**The Church – The Fullness of Him Who Fills All in All**

*Ephesians 1:22-23*

**Introduction**

1. What should be the vision of a local church? (This church…)
2. What is our purpose? What trajectory are we on?
3. What is our concept of a “sound” church? Or a strong church?
4. What has attracted you to a particular church in the past?
5. Are we measuring up to Christ’s intentions for the church?
6. God has very specific plans for His church in Christ. We should be diligent to understand them and appreciate what our function is.
7. The Fullness of Him Who Fills All in All
8. A Powerful Paradox
   1. The head over all is given to His subjects.
      1. Head over all…
         1. He is ***“head over all things”* (Ephesians 1:22).**
         2. Humbled to exalted:
            1. Humbled self to death on the cross – **Philippians 2:8**

Crucified in weakness, raised in power – **2 Corinthians 13:4**

* + - * 1. Exalted in resurrection, ascension, dominion – **Ephesians 1:19-21 (cf. Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:34, 36); Philippians 2:9-11** (name – authority; **Acts 4:10, 12; Mark 2:10** – “Son of Man,” named Jesus)

**Daniel 7:13-14** – ascended to God to receive dominion, glory, kingdom.

Above all (Spiritual/Physical) – **Ephesians 1:21; Ephesians 3:10-11** (Good; **1 Peter 1:12); Colossians 2:13-15** (Evil)

* + - 1. Headship – authority – **Matthew 28:18; Colossians 1:15-18** (Preeminence – first in rank – in ALL things)
    1. …given to His subjects.
       1. “things” and “to be” supplied by translators.
       2. **“And He put all under His feet, and gave Him – head over all – to the church”**
       3. Christ (as head over all) is given by God to the church – THE ONE WITH ALL AUTHORITY IS GIVEN TO HIS SUBJECTS.
       4. **(v. 23)** – church is His body – in need of a head for proper function.
       5. Without – **Mark 6:34** – sheep without a shepherd.
          1. Given a Shepherd – **Ezekiel 37:24**
       6. Government upon His shoulder – **Isaiah 9:6-7** (context of promise, and hope)
          1. **(v. 7)** – order it (set it up, found it); establish it (uphold, support, maintain) – with JUDGMENT and JUSTICE.
          2. **Success and longevity of kingdom dependent on government of the King.**
       7. Authority used for the good of the church – **Ephesians 5:23, 25**
  1. The filler of all is filled by the church He filled.
     1. Filler of all…
        1. ***“Him who fills all in all”*** – He fills all things in all ways (comprehensive in scope, sufficient in provision)
        2. He fills all that exists – **Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17** (not simply created, but sustained); **1 Corinthians 8:6**
           1. **Acts 17:28** – true of Christ.
        3. Church included in “all”:
           1. Every spiritual blessing – **Ephesians 1:3-14** – in Christ, in Him.

**(v. 3)** – every spiritual blessing.

**(v. 4)** – character – holy, without blame.

**(v. 5)** – adoption as sons.

**(vv. 6-7)** – accepted through redeeming blood, forgiveness.

**(vv. 8-10)** – revelation of mystery/will.

**(vv. 11-12)** – inheritance.

**(vv. 13-14)** – guarantee of inheritance.

* + - * 1. I.e. He is the source, the location, for all our sinful state requires for salvation.
    1. …filled by the church He filled.
       1. What is a body without a head?
       2. WHAT IS A HEAD WITHOUT A BODY?
          1. NOTE: Not suggesting a dependence of Christ on us, but a fulfillment of plan.
       3. Body – head directs, but tasks accomplished via arms, legs, eyes, ears, mouth, etc.
          1. “Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today, He has no feet but our feet to lead men in His way; He has no tongue but our tongues to tell men how He died, He has no help but our help to bring them to His side.” (“The World’s Bible”)
       4. **Philippians 1:9-11** – filled by Christ through knowledge/discernment to the end of bearing fruits of righteousness BY Christ.
          1. The church is the fruit bearer for Christ.
          2. HE fills us that we might be His fulness on earth.
       5. **Ephesians 4:7-10** – left gifts **(v. 11)** for church – ascended to fill all things – that we might function as His body, in turn filling Him **(v. 12** – for the work of ministry).

1. The Church – Her Own Filler’s Fullness
   1. Example of the Father and the Son – **John 5:17, 19-20**
      1. Father working in the Son, Son working in subjection to the Father.
      2. **John 7:16-18** – doctrine of God spoken through Son.
      3. **John 9:4-5** – working works of Him that sent.
      4. **John 14:9-11** – see the Father in the Son – words and works.
   2. Relationship of Christ and the church – **Acts 9:1-5** – disciples, those of the Way, Jesus.
      1. Christ acting through the church who acts in submission to Christ.
      2. Christ and His people are one – BUT NOT IN SIMPLY A SENTIMENTAL WAY, BUT PRACTICALLY – ***“any who were of the Way”*** (**cf. John 14:6**).
   3. Mutual dwelling – **John 14:15-24**
      1. **(vv. 15-18)** – promise of HS to be with them in place of Christ personally – Christ with them through HS. (**v. 16** – ***“another”*** – *allos* – another of the same kind)
         1. NOTE: conditional **(v. 15)**
      2. **(vv. 19-20)** – when HS comes, know mutual dwelling of Father and Son, but also of apostles and Son.
      3. **(vv. 21-24)** – love by keeping commands, manifestation/love/dwelling of Son/Father with them – and they in them.
         1. Describing fellowship – participation with each other.
         2. Son commands (in them), apostles obey (in Him).
      4. **John 15:1-6** – vine gives life to branches to bear its fruit.
         1. Branches bearing fruit fills up the vine’s work.
         2. **(v. 5)** – Branches cannot bear fruit separate from the vine.
      5. Applies to church – **Ephesians 2:19-22** – dwelling place through adherence to apostles and prophets teaching (adhere to cornerstone – Christ).
         1. **(vv. 21-22)** – temple, dwelling place of God in the Spirit.
         2. **1 Peter 2:4-5** – offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God THROUGH Jesus Christ.
   4. Christ established the church to carry out His work, but the church can only do so by being filled with Christ. In being filled with Christ, the church becomes Christ’s fullness as it is given to Christ’s work.
      1. **John 15:5** – without Christ we can do nothing.
      2. Christ intends for His church to dwell in Him, and to allow Him to dwell in Her.
      3. The church’s purpose is to carry on the work of Christ – this cannot happen except through strict adherence to His revelation.
      4. Any church which deviates from Christ in any way is not fulfilling their entire purpose.
      5. Being Christ centered is more than simply saying we are, or emphasizing only certain parts of the gospel – being Christ centered is in emphasis of all Christ has expressed in His revelation of Self, and His will.
2. The Church as Christ’s Fullness
3. Doctrinal Integrity
   1. Function in relation to truth – **1 Timothy 3:15**
      1. Founded on truth – **Matthew 16:16-18; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11; 4:15**
      2. Upholding (supporting) truth – not just pillar, but ground (foundation) (intensifying figure of function)
         1. Truth – gospel – exists independent of anything – eternal (**cf. 1 Peter 1:24-25**) – yet, NOT JUST THERE TO BE THERE.
         2. Authored to be accepted and practiced! – by the church.
         3. **IMPLICATION – a church that does not uphold the truth will not extinguish the truth, but by no means is “the church of the living God.”**
   2. Earnestly contending – **Jude 3-4** – Don’t get to benefit from the truth without defending it; **(v. 4)** – truth threatened through error.
      1. What’s at stake? – **Jude 5-7, 12** – carried away by false teachers to destruction. (**v. 12** – ***“spots”*** – or hidden reefs)
      2. Threat of error – **Matthew 7:15-20; Acts 20:28-31; 2 Peter 2:1-3** (False teacher = one who teaches falsely; **Jeremiah 14:14**)
         1. NOTE: Wolves disguised among you; False teachers among you.
         2. Not simply denominational error outside of church – BUT MEMBERS OF CHURCH TO LOOK OUT FOR.
      3. Accepting no other doctrine – **Galatians 1:6-9**
         1. **(v. 6)** – ***“different”*** – *heteros* – qualitative difference – another of a different sort.
         2. **(v. 7)** – ***“another”*** – *allos* – quantitative difference – another of the same sort.
         3. Gospel – only 1 (quantity) of a specific sort (quality).
         4. Implication – **(vv. 8-9)** – regardless of who, if someone teaches a different sort (quality) then it can’t be true, because there is only one (quantity) – harmony.
      4. Maintaining integrity through teaching – **Ephesians 4:11-14; 2 Corinthians 10:4-6**
      5. Acknowledging, and explaining that error always has consequence – **1 Corinthians 15:32-34** (evil company)
   3. Declaring whole counsel – **Acts 20:25-28** – innocence through avoiding negligence – not only not teaching error but teaching the WHOLE truth.
      1. Speaking of preachers/churches – “they are sound because they aren’t teaching any error” – sometimes it isn’t what is being said, but what is NOT being said! (**v. 28** – taking heed to selves and flock dependent on receiving whole counsel – doctrinal and moral shoring up) (**cf. Acts 20:20** – withholding nothing profitable) **(cf. Ezekiel 33:7-9** – watchman not to neglect warning)
      2. **Hard sayings** – **Matthew 19:10-11; John 6:60-69** (Necessary teaching offended them – not any discrepancies, but simply unpleasant to hear – BUT WORDS OF LIFE!)
      3. Some will not oppose the truth, knowing it is truth, but will simply leave it out – NOTHING IN THE GOSPEL IS DISPENSABLE.
   4. Enduring sound doctrine – **2 Timothy 3:16-4:5** – because ALL scripture is profitable, Timothy to preach it – SOME WON’T “ENDURE” WHAT IS “SOUND DOCTRINE.” **(Supply and demand)**
      1. Endure – *anechō* – to regard w. tolerance, endure, bear with, put up with (BDAG) (**cf. Hebrews 13:22** – bear with word of exhortation)
      2. **(v. 4)** – some don’t want what challenges them and leads to sacrifice – they want fluff.
4. Moral Purity
   1. Christ’s intention – **Ephesians 5:25-27**
      1. **(v. 26)** – initial sanctifying (positive – for work) and cleansing (negative – from sin) simultaneous in baptism.
      2. **(v. 27)** – future – maintain purity/holiness – in same way through word.
         1. **The church not comprised of sinners, but saints. (You WERE – Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 6:11)**
         2. Those who are purifying themselves daily and changing their lives to be in accord with Christ’s will.
         3. Never being complacent, or content with sin in presence.
      3. **1 Peter 1:13-15** – holy as God is holy (obedient to the word) – not holiness by name affiliation with God, but practically, truly.
   2. Practical moral teaching – **Galatians 5:19-21**
      1. Holiness requires practical moral teaching – i.e. not just dealing in generalities, but specifically applying the words of the NT to events and activities in our lives.
      2. **(v. 19)** – evident, i.e. when instructed by the Spirit **(v. 17).**
      3. **(v. 21)** – ***“and the like”*** – *homoios* (ὅμοιος, 3664), “like, resembling, such as, the same as,” (VINE)
         1. I.e. not an exhaustive list – many general categories which specifics would fall into (EX: ***“fornication”)*** (**cf. 1 Corinthians 5:1** – specific form of sexual immorality)
         2. Discernment of good and evil – **Hebrews 5:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22**
      4. ***“inventors of evil things” (Romans 1:30)***
         1. Nothing new under the sun (**cf. Ecclesiastes 1:9-10**).
         2. **Inventors** – *epheuretēs* – one who forms strategies or tactics to effect someth., inventor, contriver (BDAG)
         3. Effect is same sin, but the process looks different.
         4. BIBLE NOT AN INDEX, BUT GIVES GENERAL TRUTHS TO BE ETERNALLY APPLIED – questions regarding morality of certain activities to be answered using biblical principles – specific.
      5. ***“You are the man” (2 Samuel 12:7)*** type application:
         1. EX: **1 Corinthians 3:3-4 *– “you are still carnal,” “For when…are you not carnal?”***
         2. **EX: What is/does an unlawful marriage, immodest dress, bible say about alcohol, dancing, etc.?**
   3. Adorning the doctrine – **Titus 2:10**
      1. The church that represents the fullness of Christ displays the truth actively in a favorable light.
      2. **Negative** – **Titus 2:5** – word not blasphemed.**(cf. Romans 2:23-24)**
      3. **Positive** – adorn – *kosmeō* – to cause someth. to have an attractive appearance through decoration, adorn, decorate (BDAG)
         1. How to make the doctrine more attractive? NOT ADDING.
         2. Living it out – context: **(v. 9)** – bondservant who is obedient, well pleasing, not answering back, not pilfering, fidelity (**cf. Colossians 3:22-24** – as to the Lord).
         3. Living the gospel to show its relevance and positive contribution.
      4. **Romans 12:2** – proving that the will of God is good, acceptable, perfect.
      5. **Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:11-12** – displaying truth through action to God’s glory, and attraction of others.
         1. **1 Peter 3:16** – bringing shame against those who revile.
      6. Showing commands not to be a burden, but a blessing – **1 John 5:3** – through living them.
   4. Addressing sin (restorative focus) **– 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22** – nearly covers all – deal with sin, help the struggling, teach word exposing good and evil.
      1. **2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Corinthians 11:30-32** (if they saw these faults themselves they could avoid greater consequences) – need for watchfulness, introspection, to discover any possible need for correction. (Even as church)
         1. NOTE: Elders given greatest responsibility – **Hebrews 13:17** – watch out for souls, will give account. (Overseers, superintendents)
      2. Preventative discipline – seen in doctrinal integrity, and practical moral teaching.
      3. Corrective discipline – **2 Timothy 3:16** (reproof, correction, instruction)
         1. **Hebrews 12:5-6, 11** – chastening of God as example. (**chastening** – *paideia* – disciplinary correction – involves teaching, but the acting to correct something amiss – sin.)
         2. Opposite – **1 Corinthians 5:1-2** – ***“puffed up”*** – pride displayed in thinking the sin in their midst was inconsequential due to their current possessions – Spiritual gifts? **(Sin must always be addressed!)**
         3. Correction to save a soul **– James 5:19-20; Galatians 6:1-2**
         4. Correction to save the church – **Galatians 2:11-14**
         5. Punitive discipline to save a soul – **1 Corinthians 5:3-5**
         6. Punitive discipline to save the church (purify, purge) – **1 Corinthians 5:6-8**
5. Spirit Based Unity
   1. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit – **Ephesians 4:3** (Faith – unity)
      1. Endeavoring – *spoudazō* – taking great effort, exert oneself.
      2. Keep – *tēreō* – to guard.
      3. I.e. there are forces working against unity, and it takes great effort to protect it from being jeopardized.
      4. Context – Jew and Gentile united in Christ:
         1. **Ephesians 2:11** – uncircumcision – term of derision.
         2. **Ephesians 2:12-13** – brought near by blood of Christ.
         3. **Ephesians 2:14-18** – peace between God and man, but also peace between men.
            1. ***“He Himself is our peace”; “through the cross”; “by one Spirit”*** – i.e. the Gospel of Christ, the message of the cross unites, nothing else.
            2. Jew and Gentile peace = unheard of! (**cf. Acts 10:28)**
            3. Mystery – **Ephesians 3:3-7** – Gentiles fellow heirs – (**vv. 8-10** – manifold wisdom of God displayed in plan.)
      5. Same mind/judgment – **1 Corinthians 1:10** – how could this occur?
         1. Jewish culture and Gentile culture harmonize? NO.
         2. Adhere to infallible standard that applies to all – **Romans 1:16; 2:11, 16** – no partiality, all judged by gospel.
      6. Effort to grow into maturity together, maintaining unity – **Ephesians 4:11-16** – THE MEASURE (standard) IS CHRIST.
         1. Unity of Spirit – **4:3, 11, 13** (apostles, prophets); **3:5** (Spirit revealed to apostles, prophets)
         2. **If the unity the gospel demands is by the “Spirit” – revelation of – then “unity” (false) despite contradictory teaching and practice is NOT SCRIPTURAL UNITY.**
            1. **(v. 14)** – not tolerant of false teaching and sin.
         3. **NOT – grace/unity; unity in diversity; gospel doctrine distinction; etc.**
            1. Grace, not law?

Man’s sinful nature precludes true unity?

Man can’t help but sin, even after becoming God’s child?

Not sinful nature – **Romans 7:9** (alive – spiritually – prior to choice to sin)

Man made upright – **Ecclesiastes 7:29**

Can keep from sin – **1 John 2:1**

Grace excludes law allowing for differences?

**Romans 6:14** – not excluding all law, but emphasizing grace. (Not…but – statement)

**Romans 6:15-19** – shall not sin (choice), but live according to righteousness (in gospel).

**(v. 17)** – to which you were delivered – i.e. as slave to obey (doctrine, gospel).

**Galatians 5:13** – not liberty as opportunity for flesh.

**Galatians 5:16-18** – walk in Spirit’s teaching. (**v. 18** – not under law of Moses, led by Spirit – HS, of Christ – **cf. Romans 8:9**)

**Galatians 6:2** – law of Christ.

**Galatians 6:1** – not overlooking sin for unity, but addressing it for unity.

Grace teaches, leading to united lives in submission to its guidance – **Titus 2:11-14; 3:9-11** (reject things causing division – contrary to grace that teaches)

* + - * 1. Gospel, not doctrine?

“Core gospel” – what is meant – **1 Corinthians 15:1-4** – death, burial, resurrection of Jesus.

Must agree on the gospel, but not doctrine.

Distinction made between the two (arbitrary – EX: baptism is doctrine or gospel?)

Context of **1 Corinthians 15**:

Accept Christ’s resurrection – (**vv. 1-4)** – received **(v. 1).**

Deny general resurrection – **(v. 12)**

Logical consequence – **(v. 13)** – Christ not risen (why believe?)

Reality – **(vv. 20-23**) – Christ’s resurrection acts as firstfruits – general resurrection to come.

Paul making an issue of doctrine (general resurrection) when “core gospel” (Christ’s resurrection) agreed upon?

Unity demanded in doctrine – (**vv. 33-34)** – excluding those who hold to error.

**1 Corinthians. 1:10** – same mind and judgment.

Including what? – gospel, not doctrine?

What did Paul address?

Chapter 5 – sexual immorality, church discipline.

Chapter 6 – civil litigation among brethren, sexual immorality.

Chapter 7 – principles of the sexual relationship and marriage.

Chapters 8-10 – use of liberties, and corresponding treatment of brethren.

Chapter 11 – proper observance of the LS.

Chapters 12-14 – evaluation and use of spiritual gifts.

Chapter 15 – universal resurrection.

Stand fast in the faith – **1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Corinthians 13:5 – stand fast in gospel, but not everything I just finished writing about???**

No gospel/doctrine distinction – **1 Timothy 1:10-11**

* + - * 1. Unity and diversity how? – Diverse people united in Christ – **Galatians 3:26-29**
      1. True unity – **John 17:20-24** – united together as the Father and Son.
         1. Unity of Jesus and God – **John 17:4** (glorified God – **John 7:16-18** – through teaching God’s will – unity); **John 17:21** (ONE)
         2. Unity of Jesus and Apostles – **John 17:6-8, 11, 17** (know the unity between Father and Son, one as Father Son through truth)
      2. **Philippians 1:27** – striving together for faith of the gospel.
      3. Division comes in disagreement on truth – **1 Corinthians 11:19; 1 John 2:19**
         1. Not good, but don’t overlook to preserve unity.
  1. The bond of peace – **Ephesians 4:3**
     1. I.e. a willingness to be at peace; a desire for peace.
     2. Requires the knowledge and acceptance of transcendent revelation from God.
        1. Thoughts of man are equal. (Humility – my thoughts aren’t superior to any others’.)
        2. Thoughts of God are greater and binding.
        3. **Ephesians 4:2** – lowliness, gentleness, longsuffering bearing in love.
     3. Peace if at all possible – **Romans 12:17-18** – implies there may not be a possibility (error, sin)
        1. Not peace at the expense of truth.
        2. Rather, peace to preserve unity in the truth!
        3. Spirit of deference – **Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:1-4**
  2. In Faith, Unity; In Opinion, Liberty; In All things, Love **– Romans 14:1-4, 14-18** – regarding something revealed to be lawful, but not required, and proper actions when a pang of conscience is involved.
     1. Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace means:
        1. No tolerance in matters of truth – “In matters of faith, unity.” **(v. 17** – righteousness in HS)
        2. Tolerance in matters of indifference to God – “In matters of opinion, liberty.” (**v. 14** – nothing unclean itself)
        3. Always acting with love – “In all things, love.” (**vv. 15-16** – not destroy brother with liberty)
     2. Willingness to forgo liberties for the sake of brethren **– 1 Corinthians 8:9-13**
     3. Don’t make something that is not a matter of truth an instrument of division. (**cf. Romans 14:3** – not judging)
        1. **James 4:11-12** – only judge via righteous judgment by the Law – don’t make judgments the law does not make.
        2. **False conservatism** – going beyond the “strictness” of the law.
           1. **False** – what are we conserving? – Supposed to be the law of Christ.
           2. **Danger** – **Matthew 15:1-9** – washings not inherently wrong, but wrong when bound – leading to superseding God’s law.

**(v. 8)** – claim of spiritual focus/conservatism.

**(v. 9)** – reality – liberal, due to undermining law by addition.

* + 1. **EX: Most recent manifestations – pandemic (masks, vaccines, etc.); politics – SATAN USING SUCH TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN BRETHREN WHO WOULD OTHERWISE BE UNITED.**
       1. Strong convictions in matters unrevealed is not being spiritually minded (Pharisaical).
       2. Also – homeschool vs. public school; order and time of worship; etc.

**Conclusion**

1. We need to be sure we are truly the ***“fullness of Him who fills all in all.”***
2. We can only be so as we carry out His will and work faithfully.