bondage, he also showed us the requirements of the moral law... the Ten Commandments.
  2. Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, as we have seen, perfectly fulfills that requirement.
    - As God in our flesh, He was all that God calls us to be.
      - As the word in the flesh, He loved God with all His heart, soul, mind, and strength—
        - He had no other gods, no false worship, no taking of God's name in vain, no Sabbath breaking;
      - And He loved His neighbour as Himself.
        - We have spoken today of how He honoured those in authority over Him, how He had no murder in Him, but pure love, no adultery, but chastity as our faithful head, no stealing as the one who enriched others, no deceit, but always truth, no covetousness, but thanksgiving and delight in the success of others.
    - We come to Him as the only one God accepts that we might be His disciples.
      - We come affirming that only His righteousness is acceptable to God.
      - We come to be clothed with His because we know that ours is not adequate.



- As we also saw, Moses showed through the ceremonies that God appointed through him, that we need one to stand in our place—one who is dedicated, one who atones for our sins, and one who nourishes us in life-giving grace.
3. The Word made flesh (Jesus Christ) is that offering that takes our place.
    - a. We have Him as the burnt offering, taking our place as one wholly dedicated to God.
      - He was completely dedicated to God.
        - The Word made flesh is the One, not us, with whom the Father was well pleased.
        - He is our King, He is our Mediator, He is the Lord our righteousness.
      - We do not trust in the works of righteousness that we have done, for they are inadequate,
        - But God has graciously appointed Him to stand in our place—to be our righteousness so that we are accounted as if we had lived as He lived.
        - He is our bridegroom, our husband, who presents His virtue to the Father so that His whole family is accepted.
    - b. We also have Him, the Word made flesh, as our sin offering.
      - Our sins had to be paid.
        - The only way we could satisfy God's justice would be by suffering His wrath and curse forever and ever.
        - We would never be able to come to God—because our punishment would never end. In a million years, we would be no further along.
      - But the Word made flesh Himself took our place and was punished in our stead.
        - He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
        - He is the grain of wheat that was buried that then springs up with life for man.
        - He is the good shepherd who gave His life for the sheep.
        - He is the serpent lifted up so that all who look upon Him are delivered from the curse of the Law—for He has become a curse for us.
        - All our iniquities were laid on Him, and by His stripes we are healed.
        - He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.
      - All has been paid by His suffering because He is none other than the Word made flesh.
        - If He had been a mere man, He would not have paid for our sins.
        - But as the Son of God made flesh, Jesus paid it all!
    - c. And finally, we have Him as our peace offering—our fellowship offering.
      - He is that virtuous one who supplies us with life-giving virtue.
      - He has the water of life, the one who has the Spirit without measure and gives the Spirit to us so that we are renewed in our minds and are able to put off the old man and put on the new man that is renewed in righteousness.

- He is the bread of life who nourishes us in eternal life.
- He is the vine from which we receive virtue so that we are able to bear fruit for God... so that we are able to live in love and joy and peace before Him.
  - Without Him, we can do nothing, but attached to Him with faith, we are able to bear much fruit and to please the Father.
- Indeed, He is the resurrection and life who pours life into us that we might be raised up with Him, both now and at the last day...
  - As soon as we believe, we are raised from spiritual death to serve God.
  - And when we die in Him, we are then spiritually perfected.
  - And when He returns, our bodies are also perfected and joined to our perfected spirits to live with Him forever in glory.

**Conclusion: Of His fullness, we have all received, and grace for grace!**

I tell you, there is full provision in the Word made flesh.

- You need look no farther than to Him.
  - Where else can you find God made flesh for you, a sinner?
    - Look to Him as your provision for acceptance.
    - Look to Him as your provision for the forgiveness of sin.
    - Look to Him as your provision for new life.
  - Of His fullness we have all received and grace for grace.
    - The Law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.