

The Ultimate Fulfillment

“That you may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing majesty of His power in us who believe, according to the energy of the might of His strength with which He energized Christ when He raised Him from the dead and sat Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above every ruler and authority and power and lordship and every name which is named not only in this age but also in the coming one. And He has subjected all things under His feet and given Him as a head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of the One who fulfills all things in all” (Ephesians 1:18-23) (Author’s Translation).

We humans have a difficult time understanding why it is that God wanted to make us in the first place. What could He possibly have wanted with these pesky particles of dust, who would seem to be far more trouble than they are worth. Why doesn’t He just wipe us out and be done with it? Obviously there is an answer to this question, but most efforts to justify God in this seemingly bizarre endeavor usually run from the petty to the absurd, as is usually the case in our efforts to vindicate God in matters that are beyond the human mind to grasp. In a certain sense, with matters of this magnitude, we must recognize the element of speculation and not be too absolutist in our solutions. The recognition of such limitations would go a long way to modify the constant contention that seems to sabotage the efforts at harmonious relationships between the believers. Fortunately, our true unity is of the Spirit and transcends the quagmire of bickering and dissension, which has shown no signs of abatement since the day that Paul clashed with the legalists who plagued the early body of believers.

So what then can we say to give light on the subject? First we must establish certain ground rules. 1) We must go only to the source and not rely on mere human ideologies. 2) We must study it with all the equipment available to us to be sure we are saying what the Bible is saying. (We may not always properly apply what It is saying, but at least we ought to know what It is saying). 3) We must refrain from the kind of absolutism that is inappropriate, given our human state. So what then do we know about what God has in mind for humans? What is our source? How can we be sure? We can only know what the Bible specifically tells us. Filling in the gaps with human reasoning gets us into trouble. Sometimes we have to do that, but then we must be very careful to indicate that we are engaging in speculation.

A good case in point is the common concept that “God wanted a family.” How do humans really know how God feels? Was He missing something of emotional fulfillment? As humans experience it, love is a vacillating, fickle, unreliable expression of the emotions, which are something of a “roller coaster ride.” The reason for this is that it is performance-oriented. The wedding vows of “till death do us part,” suffer exceedingly in the “crunch” of tattered expectations. We are speaking, of course, of the human or fleshly quality of affection, identified in the New Testament by the Greek word *philé*. Human affection or “liking” is usually based upon whether or not the other person is likable. All of this may sound rather pessimistic and negative, but the human mind simply

does not have the capacity for limitless affection. At the level of the flesh, the self inevitably creeps in.

On the other hand, the love of God is of totally different nature. It is an expression of the limitless Spirit of God extending Himself to humans without the emotional limitations of the flesh of the flesh. It is, in fact, this kind of love which is the fruit of the Spirit, spoken of by Paul to the Galatians. When we possess the Spirit of Christ, we possess His limitless love, but it is a love of caring and has nothing to do with “likability” of affection. The Spirit of Christ reaches out through us to those who may not be “likable.” When the Spirit of Christ is functioning through us, how we feel about things emotionally has nothing to do with it. Thus, the “Good Samaritan” of the famous parable, tended to the wounds of the hapless traveller with no apparent indication of any consideration of him as a person. In fact, the Samaritan was characteristically one who despised the Jews. This is probably why Jesus chose him as an example of “love.” And, it is thus that one can “love one’s enemies,” as Jesus insisted, even though one may not at all approve of their conduct.

And thus, any suggestion that God’s ultimate fulfillment in His creation is for the satisfaction of some personal or emotional need—is not impossible, but most speculative.

So what then can we rely on as a basis of our fulfillment?

The fundamental point is that in salvation we receive of His fulfillment—“*Of His fullness have all we received*” (John 1:16). That means that the very energy of God which created and sustains the universe is within the believer and, according to Peter, “*We are partakers of the Divine nature*” (II Peter 1:4). And thus, in salvation, we become, not a special “religious group,” but part of the eternal process of God in His purposes and interaction with the universe. Now, what those ultimate purposes are, is open to considerable speculation, but our fulfillment has to do with His fulfillment.

But wasn’t God complete within Himself prior to the creation?

Yes, indeed, He was complete insofar as His person was concerned. However, His creativity, which was an extension of that perfection, is always in process. A good analogy is the artist, who finds fulfillment in every painting that he paints as each artwork magnifies the artist, so God’s creatures magnify Him. The expanding universe is part of the process of God’s creativity. Just so, we humans are an extension of that fulfillment, and, accordingly, our part of the fulfillment of Christ. “*And He [God] has given Him as a head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of the One who fulfills all things in all*” (Ephesians 1:22,23). Thus, we are part of the fullness of Christ. It is not that He is imperfect, but rather that we participate in His fullness.

So our ultimate fullness is tied in with the fullness of Christ and therefore with God in the universe. According to Paul in his epistle to the Romans (Chapter 8) Paul says that we are joint heirs with Christ, who is in turn the Heir of all things. The word of heir here really means not so much inheritance *per se*, but allotted portion. So we have our portion with Christ. And thus also the fullness of the universe is part of our fullness.

So in view of these things, what then shall we do? We must rely on the Holy Spirit within us to see to it that we do what He wants us to do. If He is the master of the universe, it is up to Him to use us as He will in the fulfillment of His purposes. Such a vast purpose as God has for His universe is quite beyond our comprehension and what His part might be for us in that purpose is beyond our human understanding. Therefore we must place ourselves at His disposal and trust Him to see to it that we will be whatever it is that He wants us to be in the process of His fulfillment.

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