

6th Sunday after Pentecost
July 17, 2022
“Fullness!” (Colossians 1:19-20)
By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today’s text for this 6th Sunday after Pentecost is from our Epistle reading Colossians 1:19.

“For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

Here ends our text.

Our epistle reading picks up where we left off last Sunday. It helps us to understand our God, our Deliverer, even much better. He is the One who we heard last Sunday **“has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.”**

So, here’s a quick recap of last week. Remember how last week we heard the teacher of the law ask Jesus what he had to do to get into heaven? And what is the Bible’s answer? You have to be qualified by keeping the law perfectly. How? **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-38)**

Jesus was asked this question of how to get into heaven many times and the answer never changes. It’s the same for the Colossians and for us. **“Do this and you shall live.” (Luke 10:28)**

That’s where the rubber hits the road, doesn’t it? ...in the doing...Good Samaritan doing...as we heard last week in the Gospel reading...never passing by on the other side of the road.

We heard last week that we aren’t qualified to enter heaven. No one is. See Romans 3, quoting Psalm 14. That’s the Law reminding us who we are...unqualified sinners.

But then, we heard that God sent a Deliverer who qualified us and made us partakers of the inheritance. How?

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:13-14)

Who is the Son of His love? How could He do what no man or woman could do? Well, this Jesus of Nazareth, born of a woman, born in humble manger, 100% true man... is also true God. Listen to what Paul says again about Jesus in the opening verses of today’s Epistle.

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

So much there to ponder...the true man, Jesus, who was seen with human eyes, is also the image of the invisible God whom we can’t see. For Jesus is God! He created all things. He was before all things. In Him all things consist and receive their very life from Him for He is the firstborn from the dead! He conquered death with His death for His creation and rose again, redeeming the world from their sins. And all who believe in Him, the invisible Holy Christian Church, He has delivered His from the power of darkness into His kingdom of love. He is the head of His church. Indeed, He is preeminent in all things!

In a word...fullness. Fullness of power, of life, of love, of forgiveness for His people. How could He do this? Well, Paul says it very clearly in our text.

“For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

To make sure there is no misunderstanding, Paul repeats this thought for the Colossians and for us in the next chapter, chapter two, verse 9-10.

“9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”

What does this mean for you and me? You are complete in Him! You lack nothing! You are fully absolved of all your sins!

You see... Jesus true God, fully 100% true God, had to do something amazingly the opposite of what one would expect the true God to do. He had to not use His power fully in order to reconcile the world to Himself. He had to enter the state of humiliation and allow His sinful creation to make Him suffer and die. Yes, God died on the cross. The Creator of all died. And that was the only way to fully deliver us from our sins.

“to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

That is the Christian faith – that Jesus who in Him dwells the fullness of the deity, **“made Himself of no reputation” (Philippians 2:7)**. He laid aside the full use of His deity on the cross for us! He did so to reconcile the world to Himself and make peace through the blood of His cross.

This is who Jesus is and what He did for us. Why? Because of who we are and what we have done. Basically, before knowing Christ, before our deliverance by Him, we were fully lost in sin. Paul says it this way in our text.

“And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works,” Our tank was empty of righteousness and full of sin, absolute enemies of God. But that all changed by what God did for us!

“yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight”

You are fully absolved, fully holy before God, fully blameless and fully above reproach in His sight!! For Jesus has taken away all our sin, all our reproach.

The fullness of the mystery of God has been revealed to you in His word.

“the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

The fullness of this message of the Gospel is that God loves all people in Christ, Jews and Gentiles alike. **“Him we preach”**, Paul says. God wants His house to be full through the preaching of His Word by you and me and all Christians.

This Good News was revealed to 100 year old Abraham and 90 year old Sarah, as we heard in our Old Testament reading, that Abraham would be the father of many nations!

Don't laugh Abraham. Don't laugh Sarah! With God all things are possible and were fulfilled in Jesus, the Seed of Abraham, true Man and true God.

Fill yourselves up with this Word Paul says to the Colossians and to us. Be filled with all knowledge, wisdom and understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done for you that you too may grow in your faith!

“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

All teaching that boasts of man's works to gain heaven is empty teaching. Paul says in chapter 2:8.

“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”

All those who believe they can gain heaven by keeping the law perfectly are full of themselves. They have made gods of themselves.

No, Christ has done all for our salvation. He is preeminent in all things. He gives you the gift of His work of salvation in your baptism which unites you to His death and resurrection. He makes peace with you through your baptism.

And He gives to you His very body and blood to eat and drink this day which fully absolves you of your sins and makes peace with your Creator. The peace of the Lord be with you always. So, God says to us after the words of institution.

So Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and received the better things, the Good News of the forgiveness of her sins. All else is secondary to hearing His word and receiving His sacraments.

So, John says in the first chapter of his Gospel.

“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

You have received His fullness of grace and truth. With eyes of faith you have seen the only begotten Son. And you have full peace and pardon. Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)