

WHO IS JESUS?

JOHN 1:14-17

JESUS IS OUR TABERNACLE



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

DAVID MURRAY
APRIL 25, 2021 (AM)

INTRODUCTION

What do you call it when you're not depressed but neither are you thriving? You're not down in the dumps but neither are you on the mountain-top. Apparently it's called 'languishing.' I was sent an article this week from the *New York Times* which used this word to describe what so many people are feeling in the COVID era. We're not living in the dark, but neither are we living in the sunlight. We inhabit the gray overcast clouds of languishing. We're not burned out but we're not energized. As the *Times* put it, "languishing is a sense of stagnation and emptiness. It feels as if you're muddling through your days, looking at your life through a foggy windshield. And it might be the dominant emotion of 2021."

So, do we just wait it out and hope life will improve again when COVID has disappeared. That could be a long time coming, if the media have their way. Also, languishing leaves us much more vulnerable to full-blown depression. **So, how can we live a full life in empty times?** John 1:14-17 points us to a source of overflowing fulness to fill us full.

BACKGROUND

- Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1-2)
- Jesus is our Creator (1:3)
- Jesus is our Light and Life (1:4-9)
- Jesus is our Big Brother (1:10-13)
- Jesus is our Tabernacle (1:14-17).

John 1:1 begins with the the Word of God. John 1:14 tells us the "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." 'Dwelt' is from a Greek word meaning 'to tabernacle or camp.' John 1:14 is therefore telling us that the Word became flesh and tabernacled or camped among us.

Just as John 1:1 took us back to the creation of the world, John 1:14 takes us back to the creation of Israel, when God instructed them to build a Tabernacle or Tent "that I may dwell in their midst" (Ex. 25:8). Just as the Son of God lived with Israel in a tent in the Old Testament, so he lived with them in human flesh in the New Testament.

As we will see, this New Testament Tabernacle, or dwelling place of God, is much fuller than the Old Testament version.



Where do we see fulness in Jesus?



1. JESUS IS FULL OF GLORY (14)

The Tabernacle had limited glory

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35).

When the Israelites finished building the Tabernacle, God's glory-cloud filled the Tabernacle. God appeared in the form of a blindingly bright cloud that filled the Tabernacle. 'Glory' is derived from the word 'heavy' and indicates the effect of God's glory on the observer. It was so awesome that it left a deep and long impression on them. The glory of the Tabernacle was limited in degree and duration. It's brightness varied at times and it also didn't last. Although the same glory-cloud filled the Temple when it was later built (2 Chron. 5:14 7:1-16), that glory-cloud also departed when Israel sinned (Ezek. 10:18-19; 11:22-24) then returned when the people returned to God (Ezek. 43:1-5).

Jesus is full of glory

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father (John 1:14)

God lived in a tent in the Old Testament, but in a human body and soul in the New Testament. If a God-filled tent was awesome and weighty, how much more is a God-filled body. When we grasp the wonder of the incarnation of Christ, we are left exclaiming, "Glory, glory!" The only Son of the Father took a human body and soul, made them his and lived in them on earth for thirty three years. Just as we say on a sunny day, "What a beautifully glorious day!" so we say the same about Jesus. "He's gloriously beautiful." However much glory there was in the Old Testament tabernacle, there's far more in the New Testament tabernacle.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH JESUS' STORY

Have you seen the glory of Christ? Does Jesus fill you with awe and wonder. Is he a heavyweight or a featherweight to you? Do you see his glory? Does he impress you?

Have you ever been visiting somewhere and you've said, "I can send you a picture but it doesn't do it justice. I'd love you to see it for yourself." It's the same with Christ. I've seen his glory and I can give you a snapshot in preaching but I really want you to see him for yourself. God gives the eyes of faith to see the fullness of Christ's glory, so full that we'll never run out of it.

SOME SAY 'SEEING IS BELIEVING'
BUT WE CAN SEE BY BELIEVING



What is so beautifully glorious about Christ?



2. JESUS IS FULL OF GRACE (14)

The Tabernacle had limited grace

'Grace' is giving someone \$100 when they owe you \$100. 'Grace' is not just kindness to those who have never been kind to you, but kindness to those who hate you. It's not just God's love for those who don't deserve it, but love for those who deserve hate.

God's grace was evident in the Tabernacle. The Son of God lived in a tent among Israel when he didn't have to. He set up a system of sacrifices so they could live with him when they deserved to be thrown out of his home. He provided rituals, furniture, items, officials, and festivals, to enable Israel to live with him safely and happily. He provided laws to keep the relationship holy, healthy, and happy. What grace! But no matter how much grace, these were just little drips of grace compared with the tank of Jesus's love in the New Testament.

Jesus is full of grace

...full of grace (14)

Jesus has unlimited supplies of grace. It's not just a few drips, it's a Niagara of grace. He's so full of grace, that he can't stop overflowing into the lives of the needy. He's so full of grace, that he has enough for every sinner that's ever lived (should they want it). We will never come to Christ for grace and find a "Sorry, I've run out" sign. Sometimes I think I've got so much grace from Christ, that there won't be enough for anyone else. I've drained him dry, I fear. But no one has ever sought grace from Jesus, and been turned away.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH JESUS' STORY

Never, ever doubt that Christ's grace is running low or running out. Every time you need it, come and get it. He's gushing grace at this very moment. Ask him for the grace of faith, of repentance, of hope, of love, of equipping for service, etc. Say, "Lord, you're full of grace and I'm desert dry, refresh my soul with your grace again."

IF YOU'RE FULL OF GUILT
CHRIST IS FULL OF GRACE



Grace is a glorious idea.
But how can I be sure that it's true and reliable?



3. JESUS IS FULL OF TRUTH (14)

The Tabernacle had limited truth

The Tabernacle communicated some of God's glorious truths to some degree.

- God lives with sinners (the tent)
- God saves sinners (the altar)
- God washes sinners (the bath)
- God hears sinners (the incense)
- God feeds sinners (the bread)
- God reigns over sinners (the ark)

But even these truths were in shadow form. These revelations weren't shining with full brightness.

Jesus is full of truth

...full of truth (14)

Jesus makes known every truth we need to know and to the degree we need to know them. There is no fuller revelation of truth than Jesus. Jesus makes God known in a uniquely full way (1:18). He shows the Tabernacle truths (see above) in greater brightness and clarity. He adds truths that weren't just in the shadows but completely hidden in the dark. He dismantles the Tabernacle and replaces it not just with a bigger brighter temple but with the bigness and brightness of himself.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH JESUS' STORY

Whatever truth you need to know, Jesus has it. He's so full of truth that there's no space for any lie. He overflows with truth showing his desire to communicate it to others. You can totally trust him. As he himself said, "I am the truth" (Jn. 14:6).

JESUS IS FULL OF TRUTH
IN A WORLD FULL OF LIES



If Jesus is full of glory, grace, and truth, what does that mean?
It means he's full of fullness.



4. JESUS IS FULL OF FULLNESS (16)

The Tabernacle was half-full

For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses (16-17)

John contrasts the fulness of Christ with the law given through Moses. In the context, he's speaking of the laws concerning the Tabernacle. As we've seen, there was glory, grace, and truth in the Tabernacle. It wasn't full of them, but it wasn't empty either. It was half-full, half-empty. God used Moses to bring a limited supply, of his glory, grace, and truth to Israel.

Jesus is full and over-flowing

For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

There was grace in the Tabernacle, in the law period, but in the Gospel period we have **grace upon grace**. Through Moses, God's grace was *communicated*, but through Christ, God's grace *came*. It wasn't just announced, it came. It wasn't just pictured in a tent, it came in living flesh. Now that's fulness!

The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ

What Moses gave to some degree, Christ is in fulness. Glory, grace, truth, and divine supply came *through* Moses and in limited amounts, but came *in* Christ to the full.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH JESUS' STORY

Receive from Christ's fulness. Don't doubt if there's enough for you. There's enough and to spare. The emptier you are the better. He doesn't top up the almost-full or the half-full. He fills the empty full. He doesn't do top-ups. He does fill-ups.

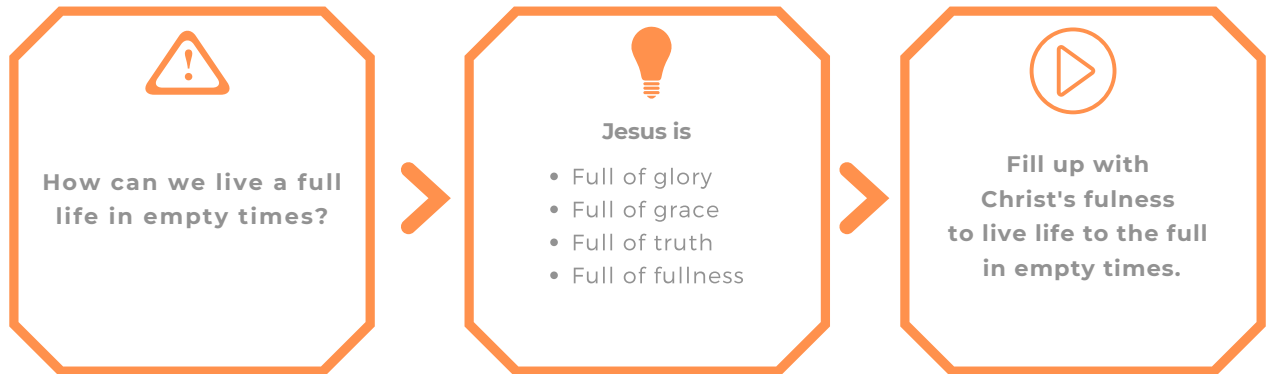
RECEIVE CHRIST'S GRACE IN FULL
BY RECEIVING CHRIST IN FULL.



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story



SUMMARY



PRAYER: Overflowing Savior, I come empty to be filled with your glory, grace, truth and fullness. Fill me so I can overflow into the lives of others too. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways have you experienced 'languishing,' especially in the past year?
2. How would you describe the relationship between the Old and New Testaments?
3. What is so gloriously beautiful about Jesus for you? What impresses you most?
4. How would you explain 'grace' to someone who'd never heard of it?
5. How does Jesus make the Tabernacle truths clearer and fuller?
6. What's the best way to get more of Christ's fullness?

First Byron Christian Reformed Church
8541 Byron Center Ave SW, Byron Center, MI 49315
Phone: (616) 878-9768
www.firstbyroncrc.org

Pastor David Murray
www.HeadHeartHand.org
www.livingthebible.net