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The Essentials – The Doctrine of Man

Radical Depravity

Ephesians 2:1-10

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¹ And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

The title of our sermon this morning is “Radical Depravity.” Our primary text, Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 through 10, although we’ll look at several texts this morning that I pray will help us as we consider this important subject. Radical depravity.

Day 6 of the creation week ends with God pronouncing all things that He had created very good. “Very good” was God’s assessment of everything that He had created including man. Everything was very good. There was no sin. There was no suffering in the world. There was no death in the world before man’s sin. The creation, a magnificent glorious display of God’s infinite wisdom, of God’s power, of God’s goodness. And Adam and Eve themselves, created in the very image of their Creator, in the image

of God, bearing His likeness, His moral likeness, moral and upright themselves; in perfect fellowship, perfect communion with God their Creator, and enjoying the blessedness of that communion with Him. Blessed with tremendous privileges, unspeakable blessings, as vice-regents over God's creation. Given authority to rule, given authority to have dominion over all that God had created. Charged themselves with being fruitful and multiplying until the glory of God covered the earth as the waters cover the sea.

And they're given one prohibition. In Genesis chapter 2 verse 16 – ***the Lord God commanded the man saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*** Now the account of man's fall into sin begins with the presence of a tempter in the garden. The serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness. He cast doubt on God's Word. He cast doubt on God's character, cast doubt on God's goodness. He cast doubt on God's righteous and loving motives toward Adam and Eve. And in Genesis chapter 3 verse 6, that text is punctuated with the rapid-fire verbs that highlight Eve's plunge into sin. She saw, she took, she ate, and she gave. The fall of man is then sealed with the actions of our covenant head – her husband, our first father, our covenant representative – when he took and he ate. James would later describe the process, now common to all men, in James chapter 1 verse 14, where he says that – ***each one then is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death.***

Now this gross rebellion didn't have the effect that Adam and Eve had imagined that it would. Their eyes weren't opened in the way that they thought that their eyes would be opened. The knowledge that they acquired was not a knowledge they were prepared for. The actual effect of having their eyes opened was to darken their understanding, was to render their reason futile. Shame, guilt came flooding in upon them. Instantly their conscience – something they had never recognized or even had opportunity to acknowledge before – now their conscience begins to accuse them.

Conviction of sin seizes their now corrupted and polluted heart. They immediately sense their estrangement from the One who created them and attempt to hide from Him in the garden. I can imagine it almost being like a curtain that comes down over them as the pollution, as the corruption takes its effect in their heart and in their mind. They immediately sense their estrangement from the One who created them and attempt to hide from Him in the garden. They immediately act in a way that demonstrates a brokenness in their own relationship with each other. Adam instantly blames the woman, indirectly blames God for giving her to him. Eve blames the serpent. Neither one taking

personal responsibility. The consequences of sin, the consequences of the fall are far-reaching. They are horrific. They are devastating.

We see it around us today. We're dull to it aren't we, sometimes? Cold-hearted toward it. Sometimes we don't see things the way that they really are. They're much more devastating, much more far-reaching than Adam and Eve could have ever understood or imagined. We see that beginning with the curse in Genesis chapter 3. Where multiplying on the earth was meant to spread abroad the glory of God, now their multiplying on the earth would bring forth the pain and death associated with sin.

So now what does God do? That reality is seen or pictured in the pain with which women will bring forth children. The woman led her husband into sin. As Calvin said, "had perversely exceeded her proper bounds." So now all her desires will be subject to her husband's dominance over her. The couple sinned by eating. Now man would suffer in toil by the sweat of his face to bring forth food from the ground for himself, in a land that would bring forth thorns and thistles. He would have to labor to eat. Having been given all the fruit of the trees in the garden to freely eat as he desired except that one, Adam now cannot freely eat any longer. He will labor to eat. And finally, cut off by sin from the communion that they once enjoyed with God, Adam and Eve then are banished from the garden with the sentence of death hanging over their head.

We find in Genesis chapter 3 that God is certainly true to His Word, don't we? He is true to what He said He would do. He's faithful to His Word, faithful to His justice, His judgements. And they died. Adam and Eve died spiritually in the garden that very day. They began at once to suffer the outward decay that indicated a future physical death that would return Adam to the dust from which he came. And now, having sinned against God, having broken the covenant, they were now subject to what the Bible refers to as "the second death." Certain judgement at the end of the age when both body and soul will be cast into hell.

Now in the garden, think with me, Adam and Eve sinned alone, but they do not bear the consequences of that sin alone. All of their descendants are born outside the garden. All of their descendants are cut off from the tree of life. All of their descendants are born into a fallen world. All of their descendants are fallen themselves. And all of their descendants, subject to the curse, the penalty of a broken covenant.

In Genesis chapter 4, the firstborn son of the woman, John says – ***was of the wicked one and murdered his brother***. Her first son murdered his brother. – ***And why did he murder him?*** – John asks. – ***Because***

his works were evil and his brother's (works were) righteous. He murders his brother out of envy – the firstborn son of Eve.

In Genesis chapter 5, every man in the lineage of Adam has his record punctuated with a period – **and he died**. Every man – **and he died – and he died – and he died**. By Genesis chapter 6, verse 5, **The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.** – Wow! – **And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.** – In Genesis chapter 6, verse 11, **The earth also was corrupt before God** – because of the sin of the man, cause of the sin of Adam – **the earth was also corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.** So in Genesis chapter 7, what does God do? God destroys every human being on the face of the earth with a global flood, save one – Noah. We see that Noah found grace, found favor in the eyes of the Lord. And Noah and his family were spared.

Now the testimony of human depravity, the testimony of sin is no less marked or evident after the flood. In fact, the whole Bible is really about two things. The whole Bible is about man's sin, man's depravity, and God's redemption in Christ, God's provision for sin. From cover to cover, we see a record of man's depravity and God's grace. That's abundantly clear according to Scripture and it's abundantly clear according to the light of nature, that Adam's sin in the garden led not only to his own curse and punishment but also has led to horrific consequences for all those that are born after him and are born in him. Every person here, we've been born in Adam and bear those horrific consequences in Adam.

Adam, not merely a bad example. He's not just a bad example. Can't fall for that one. Adam was the covenant representative. He was the federal head, the federal representative for all humanity. This is called the Doctrine of Federal Headship. We see that in multiple places in the Bible but primarily we see it described for us in Romans chapter 5. Turn there with me to Romans chapter 5, beginning at verse 12. Now there in Romans 5, Paul summarizes the effects of the fall on all men born in Adam. In Romans chapter 5 we find the Doctrine of Original Sin. We find the Doctrine of Federal Headship. We find the Doctrine of Imputation. There is a passing on of sin from Adam to his descendants after him.

Look at Romans chapter 5, look beginning with me at verse 12. – **Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.** – Now notice with me from verse 12, it all happened through one man. Who's the one man? Adam. The word Adam in Hebrew actually means "man." It's what the word means. Adam is a word for "man." It

happened through the one man, Adam. Sin came into the world, verse 12, sin came into the world through the one man, Adam. Death came into the world through the sin of the one man, Adam. And then – ***death spread to all men, because all sinned.*** – We’re going to talk about what that means in just a moment.

Now, in other words, the sin of Adam is the foundation, or the ground, for universal human sin. Every single person is born into sin because of Adam’s sin in the garden. Do you see? The sin of Adam is the foundation or the ground for universal human death. Why do we die? We die because of sin. It all began with Adam in the garden. Notice, it’s the sin of Adam here in Romans chapter 5 and not the sin of Eve. Why is that? Because Adam was our representative in the covenant. Adam is our head. Adam represents humanity.

In Romans chapter 5, Paul is setting up a contrast between Adam’s representation and the Lord Jesus Christ’s representation. Now if you notice from the passage, God has appointed two men to stand in the place of others, two men in Romans chapter 5. One of these men is Adam, and Adam represents all of humanity. The other of these two men is the Lord Jesus Christ, representing all of redeemed humanity, all of His people. In Adam there is sin, death, judgement, condemnation while in Christ there is grace, justification, righteousness, and life. You see it laid out in Romans chapter 5 beginning in verse 12. Just as the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is imputed, it’s credited or given as a free gift to those who put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the same way Adam’s sin is imputed to his posterity, to all those that come after him. And you were born under the consequences of this broken covenant, born under the consequences of Adam’s sin.

Now for our purposes, I want you to focus with me on particular facts that are true from this text with respect to all of us born in Adam. Look with me at verse 14, and note this in verse 14, that – ***death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam.*** – Even those who had not sinned as Adam did in the garden. Even those who had not willingly and voluntarily sinned as Adam had sinned. What can be said of them? Death reigns over them. Now think with me. Look at verse 15 – ***For if by the one man’s offense many died*** – I want you to focus on that clause – ***if by the one man’s offense*** – Who’s the one man? Adam. Through his offense what happens? Many died. Verse 16. Focus in on this statement. – ***For the judgement which came from one offense resulted in condemnation.*** – The implication there is condemnation for many. The judgement which came from one offense resulted in condemnation for many. Look at verse 17. Focus in on this phrase. – ***For if by the one man’s offense, death reigned through the one*** – We’re

building a case, aren't we? We're seeing what Paul's argument is here. The effects of Adam's sin are far-reaching on Adam's descendants. The one man sins and it affects the many who are born in him.

Look at verse 18, ***Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation*** – verse 19 – ***by one man's disobedience many were made sinners.*** – Do you see? We put that in the context of verse 12 – ***just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned*** – It is true that all have sinned; but the point of Romans chapter 5, beginning in verse 12, is the fact that we all sinned in Adam. We have the consequences of Adam's sin imputed or credited to us. Why? Because Adam is our federal head. Adam is our representative. Adam was there in the garden and broke the covenant and now we, his descendants, are all born under the penalty of that broken covenant. We are in Adam. We inherit from Adam a sin nature. Now that's what we see here in Roman's chapter 5.

John Murray, in a book called "The Imputation of Adam's Sin", he says this: *"All derive – all people derive – from Adam by natural generation – by birth – a corrupt nature, and that therefore original sin – the original sin of Adam – is passed on by propagation."* – Just as those who are born again in Christ have His righteousness imputed or credited to them, those who are first born in Adam have his sin imputed or credited to them.

Now many would stand up in objection to this thought. And we need to think about that for a moment. Somebody might say, "Well, listen, wait a minute. That's not fair. If I was in the garden I would never have taken that." Yeah. But they object to that notion of representation. It just doesn't seem fair that we would have someone represent us. If you have a problem with Adam's representation then there's no room for Christ's representation. The Lord in masterful, infinite wisdom, and goodness, and grace, and mercy, has instituted headship so that we who have fallen in Adam might be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. If you have a problem with Adam's imputation then you definitely are creating for yourself a problem with Christ's imputation.

We need righteousness to stand before a holy God. Why? Because we have no righteousness of our own. We are all sinners, born sinners. We have no righteousness to stand before a holy God. We are wicked. We offended Him with our sin. Where is that righteousness going to come from? I don't know anyone righteous who can give me that righteousness. I don't have a perfect grandmother who can give me the gift of righteousness. The only place that righteousness will come is the perfect One, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is sinless and perfectly righteous. And His righteousness, His perfect life is given freely

to me as a gift through faith. If I will put my faith and trust in Him, then I can be saved. I can be forgiven of all my sin. I can be washed clean and I can stand before a holy God as though I had not sinned. Why? Because He didn't sin! And He went to the cross – a perfect sacrifice, a perfect sacrifice for sin. Took my penalty upon Himself that I might be spared, I might be saved. It's a glorious truth. It's the foundation of Christianity, isn't it? We have to deal with the reality of our imputed sin, deal with the reality of our original sin and deal with the reality of our sin by nature that we do every day. We've incurred judgment. We've incurred guilt before God.

It's for this reason that Adam's sin – and his sin is then imputed to all of his descendants after him – that David could say in Psalm 51 verse 5, – ***Behold I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin my mother conceived me.*** – The result of Adam's sin is universal sin. There is now no one who is good. There is no one who is righteous. All are under the judgment of God. All are under the just condemnation of God. All are deserving of eternal hell fire, deserving of hell. Job chapter 15 verse 14, ***What is man that he could be pure? And he who was born of a woman that he could be righteous?*** – He cannot. It's not possible. He cannot be.

The Fall of Man had a devastating impact on the condition of the human race. We see the effects of the fall all around us, don't we? In considering the effects of the fall, next we have to ask ourselves, "What is the extent to which the fall has corrupted the heart and soul of man? What is the extent to which sin has corrupted?" Turn with me just a few pages back to Romans chapter 3, and look there beginning at verse 9. What is the extent now to which sin has corrupted men? In the opening chapters of this letter to the church at Rome, Paul is building a case that no one may stand before God as righteous. We have no righteousness of our own. All people, Jew and Gentile alike, are guilty, they are condemned for their sin. Man is not basically good, no matter what everyone else seems to think. Man is basically evil. Man is basically guilty. Man is basically condemned. Man is basically, from their birth, citizens of hell already.

His case against Gentiles and then Jews arrives at its climax in chapter 3, verse 9, where Paul asks, – ***What then? Are we better than they? Not at all.*** – Paul says – ***For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks*** – Meaning the whole human race. Jews and non-Jews, meaning everybody. We've charged everybody – ***that they are all under sin.*** – You and I here today, we are all under sin unless you're in Jesus Christ. We're all under sin. Verse 10 – ***As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;*** – There is not one born in Adam who can stand as righteous before a Holy God. Not one. All our so-called righteous deeds are as filthy rags. Verse 11 – ***There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God.*** – Natural man may have a knowledge of the Bible. Natural man may have an

intellectual assent to the facts of the truths of the Bible, but he doesn't get it. Natural man cannot discern those things because they're spiritually discerned. He has no Spirit-wrought appreciation of the Bible, has no Spirit-wrought desire for God.

Listen, you can walk a dog under the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and the dog's not going to get it. He's not going to be able to look up and see the beauty and the majesty of that work of art. He can't get it. Michelangelo could paint the side of a barn and it's not going to cause the pigs to take their face out of the slop to behold the wonder of that masterpiece. Not going to happen. Why? Because they don't get it. It's not in the dog's nature to get it. It's not in the pig's nature to get it. They don't see it. Man's reason, man's understanding is blinded by his sin. And if you sit there today and you say to yourself, "Well, I'm not blinded," that's even more reason that you are! Because you can't see it. Man's understanding, man's reason, man's desires are perverted. They are corrupt by sin. And as you sit there and you think to yourself, "This is not a feel-good message. Who does this guy think he is?" I didn't write these truths in your Bible, this is what God's diagnosis of you is. Your mind, your reason, your heart, your emotions, your will, your imaginations are corrupted, and perverted, and polluted by sin. And it's that much more exacerbating of that truth, that you don't see it and don't get it. Even more evidence of your great need, that you are like the dog or like the pig. Do you see?

Verse 12 – ***They have all turned aside;*** – every single one of them – ***they have all together become unprofitable;*** – the word means "worthless" – ***there is none who does good, no not one.*** – Over, over and over again in the Greek, "There is not one... there is not one... there is not one...there is not one." Do you see? How many are good? There is not one. How many are righteous? There is not one. How many seek God? There is not one. How many understand? There is not one who understands. Do you see? That's Paul's point here. There are no good people! Striking, isn't it? How much clearer do you have to say it? Why is it that 80% of evangelicals profess that people are basically good? It's because a vast majority of evangelicalism isn't reading their Bible.

Every person has turned aside into sin and rebellion and has rendered themselves worthless. Not only is this depravity universal, this depravity is also complete and total. Notice the difference. Not only is the depravity universal in that it extends to every living soul, but the depravity is also complete in that it corrupts the entirety of man.

Just as this depravity is seen in every man, the evidence of this depravity is seen in every part of man. Look at verse 13 – ***Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the***

poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. – Now notice this poetic device that Paul is using here beginning in verse 13. Quoting Old Testament psalms. Listen. Notice how Paul, quoting the Old Testament, refers to the extent of their depravity – throat, tongues, lips, and mouth. In other words, everything to do with what they say, everything to do with that. It's total corruption, everything that comes out of your mouth. Everything that comes out of your mouth apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, apart from faith in Him, apart from the work of God's Spirit, is tainted, polluted with corruption. Some of the most observable confirmations of man's depravity are the thoughts, feelings, emotions, ideas, philosophies and plans that proceed forth out of his mouth. Where does it come from? It comes out of his heart and then out of his mouth.

Now, what Paul's saying in verse 13 and 14 is that man certainly cannot talk the talk. Why? Because he's depraved. He's corrupt. He can't talk the talk. Maybe he can walk the walk. Maybe he can walk the walk. Look at verse 15. No. – ***Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways;*** – in their paths. The path of peace – ***the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.*** – They're blinded. They are lost. This is where the concept of being lost comes from. Lost and hopeless, corrupted and destitute, depraved. Man, apart from the provision that God has made for sin, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, man is hopeless. He is – ***without God and without hope in this world.*** – And he hates, and despises, and he leaves destruction in his wake – ***feet swift to shed blood... destruction... misery are in their*** (paths)... ***the way of peace they have not known.***

Verse 19, ***Now we know*** – we know – ***that whatever the law says it says to those who are under the law.*** – Who are those who are under the law? Everyone born in Adam, everyone. – ***We know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped.*** Just put your hand over your mouth and shut your mouth. You have nothing to say. No room for defense. You have nothing that you can bring to your defense. Your mouth is stopped and that the whole world, all the world may become guilty before God. This is what you should acknowledge from this truth of the Bible. You are guilty. You are guilty. And because you are guilty, you are condemned. And because you are condemned, you have no hope in and of yourself. You will stand before a righteous and holy God and give an account for all the evil that you've done. And God has already proclaimed a death sentence against you for that sin. You will give an account.

Therefore – verse 20 – ***by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight*** – because, why? – ***for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*** This is the Bible's depiction of the sinfulness of man. This is what the Bible says about you. This is what the Bible says about me. Often the simple reading of the text

might cause someone to stand up and object. You don't have to say anything about it. You just have to read it. There's no one good. There's no one righteous. No one understands. No one seeks God. "Wait a minute! That doesn't sound right to me. Man isn't that bad." Most people, a vast majority of people, and most professing Christians believe that man is basically good.

Here Paul is stating in no uncertain terms that there is no one good. There's no one good, not one. It all depends on your standard, doesn't it? It all depends on your standard. Is man basically good? Well, compared to what? Compared to what? If Satan is our standard, well, I'm doing okay. But if God's own character is our standard, if God's law which represents, reflects His perfect nature, if that's our standard, if His own perfect Word, His own holy law is my standard, then I look into the mirror of that law and I conclude there is no one good, no, not one. And I am the chief of sinners.

If you look to God's law, the mirror of God's law. And you look there at what it says about you, and you're looking rightly, you're looking rightly, you look into that law and you see, "No, there's no one good. But in particular, in particular, I am not good. In particular, I have sinned against God. In particular, the weight and guilt and conviction of my own sin come flooding in upon me just as it did for Adam and Eve that day in the garden. There is no one good. No, not one. God's law charges you. Do you see?"

One theologian said this. He said: *This doctrine...[it's] often referred to as the doctrine of total depravity... this doctrine which declares that men are dead in sin, [it doesn't] mean that all men are equally bad, [it doesn't mean] that any man is as bad as he could be, Nor [does it mean] that anyone is entirely destitute of virtue, nor that human nature is evil in itself, nor that man's spirit is inactive, [and] much less does it mean that the body is dead. [What does it mean?] What it does mean is that since the fall man rests under the curse of sin, [that] he is actuated by wrong principles, [and that] he is wholly unable to love God or to do anything meriting salvation... It is in this sense that man since the fall is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil. [He possesses a fixed bias of his will. You see?] He possesses a fixed bias of the will against God, and instinctively [you could say naturally] and willingly turns to evil. He is an alien by birth and a sinner by choice.*

When people object to this doctrine, they're most often objecting to a theological strawman. "This doctrine states that we are all Hitler's, running around as evil we as we could..." No, that's not what the doctrine's stating at all. And you don't know what you're talking about. Read your Bible. "Man has no choice. There are people out there would want to be good, but they've been rendered..." No, that's not what the Bible is saying. That's not what the doctrine teaches.

I think a better description of this doctrine is not total depravity but radical depravity. It's not that man is as bad as man could be. It doesn't mean that all men are equally evil. It doesn't mean that there isn't some worldly virtue in the things that men do, or that human nature is evil in itself, or that man has no choice, or that man's spirit is inactive in all of his choices – no. But man is radically depraved in every faculty of his being, corrupted and polluted by sin.

This all leads to radical inability. Radical depravity leads to radical inability, inability. You'll see how these two things connect. Every aspect of our humanity is corrupted by sin – man's intellect, man's will, man's emotions, all corrupted by sin. All of this being said, inside and out, inside and out man displays that he is a fallen creature. This leads to total inability. With respect to total inability then, his inward corruption has rendered man incapable of doing anything that is pleasing to God in his own flesh. He is corrupted through and through by sin. And God is holy and righteous and altogether separate from sinners. Do you see? He is unable to subject himself to the law of God, to the will of God. Indeed, he cannot. He is unable to obey God and does not have the capacity to repent in and of himself, to turn from his sin. He cannot change himself. He is radically depraved. Man, therefore, is totally, entirely, and completely unable to save himself – the doctrine of total inability. He will not in and of himself seek after God in faith or pursue the truth of God as it is in Christ.

Puritans used to talk about, how man, unable to seek after God, could pursue salvation. Put yourself under the preaching of God's Word. Put yourself around godly people. Pray. Read your Bible. Do those things through which God effects a works salvation in the heart of a sinner. Pursue salvation. You're not going to seek after God in the way that God has called every man to because of your inward corruption. Seek mercy from Him then in that state. The Puritans used to call it 'pursuing salvation.' And if we're to rightly understand salvation, if we're to rightly understand the gospel, rightly understand God's saving work in Christ, then we must first rightly understand the condition of the one who needs to be saved. You can't understand those things apart from understanding the condition of the one who needs salvation.

If we have a light view or a deficient view or a defective view of sin, then we are likely to have a deficient or defective view of the means necessary for the sinner to be saved. If you believe your problem to be nothing more than a headache, then you might take a couple of aspirin and go to bed. Make an Aspirin PM and then go to bed. If all you believe your problem to be is a headache, well, you'll take the action necessary to remedy your headache. But if you believe your problem to be a brain tumor, then your course of action and the urgency with which you take action will be radically different. Do you see?

There's no sense of urgency associated with the one, and there's a life-and-death desperation associated with the other, a desperation associated with the other. No fear associated with the one. We don't fear when we get a headache. But if you thought for a moment you had a brain tumor, fear would grip your heart. Do you see? With one you're in total control. Just go to the cabinet. Get an aspirin. With the other you're out of control. You can't excise a tumor out of your brain yourself. You can't do it.

Turn with me to Ephesians chapter 2. We'll see another example of this. Ephesians chapter 2, the text read earlier in your hearing. Listen, your radical depravity is exceedingly and infinitely far worse than a brain tumor. You will suffer the consequences of that depravity for eternity if you fail to turn from your sin and trust in God's remedy. Ephesians chapter 2. Look at the language of depravity beginning in verse 1. Listen for the language of depravity, what Paul says we are by birth. Verse 1 – **And you** – he's talking to believers in the church. And you – **He made alive**. God did the work to make them alive who were formerly dead in trespasses and sins. That's the way they're described. What was our condition in sin? Dead. Dead was your condition in sin. There's no room to argue with that? What was your condition in sin? Dead. What does God do for dead sinners? He makes them alive – something you can't do for yourself. You're dead. Stop arguing with Scripture.

Verse 2 – you were dead in trespasses and sins, verse 2 – ***in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.*** Apart from a sovereign work of God to make you alive from being dead in your sins, you are born a son or daughter of disobedience. Apart from the Lord, apart from the work of God to make you alive in Christ, you are born a son or a daughter of disobedience.

Verse 3 – ***among whom we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*** When Paul refers to "by nature", what he refers to "by nature" is that which we are. It's what we are. It's who we are. It's our being, the character of the person, the makeup of the person. It's that which you could say we inherit from our ancestors in our context today, that which characterizes the person in view of their origins or in view of their beings. Who we are we are in our inner most being by nature. And Paul says here we are by nature children of wrath, just as the others. Environment, experience, sinful influences do not make you by nature a child of wrath. Do you see? That's not what makes you sin or makes you a sinner. You don't get it from influence or environment or experience. You are born, you are by nature a child of wrath. You were brought forth in iniquity. Do you see?

That is who you are by nature. Are we sinners because we sin? Or do we sin because we are sinners? We sin because we are born sinners. We sin because we are born sinners. No one has to teach their children to sin. If you got kids you can say, Amen! No one has to teach their child to sin. No one has to teach their child to lie. No one has to teach their child to take something that doesn't belong to them. No one has to teach their child to be angry, to murder in their heart. One said that God made them small to keep them from killing us in our sleep. No one has to teach their children to sin. No parent in this room, with a straight face, can deny the doctrine of original sin, not one of you. Yeah, we see their little natures at work right from the beginning, don't we? Right from the beginning. Psalm chapter 58 verse 3 – **The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.**

Sons of disobedience. Children of wrath. Sinners are what we are by nature. You and I were born radically depraved. You can't blame your parents. It's not your red hair. It's not the fact that you're Puerto Rican, or Irish, or old and curmudgeonly like me. You can't blame it on anything. We are born by nature radically depraved. A vast majority of people in this world have no mental health issues. They have no mental health issues. All people in this world have spiritual health issues.

Mass shootings are absolutely out of control in this country. It is, you know, again, we can become so dulled to these things that we don't notice the deplorable state that we're in. It's like that old analogy of the frog in the water. Frog's in the boiling pot. The temperature's being turned up on the water and the frog has no sense to be able to discern the increasing temperature and the frog eventually boils to death. We're not to be of this world. We're in this world, not to be of this world. But this world can have an influence on our hearts and minds. That's why we need to be so submersed in God's word and separating ourselves from friendship with this world because it can have a corrupting influence on us.

Now, mass shootings are absolutely out of control in this country. It is absolutely amazing. People are murdering each other left and right, and people are calling it a mental health crisis. A mental health crisis? "We'll get them into treatment. Give them a pill!" That's going to solve everything. We just need a diagnosis for it. Give them some 'ism' and then give them some medication. "That should fix everything. That should fix everything." Sixty million babies have been slaughtered in the name of convenience. Sixty – that's in our country alone since Roe v. Wade – sixty million babies. That's not far from that that happens every year worldwide. We are literally dripping with the effects of pornography. Everywhere you turn marriage rates are down. Childlessness is up. Sodomy is normalized. The main reason that most people go to a health clinic today is for an STD. Why? Because depraved man will take

absolutely no responsibility for his rabid lust for immorality. And some might say, “That’s natural. That’s normal. It’s a mental health crisis.”

Everything today is given an ‘ism.’ There’s tremendous confusion over when or even if someone should ever feel remorse or regret. In other words, you go to most of the secular psychologists, you go for counseling today – even sadly, sadly, quote/unquote, Christian counselors – now, what are they trying to do? They’re trying to offload the responsibility from you and finding blame for it somewhere else, attaching to it an ‘ism,’ wanting to follow up that ‘ism’ with medication, and confused, every step along the way as to whether someone should actually feel remorse or regret for the things that they’ve done. We want to define it as an ‘ism’ and then suppress the feelings of guilt and shame associated with that sin. As it relates to our sinful condition we want to suppress that with medication rather than dealing with the moral responsibility that we truly have before God for our sin. “Besides, we just need to feel better about ourselves. That’s what we need. We need to feel better about ourselves. We need self-esteem. I’m basically a good person. I know what the problem is. I know what the problem is. The problem is everyone else who doesn’t make me feel as good about me as I feel about me. The problem is everyone else who wants to say that I’m guilty or accountable. I can’t be the problem. So everyone else is the problem. I’m not guilty. Society, other people, intolerant bigots, those people down at the church, those are the ones who are shaming us – they’re the problem.” The issue is, the issue always has been, radical depravity, radical depravity. That doesn’t mean that there aren’t real physiological problems that people have, doesn’t mean that they don’t face real physiological issues. But man is body and soul, body and soul. We can address physiological issues related to the body. The Bible, God’s Word, addresses man’s soul problem. When it comes to the soul, there’s only one true source of help and wisdom.

The doctrine of total or radical depravity explains or describes the Bible’s exceedingly serious view of sin. Sin is exceedingly sinful. Man is radically depraved. Yes, man is that bad and yes, God is that mad. And if you don’t view your sin through the lens of a biblical informed understanding, then it’s going to have an impact on the way that you view guilt. It’s going to have an impact on the way that you view your own sin. It’s going to have an impact on the way that you view the remedy. It may cause you to struggle with notions of judgment, or notions of justice. If you’ve ever found yourself sitting before the Bible and looking at God’s judgment or God’s justice against a sinner, thinking to yourself, “Wow man, I cannot believe that He actually did that against those people,” you have a distorted, unbiblical view of sin, a distorted, unbiblical low view of God’s law, God’s justice, God’s holiness. It may lead you to

embittered blame-shifting rather than personal responsibility. It will dull, cool, or even suppress what should be our wonder and amazement, and what the Lord freely offers to sinners in the gospel.

Here in Ephesians there, again in chapter 2, look at verse 4. We are born radically depraved sinners.

Verse 4 – **But God** – I love the buts in the Bible. But God – **who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ. By grace** – and all of grace – **you have been saved. He raised us up together, made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (so) that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches** – That is an understatement – **that He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.** – You can't do it yourself. You can't clean your own self up. You can't save yourself. Why? Total depravity, total inability. God must do that work. – **For** – verse 10 – **we are His workmanship.** – It's not we, "our own workmanship". It's not what it says. I am "His and some of my workmanship". – No! We are His workmanship – **created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

If I see myself as a good person, then I will never comprehend the depths of my sin or the desperate state of my own soul and my desperate need for the Lord Jesus Christ. If I see myself as a good person, I will make ruin of the gospel. I will not come to see Him as the surpassing treasure that He is. If I don't see my sin, then I will not see the cross as the sacrificial act of love that it is, or His work as the supreme sacrifice that it is. If I do not comprehend my depravity, then I will not recognize the infinite chasm that exists between Him as holy God and me as sinful depraved man. I won't see the chasm between those two realities. It's only in the context of understanding sin rightly that I may magnify the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ rightly. And it's only when you see yourself radically depraved that you will flee to God's only remedy, the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ saves sinners. Jesus Christ saves sinners. Acknowledge who you are before Him. Take heed according to His Word. You are depraved and God is holy. You are a sinful person, a sinful man, a sinful woman, listen, you are a sinful boy, a sinful girl, and God is holy, and God is just. He will deal with your sin against Him. He's not going to sweep it under the rug. He's not arbitrary or capricious. God is just. God is true to His Word. God is true to His law. And your sin carries the sentence of death. Condemnation hangs over your head already. Turn from your sin.

God says, listen, – *I (take) no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked (might) turn from his wicked way and live.* Live, live! Turn to Christ! Trust Him alone. You can't... Listen. It doesn't matter how many masses you go to, doesn't matter how many beads you rub, doesn't matter how many prayers you say, doesn't matter how many times you walk the aisle asking Jesus into your heart, God is the one who saves sinners! Flee to Him for mercy. Flee to Him alone for mercy. Don't put any trust in those things. Those things are powerless to save. Put your trust and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. He is the One who saves sinners. And commit yourself to following Him. He is our salvation. He is our righteousness. When we are filthy, depraved sinners, He is our righteousness. Amen? Jesus Christ came to save sinners. Turn to Christ. All praise, honor, and glory be to the One who demonstrated His own love toward us in this, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.