Section: Doctrine of Sin

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q37. What happened to mankind because of sin?**

After the sin of Adam, all people are guilty: born sinful by nature, enslaved to sin, and practice sin willingly and continually; therefore, all are due the just penalty of God’s perfect wrath.

Open in a quick prayer:

I have the privilege to teach tonight on the next question within the **Doctrine of Sin.**

Sin is not a topic that people generally enjoy talking about – sinful things yes, but not the topic of sin itself. Not in a way that brings sin into the light, in a way that exposes our own flaws and shortcomings. It is against the nature of sin to be exposed, it hates the light and loves the darkness.

**John 3:19-20** And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

One of the biggest tell tale signs of false doctrine in many churches today is the absence of any real talk of sin. Speaking about sin is not known for building up the self-esteem of people who just want to be told that they are great in spite of all their moral failures and how far they fall short of the glory of God.

But as Children of God who have been saved by grace through faith in Christ who paid the penalty for our sin, we want to have a growing understanding of sin so that we can wage war against it. We want to know our enemy and how to defeat it when it comes knocking on our door. But more than that, we want to have a growing appreciation for the holiness of God and His grace towards us, by having a right understanding of our sin and how it can hinder our fellowship with Him.

Charles Spurgeon famously said that those who think lightly of sin think lightly of the savior.

So because we love Jesus, we do not want to be dismissive or play light with the sin that cost Him so much. Our purpose is not to try and make ourselves feel bad (although we should and do feel bad when we sin). Our goal is to honor Christ by growing in our hatred of sin (especially our own) and being increasingly aware of how it is always looking for ways to manifest itself in our flesh.

Let’s pray once more before we jump into our lesson.

**In the first of this section Pastor Josh taught on question 33... What is Sin.**

**Q33. What is sin?**

Sin is disobeying God; sin is any disobedience in heart or deed to God’s perfect law and commands.

It is important to remember that the basis of our sin is our disobedience in heart or deed to God’s perfect law. It’s not honoring him as we should. It’s making more of his creation than of him or misusing His creation. It’s disregarding God and His design for us.

Our answer to what happened to mankind because of Sin starts with the sin of Adam and the fact that we all inherit his guilt and are born with a sinful nature.

**Q37. What happened to mankind because of sin?**

After the sin of Adam, all people are guilty: born sinful by nature, enslaved to sin, and practice sin willingly and continually; therefore, all are due the just penalty of God’s perfect wrath.

**1. SINFUL BY NATURE- Inherited Sin/Original Sin**

In your catechism book you will see our definition of Original Sin aka Inherited Sin.

**Original Sin**: The inherited guilt and corruption of man’s nature as a direct result of Adam’s sin.

Because of God’s system of headship, when Adam sinned, in some sense, all of mankind sinned with him; therefore, Adam’s guilt is every person’s guilt. In addition to the legal guilt that God imputes to each person, everyone also inherits a sinful nature and the other consequences brought on because of Adam’s sin.

As a result of Adam's sin, we all enter the world with a fallen nature.

This is *original sin*- the guilt and sinful tendencies, desires, and dispositions in our hearts with which we are all conceived. Therefore, original sin is something *inherent in us*--it is a morally ruined character, a flawed nature.

When Adam sinned, his inner nature was transformed by his sin of rebellion, bringing to him spiritual death and depravity which would be passed on to all who came of man and woman after him. Just as we inherit genetic or physical characteristics from our parents, we inherit our sinful natures from our first parents, Adam and Eve.

**Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

Original Sin does not refer to Adam's first sin, but to the guilt and inclination to sin with which we are conceived. It is "original" in that it comes from Adam and it is also original in that we have it from the beginning of our existence as persons, but it is our guilt and brokenness, not Adam's, that is meant.

In our teachings here, we have made it clear that Adam was our right federal head and represented us accurately because of the One who chose for him to be our federal head. God is perfect so His choice for our representative was perfect.

Second, when considering Adam’s representation of us, we should strongly consider how important this system of representation is for us so that we can be be represented by Christ and to have his righteousness imputed to us by God.

This is Paul’s very point in:

**Romans 5:19** For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

In speaking about our sinful condition, King David lamented the reality of our condition in our fallen human nature in **Psalm 51:5:** “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”

A similar idea is affirmed in **Psalm 58:3**, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies."

So, through Adam the inherent inclination to sin entered the human race, and human beings became sinners by nature. The original sin that we are all born with manifests itself throughout our lives in actual sins--the actions, thoughts, and feelings we have that violate God's moral commands.

It is the nature of a sinner to sin, just as it is the nature of a fish to swim. People sometimes have a hard time thinking of newborn babies as sinners because they supposedly haven’t done anything sinful yet. Children are a wonderful gift from God with great dignity and value as image bearers of God and it is good for us to do everything we can to protect them from exposure to the sin in the world around them - the particular sins they are innocent of having committed when they first enter the world. But we would be damning our children to an eternity in hell if we ever lead them to believe that their ability to refrain from committing the list of sins that they had not yet personally committed as newborn babies would keep them unstained from the corruption of sin.

Even if a baby could make it all the way to the age where they could talk without having committed any external act of sin, if they were to claim to be without sin they would prove to be a sinner by calling God a liar. (1 John 1:8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.)

Anyone who has raised children can give experiential testimony to the fact that we are all born with a sinful nature. Children do not have to be taught to, or taught how to do wrong; it is in them naturally. Their sinful selfishness will manifest itself in lies, temper tantrums, violence towards others, defiance, and on and on. These sinful behaviors can be recognized very early on, in spite of the efforts of the most diligent parents to teach them the opposite. There are some children who seem to be more or less inclined to embrace the fullness of their sin nature, but the fact remains that there is no such thing as an innocent baby.

Think about the nature of a black widow. If you are moving furniture into your house and as you look underneath it you see a black widow in it’s web filled with a bunch of cute little black widow eggs filled with cute little black widow babies. After you squish the black widow, or after you have called 911 to take care of it, are you going to leave the innocent little baby black widows with the chance to choose for themselves what they want to make of their lives? No! They’re black widows! They have no control over their nature. They cannot choose to be a puppy dog.

This is the point God is making through the prophet Jeremiah in

**Jeremiah 13:23** Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil.

This helps us see the outworking of our sinful nature is also known as our state of being TOTALLY DEPRAVED!

**2. ENSLAVED TO SIN- Total Depravity**

In your Catechism book, you have another definition In the glossary that restates inherited sin and then gets to the outworking of that sin in our total depravity.

**Total Depravity**: As a result of Adam’s sin, every person born of both man and woman has inherited a sin nature and is utterly dependent on saving grace exerted by God for a new nature and salvation. Because of the fall, every part of natural man has been corrupted by sin: his mind, will, emotions, and flesh. Sin affects the whole person; all people sin because they are sinners by nature. All men are conceived in sin, dead in sin, slaves to sin, and deserving of God’s wrath. Total depravity does not mean that man is without a conscience or any sense of right or wrong, nor does it mean that man is as wicked or sinful as he could be. Total depravity recognizes the Bible teaches that even the apparent “good” things unregenerate man does are ruined by sin, because they are not done out of faith in Jesus for the glory of God.

**A concise way to think of total depravity is the state of being spiritually dead.**

It is not just that some parts of us are sinful and others are pure. Rather, every part of our being is affected by sin- our intellects, our emotions and desires, our hearts (the center of our desires and decision- making processes), our goals and motives, and even our physical bodies.

Paul says, "I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh" (**Rom. 7:18**),

"to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted" (**Titus 1:15).**

Jeremiah tells us that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?" **(Jer. 17:9).**

In these passages Scripture is not denying that unbelievers can do good in human society in some senses. But it is denying that they can do any spiritual good or be good in terms of a relationship with God. Apart from the work of Christ in our lives, all unregenerate people are "darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart" (**Eph. 4:18).**

One of the more famous scriptures to speak of man’s efforts to do spiritual good apart from Christ is:

**Isaiah 64:6 …**all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment

This is what it means to be totally depraved, completely corrupted. Even our righteous deeds are affected by corruption. Apart from Christ we cannot even perform what in and of itself would be considered a righteous deed without it being polluted by our sin. Because of sin, no good deed, no matter how good it may be on a horizontal level, is anything other than putrid filth with respect to the perfect purity and holiness of God.

**In Genesis 5, we see the line of people that came from the original man, Adam. In Genesis 6, we see God's evaluation of mankind after the fall and his explanation of mankind's condition due to the fall of Adam.**

**Genesis 6:5** 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.

**Mankind loves to argue that there is good in man and that not all men are bad or evil or wicked.**

This mindset is actually a condition of man’s depravity, a manifestation of his corrupted mind.

Man’s sinful desire to be his own god is manifested in the sin of pride by comparing himself to others and making much of their sin while minimizing his own. With the fallen condition of mankind, it will always be very easy to find someone else to point to who seems to be sinning much worse than we are. In our flesh, our standard of goodness does not account for the goodness of God at all.

**It becomes a contest of who has the prettiest pile of garbage with the least amount of maggots crawling all over it.**

**The critical error in this line of thinking is that man becomes the ultimate determiner and standard of what is good.**

**The true and terrible condition of man's heart will never be recognized by people who assess it only in relation to other men**.

**Mark 10:18** And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

Only God is good. Not only is God alone good, but He is the source of all good.

**James 1:17a** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights…

The glory of God is the manifestation of His goodness and beauty. Sinful man, even in his fallen condition, is able to see and appreciate God’s good gifts and the beauty that is manifested in those good gifts – not fully or rightly, but enough to desire more. But sin takes what is beautiful and good and corrupts it by disconnecting it from its purpose and its rightful place. Sin takes the things that are created by God which are designed to display His goodness, to manifest His beauty, and it robs them of that purpose and says these things are good because of what they do for me, because of how they serve MY purposes.

This makes plain that depravity is our condition in relation to God primarily and only secondarily in relation to man. Unless we start here we will never grasp the totality of our natural depravity.

It is a mistake to think that total depravity means that unsaved society cannot function in ways that are good towards one another. The landscape of Genesis 6 was not a scene from the walking dead, it was not chaos and anarchy. People were living with one another in ways that experienced and expressed good things. They were enjoying God’s good gifts and showing love towards one another on a horizontal level. Jesus said in:

**Matthew 24:38** For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,

Their wickedness was primarily in regards to how they were living towards God.

This is really important! We can’t miss this if we truly love people. If we are basing people’s need for the gospel on how they deal with us or others, and not on how they deal with God, we will be prone not to share the good news with them. We will not see their desperate need for repentance and salvation.

Church, we need to repent of our tendency to call people good because of how they treat other human beings, while they are at enmity with God. In our flesh, we want to believe that people who are nice to us or nice to others are good, and that God would certainly appreciate their goodness.

This is why so many false teachers will claim that people are inherently good. And that is the reason you will NEVER hear those teachers calling sinners to repentance. Their so called gospel is that God loves everyone just the way they are and that they can have more of the things they consider to be good by performing a certain way. They claim that God is not angry at their sin and He would never punish them for it, but they must do more on their end if they want to unlock the secret to having a better life now.

**A man-made pursuit of God’s acceptance (as seen in all false religions and false gospels) is one of the chief ways that man conceals his unwillingness to forsake self-reliance and put his trust in Christ alone.**

Totally depraved mankind can be very religious and socially minded. They can look generous, serve others, say prayers and fast, as Jesus said of the hypocrites in (Matthew 6:1-18).

But these very things are rebellion against what is due to their Creator, if it does not come from a genuine, childlike heart of trust in the free grace of God.

This is Jesus' point in his parable in **Luke 18:9-14** He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get. ’ 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner! ’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.

So not only are unbelievers able to do what appear as good things towards their fellow man, they are also able to do things that appear to be good towards God. But as we seen in this parable, these things might appear as being done towards God, but the ultimate aim in them is to impress man. They are done to gain the approval and applause of the creature, not the creator.

We hear this parable and immediately spot the arrogance and hypocrisy of this Pharisee. We clearly see the works of fasting and tithing as being insufficient for salvation. But the human heart is deceitful and we can just as quickly turn the humility and brokenness of the tax collector into a work that has merited God’s grace.

The totality of our rebellion is seen in

**Romans 3:9-12** For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one;11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.

12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one

**Romans 3:18** “There is no fear of God before their eyes...”

Now, listen carefully here! Fallen man, in a way, does seek God. But if they are not saved by God, they do not seek Him for who He is. They seek Him in a pinch as one who might preserve them from death or enhance their worldly enjoyments or they seek to add Him to their life as a comforting idea, a genie in a lamp, or eternal fire insurance. Apart from God’s gracious regeneration, **no one wants God for God.** They want him only for what he can give them unto another end. So in this way, the true way, as Romans 3:11 says, “no one seeks for God.”

Paul explains how “all of mankind” is dead in sin. This includes the saved saints before they were made new by God.

**1 Corinthians 2:14** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

This is the description of our heart of stone. A natural unregenerate heart that is spiritually dead and spiritually undiscerning.

Now, one of the things you need to understand is that human beings are not as bad as they could be.

The natural man does have a conscience (the law written on the heart) and other influences that help govern or restrain his/her decisions.

The constraints of civil law, the expectations of family and society, and the conviction of the natural human conscience all provide restraining influences on the sinful tendencies in our hearts.

There is no measure of true sanctification that helps an unregenerate person so they are left to the best that their circumstances and upbringing and natural mind and heart can produce.

This is why we still train, discipline and shape our children even before they make an outward claim to faith in Christ.

Again, this is only speaking of the horizontal. The vertical rightness of ones actions or thoughts are all depraved until regeneration.

By God's "common grace" (that is, by his temporary, undeserved favor that is given to all human beings), people have been able to do much good in the areas of education, the development of civilization, medical, scientific, and technological progress - the development of beauty and skill in the arts, the development of just laws, and general acts of human benevolence and kindness to others.

While these advances and deeds have great horizontal impact and help, they all fall short of meeting the highest standard of God’s holy perfection.

Paul says in Romans 8:7-8 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

The "mind of the flesh" is the mind of man apart from the indwelling Spirit of God. We see this in the very next verse: "You are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you," Romans 8:9. So natural man has a mindset that does not and cannot submit to God. Man cannot reform himself.

**Ephesians 2:1** says that we Christians were all once "dead in trespasses and sins." The point of deadness is that we were incapable of any life with God. Our hearts were blind and incapable of seeing the glory of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4-6). Moreover, in terms of bearing fruit for God's kingdom and doing what pleases him, Jesus says, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Most simply put, an unregenerate person's actions do not proceed from faith in God. And Hebrews 11 tells us: "without faith it is impossible to please him" (**Heb. 11:6**).

Many people, myself included, were taught growing up that **man has the ability, is free enough, to choose God** and believe in his Gospel. But as we have just seen, the Bible speaks often and clearly that man's will is tied to his sin nature, so he will only desire or will to do that which is in accordance with his nature. Rather than being free in this regard he is actually described in scripture as a slave.

**John 8:34** “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin...”

We must understand that because of sin, man CANNOT free himself from sin. His sinfulness stems from his desire to sin and as long as he is a sinner he will never desire to be free from it. Do you see the hopeless condition of man apart from the unmerited gift of God’s amazing grace?

Before we get to “how does one have faith?”…

**3. Practice Sin Willingly and Continually**

The question often comes up. **If I inherited my sinful nature and I don’t have a will or motive or ability to do anything that pleases or worships God, do we still make real choices?**

The answer is absolutely. Unsaved people choose every day and all day to do the things they do. As we learned in the sovereignty catechism lesson, these things are always in accordance with God’s sovereign plan, AND they are genuine from within a person.

Proverbs tells us a person’s desires and choices are from within them:

**Proverbs 16:1** The plans of the heart belong to man…

**Proverbs 16:9** The heart of man plans his way…

**Proverbs 19:21** Many are the plans in the mind of a man…

And we see this in James as well:

**James 1:14** each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

Unregenerate man’s choices are determined by his desires, or by his will. He does exercise his will freely - that is the problem!!

The pagan concept of free will is not compatible with the truth. Man is free to do what he wants to do, but that freedom doesn’t mean that he is able to will something contrary to his nature. This is incredibly important to understand. Every decision a person ever makes is a choice that is determined by their own desire. Even when a person denies himself he is doing so because that is what he wants to do. So you may deny yourself the bowl of ice cream that you really want, but you will do so because there is another desire you want to satisfy even more. You are making a choice to not eat the ice cream because you want to lose weight, or because you are worried that it will keep you awake at night, or some other reason that you have placed a higher value on than the satisfaction you will get from eating the ice cream.

Because of sin, man is born into a condition in which his will- his desire is to sin. This is the governing attribute of fallen man, that he is a sinner.

If you are still struggling with this understanding of free will, or with the idea that our wills are limited, consider what scripture has to say about God. God’s nature, His character, His will and His desires are all governed by God. He is who He is and cannot be anything else. In other words God is not free (in the sense we are describing) to be something other than God. In fact, as we have studied the attributes of God we have learned that we are not even able to know God without thinking of him in terms of what He is not.

God does not change, God does not lie, etc. In other words, even God is not “free” to do things that are not in accordance with His nature. In fact, hopefully you see that this limitation has nothing to do with actual freedom of the will.

And that is what we must understand about the nature of fallen man. His restricted will has nothing to do with his freedom of choice, but with the corruption of his nature.

So what does that mean for we who are saved?

**Romans 6:17-18** But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness

Before we are given saving faith, we are enslaved to sin and we will choose to sin because it is all we know, it is all our nature is inclined to.

After we are given saving faith, we are enslaved to Christ and we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to grow in obedience to God. We are no longer enslaved to sin. What this means is that God works in the saved to produce real fruit, to honor Him with our lives. When we chose obedience, it is a real choice from us that God worked in us, just as Phil 2:13 says ‘it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.’

But we should note that it wasn’t God’s will to completely remove the effects of sin from the saved in this life. For His wise and holy purposes, He ordained that the saved will still fight sin temptations. In this way, the saved still do sin. But they do not love sin. They see it for what it is, and repent from it. Sin still affects the saved, but we are no longer enslaved to it.

But it won’t be like this forever. At the consummation, when Christ returns, God will, at that time, finish removing the effects and temptations of sin on the saved. He will keep us forever in a sinless state, fully and exclusively glorifying Him.

**4. Therefore due the just penalty of God’s perfect wrath**

Ephesians 2:3 says that in our deadness we were "children of wrath." That is, we are rightly due God's wrath because of the corruption of our hearts that made us enemies of God.

The reality of hell is God's clear indictment of the infiniteness of fallen man’s guilt. If our corruption were not deserving of an eternal punishment, God would be unjust to threaten us with a punishment so severe as eternal torment. But the Scriptures teach that God is just in condemning unbelievers to eternal hell.

**2 Thessalonians 1:6-9** “...since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”

Also (Matthew 5:29f; 10:28; 13:49f; 18:8f; 25:46; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:10).

Another manifestation of fallen man’s corruption is that he is prone to deny the reality of Hell and God’s impending judgment. In fact, many talk about Hell as though it is place where all the fun is going to be. They promote the idea that Hell is going to be one big party with no holds barred. Why?, because the nature of a sinner is to see sin as good and fun. Sin causes man to see God’s good and perfect law as a hindrance to what he truly wants.

Others want to simply deny the existence of Hell or the afterlife. Sadly, there are many with great influence who are leading throngs of people to believe that because God is love, He would never send anyone to Hell. They paint Jesus as some kind of caricature who only talked about love, peace, and, happiness.

To correct this line of thinking let's look at what Jesus will do.  We simply turn to His very own teaching as Jesus describes the judgment to come in Matthew 25 through three parables he shares:

-In the first story the bridegroom returns suddenly, and the women who are not ready for his coming are excluded from the marriage feast (Matt. 25:10).

-In the story of the servants, the master returns to settle his accounts, and the evil, lazy servant is condemned: “Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (v. 30).

-In the final story the king separates the sheep from the goats, sending the wicked “to eternal punishment” and the righteous “to eternal life” (v. 46).

According to Jesus himself, **“*There absolutely will be a future day of reckoning and judgment and many will be rightly condemned to hell as the wrath of God is still on them.”***

But many people love to argue, **“*God is so good, He could never send anyone to hell*.”**

It is BECAUSE of God’s goodness that He MUST rightly judge and condemn guilty people to hell.

His perfect justice means he must declare the guilty, guilty! And the sentence is death, eternal death.

If a human judge declared someone innocent who was clearly guilty, he would not be considered a “good judge” – in fact he would be fired, because he is indeed a *terrible judge*.

It is because God is a God of love that he MUST send people to hell for the same reason.

Letting a guilty person go free is not an act of love, it’s an act of treason.

Let’s make it more personal. Let’s say this guy sexually assaulted you or your sister, your mother. He was found guilty of the crime and at the sentencing the judge stood up and let him go free, no punishment.

Would you call that an act of love? Would you call that judge a loving judge? Of course not.

So the presupposition that “God is good” is correct, but the conclusion that therefore, because He is good, means He won’t or can’t punish anyone is completely wrong and dangerous.

The Bible proclaims *the sentence for sinners* in **Romans 6:23,** “For the wages of sin is death…”

Jesus declared it in **Matthew 7:13**, “For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction…”.

**Hebrews 10:26-27**, “says…if we keep on sinning there is only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”

*It is imperative that we note that:* ***None of our excuses will have any weight before God.***

As we read these stories in Matt 25, we find that the people who were confronted by the Lord’s return made manifold excuses for themselves, just as people make excuses for their wickedness today.

You can get away with giving excuses to other people—your boss, your parents, your pastor. But you cannot excuse yourself before God. The apostle Paul wrote that in the day of judgment:

**Rom. 3:19** every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

When the Judge takes the bench, there will not be a single protest.

In our current day, man is in love with human “rights,” most people wrongly assume that God owes us something—salvation or at least a chance at salvation.

If God were obliged to be gracious, grace would no longer be grace and salvation would be based on human merit rather than being *sola gratia*. **To add anything we do to grace alone, is to deny grace alone!**

**5. Desperate for Sovereign Saving Grace**

To close, let me talk about grace! Because it changes everything.

With a better understanding of our total depravity and inability, we see how utterly desperate we are for God’s saving grace to regenerate our dead hearts and give us saving faith.

**Jesus teaches that it is impossible for man to turn to God without God’s gracious intervention.**

**John 6:44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

**Matthew 11:27** All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

**John 6:63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all…

So, those who are in sin are not free. Instead, they are enslaved by their evil nature to only do evil.

They cannot choose to repent and believe in Jesus, they need the Holy Spirit to give them a new nature in order for this to happen.

**This brings us to the glorious work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.**

**Regeneration defined: The act by which God, by His power and will, gives new life to the spiritually dead. Regeneration immediately precedes the gift of saving faith. This is sometimes called "being born again".**

In the work of regeneration, we play no active role at all. It is totally a work of God.

We see this, for example, when John talks about those to whom Christ gave power to become children of God- they "were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13).

Here John specifies that children of God are those who are "born of God" and our human will ("the will of man") does not bring about this kind of birth. The fact that we are passive in regeneration is also evident when Scripture refers to it as being "born again".

**James 1:18** Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures

**1 Peter 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

**John 3:3-8** Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God

We did not choose to be made physically alive and we did not choose to be born- it is something that happened to us; similarly, these scriptures tell us that those God saves are entirely passive in regeneration.

Church, this is why we praise Him! We know that our faith is not an exercise of our free will which caused God to respond to us by giving us new life. Rather, we worship Him through and for the faith and repentance which is a result of the new life He has given us.

We praise Him for the good news of the gospel that saved us!

This is why we preach the Gospel. Because we know that it is through the power of the gospel that God draws dead men to life. No other message has that power.

It is so important we do not slow down in our understanding of or talking about sin.

***“he who makes lightly of sin makes lightly of the savior”***

I pray you dig in tonight in your groups. Work to understand these truths and why they are so important.