

SEEING YOUR OWN INNER SELF

The Bible Doctrine of Depravity:

By Del Wray, Pastor

Seeing our own inner-selves as God sees us! Do we see ourselves as God does? I know we do not, we refuse even to read His Book, how can we? Many years ago I ask God to show me why human beings commit suicide and take their own lives. You see I once believed that a saved man could not take his own life. I don't believe that anymore. The regenerate man can commit any sin that's ever been violated if he were to get far enough away from the Lord. God since has shown me why people take their own lives and it all boils down to the total depravity of human nature. Any man saved or unsaved is capable of committing any sin that any other man has transgressed. When as a boy growing up we had two suicides in our family and it has shaken me to the core. And for the last fifty-seven years I've given myself to warn folks of their sinful natures as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. We are a totally depraved fallen race of people unable to do anything good in and of ourselves. Except for the grace of God I could not even preach. Maybe you can see now why I'm writing on this subject so often. I do not preach on total depravity for the sake of dramatics or write on it because I'm a hellfire and brimstone preacher. No! For heaven sakes no, instead, I see in this doctrine the means by which we can see our inability to earn salvation. We see more clearly the grace of God and man's INABILITY to do anything to save himself. Preaching this major doctrine is vital to the salvation of the soul. And those who refuse to do so and have done so are guilty of many committing soul suicide.

Who can understand the number of his sins? The mightiest mind could not count the sins of a single day. As the multitude of sparks from a furnace, so innumerable are the iniquities of one day. We might sooner tell the grains of sand on the sea-shore, than the iniquities of one man's life. A life most purged and pure is still as full of sin as the sea is full of salt. And who is he that can weigh the salt of the sea, or can detect it as it mingles with every fluid particle? But if he could do this, he could not tell how vast an amount of evil saturates our entire life, and how innumerable are those deeds, and thoughts, and words of disobedience, which have cast us out from the presence of God, and caused him to abhor the creatures which his own hands have made.

The fact is that man is a reeking mass of corruption. His whole soul is by nature so debased and so depraved, that no description which can be given of him even by inspired tongues can fully tell how base and vile a thing he is.

If we would run in the way of God's commands, then sin has lamed us; if we would grasp God's promises, evil has paralyzed us; if we would see into the mysteries of grace, guilt has blinded us; if we would hear the voice of God, transgression has smitten us with deafness; and if our voices would swell the song of cherubim and seraphim, alas, the plague of our heart within has made us dumb.

Our prayers have stains in them, our faith is mixed with unbelief, our repentance is not so tender as it should be, our communion is distant and interrupted. We cannot pray without sinning, and there is filth even in our tears. In the best prayer that was ever offered by the holiest man that ever lived, there was enough of sin to render it a polluted thing if the Lord had looked upon it by itself.

My friend, you, who are so fair to look upon when you look in the glass of your own self-adulation, if you could see yourself as God sees you, would discover that you are leprous from head to foot; your sins are abundant and loathsome, though you perceive them not.

He who cannot find water in the sea is not more foolish than the man who cannot perceive sin in his members. As the salt flavors every drop of the Atlantic, so does sin affect every atom of our nature? It is so sadly there, so abundantly there, that if you cannot detect it you are deceived.

There is no beast in wolf, or lion, or serpent that is as brutish as the beast in man. Did I not tell you last Sunday that whereas, according to the Levitical law, he that touched a dead animal was unclean till the evening, he who touched a dead man was unclean seven days, for a man is a seven times more polluting creature than any of the beasts of the field when his animal nature rules him.

A very hell of corruption lies within the best saint; and if the grace of God did not restrain it, he would soon be found among the chief of sinners.

If any man could see his own heart as it is by nature, he would be driven mad: the sight of our disease is not to be borne unless we also see the remedy. No man's reason would survive a full sight of his own inner self. The creature that has done nothing right, but everything that is wrong, still believes in himself. No, sir, you are even worse in heart than you ever were in life, because there are many things that restrain you from revealing your naked self to those who only see your outward life.

You see the Bible teaches the total depravity of the human race. Total depravity means radical corruption. We must be careful to note the difference between total depravity and "utter" depravity. To be utterly depraved is to be as wicked as one could possibly be. Hitler was extremely depraved, but he could have been worse than he was. I am a sinner. Yet I could sin more often and more severely than I actually do. I am not utterly depraved, but I am totally depraved. For total depravity means that I and everyone else are depraved or corrupt in the totality of our being. There is no part of us that is left untouched by sin. Our minds, our wills, and our bodies are affected by evil. We speak sinful words, do sinful deeds, and have impure thoughts. Our very bodies suffer from the ravages of sin.

Perhaps "radical corruption" is a better term to describe our fallen condition than "total depravity." I am using the word "radical" not so much to mean "extreme," but to lean more heavily on its original meaning. "Radical" the word comes from the Latin word for "root" or "core." Our problem with sin is that it is rooted in the core of our being. It permeates our hearts. It is because sin is at our core and not merely at the exterior of our lives that the Bible says: "There is none righteous, no not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one" Romans 3:10-12.

It is because of this condition that the verdict of Scripture is heard: we are "dead in trespasses and sins" Ephesians 2:1; we are "sold under sin" Romans 7:14; we are in "captivity to the law of sin" Romans 7:23; and "by nature children of wrath Ephesians 2:3. Only by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit may we be brought out of this state of spiritual death. It is God who makes us alive as we become His craftsmanship Ephesians 2:1-10.

"While it is true that in sin we are all totally depraved, it is also true that in Christ we are fully forgiven."