

We began to consider last week, the first of five Doctrines of Grace. As mentioned, these doctrines are also called the Five Points of Calvinism and summarized by the acrostic TULIP – Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.

Last week, in beginning to consider Total Depravity, I introduced you to an important theological phrase – original sin. Original sin refers to the fact that all men are originally born (conceived) as sinners.

This is because the guilt of Adam's sin is charged to our account at conception, and the corruption of the soul is conveyed as a punishment of that sin. Simply put, what happened to Adam when he sinned, happens to every member of his race at conception.

Simply put, because of our sin and fall in Adam, we are all born in a fallen condition similar to Adam's fallen condition, Rom.5:12—"Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned (in Adam)."

This morning, in continuing our study of Total Depravity, I want consider a related topic and that's Moral Inability. These two go together as cause and effect. Because man is totally depraved, he is morally incapable of recovering himself. Thus, Moral Inability refers to the fact that man is unable to recover himself from his native condition.

This is the clear teaching of our text, Jn.6:44—"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." This statement is in the middle of our Savior's Bread of Life discourse. He's been making the comparison between Himself as the OT bread (manna). Unlike that typical bread, he who eats this Bread will never die but have eternal life.

Our Savior's statement is a universal negative—"No one can come to Me"—that is, no person possesses the native ability to come to Christ (or believe upon Him). Notice He doesn't say, "No one may come to Me," but "No one can come to Me." The issue is not permission, all men are invited to Christ and commanded to come to Christ—the issue is ability.

Thus, the question becomes this—Why is man unable to come to Christ, unless the Father powerfully bring Him? Well, I suggest there's basically three reasons behind man's native inability: he is a dead, he is a slave, and he is a rebel.

And it's important to remember, these three are the direct result of Adam's sin imputed to our account. In other words, these three facts (man is dead, a slave, and a rebel) are true of all men as a punishment from God for our sin and fall in Adam (our federal head).

Just as death was conveyed to Adam as a punishment for imputed guilt, so death is conveyed to his posterity when the guilt of his sin is imputed at conception. This death includes the separation from God as the source of spiritual life, servitude to sin, and the corruption of nature that results.

- I. Man is Dead
- II. Man is a Slave
- III. Man is a Rebel

I. Man is Dead

1. If Scripture teaches us anything, it teaches us that all men are conceived (or born) as spiritually dead.

2. Eph.2:1—"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins" Eph.4:18—"being alienated from the life of God."
3. Here we not only learn about the fact of our native death, but its nature—spiritual death is being separated from God who is life.
4. Thus, every person is conceived (or born) as spiritually dead, or separated from God the source of spiritual life.
5. Rom.5:12—"Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned (in Adam)."
6. Death spread to Adam's offspring because all of Adam's offspring sinned in him as their federal head.
7. Now this takes us back to Adam and to the punishment that was threatened Adam in the original paradise.
8. If you remember, God told Adam—"in the day you sin (eat the fruit) you will surely die" and this death was threefold.
9. First, he immediately began to die physically, second, he immediately died spiritually, and third, he deserved to die eternally.
10. Now, it's very important to keep in mind that death spreads to Adam's offspring in each of these three ways.
11. But it's primarily the second of these that's that Paul has in mind when he describes as "dead in trespasses and sins."
12. When I say that Adam immediately spiritually died when he sinned, what does this spiritual death entail?
13. Well, it fundamentally entails separation from God who is the source of all spiritual and eternal life.
14. In fact, Paul actually defines spiritual death in this way later in v12—"having no hope and without God in the world."
15. This is what spiritual death entails—to be without hope and without God in the world—to be void of spiritual life.
16. (1) Spiritual death doesn't mean inactivity—spiritual death simply means man is dead with regards to God.
17. This doesn't mean he's dead in every sense—native man is very much alive with regards to other things.
18. This is clearly taught us in Eph.2:1-2—"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."
19. Notice, Paul describes man as dead (v1) and yet walking (v2)—dead to God but alive to sin and Satan.
20. Thus, there's a sense in which we can describe native man as "the walking dead"—dead to God, alive to sin.
21. (2) Spiritual death is separation from God—this is fundamentally what death means—it means separation.
22. Physical death is the separation of the soul and body, whereas eternal death is the sinner's separation from God's mercy.
23. Thus, spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God—from having favor and fellowship with God.
24. This means, man by nature, lacks all spiritual strength, because fundamentally spiritual life is spiritual strength.
25. Rom.5:6—"For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly"—to be without strength is to be without life.

26. Furthermore, because man is separated from God, the source of life, he is born spiritually blind and deaf.
27. In short, those separated from God are spiritually dead, and thus lack all spiritual strength, sight, and hearing.
28. (3) Spiritual death is a punishment for guilt—men are conceived spiritually dead and separated from God.
29. The soul of man is conceived void of any spiritual life as the result of his connection with Adam's sin.
30. Now, before we come to our next heading, I want to quickly examine God's remedy for spiritual death.
31. This can be summarized by the word "resurrection," which entails, granting life to a previously dead soul.
32. Eph.2:4-5—"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."
33. Just as we die in Adam, we are made alive in Christ—we die because of Adam, we live because of Christ.
34. Put another way—just as we die because of Adam's transgression, so too we live, because of Christ's obedience.

II. Man is a Slave

1. Natural man is not only spiritually dead but also a spiritual and moral slave—unable to liberate himself.
2. (1) Who is man a slave to? Simply put, man is a slave to sin, Satan, and the world (and these go together).
3. Think of it like this—man is a slave of Satan, shackled by sin, and imprisoned within the prison of this world.
4. Jn.8:34—"Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin"—that is, those who live in sin evidence they're slaves of sin.
5. Rom.6:18—"And having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness"—we were slaves of sin by nature and became slaves of righteousness by grace.
6. 2Tim2:24-26—"A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in position, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."
7. All men are caught in the snare of the devil, and have been taken captive by him, to (willingly) do his will.
8. 1Jn.5:19—"We know that we are of God and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one."
9. Thus, all men by nature are unable to come to Christ for salvation, because they are slaves of sin and Satan.
10. (2) Why is man a slave? Man became a slave to sin and Satan, as a punishment for his sin in Adam (his head).
11. Go back to the garden—so sooner did Adam sin against God, was he removed from the garden of God.
12. And having been removed from the garden of God, he was banished into the wilderness of the serpent.

13. This implies, that God gave Satan a measure of authority within this world as the kingdom of darkness.
14. Perhaps I can put it like this—having been banished from the kingdom of light he entered the kingdom of darkness.
15. Acts 26:18—"I now send you to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."
16. Thus, all men are born (conceived) as slaves to sin and Satan, as a result (consequence) of Adam's sin.
17. Just as God sent the nation of Israel into Egyptian captivity because of their sin, so too, He sent mankind into the kingdom of darkness because of their sin.
18. Again, before I come to our final point, let me briefly suggest God's remedy for man's native servitude.
19. This of course is found in the term "redemption"—to redeem is to deliver by way of price or purchase.
20. God redeems us by the blood of His Son, and thus, delivers us from the slavery we were justly sold into.
21. And so, the ransom that Christ pays for our redemption, is paid to God not Satan, because our slavery was the result of God's just punishment.

III. Man is a Rebel

1. This gets us at the heart of man's inability—the fundamental reason he's not able to return to God through Christ is because he refuses to.
2. Put another way—man is not only a dead slave, but he refuses to come to Christ to have life, and leave his servitude to sin and Satan.
3. Prov.1:24—"I have called and you refused, I have stretched out My hand and no one regarded, you disdained all My counsel and would have none of My rebuke."
4. Lk.14:16-18—"A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses."
5. Jn.5:40—"But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life"—life is offered, but they refused.
6. This is why man is not able to come—because he natively hates God and loves sin too much to forsake it.
7. Gen.37:4—"When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him."
8. This refers to the inability of Joseph's brothers to speak kindly to him because they hated him too much.
9. This is similar to the inability of man—man cannot come to Christ because he loves his sin too much.
10. Thus, here I want to say three summary things about these texts (and then I want to close with three questions).
11. (1) Man's inability is moral not natural—this is a very important point that our fathers were fond to make.
12. Simply put, they were desirous to clarify, man's inability to come to Christ wasn't a physical obstruction.
13. Man's inability to come to Christ isn't because lacks the faculties of soul necessary to come to Christ.

14. Man has a mind, he has a heart, and he has a will—to lack these is to be a rock or beast and not a man.
15. Simply put, as a man he possesses the necessary parts (faculties) of soul necessary to come to Christ.
16. Paul Washer—"If man did not love or obey God because he lacked the mental faculties to do so or was somehow physically restrained, then it would be unfair for God to hold him accountable—he would be a victim. Man's inability is moral and stems from his hostility toward God. Man is unable to love God because he hates God. He is unable to obey God because He disdains his commands. He is unable to please God because he does not hold the glory and good pleasure of God to be a worthy goal. Man is not a victim but a culprit. He *cannot* because he *will not*."
17. (2) Man acts in accord with his nature—this brings us to the often-debated question about man's will.
18. By "will" is meant the faculty of choice in man—it's possible to refer to the "will" as the chooser (selector).
19. And here's my point—man will always act in harmony to his nature—the mind and heart determine the will.
20. For example, let's say you love vanilla ice-cream but hate chocolate—well, if offered both you will always choose vanilla.
21. You're free to choose chocolate but you never will—you will always choose that which you prefer (love).
22. And so, while man is free to choose Christ, he never will, because he's blind to his desperate need of Christ.
23. Prov.1:29—"Because they hated knowledge, they did not choose the fear of the LORD, they would have none of My counsel, and they despised My every rebuke."
24. Fallen man does not choose the fear of the LORD—this is another way of saying, they refuse to choose true wisdom (for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom).
25. Notice why—"Because they hated knowledge"—because man hates true knowledge, he does not choose wisdom.
26. Jn.3:19-20—"This is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light."
27. Fallen man refuses to come to the light (that is, Christ), because he loves darkness and hates the light.
28. John Calvin—"The will is always mindful of the bidding of the understanding, and in its own desires awaits the judgments of the understanding."
29. A.W. Pink—"The sinner's will is *enslaved* because it is in bondage to and is the servant of a depraved heart."
30. (3) Man acts freely and not by force—by this I mean, there is nothing external to man that compels him to act.
31. Nobody forces man to act, he is in this sense free—man's will is free in that nothing forces him to act.
32. If God or Satan or the world forced man to act, then man could hardly be held accountable for his actions.
33. But it's in this sense that man's will free—it's free to act in harmony to its own nature—it's free to be itself.
34. Here again, as I've done with the other two points, let me briefly explain God's solution to man's rebellion.
35. If God's solution to our spiritual death is resurrection, and His solution to our servitude is redemption, His solution to our rebellion is renovation.

36. That is, in renovating our natures He changes our hearts, and to change our heart is to make us willing to come.
37. Remember, the will always follows the heart (mind), and so to make us willing, God changes our hearts.
38. This means, every person who comes to Christ does so willingly—no one comes to Christ against their will.
39. Question 1—If man by nature is unable to come to God for salvation, why is he responsible for not coming?
40. Before I come to answer this question, let me clearly state, that man is reasonable for repenting and believing.
41. Simply put—mankind is responsible for depravity and inability because they're the result of imputed sin.
42. Whose fault is it, that mankind is spiritually dead, a slave to sin and Satan, and a rebel who hates God?
43. Well, the obvious answer is that man is responsible—man finds himself in this condition by his own merit.
44. For example, think of someone who borrows \$20,000 from the bank, but foolishly wastes the money.
45. Would the bank be wrong, in still expecting payment even though the person is not able to repay them?
46. Question 2—If man by nature is unable to come to God for salvation, why does God command Him to come?
47. Perhaps put another way, if God knows man is unable to pay his debt, why does He command him to pay?
48. Well, let me begin by underscoring the fact, that God does call all men to repent and come to Christ for salvation.
49. Remember, the word of God doesn't address sinners as if they were dead stones or nonrational beasts.
50. The gospel message addresses man as a rationale creature who retains the image of God in some measure.
51. Andrew Fuller—"No one in his senses would think of calling the blind to look, the deaf to hear, or the dead to rise up and walk. But if the blindness results from the love of darkness rather than light, if the deafness is like the cobra which closes its ear to the charmer, and if the death consists in separation from God and absence of all desire after Him, there is nothing absurd or cruel in calling them to repent and believe."
52. Question 3—If man by nature is unable to come to God for salvation, how should he respond to the invitation?
53. Well, I can answer this question very simply—every sinner should receive the invitation and come to Christ.
54. But the sinner might object! How can I come if all that you've said about me is true—I am dead, a slave, and a rebel.
55. Well, let me ask—do you agree with these truths? Do you agree these things accurately describe you?
56. Well, my friend, if you know you are dead in your sin, and you know you're a slave of sin and Satan.
57. And you know this all your fault because of your sin in Adam and your own personal and actual sin.
58. And you know you are helpless to save yourself! Then this means God Himself has been teaching you.