

# Total Depravity: What is It?

January 7, 2018

**OT**

**Gn 6:5-12**

Gn 6:5-12 5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 7 So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. 9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

**NT**

**Eph 2:1-5**

Eph 2:1-5 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-- by grace you have been saved.

## Context? (introduction)

*So far in Ephesians:*

- Review Outline:
  - I. 1-3: The Church: The place where God's glory is enjoyed
    - A. 1: Purpose of writing: that through the Church we might live the new life that displays God's glory

## B. 2: Purpose achieved by bringing us into the Church

- Last Sunday: Our life before we were brought into the Church
- Today: in-text doctrine: total depravity, (3 sermons, Eph 2:1, 5)
  - 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins. ... 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses,
    - What is total depravity?
    - Big objection: what about free will?
    - Big objection: what about good deeds?
    - Why is total depravity a big deal?
- Gospel focus:
  - Need (ours): to escape all self-reliance –
  - Remedy (Jesus): to see how hopeless self-reliance is
  - Joy & Glory!: to abandon self-reliance and rest in Christ-reliance
- Caution: 3 dangers
  - Denigrating God's word:

Jh 6:60-63 Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?" Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

- Dismissing God's warning:

Jer 6:13-15 From the least to the greatest, their lives are ruled by greed. From prophets to priests, they are all frauds. They offer superficial treatments for my people's mortal wound. They give assurances of peace when there is no peace. Are they ashamed of their disgusting actions? Not at all-- they don't even know how to blush! Therefore, they will lie among the slaughtered.

- Defaming God's worth:

You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you commit adultery? You condemn idolatry, but do you use items stolen from pagan temples? You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it. No wonder the Scriptures say, "The Gentiles blaspheme the name of God because of you. Rom 2:22-24

## Focus? (attention)

*Gospel focus: how are you self-reliant?*

## Text? (explanation)

**The Big Topic:** what is total depravity (see handout in blt, WS)

Cover three things: broken relationship, depravity, total.

*Total depravity is about our broken relationship with God  
(Two considerations: dead, sins)*

Eph 2:1 And you were *dead* in the *trespasses and sins*

### *1. Dead – in relationship to God*

Eph 5:3-7, 11-14, 3 Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. 4 Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes-- these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. 5 You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

6 Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. 7 Don't participate in the things these people do. ... 11 Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. 12 It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. 13 But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, 14 for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

Lk 15:24, This son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.

1Tm 5:5-6, Now a true widow, a woman who is truly alone in this world, has placed her hope in God. She prays night and day, asking God for his help. 6 But the widow who lives only for pleasure is spiritually dead even while she lives.

1Jh 3:14, If we love our Christian brothers and sisters, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead.

Rv 3:, Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis. This is the message from the one who has the sevenfold Spirit of God and the seven stars: "I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive-- but you are dead."

*Dead = no relationship with God*

## *2. Sins – in rebellion against God*

Tit 1:16, Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live. They are detestable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good.

Rom 1:22-25, 28-32, 22 Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. 23 And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. 24 So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies.

25 They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

28 Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. 29 Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. 30 They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud,

and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. 31 They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy.

32 They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

2Tm 3:2-5, 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. 4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God.

5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!

*Sin = living in rebellion against God*

*Depravity is about our moral impurity before God*

*(Two considerations: absence of holiness, complete moral corruption)*

*1. Entire absence of holiness (Hodge)*

Ecc 7:29, God created people to be virtuous to be morally upright, but they have each turned to follow their own downward path.

Gn 6:5, 11-12, 5 The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ... 11 Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. 12 God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt.

Rom 7:18, And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't.

*Depravity = entire absence of holiness (moral purity)*

*2. Complete moral corruption*

Job 15:14-16, 14 Can any mortal be pure? Can anyone born of a woman be just? 15 Look, God does not even trust the angels. Even the heavens are not absolutely pure in his sight. 16 How much less pure is a corrupt and sinful person with a thirst for wickedness!

Ps 14:1-3, 1 Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and their actions are evil; not one of them does good! 2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God. 3 But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!

Ps 106:37-39, 37 They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons. 38 They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters. By sacrificing them to the idols of the country, they polluted the land with murder. 39 They defiled themselves by their evil deeds, and their love of idols was adultery in the LORD's sight.

*Depravity = Complete moral corruption (all people, all parts)*

*Total is about the extent of our moral impurity before God  
(Four considerations: soul, body, life, partial)*

*1. Soul: thoughts, emotions, desires, choices*

Gn 8:21, And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things.

Pro 21:10, Evil people desire evil; their neighbors get no mercy from them.

Mt 15:19, For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander.

Tit 1:15, Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are corrupted.

*Total depraved = all functions of our soul morally corrupted*

*2. Body: words, deeds*

*Eph 2:1-5, Total Depravity A*

*RDP, 1/7/18, p. 6*

Eph 2:3, All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

Mt 12:34-35, 34 You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. 35 A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart.

Eph 4:18-19, 18 Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. 19 They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

*Total depraved = all actions of our body morally corrupted*

### *3. Life: intentions, motives, goals*

Ecc 7:20, Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins.

Ecc 9:3, This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

Tit 3:3, Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other.

Eph 2:3, 2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil-- the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

*Total depraved = all our life's motives, goals, purpose*

### *4. Partial (not total)?*

Prv 27:22, You cannot separate fools from their foolishness, even though you grind them like grain with mortar and pestle.

Isa 64:6, We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy blood-soaked rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind.

Jer 2:22, No amount of soap or lye can make you clean. I still see the stain of your guilt. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!

Rom 8:8, That's why those who are still in the flesh, under the control of their sinful nature, can never please God.

*Total depraved = total, no part of us is free from moral corruption*

*So what hope is there?*

Eph 2:4-5 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 **even when we were dead in our trespasses**, made us alive together with Christ-- by grace you have been saved.