

Total Depravity

April 19, 2009 – Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Total Depravity is a doctrine that is hated by many people today, and it has always been hated. People want to think that they are good and that God must accept their goodness as righteousness; but the Bible delivers a different opinion about us.

The Bible tells us that man is totally depraved and that he has no righteousness of his own; therefore, man needs the pure grace of God for his salvation. Anything less than God's free grace is insufficient for salvation. Let's notice some things about depravity.

I. Man Has Total Rebellion

Read Matt. 6:1-20. This shows the hypocrisy of men as they do their religious duties. Matt. 15:8 *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me.*

Man in his natural state, since he has been tainted by Adam's sin and his own sin, is rebellious against God. It does not seem that he is many times, but this is because of religious and social training that he has had in his life and the natural sense of religion that God has put into each heart—*he lighteth every man that cometh into the world* (John 1:9).

If every man were in love with God, he would surrender his life to Jesus Christ and serve him faithfully. He would meditate on the word of God daily, and he would shun sin and love righteousness; but man is not like that in his nature—he is in rebellion against God.

II. Man Has Total Sin

Ro 14:23 *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* Hebrews 11:6 tells us that . . . *without faith it is impossible to please him.*

Therefore, if someone does not have faith, he cannot please God, and the Bible also tells us that in Rom. 8:8 *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* We are in the flesh, so we cannot please God in the flesh. We must possess faith in Jesus Christ, and that comes from God as a gift (Gal. 5:22).

So, then, everything we do without faith in Jesus Christ is a sin. Sin is not made up of only those things that WE consider to be sin, but of what God considers to be sin. We are sinners from top to bottom, inside and out. Isaiah 1:6 *From the sole of the foot even unto the head [there is] no soundness in it; [but] wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.*

Ro 7:18 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but [how] to perform that which is good I find not.*

III. Man Has Total Inability

Rom. 8:7 *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

The carnal mind is the fleshly mind, the mind that you are born with, the mind that is separated from God because of sin. Verse 7 tells us that . . . *it is not subject to the law of God*, which means that our mind in its original state cannot subject itself to the law of God, for God's law is above man's consideration, logic, and understanding; it is also too pure and righteous for the human mind to conceive and to obey.

But verse 7 goes on to say . . . *neither indeed can be*, which tells us that man's mind cannot, even with all of the mental training and exercise, reach up to the righteousness of God and the demand of God for man to obey him.

This phrase "neither indeed can be" is the part of depravity that many Bible students want to omit and refuse to believe. Man's mind is not able to penetrate the spiritual nature of God's law. Even though man may try with all his might to serve God through the law, he cannot do it. We must be enabled by the Holy Spirit to believe serve the Lord, Jesus Christ.

God's demand for everyone everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30), is still valid; man must obey this command. But man cannot without the Spirit's aid. Man must be regenerated from this inability and from his rebellion.

Why could Nicodemus not understand the words of Jesus? It is because he needed to be born again. John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Nicodemus could not see the kingdom of God until he was born again; and it is evident that he was born again, as we see later in the New Testament (See John 19:39).

If you can believe in Jesus Christ today, then you know that you have been born again by the grace of God, regenerated by his Spirit, and you have eternal life.

IV. Our Rebellion Deserves Eternal Punishment

2 Thess. 1:6 *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

Our rebellion is against God and no one else. If it were against man, then we may be able to reconcile through forgiveness and righteous acts, but cannot be so easily pleased by our actions.

Remember that everything that we do without faith is sin. Remember, also, what David said in scripture: Psalm 51:4 *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done [this] evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, [and] be clear when thou judgest.*

God will judge all sin, even the very thoughts that we have and the words that we say. We are well deserving his this punishment, since we have sinned against an eternal God. Our disposition is against him; our attitude is against him; our actions are against him; our very nature is antagonistic against him; therefore, we need his imposition into our hearts with his own righteousness' being imputed to us. This is salvation.

We deserve all the Hell God will deliver to us in our sin (see Rev. 14:11), but there is one more dimension that we need to consider.

V. But There Is Mercy With God

Nehemiah 9:17 And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou [art] a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

God is faithful to his promises, and he tells us that he will forgive those who to come him by faith.

Ac 15:9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

If you want your heart purified before God, if you desire to walk with God and have promise of eternal life, then you must come to him by faith.

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

2 Cor. 6:2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation.)