

Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, we are all sinners – Paul stresses the all

There are no ‘good’ people

Paul also stresses that sin affects every faculty we have

Does not mean we are as sinful as we possible could be – but sin infects every part – intellect, will, emotions, morality, culture

Therefore we are unable to save ourselves

Those controlled by sin cannot please God – we cannot fix the problem ourselves

Ephesians 2:1 - We are dead in sin

2 Corinthians 4:4 – blind to glory of God

John 8:34 – slaves to sin

“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.”¹

If we are slaves and our master is sin we are not free to choose God

If we are bound slaves, can God hold us responsible for our sin?

Yes – because we want to sin

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires²

We are enslaved to sin but we are willing captives – nobody forces us to sin

An Illustration

We are free to do exactly what we want, but we want to sin and reject Jesus³

John 8:31, 36 – Only Jesus can set us free

How did we get in this state? Original sin

Didn’t God create us in His image and His verdict was that it was “very good” – Gen 1:31

¹ John 8:34

² John 8:44

³ So the *Westminster Confession of Faith* IX.3 - Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

Original sin – the sin that comes from our origin – Adam in the garden

Romans 5:19 *For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners⁴*

When Adam sinned in the garden, the consequence for all humanity was to be born in sin – our nature is sinful

God appointed Adam the covenant head over all humanity – our representative

When Adam fell, all those in Adam (those he represented) fell

We do sins because we are sinners by nature

Not that we are sinners because we do sins

Is it fair that God should deal with humanity through a covenant head?

- i. It’s the way God has sovereignly chosen to deal with humanity
- ii. It’s the way God saves us through a second covenant head, Jesus

What is God’s response to sin?

God responds to sin with holy hatred – He *must* hate sin that is a rejection of His rule

Therefore every one of us is under God’s wrath

Psalm 5:5 – “you hate all evildoers”

Ephesians 2:3 – “by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

John 3:36 – “whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on Him.”

Our biggest problem is not our sin, it is that we rightly face God’s just anger as sinners

Praise God that Jesus is the Saviour who saves those who cannot save themselves
He frees willing slaves of sin and gives life to those who are dead in sin

So What:

- “I am more wicked than I ever imagined ...” – we must grasp that we cannot save ourselves and we desperately need Jesus as our Saviour
- We can understand why people do wicked things – we should not be surprised because we are not “inherently good”

⁴ Romans 5:19

- We will have compassion upon unbelievers – apart from God’s grace they are no worse than us
- In evangelism we will see that conversion needs to be 100% the work of the Holy Spirit
- As parents we will recognize our children are inheritors of the same sinful nature as ours, and so we will point them Christ the Saviour rather than preach mere morality
- We will be driven to prayer and praise in humble adoration of the grace God has shown to sinners like us

Things to think over this week:

Read and pray through Psalm 51 this week

Read again and think through the two quotes below from the great Baptist minister, Charles Spurgeon:

“I will go as far as Martin Luther, where he says, “If any man ascribes anything of salvation, even the very least thing, to the free will of man, he knows nothing of grace, and he has not learned Jesus Christ rightly.” (Sermons, Vol. 1, p.395)

“We declare on scriptural authority that the human will is so desperately set on mischief, so depraved, so inclined to everything that is evil, and so disinclined to everything that is good, that without the powerful, supernatural, irresistible influence of the Holy Spirit, no human will ever be constrained toward Christ.” (Sermons, Vol. 4, p.139)

Supplementary material: (available online):

R. C Sproul, *Total Depravity*, www.ligonier.org/blog/tulip-and-reformed-theology-total-depravity/

J Piper, *Total Depravity*, www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/piper/depravity.html

Theopedia entry for Total Depravity - www.theopedia.com/total-depravity

D Sterling, *The very practical doctrine of total depravity* - matthiasmedia.com/briefing/2008/12/the-very-practical-doctrine-of-total-depravity/

Key Doctrines #5

Doctrines of Grace – Total Depravity

Why we need a Saviour? God’s wrath at our sin

People will never see their need of a savior until they appreciate their sin.

What is sin? The truth about humanity apart from God’s grace

Around 50 different words used to describe sin

missing the mark, ... of guilt, ... and of rebellion against a King⁵

Jeremiah 2:13, “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

Romans 14:23, “Everything that does not come from faith is sin.”

Hebrews 3:12, “See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.”

1 John 3:4, “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.”

Sin as idolatry or false worship

From **Romans 1:18**, God’s wrath is upon us – why?

Because we suppress the truth about Him and worship created things rather than the Creator, v.21-23

We all worship something, devoting our heart to something other than God

Sin robs God of His rightful glory, makes us unclean to enter His presence and liable to punishment

How does sin affect us? Total Depravity

“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”⁶

⁵ Other bible words for sin are ungodliness, trouble, emptiness, falsehood, worthlessness, foolishness, stupidity, sickness, injustice, evil, error, lack of reverence, debt, ruin

⁶ Romans 3:10–12