CALLED UNTO HOLINESS

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CHAPTER THREE -

FULLNESS OF CHRIST

We have been considering together in these meetings the standard which the Lord JESUS CHRIST set for the Christian as given in that last conversation with His disciples on earth. It was to be a life like His life. They were to live as He had lived, and to work as He had worked. In other words they were to live a supernatural life. But how was such a life possible for human, sinful men?

In the definition of the church given in the Epistle to the Ephesians we see the same high standard set.

"The church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22,23).

Think of it! "The church... the fullness of [Christ]"! The Christian, the fullness of CHRIST! Is that your conception of what it is for you to be a Christian. You, living in your home; you, walking up and down the streets of your town or city, the fullness of CHRIST! That is what the Word says. "The fullness of him that filleth all in all."

Here we are told how it is possible. He fills us with His own fullness - But, as He set this standard before His disciples on that last night with them, He saw their perplexed look and the sorrow in their faces. If they had not been able to live according to such a standard when He was with them, how could they possibly live such a life when He had gone from them? Then He told them how.

He was going away, but He would send Another like Himself to be not only with them but in them.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever... for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16, 17).

The supernatural life could be lived because they were to be indwelt by a supernatural Person, whose indwelling Presence was for one purpose, to make the life of CHRIST a living reality within them.

He promised to send this wonderful Comforter, but, in order to do so, He must go away. Yes, He had to go to the Cross where He laid down that precious life in death. He had to go down into the darkness of the tomb but He could not be kept there. He, who was the Author of life, yea, who was Life itself, broke the bonds of death and rose from the tomb. He ascended into Heaven and was exalted by the Father to be Lord over the universe and Head over all things to the Church. As the exalted, glorified Lord, He would send back the HOLY SPIRIT, Who had indwelt, infilled and empowered Him in His earthly life, to indwell, infill and empower them.

The Fullness of CHRIST Through Personal Sanctification

The day of Pentecost came. The HOLY SPIRIT descended and that little company of believers were baptized with the HOLY SPIRIT and so made one in the body of CHRIST. Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit on day of Pentecost.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:4).

By so doing CHRIST, the Head of the church, set the standard for the entire church and for every Christian all down through the ages. It is not at the end of our Christian life in the twilight of Christian experience we are privileged to be filled with the Spirit as a sign of spiritual maturity. But at the very beginning, yea, on any day after we have been baptized into the body of CHRIST through rebirth, we may be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT as the means of becoming full-grown in CHRIST.

My friends, to be filled with the Spirit is GOD's standard for every Christian here this afternoon.

Are you filled? The only normal Christians here are those who are filled with the HOLY SPIRIT!

We sometimes think this is such an extraordinary spiritual experience that the person who is so filled is abnormal. It is the exact contrary.

I put it to you today, is it normal for one who is in CHRIST and has CHRIST in him and who is indwelt by the same SPIRIT that indwelled CHRIST, to be constantly defeated? Is it normal for that one to be without joy, or peace, or rest, or power? Is it normal for the Christian to be simply bearing "fruit" when he should be bearing "much fruit"?

So I do not wait until the close of my message to press home this question. Are you filled with the HOLY SPIRIT? We can know whether we are filled or not as truly as we can know whether or not we are saved. There are conditions to be fulfilled by us for receiving and conditions for maintaining the fullness of the Spirit which are as clearly stated in the Word as the conditions to be fulfilled for salvation. We may and should know what they are.

We shall think now of how to obtain this fullness. We shall do so by asking and answering questions from the Word of GOD.

Has Such Fullness Been Provided For Me?

Oneness in CHRIST made it ours.

"For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him . . ." (Colossians 2:9, 10).

"In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." We all believe that, do we not? But we cannot stop there. It goes on to say. "And ye are complete (made full) in him." Our position in CHRIST makes us potential partakers of the fullness of CHRIST. We "are complete" it says. Not we will be. The moment we become a part of the body of CHRIST, the fountain of fullness in Him is opened to us. The fullness has been provided for every Christian.

Is Such Fullness Possible For Me?

Our theme today is "The Fullness of CHRIST through personal Sanctification." Can the fullness provided be made personal? Is it possible for me? Let the Lord JESUS give us the answer.

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

"Water" in Scripture is the type of the Spirit - as CHRIST Himself interprets it in John 7:38, 39. CHRIST is never called the water of life. But He gives this water to those who thirst and drink. CHRIST gives the HOLY SPIRIT to the Christian.

He is promising here the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT.

"In him a well" - is the HOLY SPIRIT indwelling which CHRIST promised the disciples.

"A well of water springing up" - leaping up in an exhaustless, irrepressible way; springing up and overflowing. Is not this fullness?

"Whosoever" - Did you get that word? It is big enough to include you if you want to be inside. Whenever I find a "whosoever" of promise from the lips of my Lord. I want to be inside as quickly as possible. Do you want to be inside this "whosoever"? You may be if you will. To whom were these words spoken? To the most respectable, cultured, educated, moral woman in that Samaritan city? The exact opposite. Perhaps to the most wicked woman there. Think of that!

If you and I had been talking to that poor sinful woman we would have said to her "Ye must be born again." And to Nicodemus, ruler of the Jews, the cultured, gifted, gentleman, we would have spoken of the living water. But not so with JESUS. He went no further in the conversation with Nicodemus than exhortation to be born again, while to the wicked woman He offered the gift of the fullness of the Spirit.

It is for you, whoever you are, and for me, is it not, if we want it?

"Shall never thirst." Do you believe it? You know when JESUS says "never" He means

"never." When you and I say "never" we usually mean "sometimes." But when JESUS said "never thirst" He meant "never thirst." And what do the words mean? Perfect inward heart satisfaction. Do you have it? Do you know many people who do? How many people do you see whose faces seem to show that their hearts are satisfied? My friends, if everyone of us women in this tent today had such a face, a revival should start immediately. It would indicate a quiet, peaceful, restful heart. And people would be asking how we got it.

After our first meeting someone said to me, "Did you see the person on the front seat with such a radiant face?" I was sorry to say I had not seen her. But in thinking of it afterwards it impressed me that it should be such an extraordinary thing, especially at a Keswick Convention, to see a radiant face that someone would remark about it. Why should not every Christian in that meeting have had such a radiant face that the one who had an unhappy face would have been the exception? Does this not seem abnormal and wrong?

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" but shall have perfect inward satisfaction and sufficiency. No matter what the circumstances or the environment or the spiritual and temporal need, CHRIST is enough and equal to it all.

CHRIST only satisfies; CHRIST only suffices because the indwelling HOLY SPIRIT fills the life and makes CHRIST a living reality within. Is He doing that for you?

I would hardly know how to answer anyone who asked me if I had been at the Keswick Convention. I have been in the town of Keswick but, because of my illness, sitting day after day in my room at the hotel, unable to go to any meetings or to receive the blessing that would come through personal fellowship with the speakers and friends here at Keswick. But have I not been at Keswick nevertheless? What is "Keswick"? Is it only a town? Is it only a giant tent? - Is it only an enormous crowd? Is it only meetings from morning until night? The inwardness of that word "Keswick" is the presence of the living Lord as a living reality manifested through the power of the HOLY SPIRIT indwelling the Christian. If you have not known that, than you have not been at Keswick at all, though you have attended every meeting. And if I have known that, then I have been at Keswick though I have not been able to attend any other meetings than these. And, if we have experienced the presence of the living CHRIST in a larger measure than ever before through a fresh infilling of the HOLY SPIRIT, then "Keswick" will go to the ends of the earth by the rivers of living water flowing through us.

You remember that Samaritan woman went to the well with a waterpot, but she left it there.

There are some people who come to Keswick with a little waterpot to be filled with living water, hoping it would last until they could come to Keswick again. Did you do that? Oh! Leave your little waterpot here and go away knowing that you have a well of living water within you springing up into everlasting life. Then you can go back to the most drab, difficult circumstances in home, in business, or in social circle and carry CHRIST into every situation. That each of us may do if we drink of this living water until filled.

It is not GOD's desire to give us merely a waterpot full of blessings, just victories, but rather, to give us a well, the fullness of Him who is the Blesser and the Victor.

Then, may I also have this fullness for power? For some of us are conscious of lack not only in the realm of Christian character but also in the sphere of our spiritual service. We have to acknowledge a lack of passion and of power to win souls to CHRIST. Let us listen again to the words of our Lord.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37, 38).

"Rivers of living water" - not a rivulet, or stream, or even a river, but "rivers," the Amazon, the Mississippi, the Yangtze, the Thames, all put together into one.

"Shall flow" - not a Dead Sea that receives and retains the blessings of Keswick, but the river Jordan that refreshes and renews every life it touches. Rivers of living water flowing out of Keswick into every village, town, city and country represented here at Keswick, so that "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live."

Plenitude of power in the Spirit-filled church!

When in the United States last year I passed through the mid-western states which had suffered so terribly from drought. The train crossed over a very long bridge beneath which was a very tiny stream of water twisting its way through a wide dried-up river bed. What a parable it was of many of our present-day churches! Expensive buildings, magnificent pipe-organs, big programs, countless organizations, something on almost every day of the week, yet so few souls saved and so few Christians filled with the HOLY SPIRIT. Oh! why is it that with the church better organized and equipped than ever before in its history, it has so little power? What would it mean if from Keswick five thousand people went forth with rivers of living water flowing from the life? It would mean revival that would extend to the uttermost part of the earth.

Plenitude of power in each Spirit-filled Christian!

A woman attending a conference in Holland last summer was filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, and during the week of the conference, while she attended all the meetings, won four people to CHRIST: Two women went home filled with the HOLY SPIRIT for the first time and within six weeks they had brought six other women to share that same wonderful experience. Will this happen in some lives here in Keswick?

"Out of his belly" - an inflow demands an outflow and an overflow. CHRIST is enough and to spare. And for whom is this plenitude of power?

"**He that believeth on me**" - not only for some great preacher or Bible teacher, not even alone for some one employed in Christian service, but for him who believes on the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Do you believe? Then this promise is for you. Not even the youngest, or the weakest or the least gifted believer is excluded from this blessing.

A missionary came home from China on furlough last year. On the boat she met a young woman who was unsaved but troubled over her spiritual condition. She sought help from the missionary and was open to know the way of salvation. But the missionary could not lead her to CHRIST. This caused desperate discouragement and led her to determine not to return to the mission field. Then a glorious thing happened.

She was filled with the HOLY SPIRIT and the Lord did such a gracious thing, so like Him. He brought that young woman across her path again and gave her the power to win her to CHRIST. Filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, then able to win souls to CHRIST.

Are you doing it?
Are you able to do it?

If you are filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, then those rivers of living water will flow through you into other lives.

Is such Fullness Optional?

May I choose whether I will be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT or not? The Bible answers that question.

"Be filled with The Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

It is a command, Christian friends, are you and I free to disobey the command of CHRIST? Or are we free to choose which commands we will obey and which we will not? I read in GOD's Word, "Thou shalt not kill" I find not one bit of difficulty in obeying fully that command, for I have never seen one human being I desired to kill.

"Thou shalt not steal." This command also is easy to obey, for I have never seen anything I wanted badly enough to steal it and run the risk of going to prison. To obey this command presents little difficulty to me. But, "Be filled with the Spirit." "No, Lord, I do not want to be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT for it makes too great a demand upon me. I will have to live too holy a life. I do not wish to obey this command."

Can we say that to our Lord?

Here is a command, and obedience to it puts the Christian in possession of the greatest spiritual blessing possible this side of Heaven. Then is not disobedience to this command the Christian's greatest sin? For if not filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, it is impossible for him to live a life of victory, holiness and power. No, to be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT is not optional but obligatory upon every Christian, and the Christian who is not so filled is sinning.

Why Do I not have The Fullness of the Spirit?

There are two objective causes in the realm of truth.

One is ignorance. In CHRIST we possess the fullness of the Godhead, and in the Spirit we have the One who makes this fullness our personal possession. But, because of ignorance of the Word of God, we lack this knowledge. Consequently we lack the experience of fullness.

<u>The other cause is unbelief</u>. We know the truth but only intellectually and doctrinally. It has not become heart experience. Or we know it but we are afraid to act upon our knowledge and to appropriate this blessing by faith.

"So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:19).

Then there are two subjective causes in the realm of experience.

One is unconfessed sin. The HOLY SPIRIT is holy and the place He indwells must be made and kept holy. This infilling demands cleansing from all known sin. It is impossible to be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT while knowingly, deliberately, retaining sin in the life.

The cleansing of the temple during the wonderful revival under King Hezekiah, as recorded in II Chronicles 29, shows us the manner and the extent of the cleansing GOD requires of us.

"Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place" (II Chronicles 29:5).

"And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the Lord" (II Chronicles 29:16).

"Now they began on the first day of the month to sanctify . . . and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end" (II Chronicles 29:17).

Did you note the word "filthiness"? GOD uses no soft, sentimental words when He talks about sin. He calls it what it is, "filthiness." Filthiness in "The holy place." How did so much uncleanness accumulate in the holy place that the king was compelled to order a special cleansing of the temple? Note, also, that they did not begin cleansing at the outer court of the temple and stop there but they "went into the inner part of the house of the Lord, to cleanse it." Note, too, that they did not merely find the uncleanness, but they brought it out and they did not bring out only some of the uncleanness but "all the uncleanness that they found."

It was a most thorough going house-cleaning. And how long did it take to do it? Exactly sixteen days. What a tremendous amount of filthiness to remove! But they persevered until it was done.

Now let us turn to the counterpart of this truth in the New Testament. We are struck by the similarity of the teaching even to the use of some of the same words.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (I Corinthians 3:16, 17).

"Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1).

"Ye the temple of God," which temple "is holy."

Therefore it must be cleansed from all filthiness both of the flesh and of the Spirit. There may have been gross, vulgar, even sensuous sins in the life of the past. Perhaps we are rid of these grosser, fleshly sins, but what of those which still defile our innermost spirit?

We used to lie. Now we would not tell a deliberate, out-and-out lie, but there is hypocrisy, deceit, double-dealing. Even in our Christian experience there is a profession of CHRIST which is not evidenced in our possession of CHRIST.

Formerly we had a violent temper to which we gave way constantly. Now there is a large measure of control of outward bursts of temper. But what about that secret irritability, and impatience in the spirit? Once we frankly and outspokenly hated someone and said so. To us now that is sin, but is there still lurking in some dark corner of the heart the jealousy or resentment that caused the hate? We would not now openly quarrel with someone as we once did, but if we see somebody we do not like, we just cross to the other side of the street. And we think we are victorious, spiritual Christians, not needing cleansing.

One time in China I went to a girls' school to take a series of meetings. One of the missionaries came to me and said, "Do not ask me to do any national work among the girls during these meetings, for I will not do it." She went on to say, "I am going home on furlough and I am not coming back. I have already told my missionary and Chinese co-workers that I cannot return because of the condition of my health." Her health was breaking down it is true. But the cause of the breakdown was not physical but spiritual.

As she talked I was studying her face. There was a line in her forehead that ought not to have been there. As we go on growing into spiritual maturity there are some lines marking this growth of character that will be in our faces. But there are other lines that are the footprints of sin. And these two kinds of lines are distinguishable.

I began quoting verses on victory from the Bible. She could say every one of them by heart. I spoke of books on victory. She knew them all and had read many of them. The doctrine and phraseology of victory were very familiar to her but she did not have victory. You ask, "Did she have some great gross sin of the flesh that overwhelmed her?" Oh! no, it was nothing but a little hurt that she had allowed to sink down into the depths of her heart four years previously and which she had nursed until it had robbed her of her peace of heart, her joy in Bible study and prayer, and her passion for lost souls.

More than that it had brought on her physical illness and was finally taking her home not to return to the mission field. A little hurt hidden away in a human heart doing damage like that! Is there anything of this kind deep down in your spirit? If so, will you cleanse yourself of it today? That dear missionary got rid of that hurt and has since been home on two furloughs and returned to China where she is today.

Last summer at a conference in Switzerland a grey-haired man made a public confession at the close of one meeting that for twenty-seven years he had had nothing to do with his relatives. For years he had suffered from insomnia. That night, after his confession and cleansing, he slept like a babe. On the following Lord's Day he testified that for twenty-seven years he had not known peace of heart as the last three days.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

It is utterly foolish and futile for anyone of us to pray for the fullness of the HOLY SPIRIT if we hold even so much as a tiny spark of known resentment, or hurt, or unlove, or any unchristlike feeling toward another. We shall pray in vain. Are you willing to have all uncleanness, both of the flesh and of the spirit, carried out of your life?

The cleansing is not the infilling but it rids us of what prevents the fullness and makes us ready for it.

The second subjective cause for the lack of fullness is an unyielded life, which means an uncrucified and uncontrolled self.

Infilling demands the yielding of ourselves in toto to the Lordship of CHRIST. It permits of no reservations; it allows no locked doors. We must part with everything of which CHRIST is not the source and we must place everything under CHRIST's control. There must be the utter dethronement of self and the voluntary enthronement of CHRIST.

In the revival under Hezekiah we see, following the cleansing of the temple, the consecration of themselves and of their sacrifices and thank offerings.

"Hezekiah said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the Lord. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings: and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings" (II Chronicles 29:31).

After the filthiness was carried out the offerings were brought in. Just so is the divine order in the cleansing and consecration of the Christian who is GOD's holy temple. The "**perfecting [of] holiness**" follows the cleansing from all the filthiness of the flesh and spirit. This comes by presenting the body to the Lord as a living sacrifice for His perfect possession, complete control, and exclusive use.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

"He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (II Corinthians 5:15).

Yielding to CHRIST means opening every part of the life to CHRIST, that He may fill it with Himself. Whatever we open the life to, that fills us. If I open my being in any measure to Satan, to the world and to the flesh, I am filled to that degree by them. But if I open every door to CHRIST, to the Spirit and to the Word, then they fill my mind, my heart, my spirit.

Yielding is not infilling, but it prepares for it. Emptying makes ready for infilling. Only the yielded life can be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT. Have you yielded yourself to the Lord JESUS CHRIST?

How May The Fullness Be Obtained?

The way is so simple but man sometimes makes it so complex. Some think it requires long fastings, all nights in prayer, seeking with agonizing, constantly praying for the infilling but never receiving it, earnestly seeking but never finding it. In one institution where the message of the Spirit-filled life was given at a meeting of Christian workers, we were told afterwards that every week for a whole year they had prayed for the fullness of the Spirit but had not yet received this blessing.

A missionary told me she had prayed every day for this fullness out had no answer. Then is GOD not willing or not able or not ready to bestow the fullness upon His children? Yet He commands them to be filled. In what an unreasonable, unkind position this places GOD.

What is GOD's way? It is so simple and so clearly stated. Listen to His words:

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him" (John 4:14).

It is the active appropriation of a gift.

"Jesus... cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37).

Could anything be more simple? One does not have to get down a big lexicon or commentary to understand the meaning of one of these words. They are part of your everyday vocabulary. We miss the way because it is so simple. If "any man" - there are no favorites with GOD. When GOD says "any man" it is as though He wrote in your own name there.

Only it is far, far better just as it is. A few years ago I received a letter from a young girl - who signed herself "Ruth Paxson." So if it read, "If Ruth Paxson thirsts" how would I know that it did not mean her instead of me? But when GOD says, "**If any man**" then it means, the one who meets the conditions stated.

And what are they?

"Thirst" - this is not mere desire for some thing. I vaguely feel I ought to have which I do not possess, or a longing born of jealousy or envy possibly, for a power which is seen in some Spirit-filled life. Thirst is an intense desire for holiness for CHRIST's sake that must be satisfied. It is an intense craving for power to witness for Him. and to win souls to Him that must be quenched.

Nay, even more than this is enfolded in that word "**thirst**." It is an insatiable longing for GOD Himself. It is that inward heart cry of the Psalmist of old.

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:1,2).

It was expressed in a letter received just yesterday here at Keswick, "I am unquenchably athirst for Him and His holiness." Do you have this kind of thirst? It is the first condition for obtaining the fullness. Then what?

"Come." Where and to whom? To a "tarrying meeting"? To a conference, even Keswick? To some human leader? "Come unto Me" - the only One who can bestow this gift: the Giver of this living water in all its fullness.

Have you come to Him? Perhaps you have come and asked for the gift. But that is not His condition. He states it clearly. The asking is bound up with the thirsting. But aspiration even expressed in asking is not enough. There is something more for us to do.

"**Drink**" - this is an act. <u>Aspiration becomes acquisition by appropriation</u>. Thirst is desire - I want water. To drink is an act - I take water. Just here is where many earnest, seeking-souls fall short of this glorious experience. They thirst but they do not drink.

After a meeting where this message was given a very sad-faced woman stopped to shake hands and said, "Oh, Miss Paxson, I thirst!" I waited to hear the rest of our Lord's blessed invitation and to know she had acted upon it. But she went out still sad-faced. But she returned to the afternoon meeting where we went further into the way of obtaining this fullness. Again she stopped and with a radiant light in her face said, "Oh! I thirst and I drink."

A letter came from her later in which she said, "I keep on thirsting and drinking and He keeps on satisfying."

In these words is the secret not only of obtaining the fullness of the HOLY SPIRIT but of having that fullness maintained continuously in the life.

"Be not drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit."

How does one get drunk? By drinking. How does he stay drunk? By continuing to drink. How is one filled with the HOLY SPIRIT? Our Lord says by drinking of that living water. How does one stay filled? By continuing to drink day by day. Is that not simple for each one of us in this tent?

May we bow in silence to face a few questions in the presence of the Lord, and answer by a definite "Yes" or "No."

Have you ever been filled with the HOLY SPIRIT? Are you filled with the Spirit now? Will you be filled today?

Do you purpose to live the Spirit-filled life from now on?

If you thirst and will drink just now, will you offer to GOD this simple prayer: "Lord, I thirst; Lord, I come and drink; Lord, I take the gift Thou offerest, the fullness of the HOLY SPIRIT, and thank Thee for it."

~ end of chapter 3 ~
