

"There Is None Who Does Good"
(Romans 3:10-12)

Introduction: In the last few weeks we have seen that the first Adam was placed under a probation in the garden for the whole human race, which probation he subsequently failed. The result of his failure was that he plunged the whole human race into everlasting sin and misery. Not only do we incur the guilt of the first Adam, but we inherit his corruption as well, which is called original sin. The way that this becomes apparent to us, is through the holy Law of God which is able to point out our sin and to show us our unrighteousness. It points us to Christ, who alone kept the Law of God perfectly, in order that we might be justified by His absolutely flawless righteousness. But what we want to focus on this evening is that condition in which the Fall left all of Adam's posterity, that which is the result of the corruption that all have inherited.

In Romans 3:10-12, we have one of the most explicit passages in the Scriptures on the state of man as he comes into the post-Fall world. Sadly this passage is either neglected or passed over entirely in the minds of most Christians today. But here we see man's condition in the eyes of God as one who can do absolutely nothing to commend himself to God. Paul, up to this point, has been arguing that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin, and then arrives at his conclusion. Verse 10 affirms that there is not one righteous man in the world. There is no one on the face of the planet who was ever born through ordinary means that can be declared just before God on the basis of his own righteousness. To ensure that his idea gets across, Paul adds, "not even one." Furthermore, he says that there is no one who understands and who seeks for God. That is, no one is affected by the divine truth, who has right affections for God, so that he seeks for God in the way of true desire, worship and obedience. Men have the natural faculties to know the truth of God's Word, but they have no love in their hearts for it. As a result, no one will seek Him in their own strength. And lastly, blinded by sin to God's perfections and loveliness and to that of the truth, they have all turned out of the way and have become utterly depraved. So that Paul says, there is no one who does what is right, that is, what is right in God's sight, there is not even as many as one. And what I want you to see this evening is,

Since the Fall, every man, woman and child that has been born into the world through ordinary means, is dead in sin and completely unable to do anything that would commend them to God.

- I. *Everyone Coming Into the World Is Totally Depraved.*
 - A. *Total Depravity Means that All of Man's Faculties Have Been Affected by Sin.*
 1. *There is no area of the human person that is not affected by it.*
 - a. *Man's physical body has sown within it the seeds of that corruption, so that it eventually terminates in death.*

- (i) Remember as part of the curse which was pronounced upon man he was to return to the dust.
- (ii) God warned man that in the day that he sinned, he would surely die.

b. Man's intellectual faculties are also affected, so that they do not work as well as they would have.

- (i) It is hard to conceive of how intelligent man would be in an unfallen state.
- (ii) We know that today, individuals vary in their ability to understand and to remember certain things.
- (iii) But it is inconceivable that man's intellect would have improved after the Fall, so the conclusion is that Adam, and all of his posterity, would have at least as great, and surely greater, both intellect and memory, than the greatest that mankind has ever seen.
- (iv) And **so**, man's intellect is affected by the Fall.

c. Man's moral faculties are also affected, so that he no longer delights in God as his highest and greatest good.

- (i) Man originally delighted in God as the greatest object of his desire.
- (ii) But according to our text, man no longer seeks after God, but now he does all he can to suppress it. According to Romans 1:18, "FOR THE WRATH OF GOD IS REVEALED FROM HEAVEN AGAINST ALL UNGODLINESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF MEN, WHO SUPPRESS THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS."

2. Every area of man's being is affected, but every area is not equally affected.

a. Man is physically dying but is not dead.

- (i) The antediluvians, or those who lived prior to the flood, lived close to one thousand years.
- (ii) However, after the flood, man's life span gradually decreased. Moses says in the 90th Psalm, "AS FOR THE DAYS OF OUR LIFE, THEY CONTAIN SEVENTY YEARS, OR IF DUE TO STRENGTH EIGHTY YEARS" (V. 10).
- (iii) The point is, man still has a life span. All humanity was not entirely eradicated by the Fall.

b. Man's natural abilities were affected by the Fall, but not destroyed.

- (i) Man still has a mind that he can use to reason, whatever the amount of intelligence he might possess.
- (ii) Man still has the use of his eyes to see, his ears to hear, his hands to grasp, his feet to carry him to places he wishes to go.

- c. *But man's moral abilities, in as much as they used to reflect the image of God, are now destroyed.*
- ti) Man is still a moral creature, but morally depraved.
 - (ii) He no longer reflects the image of God in this area, but that likeness has been effaced.
 - (iii) He still has the capacity to reflect this image, but he in fact does not.
 - (iv) And because of this moral depravity which man now possesses, it binds his will against anything that is pleasing to God, "THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."
 - (v) This is the reason that "THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS," that is, no one that has a desire for God, has a "saving" understanding of these things, and the reason why, "THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD," because, "THEY HAVE ALL TURNED ASIDE FROM THE WAY, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME DEPRAVED" (v. 11-12).
 - (vi) The sad commentary on man after the fall was, "THEN THE LORD SAW THAT THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN WAS GREAT ON THE EARTH, AND THAT EVERY INTENT OF THE THOUGHTS OF HIS HEART WAS ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY" (Gen. 6:5).
 - (vii) Solomon said, in his prayer of dedication for the Temple, that, "THERE IS NO MAN WHO DOES NOT SIN" (1 Kings 8:46).
 - (viii) Jeremiah said, "THE HEART IS MORE DECEITFUL THAN ALL ELSE AND IS DESPERATELY SICK; WHO CAN UNDERSTAND IT?" (17:9).
 - (ix) And David writes, "BEHOLD, I WAS BROUGHT FORTH IN INIQUITY, AND IN SIN MY MOTHER CONCEIVED ME" (Ps. 51:5).
 - (x) Unregenerate man sins at all times in his thoughts, words and deeds.

B. *But Total Depravity Does Not Mean that Man Is as Bad as He Could Be.*

1. *Some reject the doctrine of total depravity because they see that man can and does do many outward acts of kindness.*
 - a. *It is true that there are those in the world that put all of God's people to shame by their deeds of kindness.*
 - (i) Maybe you've thought about the deeds of a Mother Theresa, or of those who are professedly outside the church who perform charitable acts far beyond the average Christian.
 - (ii) Maybe you've also thought about those who have given their lives in order to save others, when they themselves were not Christians.
 - b. *But this is not a refutation of the total depravity of man, because the doctrine does not teach that unregenerate man never does outwardly good acts.*

2. *Total depravity does not mean that man is as bad as he could be. It simply means that man is affected in his total being by sin.*
 - a. *It refers to the extent of that depravity.*
 - b. *There is no part of a man that is not affected.*
 - c. *And it refers also to the intensity of that depravity. Man could not be more depraved than he is.*

3. *The confusion comes when we do not take into account that God is very graciously restraining sin in the unbeliever.*
 - a. *Failure to understand this can leave Christians wondering why they should preach the Gospel to those who outwardly seem better than themselves.*
 - b. *But we must not confuse apparent outward good acts with the true righteousness which alone is acceptable to God.*
 - c. *The Bible tells us that God restrains the wickedness of men, in order that the world may continue until He has called out those whom He will bestow grace upon.*
 - (i) *Common grace, as it is called, is not redemptive grace bestowed upon the unbeliever, but it is the goodness of God toward that unbeliever.*
 - (ii) *It is defined as "Every favor short of salvation which the world enjoys from God."*
 - (iii) *God is the source of all good things, "EVERY GOOD THING BESTOWED AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE, COMING DOWN FROM THE FATHER OF LIGHTS, WITH WHOM THERE IS NO VARIATION, OR SHIFTING SHADOW" (James 1:17).*
 - (iv) *It is clear from the Scripture that the unregenerate are totally depraved, incapable of doing any good thing, undeserving of any good from God, and under His wrath.*
 - (v) *And yet, the unregenerate receive good gifts from God and even perform some worthwhile accomplishments.*
 - (vi) *As a matter of fact, the Christian is to emulate this goodness of God in dealing with his enemies, "BUT LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, AND DO GOOD, AND LEND, EXPECTING NOTHING IN RETURN; AND YOUR REWARD WILL BE GREAT, AND YOU WILL BE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH; FOR HE HIMSELF IS KIND TO UNGRATEFUL AND EVIL MEN. BE MERCIFUL, JUST AS YOUR FATHER IS MERCIFUL" (Luke 6:35, 36).*
 - (vii) *And God restrains the working out of the moral depravity of men, in order to preserve the world while He graciously gathers His elect.*

II. Because Total Depravity Is Universal, Everyone Coming into the World Is Totally Unable to Do Anything to Commend Themselves to the Lord.

A. The Result of the Total Depravity of Man Is that He Is

Entirely Unable to Do Anything to Please God.

1. A work that pleases God must meet certain criteria if it is to be acceptable to God.
 - a. In order for someone to do something that would truly please God it must be done out of a heart of love to God. This must be the motivation.
 - b. It must be done according to the righteous standard of God's Word. That is, it must be done in the way that God says to do it.
 - c. And it must be done with no other end than that of giving all the glory and honor to God. It cannot be done for self-aggrandizement.
 - d. No work of the Unregenerate ever falls into any of these categories. The wickedness of his heart repels him from any love to God, any desire to live according to His Word, and any motivation to seek His glory.

2. But total inability means more than the fact that he does not do anything to please God, he in fact cannot do anything to please Him.
 - a. The ungodly cannot do any of the things which are required for something to be a truly meritorious work.
 - (i) Christ said that a bad tree cannot produce good fruit (Matt. 7:18), it is not able to do **so**.
 - (ii) Paul said, "FOR THE MIND SET ON THE FLESH IS DEATH, BUT THE MIND SET ON THE SPIRIT IS LIFE AND PEACE, BECAUSE THE MIND SET ON THE FLESH IS HOSTILE TOWARD GOD; FOR IT DOES NOT SUBJECT ITSELF TO THE LAW OF GOD, FOR IT IS NOT EVEN ABLE TO DO SO; AND THOSE WHO ARE IN THE FLESH CANNOT PLEASE GOD" (Rom. 8:6-8).
 - (iii) The unregenerate is here said to be unable to subject himself to the law of God or to please Him.
 - (iv) If he cannot subject himself to the holy standard of God's own morality, then it is clear that he cannot please God.
 - (v) It is not that he may not, but he cannot. He does not have the ability. It was lost in the Fall.

 - b. **But** we must also remember that for the Christian, his works are not completely pure in themselves either.
 - (i) Everything that we do is also mixed with a measure of sin, because of our indwelling corruption of heart.
 - (ii) But that is why we need our Mediator to make them acceptable to God, and it is only in Christ that they are.

B. *In Consequence of this, Man Is Unable to Do Anything to Save Himself. It Is Entirely the Work of God.*

1. *Man can do nothing to engraciate himself to God, but this is not the same as saying that there is nothing that he can properly do toward his salvation.*
 - a. *Man cannot do anything that is meritorious, that is, worthy of reward, in the sight of God.*
 - (i) This we have already seen in the fact that he has the wrong motives, the wrong standard, and the wrong ends.
 - (ii) He is averse to them by reason of the wickedness of his heart.
 - b. *The Bible also states that man by himself is unable to come to Christ. Jesus said, "NO ONE CAN COME TO ME, UNLESS THE FATHER WHO SENT ME DRAWS HIM" (John 6:44), the verb "draw" here, literally meaning "drag."*
 - c. *But this does not mean that he has no ability to do anything. Remember that man's natural faculties are still intact.*
 - (i) He can still see, walk, reason, and speak.
 - (ii) He is morally depraved, but this only affects what he will use his natural faculties for, it does not destroy his natural faculties.
 - d. *He can still use these to place himself under the means of grace, where, when God saves, this is the most likely place that He will.*
 - (i) Man cannot save himself by anything that he does, but he still has the ability to seek the Lord.
 - (ii) Because he can still see, he can read the Bible.
 - (iii) Because he can still walk, his legs can take him to church.
 - (iv) Because he can still hear, he can listen to a sermon.
 - (v) Because he can still speak, he can pray to God.
 - (vi) Because he can still think, he can meditate upon the warnings and promises of God.
 - (vii) There are things which he can do, although none of them are meritorious in themselves for reasons we have already mentioned.
 - (viii) But when God saves individuals, it is usually in the arena of the means of grace that He does it. God uses means to save His people.
- d. *This is the only proper counsel to give a man who has been commanded by the Scriptures to repent and to turn to Christ and realizes that he cannot do what God clearly commands him.*
 - (i) Yes, the Gospel call to men everywhere is to immediate repentance and belief in God.
 - (ii) But a man can only do what God has commanded him if he receives grace from Him.
 - (iii) If he has not received that grace, he should not therefore give up all hope and go back to a life of flagrant sin.

- (iv) Rather, he should, "SEEK THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND; CALL UPON HIM WHILE HE IS NEAR" (Is. 55:6).

2. *However, in the final analysis, it is God that must have mercy on him if he is to be saved, for all of his efforts to seek salvation amount to nothing more than further sin.*
- a. *No one sincerely seeks after God, and no one can apart from the grace of God.*
- (i) The unregenerate man does not have any desire for God. If that is so, you may ask what would motivate him to seek God?
 - (ii) It could only be for selfish motives, such as a ticket out of hell.
 - (iii) The unregenerate does not want to go to heaven where God is, but he most certainly doesn't want to go to hell to face unimaginable torment.
 - (iv) And so he seeks after God in order that God might grant him grace to change his heart.
- b. *But all the seeking of the unbeliever is hypocritical. and does not place God under any obligation to save him.*
- (i) Because he really loves his sin more than God, he really does not want God to change his heart.
 - (ii) But if his heart is not changed, he will most certainly end up in hell, and he doesn't want that either.
 - (iii) And so he seeks, but he does so hypocritically, and hypocritical seeking does not obligate God even one iota.
- c. *If the unregenerate is ever to be saved, it must be a sovereign act of God to quicken him to life.*
- (i) Sometimes, the Lord sovereignly and immediately regenerates an individual under the preaching of the Gospel, so that he reaches out and embraces Christ at once.
 - (ii) But in most cases, there is a process involved of awakening a person to their danger of perdition, and a gradual freeing them from their love of sin, before God actually quickens them, makes them alive, and gives them the ability to trust in Christ.
 - (iii) But in either case, it is always the grace of God which is the determining factor in the final analysis.

III. Uses.

- A. *If you are outside of Christ here this evening, you are commanded by the Scriptures to repent of your sins and to believe in Christ alone for salvation.*
1. *Your inability because of your own wickedness does not relieve you of the obligation to repent and believe in*

Christ unto salvation. It is God's commandment to all men and all are required to obey it.

2. You still have the natural faculty of choice, but you will not use it to come to Christ because you do not want to.
 3. How can you fault God for your decision when it is of your own free will that you will not embrace Christ?
 4. But it is the only hope for you or anyone outside of Christ. You must turn from your sins and trust in Christ alone for salvation if you are to be saved from the certain destruction which awaits you.
- B. But if you wickedly refuse to come to Christ, you must recognize that it is not within your own power to change your heart and incline it toward God.
1. You must seek after God while He may be found. You must call upon Him while He is near.
 - a. There is no other way, no other door, no other hope.
 - b. You must throw away your carnal security, anything that you are trusting in as your personal righteousness other than Christ, and pursue his mercy.
 - c. You cannot go away believing that you can turn to Christ any time you choose, as if you could live a life of sin, and then when you think you've had enough, to repent and believe.
 - d. You cannot do this apart from God's mercy.
 - e. Seek Him for that mercy. Make diligent use of the means by which He saves His people.
 - f. You must not give up seeking until you have found.
 2. And once you have been found by God, you must not stop your seeking, for it will only demonstrate that you have not found.
 - a. Many come to Christ and think that that is the end of the road, the goal has been reached.
 - b. But Christ-likeness is the goal, not entrance into the kingdom.
 - c. The true Christian has an altered heart; he is a new creation; he seeks after holiness as his main objective; and Christ-likeness is the epitome of that holiness which none of us will obtain this side of glory.
 - d. Paul did not stop when he entered the kingdom. He said, "NOT THAT I HAVE ALREADY OBTAINED IT, OR HAVE ALREADY BECOME PERFECT, BUT I PRESS ON IN ORDER THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF THAT FOR WHICH ALSO I WAS LAID HOLD OF BY CHRIST JESUS. BRETHREN, I DO NOT REGARD MYSELF AS HAVING LAID HOLD OF IT YET; BUT ONE THING I DO: FORGETTING WHAT LIES BEHIND AND REACHING FORWARD TO WHAT LIES AHEAD, I PRESS ON TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS. LET US THEREFORE, AS MANY AS ARE PERFECT, HAVE THIS ATTITUDE; AND IF IN ANYTHING YOU HAVE A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE, GOD WILL REVEAL THAT ALSO TO YOU" (Phil. 3:12-15).
 - e. If you believe that you have come to Christ, and yet you have not progressed at all since that time,

you are not pressing forward, but are living as you were when you first made your profession, you can have no assurance that you have even entered the kingdom of God.

- f. Continue to move ahead, press on to Christ-likeness, for this is what you were called to.*
- C. And for those of you who have received God's mercy, and are continuing to press forward, realize just how merciful God has been to you.*
- 1. You did nothing to merit the grace of God.*
 - 2. You did not have it in your heart of yourself to come to Him.*
 - 3. You would have been perfectly happy going on in your way of sin, all the way down the path of destruction into hell.*
 - 4. But it is of God's doing that you are in Christ, and so He deserves all the praise.*
 - 5. You did not put yourself in Christ, you cannot keep yourself in the grace of Christ. Salvation is from first to last of the Lord.*
 - 6. Give thanks to Him, praise Him, serve Him with all your might, glorify Him with all you heart, mind, soul and strength, for this is what you owe Him. Amen.*