

Total Depravity: Why Is It Important?

January 28, 2018

OT

Pro 28:26

Pro 28:26 Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.

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:

- Three Sundays ago: our life before we were brought into the Church
- Last tow Sunday: 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? Morally corrupted in all parts of our being, so dead in relationship with God.
- Big objection: free will. We have free will; a faculty of our souls. It functions according to our nature, which is totally depraved.
- Big objection: good deeds. We can do good deeds, things that are relatively good to other and to God. But since we are totally

depraved, even the best deed is contaminated by self-glorifying motives and goals.

- Why is total depravity a big deal?
- Gospel focus:
 - Need (ours): to be stripped of all hope in self efforts.
 - Remedy (Jesus): doctrine of total depravity humbles us.
 - Joy & Glory!: so we're ready to receive grace!
- 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: will you humble yourself under God's declaration of your total depravity?

Text? (explanation)

The Big Topic: why total depravity is such an important doctrine!

Eph 2:1-5 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ... 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses,

(Three considerations: clarifications, consequences, comeback)

Three **clarifications** for total depravity (who, when, where)

- Who has total depravity?

Ps 14:3, But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!

Ps 53:3, But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!

Rom 3:9-12, 9 Well then, should we conclude that we Jews are better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin. 10 As the Scriptures say, "No one is righteous-- not even one. 11 No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. 12 All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one."

All people have natures that are totally depraved.

- When does a person get total depravity?

Job 15:14, Can any mortal be pure? Can anyone born of a woman be just?

Ps 51:5, For I was born a sinner-- yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.

Ps 58:3, These wicked people are born sinners; even from birth they have lied and gone their own way.

Joh 3:6a, can reproduce only human life,

All people are born with natures that are totally depraved.

- Where do we get our totally depraved natures from?

Rom 5:12, 19a, 12 When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. ...
19a Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners.

All people, except Jesus, have natures that are totally depraved because they're descended from Adam

Two significant **consequences** of total depravity

- Impossibility of making ourselves right with God

Pro 20:9, Who can say, "I have cleansed my heart; I am pure and free from sin"?

Job 14:4, Who can bring purity out of an impure person? No one!

Jer 13:23, Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin? Can a leopard take away its spots? Neither can you start doing good, for you have always done evil.

Heb 11:6a, And it is impossible to please God without faith.

Because from conception we are totally depraved, it is completely and categorically impossible for us to do anything that makes us right with God.

- Cannot respond to the gospel on our own

Joh 3:27, No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven.

Joh 6:44, 65, 44 For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. ... That is why I said that people can't come to me unless the Father gives them to me."

Joh 12:39, But the people couldn't believe.

1Co 1:18, 21-24, 18 The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the

very power of God. ... 21 Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe. 22 It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom. 23 So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense. 24 But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1Co 2:14, But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.

2Co 4:3, If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing.

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Three possible **comebacks** to the doctrine of total depravity

- Fool vs. wisdom

Pro 28:26, Those who trust their own insight are foolish, but anyone who walks in wisdom is safe.

Pro 3:5, Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

Lk 13:24-27, 24 Work hard to enter the narrow door to God's Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will fail. 25 When the master of the house has locked the door, it will be too late. You will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Lord, open the door for us!' But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from.' 26 Then you will say, 'But we ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' 27 And he will reply, 'I tell you, I don't know you or where you come from. Get away from me, all you who do evil.'

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.

We can reject the doctrine of total depravity (this would make us a fool).

- **Freedom**

Joh 8:35-36, A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.

Rom 8:2, And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

2Co 3:17, For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Gal 5:1, So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.

? We can humble ourselves under the doctrine of total depravity (this would make us a free).

- **Rejoice**

Mt 9:36-38, 38 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. 38 So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."

Rom 5:6-10, 6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. 7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. 8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. 9 And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. 10 For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.

Eph 2:5, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)

? We can rejoice in the doctrine of total depravity (this would fill our lives with God's glory).

1N + 1S = Joy & Glory!

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- Freedom

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- Rejoice

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So is there real hope?

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