



## Obtaining the Fullness of the Blessing of Christ

by David Wilkerson

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"I am sure that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:29). Paul wrote these words to the Christians in Rome. He was telling them, "I have no doubt that when I meet you, it will be in the fullest measure of Christ's blessing."

The apostle's words here imply something that every believer must know. That is, there are various degrees, or measures, of Christ's blessing. Some believers obtain a full measure of this blessing, which is the goal. We're all meant to come into a full measure of the Lord's blessing. Yet other Christians enter into only a small measure of Christ's blessing.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul urges everyone to pursue the fullest measure of this blessing: "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ...Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 4:7, 13, 3:19).

Note the word "fullness" in these passages. The Greek word Paul uses here means "to complete the task of filling up to the full." That is the task God has given us: to pursue the fullness of Christ's blessing in our lives.

Paul elaborates on this, writing, "There is...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (4:4-6). In short, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit abides in all his children. Jesus promised, "We will come and make our abode in you" (see John 14:23). Paul is making clear that we all have the same access to the Lord. Therefore, we all have an equal opportunity to obtain his ever-increasing blessing. Indeed, our lives should continually increase in what Paul calls "the blessing of Christ."

Consider the incredible measure of Christ's blessing in Paul's life. This man received revelations from Jesus personally. He writes that Christ revealed himself in him. Of course, Paul knew he hadn't attained perfection. But he also knew, without a doubt, that there was nothing in his life hindering the flow of Christ's blessing.

This is why Paul could say, "I am sure that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:29). He had a holy confidence in his walk with Christ. He claimed, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16).

Paul was saying, in essence, "My life is an open book before the

Lord. I have no hidden sin in my heart, and he has no controversy with me. And his blessing to me is a continual flow of revelation. So, when I preach to you, you don't hear the words of men. I don't deliver a dead sermon full of clever theology. What you hear are the very words of God's heart to you."

You see, the fullness of Christ's blessing has little to do with material goods. Of course, all good health and earthly resources must be seen as blessings from God's gracious hand. But Paul is speaking of a much greater blessing here. The Greek word he uses for blessing means "God's commendation," or his "Well done."

In short, the blessing of Christ means having a life that's pleasing to the Lord. It's an inner knowing from the Holy Ghost that as God looks on your life, he says, "I'm pleased with you, my son, my daughter. There is nothing between us to hinder our communion and relationship."

The writer of Hebrews sums up the fullness of Christ's blessing this way: "The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever" (Hebrews 13:20-21).

I love being around people who live this kind of Christ-life. They have about them the aroma of having been with Jesus. Like Paul, these saints have a divine dissatisfaction with this life, a longing to be in the presence of Christ, a hunger to obtain more and more intimacy with him. They speak much of Jesus, and they exude his love and holiness.

Such people enjoy life, but they avoid all foolish conversation. They live wholly separated from the things of this world. And God's favor is evident in their lives and in their families. They may be poor, but their lives are fully blessed by the Lord.

Don't get me wrong: these believers suffer like everyone else. They go through seasons of severe trials and testings. But, like Paul, although they may be cast down, they are not destroyed. And they never quit. They're determined to finish their walk of faith and ministry in a way that's pleasing to God.

The purpose of this message  
is to expose what hinders our  
entering into the fullness  
of Christ's blessing.

Paul asked the Galatians, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:7-9).

Paul is referring here to a mindset, a doctrinal belief or theology. He's asking, "What's in your life that keeps you from going on in

the full blessing of Christ? You were doing well at one time. I know you to be a praying people, and you labor diligently to do good works. But something's wrong. I don't see you growing anymore. Instead, you've gone back to relying on your flesh. I don't sense the sweet aroma of Christ you once had. Your certainty, your clarity, your vision are gone. Something's hindering you.

"What could have persuaded you to settle in this condition? Whatever it is, I tell you it's not of God. In fact, I sense leaven in you, a compromise of some kind. Something is clouding you, something you may be holding onto. And it's causing the Lord to have a controversy with you. Tell me, what is it?"

I know so many Christians today who once were mightily used of God. These people were devoted, praying, believing saints. But then something happened to them. Somehow, they were hindered from experiencing the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

This includes many ministers I know. These men saw victory after victory in their walk with the Lord. But something crept into their lives, some compromise, and over time they made peace with it. Often that hindering leaven was a single besetting sin.

To all such people, Paul asks, "What happened? What's hindering the flow of Christ's blessing in your life? What leaven has crept in?"

Even godly, praying Elijah  
was hindered from entering into  
the fullness of God's blessing.

The prophet Elijah was mightily used of God. He shared God's burden of grief over Israel. His heart broke over the people's backsliding. And he performed great miracles and wonders in God's name. Yet, just as Moses was prevented from entering the Promised Land, Elijah was hindered from experiencing the complete fullness of God's blessing.

You know the story of Elijah's victory on Mount Carmel. The godly prophet called down fire from heaven and slew the prophets of Baal. Then he prayed for rain, and showers poured down, ending the long drought in Israel. When the people saw these things, they immediately repented of their idolatry and turned back to the Lord.

I want to pick up the story as the people started for Jezreel, the capital, to report the news. Incredibly, Elijah outran a speeding chariot back to the city, a distance of over twenty miles. Scripture says, "The hand of the Lord was upon Elijah" (1 Kings 18:46) as he raced along. This tells me Elijah was on a divine mission. "The hand of the Lord" indicates his leading. God was sending Elijah back to Jezreel for a purpose. Why, exactly, was the prophet being hurried back to the capital?

We find a clue in Elijah's testimony at Mount Carmel: "I have done all those things at his word" (1 Kings 18:36). The prophet was saying, in essence, "Lord, let everyone here know that everything I do is in submission to your leading. What I've done here today is simply what you told me to do in prayer."

But then wicked Queen Jezebel got the news. When she heard that Elijah had slain all her false prophets, she threatened to kill him. Scripture says, "[King] Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them

by tomorrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life" (1 Kings 19:1-3). When Elijah heard Jezebel's threat, he ran for his life.

Many Bible commentators believe Elijah wasn't afraid of Jezebel. They say his mission was fulfilled at Mount Carmel, and that now God was leading him into the wilderness to teach him some important lessons. In other words, the Lord never intended for Elijah to face Jezebel back in Jezreel.

I disagree. I think this interpretation misses the point of this passage entirely. As I picture bold Elijah racing back to Jezreel, I believe he was on his way to accomplish one final thing that God had asked of him: to kill Jezebel.

Think about it: the Lord wasn't about to allow Jezebel to raise up a whole new corps of wicked priests. Why would God tell Elijah to slay her 400 prophets, but allow the mother of idolatry to survive? It would be like lopping off sin's branches, but allowing its root to survive. When God prepares his people to enter the fullness of his blessing, he calls us to do more than just repent. He also calls us to root out our sin, so we can be brought into a life of purity and holiness. Only then can we experience his fullness.

I believe the Bible proves Jezebel had to be cut down. In Revelation, Jesus instructs the church in Thyatira, "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols...."

"Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts" (Revelation 2:19-23).

Christ is speaking here to a people who are charitable, full of faith, patient, growing in good deeds. Yet these devoted saints still didn't have the Lord's full blessing. Why? Jesus tells them, "There is one issue, one hindrance, that keeps you from experiencing my favor in full. That is, you refuse to deal with the Jezebel spirit in your midst. You allow that wicked spirit to go on seducing you." Christ makes it absolutely clear: if we are to enter into his fullness, we must get to the root of all idolatry and sin.

So, what is the sin that Jezebel represents? Jezebel is a symbolic name. In Hebrew, it means "chaste?" with an intentional question mark. This suggests surprise at the very thought of chasteness - meaning, "certainly not chaste, not pure; that which is clearly impure." In short, Jezebel is a spirit of gross uncleanness and lust.

Some commentators don't believe Jezebel was the actual name of Ahab's wife. Rather, they say the writer used the name as a degrading epithet because of the queen's hated behavior. This was a common practice among the biblical writers. For example, John uses the word "antichrist" not just to describe the person who's to come, but also a spirit. The same is true with the use of "dragon": it's used to describe not only Satan, but any entity that's controlled by him, including humans.

Simply put, Jezebel is a seductive propaganda from hell, and it's

aimed solely at God's servants. It's meant to bring down and destroy all who have been touched and anointed by the Lord. The passage on Mount Carmel bears this out. Have you ever wondered where those prophets of Baal came from? They weren't some imported, immigrant priests. They were Israelites, God's chosen. They'd been seduced by Jezebel, led into her fornication through devilish indoctrination.

There's no question in my mind Elijah was called as an instrument to pull down that stronghold in Israel. Elijah had a history with the Lord, and was trained to hear God's voice. He prayed with such power that the heavens were shut and opened again. When he struck a river with his mantle, the waters divided. And he raised a young boy from the dead. Elijah clearly lived and moved in the miraculous. He had once declared to Ahab with authority, "Elijah is here!" What courage! What fearlessness!

Yet the mighty prophet was now running away in fear.

The battle that began between  
Elijah and Jezebel is the same  
battle we fight today.

This same battle is being waged in God's house even now. Think of a devoted Christian, someone who's like Elijah. He's dedicated to God's work, diligent, patient, walking by faith, serving others, increasing in good works. But there is a hindrance in his life. This servant has a measure of Christ: he's saved, justified, occupied with the Father's business. Yet now the Lord comes to him, saying, "I have something against you. You've allowed something destructive in your life. A Jezebel spirit has seduced you. And it's hindering you in your walk with me."

"Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel...to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" (Revelation 2:20). Jesus isn't speaking here of an actual woman who stands up before a church and lectures on how to get away with fornication. No, he's referring to those things that you allow to indoctrinate you: TV, the Internet, the lusts of our flesh. These are all powerful seducers.

Likewise, when Christ speaks of "eating things sacrificed unto idols," he's not talking about food. He's referring to Christians who dine on the devil's filth. These believers may raise their voices in praise at church, but when they go home, they turn their minds over to the worst filth imaginable: sex, violence, abominations.

Even the world acknowledges the evil of such things. In an interview with the New York Times, a famous young actor was asked if he ever indulged in pornography, as many Hollywood stars do. The young man answered, "I can't afford to feed my mind with filth. Those who get into pornography can't control their thoughts. Their minds constantly race with all the images they've gotten from porn. I can't let myself do that. No professional actor can." Sadly, many Christians can't claim this kind of discipline.

Often when the Jezebel spirit comes to seduce us, it whispers, "You've worked hard, and now you need to relax. It's time you allowed yourself some recreation. This is the day of grace, and God isn't hard on his people. Go ahead, tune into that off-color TV show. Or rent that filthy movie. If you indulge too much, you can always claim the blood of Jesus and get clean again."

No! Jesus says if you lust in your heart, you've already committed

adultery. He tells us plainly, with flaming eyes, "I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not" (Revelation 2:21). The "her" in this verse signifies the deceived children of God, those seduced by the Jezebel spirit.

The Lord is saying, "I am merciful toward you, and I have been very patient. I've given you lots of time to repent and forsake your sin. I have sent prophets to you, sermons from the pulpit, warnings from your friends. My Spirit has convicted you and warned you in love. But you still haven't repented.

"I long for you to enter my fullness. I've laid out every resource before you. Yet you continue to live like a pauper. I have a controversy with you, and it won't go away until you deal with this hindrance."

Consider the awful consequences  
of letting Jezebel live.

Jesus tells us what these consequences are:

\* "I will cast her into a bed" (Revelation 2:22). The Greek translation here is "wear down, put to flight." It signifies continual fear, weariness, always running.

\* "Great tribulation" (2:22). The Greek suggests pressure, troubles, depression.

\* "I will kill her children with death" (2:23). Unless those who make a covenant with Jezebel repent, their end will be literal death.

Why does the Lord deal so severely with those who go to bed with Jezebel? It's because he wants this matter taken seriously by everyone who serves him: "All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (2:23).

These aren't the words of some Old Testament prophet. It's a warning from Jesus himself, in this day of grace. He's telling us, "Every individual in my church has to know that Jezebel must be cast down. You have to deal this spiritual stronghold a death-blow, or you'll never have a greater measure of me."

Let's go back now to Elijah. I consider him to be one of the mightiest men of God in all of Scripture. Yet he allowed Jezebel to live. Elijah failed in this mission, with no justification.

What was at the root of Elijah's failure? It was a lack of faith. Elijah ascribed more power to Jezebel than to God. Think about it: after his victory on Mount Carmel, there was revival in the land, conviction among the people, and widespread repentance. Jezebel had no power left. If she had tried to kill Elijah then, the people would have surrounded him in protection. But instead, when the threat came, Elijah lost faith.

Are you getting the point of this message? The God who saved you - who has given you victories over sin, and provided miracles for you - has the same power to kill any Jezebel-lust in you. He can destroy every stronghold, mortify every besetting sin, and deliver you from all power of the enemy.

Many struggling Christians think, "This habit in me is so strong, I'm overwhelmed. Where is the victory?" That's when the enemy whispers to them, "God doesn't hear you. You're not going to make

it. In spite of all your prayers, you're going to fall." But the Lord answers, "No! No stronghold, no Jezebel spirit, shall have dominion over you."

Elijah did what many believers consider doing: he ran away. David writes of wanting to fly away to the desert, like a bird. Jeremiah wished he had an isolated cottage, far away in the wilderness. Yet most Christians who "run away" never actually go anywhere. For them, it's a frame of mind, a desire to get away from their trial.

Eventually, David concluded, "I will fear no evil." But Elijah chose to run away and hide. He gave up the fight. And Jezebel lived on.

God loves his servants through  
all their fears and failures.

I believe Elijah's story reveals one of the greatest compassionate acts God has ever shown any fearful servant. Elijah ended up under a juniper tree in the wilderness, so depressed that he fell into a heavy sleep. But the Lord sent an angel to wake him up and feed him with a cake and some water. So Elijah ate and drank, but he was still so depressed he went straight back to sleep.

Once more the angel woke him and fed him another meal. Then God spoke these kind words to his servant: "Elijah, the journey is too much for you. Here, sit up and eat" (see 1 Kings 19:7). He was saying, "Friend, you can't handle this alone. I'm with you."

You see, God's love for Elijah was never in question. It didn't matter how badly his servant failed. Even in his fear, depression and desire to run away, Elijah was still much loved by the Father. The same is true for all of us who love and serve the Lord.

Yet God had another message for Elijah. It was a merciful warning, and it applies to us today as well. He asked, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" (19:13). Even though the Lord had forgiven Elijah, he wasn't going to sweep his problem under the rug. He loved him too much.

Elijah answered with an excuse, but God wouldn't accept it. Again he asked, "Why are you here?" He was asking, in essence, "Why did you give up the fight, Elijah? Why did you resign from your ministry? Where did this weariness come from?"

In the end, it appears that God accepted Elijah's resignation. The Lord said, in so many words, "I won't force you to go on, Elijah. But I'm going to anoint Jehu in your place. He's going to fulfill your mission by killing Jezebel."

The fact is, if we want to quit, the Lord will allow it. And he won't love us any less. He'll simply allow us to go on living with our limited measure of Christ. Indeed, when the time came for Elijah to go home to the Lord, he was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire. He was a man greatly honored. But, like Moses, who was prevented from entering the Promised Land, Elijah never entered the fullness of God's blessing.

You may be able to say, "I don't have a problem with lust. I'm not a fornicator or an adulterer. Thank God, I haven't been seduced by the Jezebel spirit." I rejoice with you. But for every believer who desires to enter fully into the blessing of Christ, an Elijah moment will surely come. You'll encounter the biggest, most overwhelming enemy you've ever faced. And the Jezebel spirit will taunt you, "This time, you're going to fall. It's all over for you."

When that time comes, you cannot think of quitting. Don't give up the fight or forsake the promises God has given you. Cast down that Jezebel spirit. The Lord says it has no power over you.

Here is one final picture of God's mercy. Even though Elijah failed, the Lord gave his servant the final word. Scripture says Elijah prophesied, "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel" (1 Kings 21:23). That is just what happened. Jezebel was slain on the very spot where Elijah had fled, and the dogs licked up her blood. God gave Elijah the last word.

Dear saint, our Lord has made us more than conquerors. That is his final word on the subject. So, get up and fight. And let him lead you into the fullness of his blessing.

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