

## ***“Filled Full in Christ”***

Jesus, the Savior, says to you this morning: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to YOU, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”

When Jesus speaks of “the Law and the Prophets” – He’s talking about the Old Testament. His epiphany for us today (what Jesus is revealing) – is that the Old Testament hasn’t been abolished – crumpled up and thrown away. Rather, in Jesus, all of it is brought to fulfillment – to the Father’s intended goal.

That’s an important distinction. It’s not that the words of the Old Testament are no longer in play – it’s not that the Old Testament was a failure and that now God has to come up with a plan B – it’s not that what God was doing in days of old has no relevance for today, so He has to do something different.

No, He has fulfilled what He set out to do – to reconcile us to Himself. Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ – all sin has been atoned for – death has been defeated – and the children of God are restored to their heavenly Father, by faith.

When you hear Jesus speak of the Law – you probably think of the Ten Commandments, and that is good. In addition to the Ten Commandments, the Law includes everything that the Father desires for His children.

The Law is good – good in the sense of Genesis 1 – where God sees everything He has created and declares it to be “very good.” It is the “good life” that God desires for YOU. It’s the life that Adam and Eve lived, with God, before the fall into sin.

They lived by faith in God. They trusted Him to provide their daily bread and to sustain the life He had given. This good life included the man not being alone – and the fit helper He provides. It includes the devout husband or wife that He brings to you. It includes the place where He puts you in life to do the work He has given you to do – not a burdensome toil, but a glad stewardship of His creation.

Of course, the fall into sin changed all of that. The good life the Lord intended is now full of pain and suffering. Now the Law is a curse to sinners. The Law is a burden – it binds us in our fallenness – it condemns us – and it kills.

This is why our heavenly Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ – to fulfill the Law for you. Jesus comes to give you life – to restore the “good life” to you. He does this, first of all, by taking your place, and doing all that the Father desires.

Jesus lives in perfect obedience to the Father. He fulfills the First Commandment by fearing, loving, and trusting the Father above all things. He observes the Sabbath. He does not hurt or harm His neighbor in his body. He leads a chaste and decent life. He protects His neighbor’s reputation – and does not covet.

All that the Father wants YOU to do – but what we all have failed to do by our disobedience – Jesus does “for you.” With His innocent life, He suffers and dies in your place. And with His holy, precious blood – He pays the penalty for your sins – He offers the ransom price to redeem you.

That is to say, He restores you to the Father – fulfilling the Father’s will – so that now, the Law is no longer a curse for those who are in Christ by faith. The Christian is a new creation – a new man – for whom the Law is no longer a burden. Their chains have been burst. The Law is no longer dreaded for the new man – the Law is good.

If you’ve had me in Catechesis class, then you probably remember how I demonstrated what Jesus means when He says that He has fulfilled the Law and the Prophets.

I take an empty cup and set it on the table and begin pouring water into it. When it’s about half-full I ask, “is the cup is full.” NO. So, I keep adding water, a little bit at a time, stopping to ask – “is it full?” NO.

So, when do we know it is full? The answer is – when you can’t add any more to it. So, I add a little more – until there’s a crown of water on top of the glass. Is it full? Let’s see. If I can add even a drop, it’s not yet full.

You know it's full when that last drop causes the water to pour out over the table. That's when it's full. That's when it's FILLED – FULL. When you can't add anything to it.

So it is with Jesus. He has FILLED – FULL all that the Father desires. It's full, which means YOU can't add anything to it. In Christ, your cup is full. You are fully saved – fully redeemed – fully righteous in God's sight – fully restored – fully a child of God.

Though Jesus has fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, He adamantly tells us that still remain. Not even the smallest part has passed away. The Word of God – the will of our heavenly Father remains in play – “until all is accomplished.” That is to say, until all of the Father's children are gathered to Him in their heavenly home.

So, now what? Your cup is full. “It is finished.” Your neighbor, however, needs the “good life” that the Father desires for them. Your neighbor needs your love – and the Law of God guides you in love for your neighbor. In Christ, you are free to fill your neighbor's cup – to be the Father's instrument for the good of your fellow man.

This is what it means when Jesus says that YOU “are the salt of the earth” and that YOU are “the light of the world.” Your love seasons their lives, so that they may “taste and see that the Lord is good.” Your love drives out the darkness of lies and deceit – “so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Jesus is your Savior, and their Savior. He has come to restore all mankind to our Father who art in heaven.

May His Epiphany Word guide you in all your days. May His Body and Blood strengthen you in faith toward God, and in fervent love towards your neighbor. And may the good works OF JESUS CHRIST fill your lives – keeping you steadfast in the one true, faith, steadfast in His salvation – unto life everlasting. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.