

T.U.L.I.P

Part 1: Total Depravity

Pre-sermon

This morning we come to a familiar passage of Scripture that **I'm sure many of us** are familiar with!

But we're gonna focus on a particular aspect of the passage here today!

This morning we have the wonderful opportunity of continuing to look at what the Church has historically referred to as:

The Doctrines of Grace!

Others here this morning **will simply know these** as *the 5 points of Calvinism...*

And still others will know them by the acronym **T.U.L.I.P!**

Now **I'm not gonna re-hash the history of these things** – as I know pastor Jase **did a wonderful job of that** last week for you guys – so we're **not gonna go back over that...**

But I will say:

That **whatever our understanding** of these things are... however we understand election, & predestination, sin, salvation, and the Gospel – it is **our aim here at Grace** to present these doctrines **in what we would call the Spirit of Calvinism...**

See friends **at the heart** of Reformed Theology – **at the heart of Calvinism** – is the fundamental conviction to see and to savour:

The Glory of God in the Salvation of Sinners!

That is what Calvinism **primarily seeks to accomplish in its explanation of the Scriptures!**

Because the Calvinist is the one who knows:

What it is he's been saved **from!**

And Who it is He's been saved to!

And that's why we've titled this series:

To the Praise of His glorious Grace!

Because we want to **maximise the grace & the glory of God & minimise the worth & glory of man!**

This is a series that centres upon the glory of God **NOT John Calvin!**

I love what Charles Spurgeon said in his autobiography on day – he says:

[SLIDE]

*When I was coming to Christ, I thought I was doing it all myself, and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea **the Lord was seeking me...**I do not think the young convert is at first aware of this. I can recall the very day and hour when I first received those truths into my own soul – when they were as John Bunyan says, burnt into my heart as with a hot iron...I saw that God was at the bottom of it all, and that He was the Author*

of my faith, and so the whole doctrine of grace opened up to me, and from that doctrine I have not departed to this day, and I desire to make this my constant confession, I ascribe my change wholly to God...

And so friends **it is my prayer here this morning** that we like **Spurgeon**, like Bunyan, like Luther, like Calvin, like Peter, like Paul, **and every saint that has ever trusted in the finished work of Christ** would say in our hearts with utmost joy:

I ascribe my change wholly (not partly, not mostly, but wholly) to God...

Do you know the reality of your salvation and who it is that first sought you...

And so with that being said why don't we pray – and then we'll open up our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 2 as we come to the **T in TULIP** here this morning:

[SLIDE]

Total Depravity

What does the Bible teach concerning man's fundamental nature outside of Jesus Christ?!?!

And so to see that **we're gonna turn to a few places** in particular – but primarily Ephesians chapter 2, so please turn in your Bibles...

And while you're turning there let me just quickly pray for our time in God's Word...

Prayer

Dear LORD & heavenly Father,

God we love you... we thank you Father for saving such wicked people like us!

Lord as we come to you now, knowing that there is nothing in us that we could ever bring to the table of faith that would merit our salvation...

We believe LORD as one pastor has proclaimed:

The only thing we contribute to our salvation was the sin that made it necessary...

And so we ask father that as we come to what is no doubt a very hard topic to swallow, that you would break our preconceived notions by the power of Scripture and NOT the wisdom of man...

I come before you now knowing that there is nothing in my ability to change the heart of man, but only and purely, and wholly Your sovereign grace...

*LORD, please pour out your Spirit upon us as we open up Your Word, and convict us of our sin, save any people here this morning **who are not yet trusting** in the Person & work of Christ Your Son we ask and we pray in Jesus' precious name...*

Amen.

Introduction

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay
 Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
 Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
 Amazing love! how can it be
 That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

Did you catch it...?

Did you hear it?

Can you see it...?

Would you know it...?

Do you believe it...?

Jesus – called it slavery!

John – referred to it as darkness!

Matthew in his gospel – would call it blindness!

Jude – called it *the ungodly passions of men!*

Peter – *the ignorance of our former lusts!*

Paul – referred to it as *the natural desires of the flesh!*

And Luther **would famously call** it *the bondage of the will!*

This is the Bible's testimony concerning **every single human** that stands outside the gates of **true & saving** faith...

That apart **from God's free, sovereign & all powerful grace** to rescue & redeem sinners from corruption of their flesh – human beings **are totally unable & unwilling to come to Jesus Christ, and to be set free, from the bondage of their sin!**

Do you believe the Bible's testimony concerning these things?!?!

See this testimony is **NOT only essential** for understanding the **message of the Bible** – but **this is essential** for understanding our text here in Ephesians chapter 2!

See here in Ephesians 2 dear friends Paul is describing for us **the very real situation** that **each and every** person is in, by virtue of their **union with Adam** outside of the Gospel of Grace!

Adam as our representative back in Genesis chapter 3, plunged into sin – and when Adam fell we fell with him!

And so as a result of Adam's fall in Genesis chapter 3 – Paul reminds us that our **fundamental condition...our natural state of affairs** as we are born into this world – is that we are not born neutral, we're not born sinless, **but we are born:**

Shaking our fists at the One who gives us life!

We are at war with God in our natural state of affairs!

Main Point

The main point that I want us to see as we come the **doctrine of Total Depravity** – is that:

[SLIDE]

People will never desire God unless God first changes their heart... X2

And we're gonna see this in 2 points:

- *The Severity of Sin*
- *And the Sweetness of Salvation*

Ephesians 2

So Ephesians chapter 2 beginning at verse 1 – Paul writes to the Ephesian churches **and he reminds them of their state before coming to Christ** – he says:

*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were **by nature** children under wrath as the others were also...*

[SLIDE]

Opening Gambit

So as Paul comes to his **gloomy assessment** of this universal condition – **how much clearer do you think** Paul could have possibly been in this assessment?!?!

Paul says that:

- We **do** what we **should not do!**
- We **crave** what **we should not crave!**

- We **desire** what **we should not desire!**
- We **walk** how **we should not walk!**
- We **seek** what **we should not seek!**
- We **love** what **we should not love!**

The very fact that **Paul labours** this **one reality in 3 different verses**, demonstrates **just how serious** our condition of sin truly is!!!

One preacher has put it like this:

In verse 1: We are **dead** in sin!

In verse 2: We are **enslaved** in sin!

In verse 3: We are **condemned** in sin!

We **are not sick...** we are not **disabled...**we are not **injured:**

WE ARE DEAD!

D.E.D – DEAD!

We are **lost boys** living East of Eden – dead souls in a valley of dry bones – rotting corpses on the bottom of the ocean floor!

Spiritually **unable to come** to God, or **to do anything pleasing** to God!

This is the, **irrefutable, undeniable, objective** reality of **every single person** sitting in this room **outside of faith** in Christ!

In 3 simple words – your spiritual condition before a **just & holy** God is this:

DEAD IN SIN!!!

Ruler of the Air

But get this...**not only** says Paul, are we **dead** in our trespasses and sins... but we are **also** very much **alive to the unrighteousness of our flesh!**

In a way that demonstrates, our **enslavement** to our sin!

Verse 2:

*In which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according **to the ruler of the power of the air**, the spirit now working in the disobedient...*

So, let's consider this phrase for just a moment...

Paul gives the illustration that Satan is:

*The prince of the power of the **air** – and those who are dead in sin, walk **according to the ways of this ruler...***

Now in our time & space reality – **where is air located on the earth?!?!?**

Where can we go to fill our lungs with the goodness of air?!?!?

Well...between **heaven above** and **beneath the earth** below **air is located in every location...**which is **also** the location of humanity, **who needs air to breathe!**

So we often say things like:

There's an excitement in the air tonight...

And what we mean is that **excitement seems to be gripping all people everywhere**; its influence is so widespread that it **simply must just be** in the air...

And so Paul says that the power spoken of here **in verse 2**, is a power that is **so widespread, so universal, so pervasive...**that **it is able to affect** all people, **in all places, at all times!**

That:

As natural as it is for mankind to breathe air into their lungs;
so too as natural as it is for the sinner **to follow the** prince
of the power of the air...

That **as natural as it is** for us to breathe air into our lungs;
that's how natural it is for us to **rebel in our natural state!**

We don't need to think about breathing; **in the same way** that we don't need to think about sinning!!!

Sinning is just **as much a part of our nature as breathing is** to an infant who comes from the womb!

That is **how natural it is** for us to indulge in our sin!

Sin is **NOT** something **outside of us** – sin **is** something **inside of us:**

Governing us – directing us!

It is apart of our very nature – our identity!!!

It is **who we are** outside of Jesus Christ!

We are NOT sinners because we sin – **we sin because**
we are sinners!

In other words:

Our sin **is a result of who we are** – NOT the result of our environment!

Children

In fact have you ever noticed that **you don't need to teach a child** how to lie to their parents... children know how to lie without anyone teaching them how to lie!

It comes naturally to the child!

In fact **most of our parenting** is teaching our children **all the good things** that they should be doing:

Say please!

Say thank you!

Don't bite your sister!

Don't hit your brother!

Don't touch the plant... don't touch the plant...Isaiah don't touch the plant...okay now you're laughing while you're touching the plant... and he continues to touch the plant... (Isaiah is my son by the way)...

This is our condition by nature!

Verse 3

In fact, **so insidious & so pervasive** is our condition of sin – that Paul identifies **the extent of it** – in verse 3:

*We too all previously lived among them (that is the children of rebellion) in OUR fleshly desires, **carrying out the inclinations of OUR flesh and thoughts**, and we were by nature children of wrath as the others were also...*

So, Paul rightly addresses the Ephesians in verse 1 – he humbly includes himself in verse 3 – and he explicitly includes all humanity there **in his final assessment!**

Whether **you breathe** the air of rebellion (verse 2); whether **you live** in the passions of **your** body (verse 2), or whether **you carry** out the desires of **your** mind... (verse 3):

Every aspect of your condition is drenched in sin!

Total Depravity Defined

This is why it is called **Total Depravity!**

Because the **total** there does **NOT refer to the degree of our sin** – but to **the condition of our sin! (to the extent of our sin)...**

Sometimes we hear this doctrine and we think to ourselves that Total Depravity **means** that mankind is **as sinful or as wicked as he possibly could be...**

But **that's NOT what we mean** when we say *Total Depravity!*

And in fact, **we praise God** that that's not what it means, because the world would be a much darker place if that were the case!

Total depravity defined #2

But it also doesn't mean that mankind **can't do anything good or morally upright** for society!

In fact, some of the nicest people you will ever meet are atheists and Mormons, and people of false religions who (according to the bible) hate God **by rejecting the one true God...**

So, mankind **can still do lots** of good things (in their fallen condition) **even though** they don't love God!

And again that's **God's general grace** being poured out **upon all humanity** – because we're all made in God's image!

We all have the vestiges of His image within us!

So praise God that people can still do good things!

The totality of sin

Total Depravity then, simply means that:

Every aspect of the human condition is fallen in sin – when Adam and Eve fell in Genesis 3 **that fall was a complete & total fall!**

So much so:

That there is **no aspect of the human condition** that is left **untouched by the effects of sin!**

Our minds, our wills, our emotions, our bodies, our passions, our desires are **totally enslaved to sin!**

Totally affected by sin!

Totally inclined to sin!

We are:

Unable to come to God!

Unable to desire God!

Unable to love God!

We are fast bound in sin & nature's night!

There is **nothing inside of us** that desires the Gospel & nothing inside of us **that desires Jesus!**

When Paul writes in **Romans chapter 3** that:

There is none good, no not one!

*There is **no one who seek for God...***

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God!

It's **NOT saying** that our will is somehow restricted from seeking God – that God is somehow restraining us from coming to Him – it's actually saying something **much more profound:**

**We don't seek for God – because we don't want
to seek for God!**

It's NOT that you're NOT free to – it's that **you don't want to!**

You won't seek God because you can't seek God...

And **you can't seek God because you won't seek God!**

You are totally inclined to sin!

Fish in a polluted Stream

As people like dead fish being **swept down a polluted toxic stream of industrial waste** and **being swept along** with the **whims** of the world!

That's us outside of Christ!

Cockroach Legs

Or think of a **dead cockroach** lying dormant on a bedroom floor – where all of the legs are pointing **inwards toward itself**, and so too all of our **thoughts** – all of our **minds** – all of our **hearts** – all of our **affections** — **everything that we are!!!**

Is pointing inward toward self!!!

That's what we mean when we say:

Total Depravity!

It affects **every aspect** of the human condition...

Proof Texts

And this is **NOT** something that is exclusive to the mind of Paul – this doctrine is **NOT** a Pauline conception – but **this is a biblical doctrine** that is rife all throughout Holy Scripture!

Let me just remind you of **the consistent testimony** that Scripture gives **all throughout** the Bible – Genesis chapter 6 verse 5:

[SLIDE]

*When the LORD saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that **every inclination** of the human mind was **nothing but evil all the time**, the LORD regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was deeply grieved...*

So every inclination – nothing but evil! **X2**

All the time!

That's total depravity here in Genesis 6!

Isaiah 1

Or what about Isaiah chapter 1 – God comes to the nation of Israel and **He says this about His people:**

[SLIDE]

Oh sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, brood of evildoers, depraved children! They have abandoned the Lord; they have despised the Holy One of Israel; they have turned their backs on Him... The whole head is hurt, and the whole heart is sick. From the sole of the foot even to the head, no spot is uninjured...

That's Total depravity in Isaiah 1!

Every aspect of the human heart is bent inward toward itself – toward evil!

Jeremiah 17:9:

[SLIDE]

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can understand it?

*Who can understand just how wicked the human heart is **in its sin!?!?***

Wicked above all other things in God's assessment!

That's Total depravity in Jeremiah 17!

I mean even David, **the king after God's own heart**, describes himself as having been ***brought forth in iniquity*** and ***conceived in sin*** – Psalm 51 verse 5!

2 Chronicles 6:36:

*There is **no one** who **does not** sin... X2*

John 3

We come over to the New testament now **and we see this** just as clearly as we do in the Old Testament – John chapter 3 verses 19-20, Jesus says:

[SLIDE]

*This is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and **people loved darkness** rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil **hates the light** and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed...*

Everyone who does evil **hates** the light; and **he who hates** the light **loves** the darkness!!!

We're talking about passions that are in bondage to sin!

You **cannot** love that which you **hate**!

&

You **cannot** hate that which you **love**!

If you **love** what is **dark** – you **hate** what is **good**!

If you **hate** what is **good** – you **love** what is **dark**!

The natural man **hates** the light!

The genuine Christian **loves** it!

The natural man **avoids** the light!

The genuine Christian **embraces** it!

Darkness tastes **good** to the **natural man**... **light** tastes **bitter** to the **natural man**!

Our wills are enslaved to our desires; our passions; our loves!

We are in bondage to that which has captured our heart's affections!

John 3:36:

[SLIDE]

*...The one who rejects the Son will not see life; but instead, the wrath of God **remains** on him.*

It remains on Him!

So notice! It **doesn't get there** it **just stays there** – it's already there it begin with!

The light comes into the world – the Gospel goes forth – and wherever Christ is NOT believed; **wrath remains on the guilty!**

It **doesn't get there** it **simply stays there!**

That's where we all are in Adam!

Our **primal, legal, objective state** before a just & Holy God is that:

In Adam all die – in Christ all shall live!

John 8

One more example before we move on!

Turn in your bibles to John chapter 8...

In John chapter 8 **Jesus comes to the crowd** at Jerusalem and He starts talking to them about the light coming into the world **to bear witness about** the Father – and these Jews **listening to Jesus** started to believe in Him as the One and only Son of God...

And so Jesus comes to them in verse 31 and He says:

If you continue in my Word, you really are my disciples.

*You will know the truth, and **the truth will set you free...***

And **some of the Jews** heard Jesus using this language and so they say to Him in verse 33 and they ask this really interesting question:

How is it that you tell us that we will become free – we're the descendants of Abraham, we've never been enslaved to anybody?!?!

Now just stop and think about that statement:

We're the descendants of Abraham, we've never been enslaved to anybody?!?!

Now these are Jews mind you – Jews **who knew their bibles** – they **knew their history** – they **had read the book of Exodus!**

Now I reckon it must have taken **everything in Jesus at that point to reign in His wit** – and NOT say to them in a condescending way:

Ahhh... you've never been enslaved to anybody...Egypt...?!?!

Something about a guy named Pharaoh and the Red Sea?!?!

Ummm Babylon?!?! Destruction of a temple... rebuilding the walls?!?!

Or how about this one:

*How about the fact that **you're under the boot of Rome** as you have this conversation?!?!*

*How about the fact that **Caesar is reigning** in your land right now!*

And yet you say to me:

We've never been enslaved to anybody?!?!

Are you serious?!?!

You're a slave to your sin!

And so to open their eyes and to show them how foolish they are in their thinking, Jesus comes to them in verse 34 and He says this:

Truly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin... X2

Don't miss the gravity of Jesus' words here – **every single person** who has ever indulged in sin **demonstrates their enslavement to sin!**

No one taught them how to sin – **it is their natural state of affairs!**

And **if everyone who commits sin** is a **slave** of sin – then brothers & sisters then **where did we ever get this idea** of having a freewill to choose God?!?!?

Where did we ever get this idea that our wills are free to **accept or reject** the things of God?!?!?

Whoever commits sin is a slave to sin...

Slavery **doesn't sound like** freedom!

Bondage **doesn't sound like** liberty!

And that's the exact point that Jesus is trying to make for us!

We're NOT free to choose God because **we love our sin!**

And **because we love** our sin – **we hate the light** of the Gospel!!!

John 6:44:

*No-one can come to me unless the Father who sent **me first** draws him...*

That's not talking about ability **that's talking about desire!**

No one wants to come to me...

He who commits sin is a slave of sin:

And if you're a slave of sin **you're NOT free!!!**

You can't be free because you are enslaved to your sin!

If the Son sets you free

And yet here's the glory of the Gospel!

Here is Calvinism 101:

But if the Son sets you free – *you shall be free indeed!*

That's the glory & grace of the Gospel dear friends!

That's the Good News of Calvinism!

Jesus Christ has come to set us free!

The Sweetness of salvation

See **Total Depravity** says that **in order for us to come to God:**

We need to be **radically resurrected from the dead!**

That **in order** for us **to believe the message** of the Bible and **have saving faith** in the Son:

We need to be called by Jesus out the tomb like Lazarus in John 11!

We are fast bound in sin and nature's night!

And so in order for us to be raised from the dead:

God must first make us alive and bring us **from the domain of darkness & into the kingdom of His beloved Son!**

So that we need a God of rich & generous mercy!

And friends **that is exactly** what we see in our second point of Ephesians chapter 2 here this morning:

[SLIDE]

The sweetness of salvation X2

So if you would, please have a look at verse 4 with me:

Paul begins with **the only 2 words** that can make any sense to us, in light of our fundamental condition given in verse 3:

But God!

The **only 2 words** that matter for us in our fallen condition of sin dear friends!

But God!

Doctor Martin Lloyd Jones said that **in these 2 words** contain the **fullness** of the Gospel!

But God!

*Being **rich** in mercy, God being **great** in love – because of the great love with which **He has loved us**; even **when we were dead** in our trespasses and sins; made us alive together with Christ! By grace you have been saved!*

Rich in Mercy

Now I've said this before but I'll say it again (friends)...that when you're reading the bible – **don't miss those small words** (in between the text) that **magnify the point** the author is trying to make!

God **isn't simply** a merciful God – He is **rich in mercy!**

God **isn't just** a loving God – He has **great love!**

It is **rich mercy!!!**

It is **great love!!!**

God is like a rich man spending **everything He has!**

Like that of a rich man **who doesn't care about the price he pays for the object of His love** – He will buy that one object because of its beauty, value, and worth...**no matter what the cost...**

But see **the difference between** a rich man purchasing a priceless object – and God lavishing mercy upon us?!?!?

Is that God **doesn't** get a priceless artifact friends:

He gets us!

Sinful, wicked, broken, us!

God, Christ, & us

And Paul expresses **this richness and this greatness** in 3 distinct ways in verses 4 & 5 – **3 different ways** that Paul highlights the **rich mercy and great love** of God!!!

Source

Number #1: Paul says:

Consider the source of this great Love **X2**

Verse 4:

But, God who is rich in mercy...

That is – **the reason why** it is such **rich** mercy & such **great** love is because of the **location** from **where this love comes from!**

It comes from **the very One** who spoke **the stars into being** – and **the planets into existence** by the power of His Word!

That is the One who showed rich mercy & great love!

We can **no more create** life in our souls – any more **than**
we can speak a galaxy into existence!

We need God's power – God's mercy – God's grace – God's love to make **us alive** together with Christ!

And so, the reason why it us **such great love & such rich mercy** is **because of the One who gives it!**

It comes from a rich and merciful Creator!

Consider the source of this rich mercy...

Object

Secondly says Paul:

Consider the objects of this mercy... X2

Verse 5:

*Even. When. **We**. Were. Dead. In. Our. Trespasses & sins, [God] made **us** alive with Christ...*

That is – the reason why it is such **rich** mercy & such **great** love is because of the **unworthy objects** who receive it!

See the incredible thing **to note about the Gospel** is that **NOT**
only did God give to us **that which we could not earn** –
 but that God gave to us **that which we did not want!**

- While we hated Him; Christ died for us!
- While we rejected Him; Christ died for us!
- While we rebelled against Him; Christ died for us!

*For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would even dare even to die— but God shows His love for us in that **while we were still sinners**, Christ died for us...*

Christ died for bad people – **God doesn't save good** people He saves bad people – good people don't need to be saved!

This is why it is called **sovereign grace!**

Because it takes **the sovereign hand of a gracious God** to do for us that which we could not do – and **that which we did NOT want!**

We hated God – and God loved us!

The unworthiness of the object **makes this a rich & great mercy!**

And so, Paul says to **consider the objects** of this mercy...

The action

Thirdly:

*Consider the **action**... of this mercy!*

How was this great love & rich mercy demonstrated – how was it accomplished...?

Verse 5:

*Even when we were dead in sin; **God made us alive... X2**
together with Christ...*

That is – **the reason why** it is such **rich** mercy, and such **great** love is because of the **action** that God displayed in order to accomplish this love!

The death of Jesus Christ **on the cross** is **in the mind of Paul** both **rich mercy and such great love** because in the death of

Jesus Christ we see both the **infinite cost** of our grievous sin & the **infinite display** of God's glory & grace!

Without the cross of Jesus Christ there is no rich mercy – and there is no great love for us friends...

God does NOT make us alive apart from the cross of Jesus Christ!

God did...

In fact, so confident was Paul of this reality – that God made us alive, **that I want you to notice how many times in this text**, Paul draws our attention **away from ourselves** & onto the person & Work of Christ!

Have a look at **how many times** Paul points us toward this **rich mercy & great love** in Ephesians 2:

[SLIDE]

- Verse 4: God was rich in mercy
- Verse 4: God is great in love
- Verse 5: God made us alive
- Verse 5: God saved us by grace
- Verse 6: God raised us up with Christ

- Verse 6: God seated us with Christ
- Verse 7: God will display the riches of His grace
- Verse 7: God will display His kindness to us

There is nothing in the Gospel that should cause you to look to yourself:

There is nothing in salvation **that should cause you to think** that you were smart enough, wise enough, good enough, or great enough **to come to Jesus Christ and be set free!**

Paul says that **if you are trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ** here this morning **that is by sovereign grace alone!**

There is nothing in the Gospel that commands you to something you did!

But **only ever unto Jesus!**

And so Paul draws our attention **away from ourselves** and onto the glory of the cross to show us the rich mercy & great love of God!

Consider the source!

Consider the objects!
And consider the action!

Colossians 2:13:

And **you were dead** in your transgressions and the
uncircumcision of your flesh:

He made you alive!!!

God commands – and Life comes!

A dead man **can't raise himself** from the dead!!!

There was nothing in **dead Lazarus** capable of responding to the call
of Christ!

And so the One who gave the command, also gave the life, **so that**
Lazarus **could respond** to the command!

We are a race of Lazarus' unable to resurrect anything worthy of
God's affection!

And so:

We need the work of Sovereign Grace!

Application

And so what are the **practical applications** then of this doctrine that we can take away and apply to our daily lives?!?!

What are the practical workings of Total Depravity in the life & liberty of the Christian?!?!

Well, I wanna finish here today with 3 ways that **we can allow this doctrine to penetrate our hearts** and to allow us to live in the beauty of God's grace!

3 ways that Total Depravity **works itself out** in the life of the Christian believer:

1. Humility

[SLIDE]

Number #1 – humility!

Total depravity is a deeply humbling doctrine X2

The Calvinist should be deeply the most **deeply dependant** and humble creature on the earth because the Calvinist knows:

What it is he's been **saved from** – and **who it is** he's been **saved to!**

See if you were ask a man like John Calvin:

What is the great fundamental foundational reality truth of thre Christian religion?

I think **without pausing** Calvin would immediately respond with:

The revelation of the Grace & Glory of the Triune God, in the salvation of sinners!

And that vision of God in salvation **not only captured** Calvin's **mind** – but it **captivated his heart!**

*See the problem with many young Calvinists today is that the system has captured their minds, but it **hasn't captivated** their hearts!*

It hasn't humbled them like it should!

But God is the great captivating reality dear friends!

God is the **great grace giver!**

Who humbles the sinner and uplifts the weary...

Who comforts the broken and endures the lowly...

In his booklet on Calvinism Ian Hamilton kindly **reminds each & everyone of us** what it means to be a Christ-centred, God-exalting Calvinist who loves God's glory – he says:

[SLIDE]

*Calvinism is a deeply affectional, God-centred, cross magnifying religion. A man may loudly trumpet his adherence to the distinct tenets of Calvinism, but **if his life is not marked by delight in God and His Gospel, his professed Calvinism is a sham...***

Cold Calvinism (he says) is a theological oxymoron...

There is no such thing as a cold Calvinist dear friend!

Calvinists should be the most deeply affectionate, warm hearted,
Christ-centred people **because it is the Calvinist who says:**

Nothing in my hand I bring, but simply to the cross I cling!

The Calvinist knows that salvation is first & foremost a gift of grace!

Total depravity is a deeply humbling doctrine!

2. Assurance

[SLIDE]

Secondly:

Total depravity is a deeply comforting doctrine X2

It should bring us the greatest assurance of faith!

It was R.C. Sproul who came up with one of the best answers to the question of assurance **I have ever personally heard!**

And he says this:

That at a practical level, people who are struggling with their assurance of salvation often approach me and ask the question:

Dr. Sproul how can I know that I am saved?!?!

How do I know that I'm elect?!?!

How can I have assurance of my salvation?!?!?

And so in response to this Dr. Sproul says that I ask them **three simple questions** for them to consider:

Number 1: Do you love Jesus perfectly?

Now every person to whom I have asked that question has responded **in the very same way:**

No, I do not...

And so if the answer is no, then I ask them a **second follow up question:**

Do you love Him as much as you ought to?

The person usually gives me a strange look at this point...

If the answer to the first question is no, then the answer to the second question **has to be no!**

If we don't love Him perfectly then **we can never love Him** as we ought to!

It's at this point that I begin to see **the desperation on their faces** and so I proceed to ask them a third & final question:

*Do you love Him **at all?!?!***

*Do you have **any affection for the biblical Jesus** that is revealed throughout Holy Scripture?!?!*

Because my bible tells me that if there is **any genuine affection, any desire, any genuine love** for the **true & biblical Jesus** – then **that is evidence** that the Spirit of God has made us alive with Christ, and He is **working and willing in our hearts...**

If **we are dead in sin** – if we're **enslaved in sin** – if we're **condemned in sin** – if we are **totally unable** to **desire or love anything** to do with God!!! – **then any of us** in here this morning:

1. Who **do love** Jesus Christ!
2. Who **do love** the Gospel!
3. Who **do seek to serve & glorify** God!

Can **only and ever do so** by the fact that **God has** predestined, elected, awoken faith, given us affections, and is drawing us closer to Christ **by the will of the Father!**

It is the starting point for all true religion!

And that faith can **only ever come** from a generous God who is **rich in mercy** says Paul!

And **only a proper view** of total depravity can bring that kind of comfort!

It is the Calvinist who says:

Any affection I do have can only ever come **by God and for God!**

And so:

Total depravity is a deeply comforting doctrine!

3. Truth

[SLIDE]

Thirdly:

Total depravity is a deeply realistic doctrine X2

It should bring us the truth of reality!

And what I mean by that is that:

Total depravity **makes the most sense** of the world around us!

See as Christians **we have a basis** for the suffering that we endure in this world!

We have a basis on which to explain to the world **the effects of sin** and the **deeply broken nature** of humanity!

No other worldview can rightly **justify** the suffering & pain we experience in the world, without stealing from the Christian worldview!

I love what Cornelius Van Til – a pastor & theologian said back in his day to his students – **something to the effect** of:

*That when I read the Bible and I came away from the Scriptures, I begin to look out into the world, and I find myself saying that things are **exactly the way they should be!***

What he meant by that is that:

When we come away from the Bible and we read passages about the depravity of man and the effects of sin, we begin to **look out into the world**, and **it is exactly** as the Bible has described for us!

The world is broken – it needs redemption – and the Bible is true!

And so the Bible gives us the **only right measure** of truth & reality there is!

When you come away from the Bible and you look out into the world – you **soon begin to discover** that everything is exactly as it should be, because that's **what the Bible has told us** about the human race!

And so total depravity gives us a basis for the reality we see in the world today!

*Total depravity is **a deeply realistic doctrine!***

It makes sense of the world around us!

Conclusion

This is the doctrine of total depravity brothers & sisters!

That if it were up to us and our freewill to choose God **no one would be a Christian in here this morning!**

We need the work of free & sovereign grace!

Yes the sinner has will, but his will is bound by his nature!

And until his will is activated by the Spirit in the work of salvation his will is never capable of choosing God:

He is totally depraved!

Totally inclined to choose sin in every circumstance!

Total Depravity declares for us that **not just our bad deeds** are dark and filthy rags in the sight of God – but that:

Even our best deeds are as dark and filthy rags!

It was John Bunyan who said:

The best prayer I ever prayed had enough sin to damn the whole world!

This doctrine is **most minimized** when it should be **most maximised** – it is **most avoided** when it should be **most considered!**

This doctrine **is the beginning** of all true religion!

And this doctrine is **the first step** to understanding salvation!

And so **at the end of the day** dear friends – when all is said & done – Total Depravity matters because:

The Gospel matters!

Total Depravity matters because:

Sin & salvation matters!

Total Depravity matters because:

If we do not contemplate **the gravity of our sin** – then we **cannot contemplate** the magnitude of God's grace!

What you believe about sin, **will ultimately govern** what you believe about salvation!

What you believe about depravity – will shape your understanding of God's Holiness!

And what you believe about Jesus **will ultimately determine** where you will spend eternity!

Do we have a Jesus who can save the utmost sinner – or do we have a Jesus who can actually save!

Luther & Erasmus

When Luther wrote his treatise **on the bondage of the will** to Erasmus – there was an analyst in the 20th century who went over that debate ...and he said this about Luther:

*At the end of the day Luther could maintain the great retort of Anselm **though hast not considered the gravity of sin...***

And what the doctrine of Total depravity does for us is that it gives us a picture of the gravity of our sin – in order **that we may see** the magnitude of God's grace...

Jesus Christ was crushed for sinners on a tree – He was raised to newness of life, so that all those who would come to Jesus, trust in His death, **would evidence their election**, and demonstrate the faith that God has granted to them because even our faith is a gift from God – Ephesians 2:8!

From first to last salvation has and always will be by free & sovereign grace!

O may we all friends **cover our mouths**, look to the cross, and proclaim in absolute wonder & joy here this morning:

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

Let's Pray.

EXTRA NOTES

Colossians 2:13:

You were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh:

He made you alive!!!

God commands – and Life comes!

There was nothing in dead Lazarus capable of responding! And so the One who gave the command, also gave the life, so that Lazarus could respond to the command!

God commands us, and must give us life to respond!