

# Does Doctrine Matter - Part 5

by Derek Melton

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*Derek Melton emphasizes the critical importance of sound doctrine and the dangers of cultural influences on spiritual life in his sermon on radical depravity and redemption.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:5, Matthew 11:28-30, John 3:16, Romans 3:10-18, Romans 6:16, Galatians 1:6-9, Ephesians 2:1-5, 1 Timothy 4:16, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 Peter 5:8

**Topics:** "Doctrine", "Importance of Doctrine", "Radical Depravity"

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## Description

Derek Melton emphasizes the critical importance of doctrine in the Christian faith, arguing that doctrinal heresy poses a significant threat to the Church today. He warns against the dangers of blending the holy with the profane, particularly through popular literature that promotes witchcraft and moral ambiguity, urging believers to guard their hearts and minds. Melton stresses the necessity of understanding man's radical depravity to appreciate the magnitude of God's salvation, highlighting that without recognizing our sinful nature, we cannot fully grasp the need for redemption. He calls for a return to sound doctrine, encouraging Christians to diligently study the Scriptures to discern truth from error. Ultimately, he asserts that salvation is a divine work initiated by God, not a result of human effort or moral goodness.

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## Transcript

Talking about doctrine and does doctrine matter? And I think that we're beginning to come to, even though maybe a small realization or understanding that doctrine is not only important, doctrine is imperative. You know, we begin to understand that in these days and times that we're living in, that probably the greatest threat against the Church of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is doctrinal heresy. And we need to have a good foundation of the doctrines of the Christian faith so that we may know what is true and what is a fable.

And before I go too deeply into this, I want to make mention, before I read the beginning passages and then launch into this talk today upon man's radical depravity, and I'm by no means gonna be able to finish this this morning on man's depravity, but beloved, it's important for us as God's people to be separate. There is a move, a purposed and a powerful move of the adversary in the day and time that you and I live in to try to blend together the profane with the holy. We should not participate in that.

Church, listen to me. Don't get angry with me when I address this. Listen to what I'm saying.

God has placed me as a bishop over souls. I have to present to you the truth. Whether you like it or not, there are things that Christians meddle in that are destructive to their spiritual life.

Beloved, listen, there are books out there that are very popular right now that are very detrimental to the Christian faith. One of them's the Harry Potter series. Do not engage in that.

The second is the Twilight series. If you're here and you're reading those books, discard them immediately, please. If you understand the spirit that's behind them, you would throw them away immediately.

I told Stacey the other day, I'm hearing these reports of people and Christians reading this filth and how are we gonna stand against doctrinal apostasy or doctrinal error whenever we allow this kind of stuff into our minds and into our homes, into our hearts, and we invite it in. These are, listen, these are two books that are very popular out there in our culture that are nothing other than witchcraft. It's witchcraft.

I don't care what term. Well, they're good vampires. There's no such thing as a good vampire.

It's the mingling together with the profane and the holy. And we try to put a stamp of approval on it because it's a good vampire. God forbid that God's people read that garbage.

We talk about separation and holiness, but if it doesn't come out to our practical lifestyle, beloved, we need to quit talking about it. And again, I'm not scolding anyone. I'm coming against something that's threatening to your spiritual walk with Jesus Christ.

We shouldn't allow our children to read lies and heresies. You know, we shouldn't have the hearts of, well, I think I'm strong enough. There's no such thing.

Listen, I told Chooch last night, there's no difference between reading that smut than reading Penthouse Forum that gives talking about sexual encounters. It's all garbage. It's trash.

And we should not be putting that into our hearts. The eye is the window of the soul. And you think that it's not gonna affect you, you're wrong.

It dishonors the Lord. It dishonors God. You know, a lot of this stuff is centered around supernatural themes.

And what, again, is the hyper-emphasis of the blending of what's holy with that which is profane. And they put some kind of a spin on it, some kind of a moral goodness so that the Christians will swallow it. But it's nothing other than lies.

It's hypocrisy. It's devilish and it's demonic. And it should have no part in the Christian's home or life.

Our eyes should not fall on that. You know, we get up here and we deal with pornography. But you know, there is a different kind of threat that comes into our minds and it begins to numb our spiritual senses.

And we begin to delve our minds into areas that sanctified minds should not delve into. And because of that, consequently, our lifestyles begin to adjust accordingly. And then don't think for a moment that reading fiction novels does not influence your perception of reality.

Chooch and I were discussing that every place we go and place a bad guy under arrest, they tell us they're gonna get it kicked out of court because we didn't read them the Miranda warning. Why do they think that? Because they see it on TV. It's a fable.

I don't have to read Miranda warning to no one unless I'm questioning them in regard to a crime they've committed. You know, and we go and they think that we can just punch in DNA in our cars and the picture of a face pops up on the screen or we can take one line of a fingerprint and we all of a sudden see Osama bin Laden's been there. It doesn't work that way.

You know, those fiction novels and those fiction television shows have a great bearing on what we began to deem as truth. So don't think that because it's fiction, it doesn't have any relevance or any power or authority in your life. Let me tell you, what you yield yourself to will assert authority and power in your life, whether it be fiction or not.

You know, the novel may be a fiction, but the spirit behind it's very real. Beloved, listen to me. As a pastor, as a shepherd, a bishop of your souls, if you have and are entertaining those books, well, no matter how fond you are of them, take heed, take my counsel, and take those things and put them where they belong in the fireplace and burn them.

If you're gonna read, read about the things of God. I'm concerned about our souls. We've gotta put away this rubbish.

We've gotta counter these cultural icons that are establishing themselves and attack them with truth. And the problem is that Christians become intimately engaged in this stuff, and it's like taking their firstborn from them. Beloved, this stuff is detrimental and harmful to your spiritual life.

And if it weren't, I would not be taking time and wasting my breath mentioning it this morning. So guard your heart, cleanse your home. Cleanse, make sure what you put into your mind, what goes in your sight is pure and worthy of the glory of God.

Amen? Are we still friends? Romans chapter six, verse 16. We're talking about doctrine. This is part five.

And we're gonna launch into this. And again, I'm only gonna be able to skim the surface this morning because of time constraints. But we'll talk about this more.

The word of God says in verse 16 of Romans chapter six, "Know ye not that to whom ye yield your servants to obey, "his servants ye are whom ye obey, "whether of sin unto death "or of obedience unto righteousness? "But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, "but ye have obeyed from the heart "that form of doctrine which was delivered you, "being then made free from sin, "ye became the servants of righteousness." And again, I want to draw emphasis here. "But you have obeyed from the heart "that form of doctrine which was delivered you, "and then consequently you were made free from sin "and became servants of righteousness." I'm not gonna go back and re-preach our first message, but we talked about the inseparable tie between pure doctrine and true redemption and true salvation, true regeneration. Now we're gonna turn over to 1 Timothy chapter four.

We're gonna read this foundational passage and then we're gonna launch into the new. The word of God says in 1 Timothy 4.16, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine "and continue in them. "For in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself "and them that hear thee." Let's pray together.

Father, just open up our understanding that we might be able to receive the gospel truth that we're fixing to hear this morning. Father, I pray that the word of God would work in us, Lord, through us. Father, I pray that the influence, Lord, of the word of God would be deep and powerful in our lives, that the seed of the word of God would be planted upon the fertile soil of the heart of those willing children of the most high God that love God with all of their hearts.

And Lord God, that the word of God will work within them to produce fruit, some 30, some 60, and even some 100 fold. Father, I pray for the God that our minds be alert and that old serpent of old would not steal away the word that has been sown. Father, give me an ability to speak, Lord God, the truth of the word of God.

And Lord God, guard and keep me from entering into fables and lies. Father God, I cry out to you. Lord God, be, Lord God, in me and speak through me.

Lord God, unto the glory of your name and the benefit of thy church. Lord, help me, Lord, with the assistance of the mighty, powerful Holy Spirit of God. And Lord God, let all that is said and all that is done be unto your glory and praise, in Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. We're continuing in this series, and I believe this series is a timely, timely message for the church in this culture and in the spans of time that we're living in. Never before since the beginnings of time has there been a time to when heretical doctrine has been at the peak that it is at today.

And I've made mention last week, or the week before, because last week was Easter, and we talked about the doctrine of the resurrection. But the week before, I made mention that the number one threat of the church today is not pornography. The number one threat of the church today is not adultery.

The number one threat of the church today, my friend, is doctrinal apostasy through doctrinal heresy. Are you with me? The Bible talks about, in the latter times, that some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits. They'll depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits.

And what do those seducing spirits do? They introduce new doctrines that are not the word of God, to get the people of God diverted away from the truth that will set them free, and not only set them free, but keep them free as well. But I believe that the spirit of the adversary is at work perverting, disguising himself as an angel of light, coming and twisting and contorting scriptural themes, and presenting them to a people to distract them, and to keep them away from the truth of the word of God. But in our perpetual quest here, to study these great doctrines of the Christian faith, we come to the monumental task of speaking upon and studying doctrinal tenets that seem to be far beyond our reach, and far beyond our absolute understanding, because we have these minds that are nothing other than finite.

And you understand the word of God is not finite. The word of God is infinite. And so these themes that we're talking about, when we talk about the radical depravity of man, we talk about the sufficiency of the scriptures, we're talking about themes that our minds will only have a limited understanding while we're in this body and upon this pilgrimage upon which we are embarked.

And so again, but yet there remains a responsibility for the doctrines of the faith in the church. Amen? There remains a responsibility, and the Holy Ghost will help us in our weakness, and even in our doctrinal weakness. The Holy Spirit is here to help us.

He's the spirit of truth. He's the spirit of revelation. He is the spirit of understanding.

And beloved, you must know this, that the Holy Spirit of God wants you to have a doctrinal foundation that is sure more so than even your pastor does. I want you to have a doctrinal foundation that when you're out there and you're being tempted by these taunting voices of a jeering adversary, proposing to you these sweet new ideas that you had never thought about before, but yet are set against truth, that the truth of the word of God will rise up within you to counter that voice, that spirit saying, no, thus saith the Lord God. Thus saith the Lord God.

Amen? That we can have an understanding, a working knowledge of the fundamentals of the Christian faith, that we can know a lie and differentiate it from the truth. But there are people that call themselves by the name of Jesus Christ that believe anything because they've not taken the time to diligently search the scriptures as the Bereans did in the times of old. And they have given themselves over to all types of devices of darkness.

And subsequently they are given over to a reprobate mind simply because they were not willing to spend time diligently studying the word of God that they might know the truth and to be kept from a lie. Amen? And so again, we've only slightly touched upon the colossal subject of the sufficiency of the scriptures. And did we do it justice? Probably not, but we talked about it anyway.

The scriptures, the word of God is inerrant. The word of God is a powerful word. We've talked about that for two or three hours.

And we're going to talk today about this colossal subject of the radical depravity of man. And again, we are not going to get very far in this and I'm not going to be able to do it justice that the Puritans would do, but we're going to do this here in this time. And in a couple of weeks, we probably will talk about this and to our benefit.

I want to encourage you to avoid the embrace of dangerous thoughts that can arise in regard to this doctrinal subject that compare it to thoughts of boredom or thoughts that are unimportant. But to guard your mind against this, the doctrine of man's radical depravity is important if you're to truly be born again. If you're truly to be used as a minister to take salvation to the ends of the earth, you must understand the doctrinal truths about the state that we fell into when we took that hit in the head in a place called Eden.

That man is radically and thoroughly depraved. He is filthy as filthy can be. He's contaminated in every area of his total life.

And we're going to get into that more in just a moment. Now, before we can understand the need of redemption, there must be a revelation concerning how depraved we are. So you understand something, friends, that the greatness of God's salvation is greatly highlighted whenever we understand and see the depth of our fall and the depth of our inward disease because of sin that we begin to see the greatness and the magnitude and the glory of the salvation that God has made available to us.

You know, it almost seems today in our culture that we're doing God a favor whenever we come to Jesus because we don't understand depravity. We think that we're good and we come to Jesus to get better. We don't understand that we are dead in our trespasses and our sins.

We don't understand there's nothing good on the inside of us and that we deserve eternal damnation. We deserve the fury and the wrath of a holy God because we are sinful and depraved at the very core of our nature. We deserve death, but God, by his great mercy and grace, has clothed us with life through his son,

Jesus Christ.

Now, before I go into the subject, I want to introduce a few thoughts to you that were penned by Mr. A.W. Pink. He was a renowned man of God in the 1800s and a great lecturer upon the subject of man's radical depravity and also an author upon this subject and also a great author upon topics such as God's sovereignty and God's grace and just some great teaching. And there are two things.

To one, he gives a vital contemporary question and then secondly, he gives the scriptural answer. And this is in regard to depravity. Now, Mr. Pink goes on and quotes, it is our deep conviction that the vital question most requiring to be raised today is this.

Is man a totally and thoroughly depraved creature by nature? Does he enter the world completely ruined and helpless, spiritually blind and dead in his trespasses and sins? According as is our answer to that question, so will be our views on many others. It is on the basis of this dark background that the whole Bible proceeds. Any attempt to modify or abate, repudiate or tone down the teaching of scripture upon this matter is fatal.

You think we need to understand this? I believe we should really have a hearty understanding of the doctrines of man's depravity. He said, put the question in another form. Is man now in such a condition that he cannot be saved without the special and the direct intervention of the triune God on his behalf? In other words, is there any hope for that man apart from his personal election by the father, his particular redemption by the son and the supernatural operations of the spirit within him? Or putting it still another way, if man is totally a depraved being, can he possibly take the first step in the matter of his return to God? The scriptural answer, he goes on to decree.

The scriptural answer to that question makes evident the utter futility of the schemes of social reformers for the moral elevation of the masses, the plans of politicians for the peace of the nations and the ideologies of the dreamers to usher in a golden age for this world. It is both pathetic and tragic to see many of our greatest men putting their faith in such chimeras. And those are mixed and unqualified thoughts that bring nothing forth to fruition.

Divisions and discords and hatred and bloodshed cannot be banished while human nature is what it is. But during the past century, the steady trend of deteriorating Christendom has been to underrate the evil of sin and to overrate the moral capabilities of man. Instead of proclaiming the heinousness of sin, there's been a dwelling more upon its inconveniences.

The abasing portrayal of the lost condition of man as set forth in the Holy Writ has been obscured, if not obliterated by flattering disquisitions on human advancement. If the popular religion of the church is including nine-tenths of what is termed evangelical Christianity be tested at this point, it will be found that it clashes directly with man's fallen and ruined and spiritually dead condition. Therefore, a crying need today is that sin be viewed in the light of God's perfect and holy law and his perfect gospel so that its exceeding sinfulness may be demonstrated and that the dark depths of human depravity be exposed by the teaching of the Holy Writ, that's the Bible, amen, that we may learn what is connotated by those fearful words dead in their trespasses and sins.

The grand object of the Bible is to make God known to us, to portray man as he appears in the eyes of his maker and to show the relation of one to the other. It is therefore the business of his servants, not only to declare the divine character and his perfections, but also to delineate the original condition and the

apostasy of man, as well as the divine remedy for his ruin until we really behold the horror of the pit in which we lie by nature. Are you with me? We can never properly appreciate Christ's so great salvation in man's fallen condition.

We have the awful disease for which the divine redemption is the only cure and our estimation and evaluation of the provisions of divine grace will be necessarily modified in proportion as we modify the need as it was meant to meet. That was somewhat long and wordy, but basically it's saying this, that we need the teaching upon the doctrines of depravity. We need that.

We need to understand that we are thoroughly and radically depraved, that we are cut off because of our sin, because of the sin nature. Beloved, it's not the sins that you've committed that has cut you off from God. It's the sin nature that you've been born with that has alienated and separated you and kept you away from God, kept you away from any hope in any form of life.

Cut you off. You are dead in your trespasses and sins, cut off without hope, without God in this world. Now, the revelation of the greatness of salvation, my friend, is in contrast to the revelation, to the horrid and the radical depravity in which we are born into and which we are chained to by our natures.

And I've got to agree with the statements that Mr. Pink has made. We are certainly living in a culture that exalts man's capabilities morally while ignoring man's sinfulness and the exceeding sinfulness of sin. We've measured our condition by our own selves.

We've measured our conditions, measuring ourselves against other fallen creatures. We've diagnosed ourselves accordingly. Therefore, we find very little amiss in our conditions.

Beloved, today, you go into your typical Christian bookstore and what you find is books that address the manifestations of depravity and give the cure to try to pursue moral goodness that those effects might be brought to naught. I could bring in stacks of books in here this morning that are written by supposed quasi-Christian authors and they deal with becoming a better you but never deal with the depth of depravity that is the very fountain of all the problems, not only in our lives personally, but also around the world. Hello? Why do we have wars? Because of man's radical, depraved nature.

Amen? And so, but yet when we begin to examine our own hearts, we begin to examine our lives underneath the search lamp of God's gospel light, drawing comparisons to the demands of God's perfect law, we soon begin to find we are not only sorely lacking but we soon find that we are absolutely and wholly depraved. There is nothing good inside of us. The movement today within cultural religion is to focus upon the good and then to magnify that good towards the good of humanity.

And again, you can find bookshelves lined at your local Christian bookstore to assist in this futile endeavor, enhancing the good in you. Books as this, *Your Best Life Now*, *Seven Steps to a More Positive Outlook*, or *Seven Steps to a More Productive Life*, emphasizing the good in you, the inherent goodness in you. But yet the fault, beloved, is in the very gross underestimation of the depth of the nature of depravity that is within us inherently.

Amen? And, beloved, when depraved men begin to compare themselves to depraved men, their reprobate minds begin to deem certain tendencies as more profitable, and then that more profitable that they deem is more profitable in their reprobate mind, they begin to enhance that into some type of a filthy moral goodness. And it's that moral goodness that they bring to the feet of God to be accepted as an

acceptable offering. This is nothing other than the very foundations of humanism that man has within himself moral goodness apart from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit through redemption.

Amen? I'm trying to preach this and then measure, see if you're receiving it or if this is boring you. Beloved, we need the foundation of man's radical depravity if we're ever to see God's salvation illuminated in the light that God wants it illuminated within. Beloved, the foundation of humanism is that man's moral capability and goodness is something that's inherent apart from the generating work of grace and redemption.

It's the doctrinal position, my friend, of myriads of assemblies that call themselves churches. Their goal is to convince their hearers to commit themselves to attend their congregations, to give money to their cause. They are encouraged that they're very special, they're encouraged that they're very unique and that God does have a plan for them.

They are taught to capture that moral goodness that they have within them inherently and then to enhance it to live a good moral life. Then they're soon placed in leadership positions to teach and to instruct others in the very same manner in which they've been instructed. It's happening all across America.

They were never told that they were radically depraved, never told that they were alienated from Christ and without hope. They were never told that they were without God in this world. Never were they told the miseries of the unconverted.

Never were they told about the wrath of God awaiting those that believe not. Never were they turned to the law of God and to its demands and their absolute inability to perform it. Never were they told of the absolute inability they have inwardly to rescue themselves from their abhorred position before God and that their only hope is in the very mercy of God.

Never told. So they go to church, what they call church. They hear something that makes them feel good, something that brings out the very best in you and your depraved state.

Never told that you're gonna face a holy God on judgment. Never told about the holy requirements of God's law. Never told or warned to flee from the wrath to come, but only enhancing that good side of you for the benefit and the good of our community.

All the while sitting underneath false doctrine, completely unaware, completely unaware of the wrath of God awaiting those that are still in their depraved condition that have not come to a saving knowledge of Christ through his precious blood. And beloved beings, they were never warned. They see no need to flee to Jesus Christ to be their only refuge.

They never partook in his atoning work, but they continued to follow. Listen to me, friends. They continue to follow the enhancement of their own moral goodness, and they follow it even unto their own perdition.

Beloved, listen to me. Mankind cannot rescue himself from his own position of depravity. Mankind cannot rescue himself.

Mr. Pink proposed the question, can mankind put forth the first foot in salvation? And the answer is no. Salvation begins with God, and it ends with God. Beloved, we cannot, in our depraved condition, be born again except for the glory of God begin to work in us, the grace of God begin to work in us.

Mankind is in an absolute helpless condition in his depravity, as helpless as a newborn baby is to tend for itself. You know, Patty's little baby back there cannot take care of himself as cute and cuddly and cooey as he is. He can't take care of himself.

He must depend upon his mother for his provision. He must depend upon his mother for his meals and for even that which tends to the continuance of his life. And beloved, we are much the same.

We're utterly helpless in our state of degeneracy with no ability to even pursue help. Amen? Well, that baby's probably got a little bit more strength than we do, because that baby can cry and let you know it's hungry and it's in need. And beloved, whenever we are depraved, we have no idea that we're even depraved.

And if it weren't for the inward working promises of God and the spirit of God's grace working in us beginning to show us our depraved state, beloved, we'd be eternally lost. Thank God for his goodness. Ephesians chapter two, please.

Beloved, I am by God's grace and help doing what myriads of preachers will not do today is take time and to diligently instruct and teach the people upon the doctrines of the faith of Christianity. Beloved, we need these doctrines. If it were not so, I would not be wasting my breath upon them.

I'm not here to try to convince you that I'm a scholar because I'm not. I am here to instruct you as a man of God in the ways of God that teach you the foundations of the faith that teach you the oracles of God, the word of God, and to convince you that you need these truths. Again, beloved, we are utterly helpless in our state of degeneracy with no ability to pursue help.

The word of God says in Ephesians 2.11, let's begin to read together. Wherefore, remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands, that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. What do you see this? Having no hope, cut off without God in the world.

But now in Jesus Christ, ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace who has made both one, hath broke down the middle wall of partition between us and having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in the ordinances for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross. You notice terminology, it's not about what you're doing, it's about what he's done. Oh, beloved, in our depravity, we are dead in our trespasses and sin.

If you know anything about death, death cannot respond to anything, it's just death. We are depraved, totally depraved, radically depraved and dead in our trespasses and sins and Jesus Christ in due time died for those that are depraved, such as we. The first step has been by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The continuing step is being done by the work of the Holy Spirit at the command of Jesus Christ and by the word of Christ unto our sanctification, unto the glorification of his people by the power of Christ, amen. It says, by having slain the enmity thereby and came and preached peace to you, which were far off into them that were nigh. Now, important stuff there.

There are two things there we see, beloved, that every one of us have been born radically depraved. David said this in Psalm 51, in sin was I conceived, in sin was I conceived. In times past, there were a

group and this was back in the 15 and 1600s.

There was a group of those, in fact, there was a theologian that brought forth a teaching, a heretical teaching that little babies were born pure. They were born in the very state that Adam was before sin had entered in. And beloved, it doesn't take very long with one of those little babies to realize they're not so innocent.

Beloved, they are born not innocent, but guilty. They are born with Adam's curse within them and upon them. They are born depraved.

And when they get to be two years old, everyone would say, amen. They are depraved. They're into everything.

They tell you no when you tell them that you want them to stop doing something. They look at you and they say, no. You know, they are depraved.

No one had to teach them how to lie to you. No one had to teach them how to steal from you. No one had to teach them how to be very mischievous that came to them by nature, naturally born degenerate beings, depraved beings.

Now, again, I made mention the work of redemption begins with God and does not begin with man. Man in his depraved condition cannot even acknowledge his own depravity. Hello? Beloved, I know this by experience that before I was born again, I was my own greatest fan.

And probably the members of the Derrick fan club were probably limited to just one and being me, but I was my greatest fan. And I thought that everything was fine. I had no understanding of how defiled and contaminated I was through the very core of my being.

And then God, in a moment's time, God began to deal with my heart. Things that were dead in sin became awakened by grace. And I began to see for the first time in my life, a condition that I had never formerly seen ever.

I saw myself as lost. I saw myself as dead in my sins. I saw myself as a disappointment to my parents that raised me to live a different life than what I was living.

And I was not only ashamed, I was broken and wept before God. And those of you that have gone through the birth chambers of the regeneration of the Holy Ghost understand what I'm talking about. But God initiated the work and not me.

I had no idea I was depraved. I had no idea that I was lost. I had no idea the wrath of God was upon me and awaiting me.

I had no idea until the grace of God began to bring alive and quicken in me the truth concerning my own condition. But I had no capabilities to see it because my eyes were darkened because of sin. Now, friend, man in his depraved state is spiritually dead.

Being so, he cannot identify his own state. When a man becomes awakened to his depraved state, beloved, it's only by the workings of the Holy Spirit. Turn with me to Luke 15.

I think the best treatise in the Bible about being awakened to our position that we are in. And that's the story of the prodigal son. It's 10 minutes till 12.

Pray that I talk fast and we'll be out by 12. The word of God begins in the 12th verse of the 15th chapter of Luke. And it says, a certain man had two sons.

The younger of them said to the father, father give me the portion of goods that fall to me and he invited them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country. And there he wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a great famine, a mighty famine in that land and he began to be in want. And he went and he joined himself to a citizen of that country and he sent him into his fields to feed the swine. And he would have fain filled his belly with the husk the swine did eat, but no man gave unto him.

And verse 17 says this, and when he came to himself, he said, how many hired servants of my father's house have bread enough to spare and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father. Mother, do you see grace beginning to work here? Do you see what man does in his depraved state? Man in his depraved state goes as far away from God as he can.

Man in his depraved state is an enemy of God, an enemy against God. We see him going as far away, living his life the way that he thought best, asserting himself in the ways of darkness and of evil. And soon he finds the wages of sin waxing weak.

And he becomes in wants. God by his sovereignty, God by his great providence uses situations to bring us to the end of ourselves that the grace of God might begin to awaken us to the provisions of Christ, provisions of God's gift. Amen.

I will arise and go to my father and say unto him, father, I've sinned against heaven and before thee, I'm no more worthy than to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants. That's the approach of the penitent, the repentant in humility.

I'm not even worthy to be called a child of God, only a servant. Lord, I will be the least of all servants, the attitude of the approach. Make me one of thy hired servants.

But he arose and he came to his father, but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said, father, I've sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and I'm no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet and bring together the fatted calf and kill it and let's eat it and be merry.

For this, my son was dead and he's now alive. My son was dead, depraved, but he is now alive. Now, beloved, this story of the prodigal son, we see the son had forsaken his first estate of relation.

And who was this? Adam. Adam has forsaken his first estate to whereby God had created him in glory. God had created him in holiness.

God had created him in his perfections, but yet man traded the glory of a almighty God for nothing other than swine and the provision of swine. He traded it out, great treason had come and that great relation that

God had between he and his created beings had been cut off because of sin. Not only the relation, but the provision, not only the provision, but the protection.

And we see this young man traveling far away into a distant land, just like us when we were dead in our sins and trespasses. We all sojourned away from the call of God and we were all without hope, even in this world. He squandered off his inheritance upon riotous or depraved living.

Yet soon we find the young man is in a quandary. There's a famine that is upon the land. He became in want.

His resources were soon depleted. The pleasure of sin we find had soon run its course. He was indeed identified with the swine in which he was attending.

The story records again a very important phrase. It says, when he came to himself. Beloved, these are the beginning works of God's grace to awaken or quicken, to make come alive the state of depravity.

It's a biblical pattern. It's God's grace at work towards those that are depraved. Beloved, let me tell you something.

Just as the well was ordered to deal with Jonah's heart, the course of divinely orchestrated events began to work as preparatory graces to prepare the depraved heart for redemption. He came to himself because he was inwardly awakened to the graces of the father. Listen, church, this is important that you see this.

He came to himself. Beloved, why didn't he come to himself beforehand? Beloved, in the sovereign providential working of God, there are circumstances that are ascribed unto our lives that are none other than God's graces to bring us to the end of ourselves. And how dare we, in the lives of those that we're praying for and believing God for salvation, that we interfere with God's providence and situational occurrences to where they're working as God's graces to affect the lives of those that are lost, to turn them away into the hope of Jesus Christ? That we're living in an age we want everyone to be comfortable when the spirit of God's trying to make us uncomfortable.

This man wanted to feed the husk with the swine, and they said, no, the curse of God is upon this man. There's a curse upon this man, and we will not give him anything. He's cut off.

And in that situation, the graces of God working through God's providence began to awaken him to something that was somewhere else that he had never even thought of, the provision of his father. We go through situations, and even in my family recently, my wife and I have gone through and are currently going through situations, as you know, with our little brother, where we've had to put him in jail and then deal with his crying and begging and pleading and sobbing and begging, get me out, get me out, I'm dying in here. I'm dying, I'm dying, you've got to get me out, I'll be dead, and we had to say no.

Love required us to say no to the providential workings of God, bringing him to a place where he can see that even the servants have it better in the father's house, to see his depraved heart. Beloved, there's times when we have to let God in his providence work through circumstances that are miserable, they're miserable, that beloved God in his ultimate and infinite wisdom is at work under the good of those that are called. All things work together for the good of those that love God and are called by his purpose, and God's called us into redemption.

And by the way, I don't agree with that garbage that God's only picked a few out and the rest go to hell. Amen. Beloved, listen, if this son would have continued in plenty and in ease and in circumstantial bliss, he would have never had an opportunity to be awakened by relational grace, because it was relational grace that awakened his heart.

God's workings of grace through his providence, beloved, that awakened his heart to the provision and the salvation of the father. They work together for the good of those called of God. Listen, it was the dried up sources of pleasure, sin has pleasure, seasonally.

It was the dried up sources of livelihood, the exhausting of creature comforts that awakened the son to the father's love and unconditional acceptance. And beloved, the point that I am making is that if the workings of grace were absent towards our depravity, we would perish in our sins. We would die in our sins.

But yet the grace of God hath appeared unto all men. The grace of God hath appeared unto all men, scriptures say. And beloved, we must know that it is the will of God that all men repent, believe the gospel and be saved.

Once again, my friend, I want to warn us, it would behoove us to avoid interfering with God's providential work when he was allowing the effects of sin to rage upon those who we are praying for to be saved. I want you to notice this, the father did not journey into a distant land in search of his wayward son. Do you see this? He was patiently awaiting him to come into repentance.

And God is patient with us too. And in the scheme of God's providential wisdom, the grace of lack and the grace of want begin to work in those who are dead spiritually to point them to the cross of Christ whereby they might live. I think one of the most wonderful statements in this whole discourse upon the prodigal son is a statement that the father makes that this, my son was dead and now he is alive.

This, my son was dead and now he's alive. He was lost and he's found again. Beloved, depravity is the radical usurping of spiritual death upon the faculties of the total man.

I'm gonna say that again, that depravity is the radical usurping of spiritual death upon the faculties of the total man, spiritually, mentally, and physically. This man is dead in his trespasses and sins and there's nothing in this man that's good. There was nothing in that son that was good.

Romans 3, 10 to 18 says, as it is written, there is none righteous. No, not one. There is none that understandeth and there's none that seeketh after God.

They're all gone out of the way. They are together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good.

No, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher. Their tongues, they have used deceit.

The poison of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood.

Destruction and misery are in their ways. In the way of peace, they have not known and there is no fear of God before their eyes. Beloved, that is us outside of the covenant of hope.

Radically depraved. It's a wonderful declaration in Romans 3 of the depraved man. And beloved, this is God's idea of man's depravity and not my idea.

This is God's idea. This is the Holy Spirit that inspired this. This is God's idea of depravity.

This man is out of the way. This man is altogether unprofitable. This man is within the bondage of total wretchedness.

You know, and you may ask, Pastor Derek, why do we need to teach and instruct upon this subject, this tenet of the Christian faith? Because it seems to be such a dreary topic. Our natural inclinations want to withdraw from altogether and avoid. But yet, my friend, I want you to understand that in and through and by this doctrine, we will most assuredly, by this awareness, we will be kept and protected from doctrinal error that promotes moral goodness as a means unto salvation.

And beloved, that is a threat even today. Moreover, my friend, it is imperative for all Christian workers, especially those that labor here with us with these boys and girls from the state of Oklahoma, Thunderbird Youth Academy, to understand that these boys and girls that come into this place are radically depraved. I'm constantly dealing with our praise and worship team.

Don't expect them to praise a God that they hate. By nature, they're haters of God. We are born that way.

We're at enmity against God in our lost condition. And there's no goodness. There's no goodness in us in our depravity.

And so, I believe it's imperative for all of us that are engaged in the work of souls to have an understanding of depravity, to know the depth of the very spiritual degradation that we are contending with. That these very souls to which God has entrusted to our care might be resurrected by the very power of God alone. By the power of God alone.

Beloved, salvation is a miracle. It's an absolute miracle. Our Lord gave his life and death, that through death that he might conquer the one who had the power of death, the devil.

Also, my friend, the scriptures say in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 22, for as an Adam, all die. For as an Adam, all die. For even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Friend, when we look at the unregenerate man, and we see him wrestling underneath the burden of sin, or even pursuing the pleasures of sin, he's only acting within his nature. I remember listening to an A.W. Tozer sermon long ago, when people were talking about their children, acting that, acting naughty, Tozer, in his old long outdrawn voice said, I have those boys at home. They're only acting according to their nature.

They're depraved. And they're only acting in accordance with Adam that inhabits them. He said, oh, I discipline them.

Oh, I bring them to scripture. But they're only boys, and they're depraved. Talking about his own sons, which entered into the ministry as great men of God.

But those, my friend, listen, I'm closing down. Those who are underneath the dominion of sin cannot act contrary to it. But yet it's not God's will we die in this condition.

Romans 5, 6 says, for when we were yet without strength and due time, Christ died for the ungodly. Christ died for the ungodly. My friend, when the sin-worrying man, who has found the pleasures of sin to be exhausted, and yet he himself in want, the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ begins to reveal the so

great of salvation that is afforded through Jesus Christ by the Father's love.

It is in this want, and it is in this lack that the gospel begins to exercise its power unto salvation. In Matthew chapter 11, Jesus gives his invitation to those who are weary and burdened. Weary and burdened.

And those who the effects of the depraved heart began to become revealed. And beloved, it's within this revelation that the depraved man is awakened to his condition and to the divine provision for his condition through Jesus Christ, the one that redeems us. Jesus died upon the cross to deliver those who are in bondage.

Those who are totally and radically depraved. And it's by his cross that we're delivered from the very curse of this depravity that we might be sealed in him and seated with him in heavenly places. Amen? Amen.

Well, let's stand. That was part one.

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