

Objections to Inability and Reflection

by John Murray

The gospel is the power of God, and man's inability to respond to it is a result of his total depravity, but the sovereign grace of God is necessary for salvation.

Duration: 51:19

Scripture: Psalm 40:3, Psalm 40:17, John 6:37-65, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Fall Of Man"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the analogy of an alcoholic to illustrate a principle about the church and the gospel. The speaker emphasizes that the church cannot effectively promote the gospel until it recognizes its own total dependence on God. The sermon also highlights the power and conviction that comes from having faith in Jesus and the salvation that comes through him. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding and accepting man's total inability to save himself, and how this realization allows for the operations of God's saving grace to have meaning and power in our lives.

Transcript

O Lord, I want to bless Thy great and holy name with oblation and help. The gospel comes in all its power to raise us from the dead, to set our feet on the water, to establish our goings and put a new song in our mouth, even praise unto our God. The song will be increasingly to the glory of Thy great name.

O Lord, Amen. Now, I will be in a position and I came to deal with these passages in John 6, 37 and 39. This is here speaking, faith, blessing, faith in Him and faith in Him as having its issue in the salvation that reaches its apex in the resurrection of the last day.

Salvation is hidden after the selection of people. It is therefore on faith in Jesus unto salvation that He is speaking in verse 44. Faith in Jesus unto salvation.

When He says, O man, come unto Me, accept the draw of Him. And that refers undoubtedly to the factual draw of Him, the factual operation of the Father in the heart. And then, except it were given unto Him of the Father, refers to the effectual grace on the part of one who is a person who is able to believe in Christ.

Now, all men are confronted with the gospel, the most elementary demand, the demand that is the only avenue to the fulfillment of all other demands, to believe in Christ. And it is precisely of that faith, Jesus' faith, man is inclined. The udunatai, the udunatai, exercise of faith as much as it does to compliance with

the law of God.

And so, what Jesus is saying is that it is the psychological, moral, and religious impossibility for man apart from the efficacious drawing. Therefore, no teaching in the whole of Scripture brings this doctrine of man's total iniquity. Furthermore, in confrontation with the past, if there is any one thing that we might hope to come within the compass of man's native ability, it is faith, it is that evangelism that is based on the assumption that the one thing man can do, can, must, is confronted with the overture to believe.

The assumption is the direct contradiction of the very person vowed to bring this man to accomplishment. This biblical evidence is to the effect that man in his natural psychologically, morally, and religiously incapable, incapable of the understanding, affection, and will which will enable him to be subject to the law of God, respond to the gospel of God, appreciate the things of the spirit of God, or do those things well-pleasing to him. Neither understanding nor affection nor will is capable of rendering that which is appropriate to and required by the revelation of God's will in law and gospel.

Or respond to the gospel of His greatness, appreciate the things of the spirit of God, or do the things well-pleasing to Him. Neither understanding nor affection nor will is capable of rendering that which is appropriate to and required by the revelation of God's will in law and gospel. No capital statement to the objections that urge against this doctrine at all.

And one of the first is that this doctrine, totally non-religious, is inconsistent with the commandments of God, because the commandments of God are addressed to all responsibility, and therefore presuppose an ability to discharge or to state it in minor form. The objection is, how obligation presupposes at least a modicum of ability, modicum of ability. Now, that objection, of course, it came to its classic expression in the Pelagian anthropology, esoteriology, and other.

Now, the commandments of these to our, they cannot be graduated or accommodated to our condition. Any such accommodation would be a denial of God's inherent perfection. God cannot demand less, complete conformity to His likeness.

He cannot demand less than complete conformity to His likeness. And that means complete conformity to that law expresses His own perfection for the regulation of thought and behavior. In this, the minimum is the maximum, and the maximum is the minimum.

No graduation, no accommodation, adaptation. Because of what God is, our impotence, our impotence is the effect of our sin. It is something that is implicit in our sin, and therefore we are responsible for our very inability.

Our inability only points to the desperateness of the condition involved in sin. Now, secondly, that if obligation presupposes ability, then it presupposes total ability. Not a modicum of ability, fraction of ability, but total ability, because the obligation is total.

And that, of course, is what we must take into account. And the consequence would be that our sin in no way whatsoever impairs our ability. Consequently, only the palladium, consistent in the application of this obligation, palladiums have total ability, plenary ability.

The denial, the denial of what sin involves acting out of it. Now, we have to know, secondly, that if man is totally unable to do anything that is well-pleasing to God, and therefore totally unable to contribute anything towards his own salvation, this would be inconsistent with the obligation resting upon man to use

the means of grace. To use the means of grace.

The objection, you see, is to the fact that the means of grace can have no relevance whatsoever to the natural man, no relevance to the totally unable use of it. Well, there are two answers that I want to give to this. First, if men are dead in trespasses and sin, they should know it.

They should be convinced of it. Now, are they going to be convinced of their depravity and inability? They will be convinced only by being confronted with the demands of God upon them, and with that gospel which is the proclamation of the truth, respecting themselves as well as respecting God. Hence, to be sealed off from encounter with the demands of law and gospel, that is to say, from the means of grace, is to be sealed off from the judgment of God, from acquaintance at least with the judgment of God.

Indispensable. Indispensable. And it is to be sealed off from the gospel which is the only provision to meet our helplessness and our hopelessness.

It is true. Men should know it. The means of grace are the way of God.

All means of grace. And that means that they are the channels through which the gospel comes into our despair. And the sovereign grace of God becomes operative unto salvation.

He has appointed these means as the channels of His grace. And to seal men off from the means of grace, and to march from the very means of grace, must please God to save men. And if we say that it is useless, useless for the natural men to attend upon the means of grace, if we say that it is useless, useless for the natural men to attend upon the means of grace, failing, we are failing the wisdom, the grace, and the power of God.

The means of grace are premised. They are premised on our helplessness and hopelessness. And God is pleased to intervene for the remedy of men.

Now a person can say to me that the preaching of this doctrine is a counsel of despair. A counsel of despair to unconverted men. Counsel of despair to the Lord.

It is not a good thing, the objection, it is not a good thing to proclaim to men what is a counsel of the gospel, the gospel, the means of grace. The proclamation of this is simply the proclamation to men of the condition. It is my answer to you.

The proclamation of the whole counsel of God is simply the proclamation to men of the condition in which they are, in which they really are. And it is all important that you register the disdain, register the disdain, which is implicit in their condition. Are men lost? Are they dead in trespasses and sins? Oh, they must know it.

They must know it. And therefore they know the despair that belongs to them. It is of total importance that you be more inimitable to the interest to conceive.

Oh, my answer to this objection of course it is a counsel of despair. That's what it's intended to be. Now, fourthly and finally, it is objective that this doctrine is in compact, the free overture of grace in the gospel with the appeal per se and with the assertion of human responsibility.

That is plausible. Men are in this condition. Why give them a free overture to gospel? Why appeal per se? Why confront them with the responsibility? Well, of course the key is that there is the free overture of the

gospel.

There is the demand for faith and repentance. That men must, that the gospel must be addressed to men's responsibility. No toning down.

Now it is quite true, quite true that a great many people cannot preach quite freely and fully to men, to lost men, on the assumption of total inability. Quite true. They can't do it.

And consequently, they are bound to perfect something inconsistent with this doctrine, namely some area of freedom, some area of ability with respect to that which is the eternal repentance of faith. Now, the core question comes back again to this. Is this doctrine true? Is it true? Is it the doctrine of that revelation which God has given us? If it is, of course, if it is the doctrine of the revelation God has given us, then there is no alternative.

And if it is the doctrine of the revelation God has given us, it must be compatible with the gospel. That is, it must be compatible with the gospel. And consequently, we shall have to come to terms with this doctrine.

And if it is the doctrine of Scripture, then we shall have to revise our conception of the gospel. We shall have to revise our conception of the gospel in order that the gospel we preach is one that is based totally, totally. But I must go on.

The only gospel there is is a gospel which rests on total. The only gospel. And it is after all this man's total inhibition that lays the basis for the glory of the gospel preach.

Nothing is really more inimical, as I said already, nothing is more inimical to the interest of the gospel than the assumption that there is some point at which the sovereign grace of God is dispensable. Some point at which the sovereign grace of God is dispensable. That there is some area, power, operative unto salvation that belongs to man himself.

However minimal it may be, some area, power, operative unto salvation. Put it in other terms. What is the demand of the gospel? What is it? Naturally it is for faith.

What is the nature of faith? For faith is the commitment of God. The gospel is one grace, and therefore rests upon this area of human resources. What is the archdemon? Archdemon of human thought in reference to the gospel.

What is it? It is self. And put it in terms of our present. It is health.

Health is just this type. Precisely when a person is convinced of the total absence of the gospel, when in all its glory and power to think of health, in all its glory and power to think of our own health, then shall the lame man meet the dumb, in the wilderness he dreams in his bed. Paradoxes? Well, prediction.

Paradoxes describe the way of God's grace is. And in your preaching, brethren, never be afraid to be on the line. Man is taught of his low conviction.

No journey, no conviction. There is the conviction of the total absence of selflessness, grace, and the power of God. We appreciate it, of course, apart from the operations of God's sovereign grace.

It's just into that situation that the operations of God's saving grace, the gospel deity, and when we are convinced of the same, to the conviction, to that conviction, the overtures of grace come with meaning,

power. I don't take any notes just now. One may want, I don't put a great deal of thought in alcoholic anonymous, a great deal of growth in your common grace, but God has a very striking pattern, one of the principles of our alcoholic anonymous.

Do anything. Grand resolutions, take them on. The principles of that procedure.

In this regard, we might perhaps learn just even a little lesson in that. One takes a natural state of policy, you see, a state of power, of his own total selflessness, his reference to this, to this desire. Convinced of his own total selflessness, then they can do a lot of policy, a thousand, but he relies upon what they are going to do policy, and not upon his own.

Now that's all on the subject of sin. That brings to a conclusion my study. Yes.

You mean the man who has not even been confronted with the dark world. How can he have a conviction, where he cannot have conviction of his own. You see this conviction, are you thinking about the alcoholic? No.

Well, that's a purely natural thing. But in the case of men who are not confronted with the dark, there is indeed many men, and if they have a certain sense of their guilt, their helplessness, they may have that outside of the pale of his feet. And we must not overlook that entirely.

It may be the influence of natural revelation upon a man, outside of the pale of the dark. But that kind of conviction that I'm talking about now, cannot be born in the dark.

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