

It's my intention for the next 10-12 weeks, to preach another short topical series on the Doctrines of Grace. But before I come to these, it's necessary for me first to say three things about them by way of introduction.

First, their meaning. Many of you know that by "the doctrines of grace" is meant the Biblical truth that salvation is all of grace. This is fundamentally what is meant by the phrase "the doctrines of grace." In fact, there's a sense in which the primary point of this entire series can be summarized in this simple statement – salvation is of the LORD. Thus, the phrase "the doctrines of grace" refers to the Biblical teaching that salvation is planned by God, purchased by God, and applied by God. Salvation is totally of God.

Second, their history. By this I mean, what is the history of "the doctrines of grace?" Well, in the first place, they obviously come from the Bible. And this is very important to underscore. The doctrines of grace (or the 5 points of Calvinism), have the source in the pages of Holy Scripture.

Now, having said that, in the historical sense, these great doctrines were summarized in the early 1600s and the Canons of Dort. In 1603 Jacob Arminius, a professor in the Netherlands, begins to preach and write against core doctrines, which had been universally embraced. Though Arminius himself died in 1609, his followers draft a document (1610), that list 5 doctrines they no longer believed.

The church eventually gathered in 1618 at Dort, to formally respond to these five doctrines. This resulted in the Canons of Dort (which contains what's often called the five-points of Calvinism, which was in response to the Arminians).

Now, keep in mind that John Calvin died in 1564 (54 years before), thus what's commonly called the five-points, or the doctrines of grace, bear Calvin's name because he clearly taught the essence of these truths. And so, while historically we trace these truths to Calvin and the Canons, they find their origin in the teaching of Holy Scripture.

Third, their importance. Here I want to briefly suggest three reasons why these great truths are of extreme importance (now, keep in mind I've chosen these reasons with you in mind—these are basically the reasons why I'm preaching these sermons).

(a) To understand Scripture. By this I mean, I want you to understand what the Bible teaches about man's native condition and God's provision of salvation in Christ. The doctrines of grace, or the five points of Calvinism, are central to the Bible.

(b) To explain Scripture. By this I mean, I want to be able to explain to others (both sinners and saints), what is the gospel. Friends, every Christian agrees we are saved by grace, but not every Christian agrees as to what that means.

(c) To love Scripture. This is the result of the other two—the better we understand the Bible's teaching on salvation, and the more effective we are in defending and explaining it, the more deeply we will love it. Or better yet, the more deeply we will grow to love Christ. This is the result of the doctrines of grace.

I. Why Are Men Depraved?

II. How Are Men Depraved?

I. Why Are Men Depraved?

A. Original sin

1. In answering the question, "Why are men depraved," I have to remind you of a theological phrase "original sin."
2. The doctrine of original sin is the Biblical truth, that all men are born (conceived) originally as sinners.
3. Thus, the doctrine of original sin does include Adam's original sin, but only as it has relation to his offspring.
4. Strictly speaking, when we speak of original sin, we refer to the fact that all men are born originally depraved.
5. Robert Dabney—"By original sin we refer to the evil quality which characterizes man's natural disposition and will. We call this original, because each fallen man is born with it, and because it is the origin of man's actual transgressions."
6. Now, let me say a few words about this word "depraved"—it's simply an older word that means corrupt or crooked.
7. All men are born, from the womb, morally corrupt or crooked—all men are originally morally depraved.
8. Now, obviously, this is not how man was originally created—by was originally created good and upright.
9. And so, what happened? How did mankind get from where he was created, to where he presently is?
10. Well, the best way to answer this question is to make a further distinction between original guilt and corruption.
11. (1) Original guilt—this means, the guilt of Adam's sin is charged to the account of his physical offspring.
12. This means, Adam represented the entire human race—he was the covenant (federal) head of all mankind.
13. And so, at conception, the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to the account of every single human being.
14. Rom.5:12—"Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned."
15. Here Paul says sin and death entered the world and spread to all men "because all sinned"—that is, all men sinned in Adam.
16. Now, do not misunderstand what Paul means—he does not mean, all men actually or literally sinned in Adam.
17. But he means, all men were represented in Adam, so that, when he sinned, there's a sense in which we all sinned.
18. This is why sin and death have spread to all men—all men die because all men sinned in Adam their head.
19. Rom.5:18—"Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation."
20. Through Adam's one offense, judgment (guilt) came to all men, resulting in condemnation (God's displeasure for guilt).
21. Simply put—the guilt of Adam's one sin is imputed to every person at conception, who become objects of God's wrath.
22. Remember, if someone objected that this is unfair, they have to also object to Christ representing us (this goes two ways).
23. (2) Original corruption—this is without doubt one of the most difficult subjects to explain in Scripture.

24. How or why are all men born (conceived) morally corrupt—how or why is the baby born sinful and corrupt.
25. Now, before I come to answer that question, let me first of all prove that all men are born morally corrupt.
26. Ps.51:5—"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me" Ps.58:3—"The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies."
27. Rom.3:10-11—"There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God."
28. Thus, these texts clearly teach us, every person without exception, is born (conceived) morally corrupt.
29. All men are conceived as sinners, are born speaking lies, go astray from God, and refuse to seek God.
30. For example, think of the four ladies who are at present with child—regardless how old that little baby is, it was conceived in original sin.
31. As soon as that baby was conceived, the sin and thus guilt of Adam's sin are imputed to that baby's account.
32. As soon as that baby was conceived, the soul of the child is conceived morally corrupt and depraved.
33. Thus, the question at this point becomes—how and why is the soul of man corrupt from its conception (in response, let us consider two things – the creation and corruption of the soul)?
34. (a) The creation of the soul—man, by nature, is made of two parts—he has a body, and he has a soul.
35. The body is created by natural generation and the soul is created by a sovereign work of God the Creator.
36. Thus, while the physical part of man comes through its parents, the spiritual part comes directly from God.
37. Ecc.12:7—"Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it."
38. (b) The corruption of the soul—while God creates the soul righteous, it's made corrupt by punishment.
39. Thus, it's important to keep in mind, God does not create a corrupt soul—that would be impossible for God.
40. Because God is good, all that directly comes from His hands is good—bad cannot come from what is good.
41. But this does not mean, that God has nothing to do with the corruption of the soul at its very conception.
42. God imputes the guilt of Adam's sin to every soul, and as a punishment, the corruption is conveyed to the soul.
43. All of this happens simultaneously at conception, and is true of Adam's physical offspring without exception.
44. For example, think of Adam—when he sinned, he became guilty, and as a punishment he became corrupted.
45. This is the same order for all of his offspring—they are corrupted as a punishment for their guilt—guilt is imputed and corruption is conveyed.
46. G.H. Kersten—"Pollution (moral corruption) flows from guilt. The guilt comes first and the pollution of sin follows from the Judicial imputation of Adam's fall."
47. This allows us to maintain, both that God creates the soul, and yet, it's corrupt as a punishment from God.

48. Having breathed the soul into the little body, He withholds the original righteousness we were created with.
49. And to withhold that original righteousness, will of necessity result in original corruption or depravity.

B. Personal sin

1. Because every person is conceived a sinner (with regards to guilt and corruption), it comes from the womb sinning.
2. People sin because they are sinners—because we are sinners by nature, it is natural (native) to us to sin.
3. Thus, by "personal sin" I refer to "actual sin" or the personal and actual acts of every native-born sinner.
4. But what's important to know this—personal or actual sin is the result of original sin—man sins because he's a sinner.
5. Sinners sin, and as we shall see here in a minute, there's a sense in which that's all sinners are able to do.
6. Rom.3:10-11—"There is none righteous, no, not one...there is none who does good, no, not one"—because no one is righteous, no one does good.
7. Put another way, nobody does good because nobody is righteous—the one necessarily determines the other.
8. Matt.7:18-19—"Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit."
9. The reason a tree bears bad fruit is because the tree is bad—bad trees produce bad and not good fruit.
10. LBC (6:4)—"From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions."
11. Now, there's two things I want to briefly discuss with regards to personal or actual sin—its guilt and its degree.
12. (1) Its guilt—by this I mean, when exactly is a person held accountable for personal or actual transgression?
13. Well let say in the first place, regardless when man is held accountable for personal sin, we are held accountable for original sin from conception.
14. But in addition to original sin, man is responsible for personal or actual sin when he personally sins.
15. When is this? Well, I don't know, but I suggest it's much younger than most people care to acknowledge.
16. Well, I trust you understand that the Scripture nowhere provides a specific age where we become accountable for personal sin.
17. But there are several texts that shed a measure of light of this question—let me briefly examine two.
18. Deut.1:39—"your little ones, your children, who have no knowledge of good and evil"---that is, they were too young to know right from wrong.
19. How young were they? We are not told, but they were too young to know good and evil, right from wrong.
20. Jas.4:17—"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin"—in the context, James is describing degrees of sin.
21. All personal and actual sin is the result of knowledge—you know what's wrong and you do it anyway.

22. This is what makes sin to be sin, as it's the transgression of law, either law that's written from Scripture, or that remains in the heart in measure.
23. But either way, all men personally and actually sin when they act against the knowledge of that law.
24. (2) Its degree—by this I mean, are all personal and actual sins equally guilty? My answer is simple, no.
25. Not every man is personally or actually as sinful as the rest, nor are all sin equally as wicked as the rest.
26. Our Savior told Pilate "the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin" and He spoke of certain cities who will receive "greater condemnation."
27. Thus, man will not only give an account for original sin, but he will also give an account for personal sin.

II. How Are Men Depraved?

1. Here I want to suggest three things about man's depravity: (1) it's total, (2) it's native, and (3) it's universal.
2. (1) It's total—this is why historically we speak of "total depravity"—man is totally or entirely depraved.
3. Now let me remind you, that the acrostic TULIP is a manmade help, that's likely less than 100yrs old.
4. Thus, the phrase Total Depravity can be misleading—it doesn't mean man is as depraved as he can be.
5. Through various means, God graciously restrains man's depravity, otherwise, we would destroy each other.
6. But by "total depravity" is simply meant, man's entire being is infected with the moral disease of sin.
7. Every aspect of man is infected—his understanding, his affections, his will—he is entirely depraved.
8. The totality of man has been ruined by the fall—every aspect or faculty of man's soul has been affected.
9. Nor does total depravity imply, that fallen and unsaved man does no good in a social or general sense.
10. When Paul says "there is none who does good, no, not one" he means, "good" in the strict (or religious) sense.
11. Robert Dabney—"By calling it total, we do not mean that men are from their youth as bad as they can be. Nor do we mean that they have no social virtues towards their fellowmen in which they are sincere. But what we teach is, that by the fall man's moral nature has undergone an utter change to sin, irreparable by himself. In this sense it is complete, decisive, or total."
12. Thus, at this point, I want to very quickly, prove from Scripture that mankind is born totally depraved.
13. Now, to do so, I have to remind you that Scripture describes the soul of man as having three faculties.
14. (a) Mind—by "mind" is meant the understanding—man's understanding is darkened (blinded) to spiritual truth.
15. Rom.3:11—"There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God"—no one understands the truth.
16. That is, no person, by nature, understands the truth about God, about man, about morality, about eternity.

17. This is mankind calls evil good and good evil—this is why man thinks the way he does—he's depraved.
18. (b) Heart—by "heart" is meant the affections—man's affections are depraved—he loves sin and hates God.
19. Jn.3:19—"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."
20. Men love darkness rather than light. Why? Because they are evil. To love darkness means to love evil.
21. (c) Will—by "will" is meant that faculty of choice within man—the will is a servant of the mind and heart.
22. Rom.3:11—"There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God"—failure to understand results in failure to seek God.
23. Prov.1:29—"Because they hated knowledge, they did not choose the fear of the LORD"—man refuses to fear God because He hates the knowledge of God.
24. (2) It's native—by this I mean, all men are totally depraved from the womb—they are natively depraved.
25. This goes against the view that man is born basically good, and it's only his environment that corrupts him.
26. O it's true brethren, our environment corrupts us, but only because it's made up of people just like us.
27. It's true we are terrible influenced by those around us, but that external influence doesn't put wickedness in us, it only draws it out of us.
28. For example, think of a young lady who was raised in a Christian home—she's outward moral and decent.
29. But then she does off the college and then begins to act immoral and before you know it, she's very immoral.
30. Did college corrupt her or did it merely reveal what she truly was! It merely gave her a context to express her wickedness!
31. O my dear friends, there's enough native wickedness in man, that given the proper context, would erupt into all manner of actual sin.
32. Let me give you another example (this one is actually true)—I mentioned some weeks ago about growing up in CA and idolizing the gang culture.
33. There was well-known gangster by the name of Monster Kody—Monster Kody was a very evil man.
34. Monster Kody was recently paroled from prison and has reported changed and turned himself around.
35. I listened to an interview he recently gave where he was answering the question—why he grew up so violent.
36. He blamed two groups of people—first, his immediate neighborhood, and secondly, what he called "the oppressive country" as a whole.
37. And it is true brethren, growing up in such a neighborhood will negatively and tragically influence people.
38. But such an environment doesn't make anyone evil—it only encourages us to be what we natively are.
39. (3) It's universal—by this I mean, every member of Adam's race, without exception, are natively depraved.
40. Depravity isn't reserved to some people but it's true of all people—rich or poor, educated or uneducated.

41. Perhaps I can say, total depravity is a family disease, and every member of the human race is born with it.
42. Exhortation 1—Let us be humbles and ashamed at what our sin has caused—God made man good, man made man bad.
43. Exhortation 2—Let us not be foolish and deny the depravity of our natures—here I'm speaking to non-Christians.
44. Denial of depravity is a sure sign of depravity—don't blame your parents, neighborhood, or country—blame yourself.
45. Exhortation 3—Let us not be surprised by the wickedness around us, 1Jn.5:19—"We know that the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one."
46. My friends, I totally understand why men do what they do! They do what they do because they are who they are!
47. Exhortation 4—Let us not be surprised by the evil that remains in us—depravity remains in us in part.
48. Rom.7:21—"I find then this principle, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good"—this is a description of every Christian.
49. Remember I said that total depravity means every faculty (mind, heart, will) of man has been corrupted.
50. Well, in regeneration every faculty of man is radially renewed—his mind, heart, and will are all renewed.
51. But, while every faculty is radically renewed, no faculty is perfectly renewed so as to remove all depravity.
52. Scripture describes this remaining corruption as the flesh, and Paul here describes it as evil (or wicked).
53. Exhortation 5—Let us not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ—this is the only remedy for depravity.
54. If you remember I said, the corruption of our nature is the result of guilt—original and personal guilt.
55. This is why the gospel message promises the forgiveness of sin—yes, the gospel provides the renewal of our nature.
56. But the reason it gives forgiveness the priority is because this is the first and great need of man—to have the guilt of his sin removed.
57. And how can a guilt sinner be forgiven his sin except someone bear that sin and guilt in his place or stead.