

Fullness Vs. Lack 1

Rejecting the Deficit & Being a Sun

(preached 9/15/24)

Please turn to *Ephesians 3:16-19*.

This is going to be a long sermon. If you have somewhere to be after and were hoping to get out of here, text whoever might be waiting for you and tell them you'll be late. To start without you.

ALTAR CALL AT END.

What is your favorite meal or dessert? Think of it right now and imagine that you've just finished eating it. What are you experiencing right now? A sense of contentment and well-being? Satisfaction?

One of my favorite meals is **Fiesta Lime Chicken** and when my wife makes it, I turn into Pavlov's Dog. My hope is that she makes a LOT of it because I love it and **I don't like to share!** Especially when I'm starving: sometimes I jealously look around to see how much her and the kids are taking, and a part of me gets worried that I won't get as much as I want. I'm a little nervous that if I don't grab it all in my first helping, there might not be a second! Sometimes I'm driven to eat a little faster so I can reach for seconds before my boys do.

Does that sound like a good Christian husband and father to you?

- Shouldn't I put their hunger and needs before my own even if that means I can't eat my fill?
- What's my problem?

I'm coming to the table from a place of lack. What's the result of this belief? Jealousy, worry, anxiety, self-centeredness, fear, unhealthy competition, hoarding, and more.

If I were full & satisfied, would I be less tempted to be worried, compete, and hoard? Might I be more generous and able to see the needs of others better?

I submit to you that **maybe we're approaching all of life from a position of deficit**. An overdrawn account. Lack. Debt.

We live as though we don't have enough love, joy, peace, patience, affirmation, attention, time, money, security, and light in our lives.

Our relationship with God, our marriages, dating, our kids, work, the church & Christian faith...**we live as though we have a negative balance on our accounts that MUST be filled**.

The result is we beg, plead, work, demand, manipulate, compete, lie, pout, pray, give, take, and even serve...*all to fill the void we perceive we have*.

When those things don't do the trick we GRAVITATE to something we think we can control that might just satisfy our internal longing: booze, video games, drugs, food, work, accomplishment, etc.

Time for an astronomy lesson. Look at the two pictures on the screen: the one on the left is a black hole and the one on the right is a sun. They are the same...but also polar opposites.

Both were born as stars that we're created to shine light into the darkness. Both were given the right combination of gases to burn brightly and give light, heat, life, and guidance...to be heavenly signs for mankind to look to and see what God was saying.

A sun is a star fulfilling its God-given purpose and does all the above.

A Black Hole has "rebelled" against the Lord, cast off its Godly design, and now serves the darkness it was once meant to drive back.

A BH is a star that collapsed in on itself and formed a gravity well so powerful that the first thing it absorbs is its own light.

- It becomes a vast being of darkness that is perpetually hungry, always eating, but never satisfied.
- It begins to pull in any heavenly body near it, even if said HB is larger.
- It matters not if said HB is solid, liquid, gas, or plasma...the BH draws it in and makes it part of itself, growing ever larger and more powerful.

While my description is cosmic in its scope, *does this describe on a smaller scale the way some of us operate here on earth?*

The way we approach God, relationships, and life in general?

We feel this great void inside, a dark emptiness that cries out for love, affirmation, security, and peace it feels it lacks.

- We desperately try to grab ahold of Jesus, a spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, or a buddy to give us what we need.
- We draw to ourselves (like gravity) cheap entertainment, booze, drugs, VG's, junk food, and the like to satisfy this emotional hunger.

Maybe it “works” for a time...until it doesn't.

- There was once when we felt close to God and experienced His love, but now things seemed to have dried up.
- We used to be madly in love with our spouse or our SO, but that fire has gone out.
- Our friendships aren't enough either, our grown kids aren't calling us, and we're disconnected from our grandkids who stare at their phones all the time....

We're all born with this black hole inside of us. When Adam disobeyed we got cut off from God. Before the Fall, Adam & Eve were one with Christ because the Lord created them in His image which meant they were supposed to shine, giving life and light to the other beings in the Garden. After they fell, God removed His glory from them and the human heart has been empty ever since.

Do you remember the band U2 and the lead singer Bono? One of his most famous songs he both wrote and sang was *“I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For.”* In said song there's a lady he cares for greatly enough to scale mountains and climb city walls only to be with her...*but he still hadn't found what he was looking for.* He even claims he tried Christianity and carried his cross...*yet he still hadn't found what he was looking for.*

The Book of Ecclesiastes is a tough read. Solomon had everything this world had to offer: 700 wives, 300 concubines, richest man in the world, a garden he compared to the GOE, all the finest food, drink, and entertainment, highly respected all over the known world, sought out, and admired. Everything he touched turned to gold. You his final end of life review was this: *VANITY which means empty...a void...a black hole.*

Did you know that Bono finally found what he was looking for? There was an older Christian man, a retired professor, and the Lord told him to do another Bible translation. The project took years and he gave out a few copies. One of his copies got to Bono who immediately came to the older Christian man's home and said this translation was exactly what he needed. Bono received Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior and for the first time in his

life, the God-sized black hole inside was filled.

How about Solomon? After he'd tried and had everything and realized it was vanity, he said this:

[Ecc 12:13 ESV] 13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

“I’ve heard this before Pastor Scott: ‘Jesus is the answer.’ ‘Jesus will meet all my needs.’ I’m Saved so why do I still feel a void inside me?”

Because we believe we still lack all the things Jesus has already given us.

Bono was introduced to Jesus as a young man, “tried” Christianity, and still sang: “*but I still haven’t found what I’m looking for*” because **he didn’t receive what Jesus had to offer.**

Have we?

Here’s our problem: our lack motivates us. It energizes us to work, compete, and strive to grab hold of what we “don’t have.”

- If we lack love we seek it in the form of another person, or perhaps we try “self-love.”
- If we lack joy, perhaps we beg and plead with God to remove our depression or anxiety.
- If we still lack joy we’ll spend all kinds of money to get it on food, drink, entertainment, games/video games, or other experiences.
- If we lack peace we’ll isolate ourselves, get a prescription, counseling, drink booze, or what have you.
- If we look in the mirror and don’t like what we see we’ll go on a diet, go to the gym, all in the effort to have the body image we want.

“Why is that a problem?” You may ask.

Because we can lose everything we’ve gained when we’ve attained it by trying.

When motivated to get something from the position of lack, we must WORK to achieve and maintain it. The moment we lose it, we also lose ALL the benefits that came with it: mental and physical.

- We felt “better about ourselves” when we lost weight—had a sense of security and confidence!
- Then we lost all of said security and confidence when we gained the weight back.
- We prayed and our depression was gone on Sunday!
- Then it came back Wednesday and we were back to square one.
- We killed the boss monster on the VG and we’re on top of the world!
- Then we’re grouchy with everyone after because of all the “fight or flight” hormones the VG injected into our system and the high comes crashing down.

What if we already have all these things we think we lack? What if Christ already gave them to us, but we really don’t believe that?

[Psa 16:11 ESV] 11 You make known to me the path of life; **in your presence there is fullness of joy**; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Where is God right now? (Answer: inside of us). **If we really believe that, then why do we lack joy?**

[Psa 50:12 ESV] 12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you, **for the world and its fullness are mine.**

So we can be “full” even when we’re physically hungry....

[Eph 3:16-19 ESV] 16 that according to the riches of his glory **he [GOD] may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit** in your inner being, 17 so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts** through faith--that **you, being rooted and grounded in love**, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and **to know the love of Christ** that surpasses knowledge, that **you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

Do you believe these 4 verses? Because here is what Paul is telling us:

- God the Holy Spirit lives inside us and no, this isn’t allegorical. He’s literally there.
- He strengthens us with POWER.
- LOVE has been planted—permanently—in us...because God is love.
- **Verse 19 is a killer**: we are filled with ***all the fullness of God***—a double positive! (ALL the FULLNESS...redundant?)

What is “the fullness” of God?

[Gal 5:22-23 ESV] 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

He IS all of those things and He’s already given all to us.

- We have them right now.
- We don’t have to wait until we die and go to Heaven.
- We don’t have to look for the Rapture to experience these, *they’re already here*.

Our problem is we don’t believe it.

I told you in the beginning of this sermon that we were all born with a BH within us because of Adam’s disobedience but *the good news is that Jesus reversed the curse Adam put on us*. He came to save that which we lost.

He reconciled us to Himself and God our Father.

- He turned our bodies into His holy temples and then permanently placed His Holy Spirit inside us.
- The Holy Spirit is the Tree of Life and bears the 9 fruits INSIDE OF US we just read in Galatians 5.

Our old self, the one with the black hole, is dead. It’s crucified with Christ and died with Him.

Then a miracle happened: **Jesus created a new self in His image and our spirits rose from the dead** as a new man or woman shining with the glory of God!

We started out as black holes and were remade as suns!

- We are no longer darkness we are Light!
- We are no longer a black hole trying to draw people and things into us to feed our insatiable hunger!
- Jesus said that whoever eats the bread He gives and drinks His water will never hunger or thirst again!

[Jhn 6:35 ESV] 35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

Everything we beg, plead, fight, demand, pout, compete, and are jealous for Christ has already given us!

- What if we lived that way?
- What if we approached God, our marriages, our churches, our families, and our workplaces from this position?

I do lots of marital counseling and the conflict boils down to the same: *both husband and wife have needs that aren't being met by the other*. What's more is both feel empty, both feel spent, both say they've got nothing to give. Yet they still look to one another to do something about it or, God forbid, someone else.

What if we approached our spouses from the position Jesus gave us: FULLNESS?

- What if we were a sun with our family?
- What if we were a shining light giving warmth and life vs a gravity well?

What if our relationship with God was like that? We don't just approach him with needs for Him to meet, but in fullness...so that He could actually *send us out to do things FOR Him vs us always asking Him to do things for us?*

We've already covered how a position of lack drives our behavior—remember my example at the supper table? Feeling lack doesn't inspire Godly thoughts, feelings, words or actions—quite the opposite.

What might a perspective of fullness drive us to think? Feel? Say? Do?

I know that a good husband loves his wife like Christ loves the church.

- If I feel a lack of love then I will serve MYSELF and demand my wife meet my needs.
- If I am FULL of God's love then I will obey Jesus and love my wife the way Jesus loves me!

I know a good dad should sacrifice for his kids.

- If I come from a position of lack, then I expect to be first at home and get the choicest bits of everything.
- If I come from a stance of fullness, my kids see me serving and sacrificing my wife and them and say “*so THAT's what a real dad does*” and maybe they grow up to do the same!

I know I should serve God and obey Him. That I've been Saved for this reason.

- If I feel like I lack, I will always be begging and pleading with God to keep me going one more day: take away my fear and give me peace. Remove my depression and give me joy.
- If I am full, I kneel before the Lord and say "*here I am Lord, send me!*"

I repeat: ***when we're motivated by lack, we're working, competing, and striving for something constantly.*** Something we gain, we can also LOSE.

- If I have to compete for love, I can lose it.
- If I have to strive to earn joy, I can unearn it.
- If I have to work for peace, my peace can be taken from me.
- If I feel secure & confident when I have money, then what happens when I don't have money? I'm no longer secure. I no longer feel successful and confident.

All these things we strive and compete for are vanity!

Let's learn from Bono and Solomon: if we keep operating from lack we're never going to find what we're looking for.

We're never going to satisfy ourselves or each other when we believe there's a void within us.

The void belonged to your old self! You are not him/her anymore! That part of you died!

[Rom 6:6 ESV] 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

[Gal 2:20 ESV] 20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, **but Christ who lives in me.** And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, **who loved me and gave himself for me.**

- Your OLD self was devoid of God!
- Your old self was cut off from love!
- Your old self had no life, no warmth, and no light!
- It was dark gravity well trying to suck everything it could from life until it died!

Not anymore. When Jesus Saved you, His Light shone into that black void and the void comprehended it not! A more word for word translation is *“and the darkness could not absorb it.”* The internal black hole was replaced with a sun that shines with the glory of God! Jesus not only called Himself the Light of the world but said this:

[Mat 5:14 ESV] 14 "***You*** are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

You and I already have His love! We already possess His joy and peace! We’ve already been given His patience, goodness, kindness, faith, meekness and yes: SELF-CONTROL.

What if we approached our addiction from a position of self-control fullness...*what would the addiction have to “offer”?! The reason it tempts us now is because we think we lack—so the addiction promises to “fill” us. If we were already filled, would we run to our addiction?*

John said “God is love” which means we already have love, because we have God the Holy Spirit living right here! (pointing to self).

- What if went home today and approached our spouses like this—from a sense of already having love?
- How might this radically change how we treat them and even what we think of them?
- Maybe we wouldn’t be so angry and resentful all the time toward them?
- Do you think they would notice?

“Needy” people are those who perceive great internal lack. A needy person can be whiny and clingy, or they can be loud and demanding. Most of them are jealous and possessive, and feel they must “compete” for love and attention.

Fullness is not independence.

Independence is the Godless solution for those who have been burned/hurt by their own lack and that of others.

The independent “I don’t need anybody or anything” person has hardened their hearts and are often proud and lonely.

Fullness is absolute dependence on God and believing His promises.

It's the revelation that He has already given us what we so desperately seek:

[2Pe 1:3 ESV] 3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

[Rom 8:32 ESV] 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

CALL KIM TO FRONT

CALL PRAYER TEAM TO FRONT

Internal convo!

ALTAR CALL