

The Depravity of Sinful Man

by Rolfe Barnard

Rolfe Barnard's sermon emphasizes the total depravity of man and the necessity of God's grace for salvation, urging believers to boldly proclaim the gospel amidst societal moral decay.

Duration: 41:16

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 1:18-19, Romans 14:9, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Ephesians 2:1

Topics: "Sin And Depravity", "Revival And Redemption"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of knowing Jesus Christ not only as a Savior but also as a Lord and King who guides and leads believers in their lives. The purpose of Jesus' death and resurrection is examined, emphasizing the need for people to turn to God and avoid the consequences of their sinful actions. The preacher highlights the depravity of sinful men and the urgency to proclaim the actual salvation accomplished by God through Christ. The sermon calls for a revival in the nation, urging individuals to return to a life of righteousness and worship of a holy God.

Transcript

Good morning to you, my friends. I come again to bring, I believe, the fourth and the last message on the general subject of the depravity of sinful men. In other words, we've been thinking for three long days, and we shall continue to do so today, about the first of the five great basic Bible teachings of righteousness and sound faith in the gospel of the great God, a living God, namely, the actual condition that men whom God will save are found to be, as we have the record of it, in the holy word of Almighty God.

We first tried to give you something to whet your appetite to a new study of these truths, because we believe that the gospel needs to be recovered in its soundness and its wholeness and its purity. We believe that totally lost sinners need to hear the proclamation not of a possible salvation, but of an actual salvation accomplished by God who was in Christ, reconciling a world to himself. And we tried to tell you that the depravity of man is just the word that in the Latin means that man is deformed, he is crooked, he is misshapen, he is bent in the wrong direction, and in the language of the scripture, he is spiritually dead in trespasses and in sin.

He is physically very active in his rebellion against God from whence all of his trouble started, but he is morally and spiritually in a bad shape. Last Lord's Day and the Lord's Day before, we devoted our broadcast to a discussion of two ways in which the Bible's teaching about the condition of men can be and is being perverted. Our first suggestion was that if we make the inability of sinful men to believe the

gospel, to make that mean a physical or a mechanical inability, we do wrong.

And we go off into the tangent and the trap of just preaching the gospel to the elect and saying that it's to comfort the elect, and we say that sinful men cannot hear the gospel, and we say wrong. For there is nothing on earth about a man, if he is a man, to keep him from hearing and believing the gospel as gospel, except the fact that he is morally in a bad shape and spiritually dead. And thus we maintain the gospel of God in grace, acting toward man.

We say that the initiative, and we thank God for it, starts with God, and that everybody who ever gets saved can thank God for the cross of Jesus Christ and glory, not in his decision or his feelings, in his virtue, but in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. That way God is careful to preserve and guard and honor his sovereignty and yet be free in his actions toward sinful men. We must preach the gospel to all whom we can get to stand still long enough to hear it, in the hope that some of them will be able to believe the gospel as gospel.

Not just accept some facts or believe some passages of scripture, but receive the gospel as good news of a God who reconciles sinners to himself. In that sense, my friends, it is true, as we'll be occupied with beginning next Lord's Day, that every man's election or rejection has to do with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is elect or he is rejected according to his stand outside or inside the redemptive purpose of a holy God.

I want us to be clear that men are hell-responsible for hearing and hell-responsible for believing the gospel as gospel. I want us all to labor that point. Multitudes believe the gospel.

It's facts, and they do not dispute it, but it's not gospel to them. It's not good news to them. It doesn't set the joy bells ringing in their souls, because it's not concerned with them so much.

They just won't argue about it, but it's never become real to them, because they are still in their rebellion and they refuse to take their place as a member of the human race and plead guilty to their sin and their rebellion against God and their utter need of being recovered by him. I want to call your attention also to the fact that last Lord's Day we took the whole broadcast and devoted it to a discussion of the second wave, in which we may pervert the teaching of the word of God concerning the actual lost condition of sinful men. That is, by confusing the degree of man's moral badness with the extent of his spiritual deadness and fall as a result of his participation.

However, the Bible means that in the sin of our Father Adam. We've said that while all men, as to the extent of their fall, are thoroughly and totally depraved in all of their abilities and all of their works and in all of the faculties of their soul, will, heart, mind, the ability to receive the gospel as the gospel man is totally depraved. But as to the degree of his badness, no man is as bad in the degree of his sin as he might be.

We showed you that even Satan is restrained by sovereign God, and we gave you illustration after illustration. Then last Lord's Day we call to your attention the five great means that a holy God uses in his common grace. By common grace I mean that God deals with all men in that sense, in grace and in mercy.

And God restrains sinners, and God fingers around sinners, and God senses sinners in, and he does that to restrain men in their love of and in their pursuit of sin. And we said that every sinful man has cause and reason to seek God, that he is without excuse and that he ought to become a seeker after saving knowledge of God in the gospel, and that God surrounds him by his mercies and his grace and his

goodnesses in such a way as to restrain him that he will not become as bad as he might be. And for that we thank God, and we ought to preach on this a lot and teach on this a lot and let men know they are without excuse.

Now we mention again this morning these five means that God uses in common grace to restrain sinful men. First, their knowledge of God. Second, their natural affection.

Third, the material blessings of the land. Fourth, man's moral conscience. And fifth, the terror of human government.

All of these are used, have been and are to this day, by a holy, good God who deals with men in grace and mercy to restrain men, lest they come to the awful place where they so terribly rebel in sin that they are given up in the sentence of God's present judgment and men are condemned to live in sin. One of the great teachings of the word of God, about the judgment of God, is not only that the judgment is yet future, but that in some sense it is now present. And one of the manifestations of God in the gospel is his wrath.

And he shows his wrath on men and women today, not by pushing them into terrible sin, but when his patience is exhausted. The book of Romans tells us in three places, wherefore, God also gave them up, and that's the sentence of God, and that's the judgment of God. And when God Almighty delivers a man, quits restraining him, when a man has got to the place that the common graces of God, the means that God uses in common grace, do not lift him up and challenge him, then it's true that we may say that men have sent away the grace of God.

And so this morning I wanted to deal on that very vital truth. Can sinful men send away God's wonderful, blessed, merciful means of grace? And the answer is all about us. It is a terrible, unequivocal yes.

Men not only can send away the grace of God, but men all about to are sending away the grace of God. How does man do that? He does it by sinning against the restraints that God puts upon him, namely the knowledge of God and his own natural affection and the hope of economic gain and well-being and the conscience that simmers within man and the terror of human government. These things are vital, and as we see them being attacked and resistant to God everywhere and the attack of Satan using men to tear down the things these truths represent, we ought to cry aloud and fear not and warn men and do everything we can to buttress these great means that God Almighty uses to restrain men.

And so I want to take the five up again today and answer the question, do men sin against these graces of God? Do men sin against these restraining efforts and works of God? Are men in terrible danger today of getting to the place where a holy God who has thus far been bringing these means to bear upon them, to restrain them and to leave them without excuse, where God will just give them up and say, all right, keep them adjoined to his idols, let them alone? It's a terrible thing to have to come before a radio audience and state that America is fast becoming a land of men and women who are being given up by a holy God and condemned and sentenced and fenced in and set apart to keep on living in the quagmire of their own hogpen that they've built themselves. And every day they sag more and more into that land where there is no recovery. Men and women sin away the great restraining means that God uses.

Let's take up these five truths. These are foundational. God Almighty has fixed it so men have a knowledge of him.

The book of Romans in chapter 1 that we've had before us these days is very clear about that. We read in verse 18, verse 18, For the wrath of God is revealed, not going to be, but is revealed in the gospel from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who imprison or keep down the truth in their unrighteous lives. And why does God now bring that judgment? He'll talk about it in the rest of the chapter.

Why is that taking place now? It's because verse 19 says, Which may be known of God. Men can know a lot about God. Men can know a lot about God.

How? Because he's revealed himself. He's showed himself to all men. How? For the invisible things of him, verse 20, from the creation of the world are clearly seen.

A man can look at the creation. It's clear. And if a man had looked at it, he'd understand by the things that are made, even God's eternal power and the fact that he is God.

And it leaves them without excuse. Do you see it? And they are without excuse because when they knew God, everybody knows something of God. When they did that, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.

They didn't worship him, they didn't adore him, they didn't surrender to him. They didn't do it, but they became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. And they thought they were mighty smart, for the next verse says, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

And look what man did. Then they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like the corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and things. And wherefore, because of this awful, awful act of sin for men, they didn't say there isn't any God, they just built them some God to suit themselves.

And they continued in their rebellion against the God of creation, wherefore God also gave them up. He didn't push them, but now he takes his restraint off of them and just says, all right, there you are, keep on in the uncleanness through the lust of their own heart. And it was so terrible that they began to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.

Do you see it? There are those in this world right now, I wonder how many I'm preaching to just now, who have sent away all the restraints of natural religion. You know, the ancients as we've just read you here, sent natural religion away in the pollutions of idolatry. They got them a pocketknife and cut them out some God to suit themselves.

But in our day, men are sending away man's natural fear of God in the theories of science, so-called, and in the liberalism of the pulpits. And God help us, I fear, in much of the mistaken evangelistic zeal of this hour that gets results at the expense of the glory and honor of God and the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Oh, my soul, all over this country, and if the preachers tell me they're preachers and they say, if we preach that, we won't get results, and so we'll preach something that'll get results.

But what kind of results are we getting? God help us, God help us, we ought to be on the mourners' bench there. What kind of results are we getting at the expense of preaching the truth about the sinful condition of men? Yes, sir, America is becoming a land of men and women whom God has given us, and they are listening to everything except the voice of God. More and more in America, men are shaping God to suit themselves, and they are making God after their own evil imaginations and making him in their own image, and they worship the God of their own handiwork, and thus continue in rebellion of the only true

God, who is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is serious, my friends, and people have to take sides about this now, and I wonder which side you are on. Men do send away their day of grace as they send against the natural affection that God has given men and women. That natural affection is being sent away in the undermining of the home.

For instance, female virtue is one of the foundations upon which the home is built. You let men lose their respect for those women who should be near and dear to him, and sing if he has any natural affection left. The abominations of perversion mentioned here in this 1st chapter of Romans, they are not natural affection, and to honor such relationships by the term friendship is like honoring lust with the term love.

Oh, my, how the moral fiber of America is becoming more rotten everywhere. You can't advertise a car without a picture of a near-naked woman. You can't sell anything over the radio or the television or the newspaper without glorifying female flesh.

And oh, the rapists walking our streets and the sexual perverts and all of the pornography that's everywhere and the rotten magazines and the evil movies and all of those things is an effort of Satan through men to tear down the foundation upon which real natural affection rests, and thus bring men to the place where God gives them up and sentences them to live in the quagmire of flesh and lust and sin. And that's all about us. We ought to lift up our voice there, and we ought to be crystal clear there, and it's time to take sides there.

Yet, my friends, the economic pull, that is the hope of a decent living, which is a blessing in America, the poor economic pull upon the hearts of men, is being gradually taken away in our day by socialism and in combinations of business and labor in restraint of trade. If we let this economic pull be taken from the hearts of men, you will see something disappear from this land, which we shall greatly miss. Now, I know that this common grace is not a redeeming virtue, but it's certainly a common blessing in a land, and we ought to take sides here.

Then, my friends, in the 3rd, 4th place, the moral consciences of people are being sent away in our day. Now, remember this very vital point, you dear preachers, listen to me, you teachers, listen to me. Remember that the conscience of the individual, natural man, is sooner or later lost in oneness with the conscience of the society of which he is a part.

He is a man that has some clear thinking, but he's subject to his environment, and he lives and touches shoulders with a society that has well nigh lost its moral conscience. That which used to be bad is now all right. That which used to take place down in the back alley now takes place in the church parlors or in the drawing rooms of our living homes.

Oh, my soul, my soul, my soul, the moral conscience of unsaved people is greatly affected by the moral conscience of the people about him. And if the conscience of the society of which he is a part is lowered, of course, his conscience is pulled down, too. And I want to ask you, do you think this is happening today? And you know it is, and it's a terrible thing.

It's a terrible fact that men and women are being pulled down by the social fiber around them, and the unsaved man who doesn't have Christ in his heart. Yet God gives him a conscience and makes him sit in judgment on himself, whether he wants to or not. But more and more, as he lives in a society that becomes more and more rotten morally and spiritually, the conscience of that man begins to fit in and

adapt itself to the mores and the conscience of the society in which he is placed, until God gives him up.

And he not only gets to the place that he enjoys in, but he gets a kick out of seeing somebody else indulge in it. This is vital, isn't it? This is vital. And God knows we need to camp along these lines.

And somebody says, Well, you can't reform society. Well, we ought to lift up our voice against every evil that is pulling down the moral consciences and lowering the strength of the moral consciences of unsaved people. For if that unsaved fellow ever finally gets to where he thinks like nearly everybody else does around him and acts, then he's probably in the place where he sends away God's grace.

And God will give him up and contend him to just fit in with the pattern of the society in which he lives. And the redeeming, sovereign grace of God will pass him by. As my time's almost gone, I bring up the last great news that God uses to restrain men and ask the question, Is it in danger now? And I answer, Yes.

The terror of human government is being taken away in this day by misguided liberals. You know, my friends, there's no greater misuse of terms in our day than the term liberal. That man who's liberal with the truth, he's not a liberal, he's a liar.

That man who's liberal with other men's money, be he a politician in Washington or a clerk in the corner grocery store, he's not a true liberal, he's just a thief. And that man who's liberal with the true freedom of men in the provisions of common grace whereby sin is restrained, we have our freedom. That man who's true liberal, he's simply one with those who traffic revelation 18.13 in the souls of men.

They make merchandise of eternity down men and women. And God has put that going on in pulpits and homes and social structures and government everywhere about us now. And that great news of God, the restrained, sinful man, the terror of authority, the terror of human government, playing with authority and flaunting truth, is being attacked on every side.

And we see the walls crumbling down. People everywhere say, Brother Barnes, it might have been hard to win people's trust. Now, that's right.

No wonder the moral fiber is gone. Men and women have sinned more and more and more and more against God's good grace. And the more they sin, the worse they get.

Until they come to the place where God Almighty will give them up and let them go on in their awful sin. May God have pity on this land unless things begin to take shape from pulpit and pew and school and home and church that once more call this nation back to rectitude in life, in the worship of a holy and living God. My time's up.

Our announcements are to follow. Lord, we've been digging in the word of God and digging at your heart and at your will and at you about this very pivotal question of whether or not you know by experience Jesus Christ, not only as a Savior to keep you out of hell and to take you to heaven, but knowing him as a Lord and a King to guide you and to lead you in this life to your desired haven. We've been talking about the purpose for which the Lord Jesus Christ died and was raised again.

We want to come in this 6th message to look a little more closely at that purpose. To begin with, before we turn to our text in the 14th chapter of the book of Romans, at verse 9, as you are turning to it, I trust many of you can, I want to ask you a question by way of practicing this message. Has the question of authority, supreme, central, absolute authority in your life, been finally settled? All over this world today, men name

the name of Jesus with their lips, but they never have bowed themselves to the authority and rule of this one whom God Almighty has ordained and appointed and decreed to be Lord both of those who are saved and those who are unsaved.

This question of authority being settled and recognized is a very poignant question. Every army needs and has to have, if it marches well, a General. Every Navy stands in dire need of an Admiral.

Every Kingdom needs a King. Every home needs a head. But with authority divided between the Lord Jesus Christ and yourself or myself, there is no victory, there is just halting and defeat.

I say beyond a fair venture of doubt that no human being can confidently expect victory if it is not submitted unreservedly and irrevocably to the dictatorship, the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We are told by historians that the early creed of the early New Testament Church Christians was a very simple one. It was simply this, Jesus is Lord.

And the early Christians went everywhere saying, God Almighty has ordained and appointed this one to be Lord, bow down to him. We have talked last Lord's Day as best we could about the fact that this world and the devil and the angels and the nations and everything has been absolutely turned into the keeping of the Lord Jesus Christ by the appointment and decree of Almighty God the Father, and that we ought to look to him. And if we look anywhere else or to anyone else for any blessing, we are looking in the wrong direction.

Now, may I read my text this morning and speak to you again on this subject line, Christ died and was raised again, and ask again and again during this message if I may, has the purpose of God in Christ died and being raised again towards you? Have you missed it? As far as you are concerned, in large part, did the Lord Jesus Christ die and was he raised utterly and vainly? As far as you are concerned, are you still one of the vast multitude of people whom the death and resurrection of Christ apparently has not succeeded in bringing you to a saving relationship to Almighty God? Note this text from the lips of the Apostle Paul, Romans 14 and 9. Far to this end, Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and the living. In one verse, it certainly does not violate any of the other verses of the scripture, we have the primary purpose of the coming of the Lord Jesus to this earth and all that he was and all that he did, and that primary purpose is that he might be the Sovereign, the King, the Ruler, the Dictator, the Death-pot, the Lord of mankind. He came to seek and to save.

He is the Savior of believers, but he is the Savior of believers that he may be the Sovereign of the lives thus redeemed. And our text tells us about this fact that the Lord Jesus Christ's purpose in coming and dying and being raised from the dead was that he might be Lord, not simply Savior, but might be Lord. And who has a right to be Lord except the Lord Jesus Christ? Notice this morning, don't go away now, three definite teachings of the word of God about this tremendous truth that the purpose of God in Christ was to establish his Lordship over mankind.

In the first place, the scriptures tell us that Jesus Christ is Lord of all by the eternal and divine decree of Almighty God. In the second psalm, we read in the 6th verse, Yet have I set my tool upon my holy hill of Zion, God talking, I will declare the decree. He said, I'm going to let you know what my decree is.

Jehovah has said unto me, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and as a result of this is the right of the Lord Jesus to rule over you and over me. And this right to Lordship is not based on our recognition of him as Lord, but it's based on God's recognition of him as the mediator between God

and man.

In other words, my friends, he's your Lord, whether you recognize him or not. He's your divine decree. He isn't your Lord by your electing him to be.

He isn't your Lord by your deciding to bow to him. He is your Lord. That is settled before there was ever a start.

He's not simply the ruler of men who are saved. He's the ruler of all mankind. Praise God, he has but to ask, and the heathen are his, and the nations are a procession.

Everything that breathes is under the Lordship and the rulership of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is settled in a way that the devil, nor your own evil intent will can change. That is settled by an eternal God, by a pious decree.

He said it, that settles that he's the Lord of all mankind. That's one of the most solemn thoughts I've ever faced, and one of the most solemn thoughts you need to face if you haven't done it. My friends, this matter of the Lordship of Christ will not be decided by you.

It's already been decided. He's the Lord by almighty God's divine decree. He's been given authority over all things.

He's been declared to be both Lord and God's anointed by eternal decree. My Lord Jesus Christ has had everything turned over to him. God in recognition of the person and worth of the Lord Jesus Christ has anointed him and appointed him.

Thank God he didn't run for the office. He didn't seek out the office. He was appointed to this office by the Father, and it does comfort this old priest's heart that this world's in the ruling, reigning hands of God's anointed.

That the devil can't bat an eyelash, nor lose an eye, except under the providential will of a holy God. And that all things are moving toward the hour when the Lord Jesus Christ shall have put down all authority and all rule and all power, and when all things shall be brought into subjection to him, and he shall bring a subjected world, some in judgment and some in salvation, and present a world won back to a recognition of the sovereignty of God, and turn that recognizing world back to the fall that the dark head may be all in all. Then I say, and we come to the second place, having said that by eternal decree, by divine appointment, Jesus Christ is God's appointed Lord over you and over me and everybody else.

And then in the second place, the scriptures ring out clearly that Jesus Christ deserves to be Lord over all. Thank God there's one who deserves it. And that great classic passage in the book of Philippians is brought to mind here.

Let just mine be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not proper to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in passion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the Father up to the point of the death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, in view of this humiliation and disobedience, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

He's been that all the time, thank God, to the glory of God the Father. He is the Son of God and God the Son, God in Christ, becoming a man. Here he is, one who would not think it a thing to be grasped as equal with God, but he made himself of no reputation and came down in obedience to his divine appointment, and that obedience carried him to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

And because of that, God Almighty has already exalted him and given him a name. He had a name while he was there, the name of his humiliation, but it's that name of Jesus, not at the name Jesus, but at the name that's now been given Jesus, that's Lord. Every knee one day shall bow, and every tongue one day shall confess that he is Lord, that he is Lord.

My soul's not a question of whether you bow to Christ, it's a question of when. It's not a question of whether you confess him with your mouth, it's a question of when. Do it now under this leadership and enabling and auctionizing and convicting, regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and your body, the saving relationship to God.

Put it off, as the brethren say now, and just give you a little time, and at the judgment you will acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord. And it'll be too late for your salvation, but not too late for the glory of God the Father to shine the face of this tongue, who is worthy to be Lord over Rothbard and you and everybody else. And who is my Lord, whether I'm obedient or disobedient? The Lord Jesus Christ.

And then in the last place, not only has my Lord been appointed and anointed to be the Lord of all mankind, and not only by divine decree, not only does he deserve in virtue of this person and his blessed death and resurrection to be Lord over all, but to sit just to me without any shadow of a doubt to me to teach that he desires to be the recognized Lord over all mankind. He is represented in Hebrews 12 as having for the joy set before him, endured the cross and despised the shame. Now, that scripture is a little too deep for this poor Christian.

I've read what's been said on it by many men, I've looked at it and prayed about it. I do not know that I understand much, no, I do not understand all that is comprehended in that tremendous expression. But I do think it means something like this.

It means that that's the joy, that's some of the joy, the joy of having men and women here on this old earth, not because he makes them, but because he enables them and moves them and wins them and overcomes their rebellion. And they give them their willing, loving service and adoration and name him with their lips to the Lord and live for him a Christ-disciplined life. You know, my friends, to refuse the Lordship of Christ, and men do it every day, they won't refuse it yonder at the judgment, but men certainly do do it today.

Men refuse him. And to refuse him as your ruler and your Lord now is, and this is almost blasphemous, but I don't know how to put it any other way, is to rob him of the fruit of his passion. It's the snatch from his lips, as far as you're concerned, the cup of joy which was set before him.

But God helps us. Men do it every day. That old lawless ungodly Christ still goes back to heaven from the heart to the lips of millions every day.

We haven't changed our minds. We still will not have this man serene over us. We will not.

Now, we don't say that in so many words, but we say it by our actions. In our actions we take life from him if we can, but we don't want his law. We want his escaped salvation, but we don't want to be under his

rule.

But the scriptures tell us that salvation means to be married to him, to be in love with him, and to be under law to the Lord Jesus Christ. But today as I speak, I speak in a religious atmosphere where men hail him as their Savior. Everybody, especially at certain seasons of the year, Christmas and Easter and so forth, everybody talks about the coming of the little baby, the Savior of the world.

But then we ignore his sovereign rule and reign in our lives. And thus by us ignoring his right and his rule in our lives, we prove the scriptures that say, why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say unto you, and that old dead sure not worth. God bless your heart.

I stake my destiny on it. I stake my ministry on it. I stake my soul on it.

You'll never know Jesus Christ that saved you to keep you out of hell and take you to him, apart from absolute surrender and submission to him as the absolute Lord of your life day by day. Bless God, that's the reason he died. That's the reason he was raised from the dead, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.

Do you know him as your Lord? God willing. I want to talk some about some things that are involved in absolute surrender to Jesus Christ as your sovereign and as your Lord. And now may God add his blessing to this message until next Lord's Day.

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