

Christmas Eve 2017
"In the Fullness of Time"
December 24, 2017

Galatians 4:4-5- *"When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."* Galatians 4:4-5 NKJV

"Fullness"- the alignment of multiple details (*i.e., timing, provision, planning*) in order to accomplish a set purpose (*Lit.- a sailing vessel stocked, staffed, and chartered to complete a journey*).

CORE- There is a dichotomy (*i.e., a clash; a seeming contradiction*) in trusting God & trusting the "fullness" of His timing—a place where we can feel blessed & bewildered—all at the same time!

This involves:

1. Accepting harsh realities

- **Jesus' birth was surrounded by chaos & adversity**
 - **Scandal** (*i.e., there were no "conceived by the HS" birth announcement cards available at the Hallmark store, both Mary & Joseph could have been permanently shunned, or worse*)
 - **Hardship** (*i.e., the census, the dashed dreams, long journey, born among animals, Herod's slaughter of male children 2 & under, their escape to Egypt*)
- **Jesus' life was surrounded by opposition from religious leaders, hatred and jealousy from His own family, stubborn unbelief, dishonor, and threats & attempts on His life.**
- **His death (and the events leading to it) were painfully traumatic—betrayed by His friends, falsely accused by religious leaders, & brutalized by Roman soldiers and the crowd (*both physically & emotionally*)**

2. Resting in God's faithfulness

- ***"I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."*** (Then He told them what was ahead) ***"Do you now believe?" Jesus replied. "A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*** John 16:28-33 NIV

- (Paul, writing while a prisoner of Rome—chained for 2 years under ‘house arrest,’ wrote these words to the Philippian churches) ***“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”***
Philippians 4:11-13 NIV

CLOSING-

There is a place in Jesus—where we can be perplexed and at rest at the same time—trusting His promises even when their fulfillment is delayed.

“For we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed...Therefore we do not lose heart...For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 16-17

He came “in the fullness of time” to give us His fullness (not just His forgiveness)! “For from His fullness we have all received grace upon grace.” John 1:16

He has graced us to live in a place where we can wrestle with issues & rest in Him—at the same time. A place where we can press in, persistent in our faith w/o letting the discouragement of delays to decrease our expectancy.