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Total Depravity (TULIP part 1)

March 7, 2021



For The King - Rocky Ramsey

“The depravity of man is at once the most empirically verifiable reality but at the same time the most intellectually resisted fact.” - Malcolm Muggeridge

“When you refuse to teach on the radical depravity of men, it is an impossibility that you bring glory to God, His Christ, and His cross, because the cross of Jesus Christ and the glory thereof is most magnified when it's placed in front of the backdrop of our depravity!” - Paul Washer

My guest joining me this week on the Sunday series is my brother Bryce. Bryce is getting his undergraduate degree in philosophy and hopes to get his MDiv. from a seminary after he completes his undergrad. He hopes to be a pastor shepherding Gods people one day.

Key Texts: Romans 1-3, Ephesians 2, Isaiah 64:6, Genesis 6:5, Romans 8:6-8

Sources: Calvin's Institutes, Matthew Henry's Commentary, Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter 6,9,10)

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-we-believe-about-the-five-points-of-calvinism> - > This document will be a source in every show note of this series. It contains an easily accessible 25 page paper about the 5 points of Calvinism. It is a very gracious and pastoral treatment of the subject and is a great starting point for the conversation. Each point of Calvinism has about 5 pages on the topic so its a real quick 15 minute read for each episode in this series.

Further Reading: Calvin's Institutes, The Grace of Godliness: An Introduction to Doctrine and Piety in the Canons of Dort by Matthew Barrett, Chosen by God by R.C. Sproul...THE BIBLE!!!!

<https://www.gotquestions.org/total-depravity.html>

<https://www.monergism.com/doctrine-total-depravity>

<https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/piper/depravity.html>

<https://www.ligonier.org/blog/tulip-and-reformed-theology-total-depravity/>

<http://lhim.org/blog/2014/02/06/three-arguments-against-total-depravity/> -> argument against total depravity

<http://people.cs.ksu.edu/~bbp9857/calvinism.html> -> article against total depravity. The telling statement in this article is, "Unfortunately, if we grant the first point, then the other four points can easily be proven as true, thus acknowledging that Calvinism is in fact true"

This whole episode that we did concerns the first point so if you accept the logic of this episode and the hermeneutic of the texts involved then we are in for a wild ride :D

Sunday Series Episode #5

listener interaction: fortheキングpodcast@gmail.com

Website still coming...eventually :)

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Transcript

(music) Hello, For The King listeners. Today I am joined with one of my pastors, Nate, and an intern at the church, Trent. They are at my local congregation that I am a part of.

They are going to help us walk through some of these points in this TULIP series that we are going through on the Sunday series. So the first point is Total Depravity in TULIP. We would just love if you guys could walk us through the history of that.

Maybe we can hit first the actual Reformed tradition and how it grows out of the history of the church. And then we can hit just exactly what Total Depravity is and why it's important for the Christian to understand. And it is found in God's Word.

Sure, yeah. Well, Rocky, thanks for inviting Trent and I to participate in your podcast. It's really a joy, brother.

Of course. So I'll start, Trent, if that's cool. And then if you want to jump in at any point in time, feel free to.

But as you're looking at what's just historically kind of been described as the Five Points of Calvinism, I think it's really important that we place them in their historical context. Right. So you've got the process of Reformation, 16th century.

And then afterwards, you end up with this more confessionally oriented Reformed

church. Right. And there was a strong emphasis on the sovereignty of God in salvation, the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation.

And some later doctrines that will even address this morning like the the Total Depravity of Man. That needs to be new ones. That needs to be described and defined.

Right. Because it can be often oftentimes misunderstood because people don't quite understand what's meant by Total Depravity. But you got the the process of Reformation in 16th century.

And then in response to some of the doctrines that were being taught within the Reformed tradition within the Reformed church, you have what's known as the remonstrance, the Arminian remonstrance, which is kind of a counter remonstrance to the teachings of the Reformed tradition. And that that is taking place in the early 17th century. Okay.

So kind of in response to the the Reformed tradition, you have the Arminian remonstrance. And it's in the Arminian remonstrance really that you have five primary points that arise, which the Senate of Dour is a response to. So the historical context that we get these five points as they're kind of growing up is really from a Senate that celebrated its 400th anniversary in 2019.

So the Senate itself was in 1619. And then we get what has been passed down to us as canons or rules from the Senate of Dour known as the Canons of Dour. And from that, we get what we tend to refer to today as the Five Points of Calvinism.

And that's known by the acronym TULIP. And again, you can look at how acronyms develop. But nonetheless, it stands for total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the saints.

Each one of those need to be nuanced and identified and described, right? Because it's only in our definition of them that we see that they're they're legitimate biblical doctrines. Yeah. And really, what's taking place again as as the Arminian remonstrance is taking place, these are these are just counterpoints.

There are some similarities, right? So even in the Arminian remonstrance, there is a general agreement upon total depravity. Now, the response or the answer to total depravity is going to be really distinct, right? From an Arminian perspective versus a Confessional reform perspective. Yeah.

But nonetheless, that's kind of the historical background. And oftentimes, people consider the Five Points of Calvinism, right? And they think that it's kind of a cold doctrine. Yeah.

But the reason they think that is they think that it's just a theological system. And really,

even to call it the Five Points of Calvinism, right, is anachronistic because it's taking place about a century after the life of Calvin. So, Calvin dies in the 16th century.

This is kind of developing in the early 17th century. So it's anachronism to describe it as the Five Points of Calvinism. But nonetheless, that's how we refer to it.

It's about realism. So we keep it because people tend to at least have some understanding, right? Exactly. So that's that's at least a little bit of the background of where these are growing up from.

And one thing that's really important is that that background helps us see that at the Senate of Dord, there really is a pastoral sensitivity that grows up, right? So each one of these points that we might call the Five Points are really embedded in a pastoral heart, in a pastoral sensitivity, in a promotion of biblical and godly piety. So that's kind of a little bit of the background, a little bit of the context that helps set the stage for each one of those particular points. So yeah, could you root it even further? Like, you know, we're talking 16th century.

I mean, that's still fairly old for the churches, like since its conception, like could you obviously it's it's biblical in nature. So it's rooted in the teachings of Paul, the apostle, and even like Christ himself in the gospels. It's clear to see our total depravity.

He knows what's in man. He knows what's in us. But even like church fathers and people like I know Augustine really had a very similar view of like free will and the depravity of man and all that.

So could you speak to that real quick? Yeah. Yeah. Just so it seems so orthodox rather than just a newer thing.

Right. And I would go even further back, right? This is this is an Old Testament teaching. Yeah.

Yeah. OK. Yeah.

Sure. Not just a Pauline teaching. This goes back to the establishment of the Old Testament books.

Right. You think about David's words in Psalm 51. Right.

I mean, yeah, a clear picture of the total depravity of man. And that transcends time because it's a true. So from the fall of Adam and Eve, all the way down to the present day, total depravity is one of the most objectively true doctrines that you could look at and say, yeah, it's true.

Pray through and through. Yeah. But if you if you look at and consider maybe say the early church fathers, there is a strong emphasis on the absolute sovereignty and

otherness, the uniqueness of God.

It's what's been classically referred to as classic Christian theism and then a biblical anthropology. Right. But one of the things that's really interesting is if you look at the early church fathers, they tend to at least emphasize the the the will of mankind.

OK, so so they they emphasize the reality that yes, mankind is fallen. We are sinful by nature and by choice. But they're also living in a day and age that is ripe with Greek and Roman philosophy that emphasize fatalism.

So we got to sit there and we're like, well, they're not going to have a whole treatise on these types of issues because one of the things they're dealing with is a fatalistic understanding of all things. Yeah. Fatalism is distinct from determinism or determinism.

But nonetheless, that's the context in which we're writing. So they do promote the responsibility of mankind to activate in such a way that would honor the Lord. So they do write with a heavy emphasis there.

But when you get to Augustine, you clearly see this continuation of thought. It's not as though it's unique to Augustine. You can see in the writings of Justin Martyr, you can see it in the writings of Irenaeus.

But you get to Augustine and you do see Augustine's emphasis on the totally depraved nature of man. And we can go into what's meant by total depravity here in a second. But you see that growing up in Augustine, you see it in his writings against Pelagius because Pelagius has argued for the general goodness of man where sin is is not something that is universally present or at least universally detrimental to mankind.

So you see that there. You see it also in other writings as well, not just Pelagius, but guys like John Cassian later on. So, I mean, it's there and it's present.

You see it throughout the Middle Ages as well. And as you start to work through the Middle Ages in that time period in particular, you start to see different ways of addressing total depravity and the simpleness of man. All of a sudden, the early church fathers had a distinct, let's be honest, a distinct view of baptism, what takes place in baptism.

But you see that played out through the Middle Ages as a way in which total depravity is addressed. So when baptism, the original sin washed away, total depravity man is washed away as an initial act of justification, which kind of plays itself forward. So nonetheless, that's kind of at least going back even further, the Reformation period into the early church fathers and post the early church fathers into more of a medieval period.

So do you want to add anything to that, Trent? It seems like a pretty good synopsis of

the history behind it. Yeah, that's kind of when going even all the way back to the Old Testament, specific texts like you mentioned Psalm 51 of just David saying, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." And you can just see that's really the entire trajectory of the Old Testament storyline. Since the fall of Adam, you just see a progressive spiral of humanity to the point in Genesis 6 where the Lord looks at man and all the thoughts of his heart are only evil all the time.

That's in the podcast. So it is. Even just the book of Judges, they just keep the cycle of... And that's kind of the question then is because you have these two lines.

You have the seat of the woman and the seat of the serpent. And it's interesting because sometimes those lines are blurred a little bit because it's hard to distinguish who really is the seat of the woman and who is the seat of the serpent. And longing then for when is this serpent crusher going to arise? Because sometimes you have the people of Israel, but sometimes there are people who are in Israel, nationally speaking, that show themselves to be the seat of the serpent.

Perfect example would be Saul. And then you have Gentiles who you would consider to be the seat of the serpent who show themselves to be the seat of the woman. Rahab and Ruth and various other than Gibeonites.

So there's the blurring of those lines, the longing for a serpent crusher, seeing that progressive spiral of mankind. And ultimately ending, you have the exile in Genesis 3 where Adam and Eve are exiled from the garden and then it culminates in the Babylonian exile when Israel, who is like a new Adam set in the new Eden is removed from the land. And so there's this pervasive sense of every time a new Adamic figure is raised up and you think this might be the guy, they show themselves to have the same... To be totally depraved.

To be totally depraved. They have the same tendencies and weaknesses and bent towards sin that befalls all mankind. And so the dear longing for this answer the question, when is somebody going to come that can conquer that? That's really, yeah.

Thanks so much for highlighting that because Bryce and I in the podcast, we made sure to highlight this. This literally is the bad news. Total depravity is kind of like the core bad news that warrants the good news.

Like when are we going to get the serpent crusher? So yeah, thanks for saying that. Well, thanks so much guys. Let's now just hit real quick.

Just real quick, total depravity fleshed out. We've kind of already started to hit it right there, but there's any last thing that just like a nice concise way of just understanding the doctrine. Well, one thing that's important, right, is some people will push back against the doctrine of total depravity and say, well, it's not... You won't find those words

in Scripture, right? Especially you won't find total depravity right next to another.

And that's really an important point to draw out is that these theological categories are second order language to try to describe and accurately define biblical categories. So we're just taking second order language and trying to use it to define properly biblical data, the biblical storyline. So we're considering total depravity, right? A couple of ways that it could be misunderstood is total depravity is not absolute depravity.

So what the distinction is is that absolute depravity says we are as bad as we possibly can be. And that's not the doctrine of total depravity. Total depravity doesn't argue that we're as bad as we possibly can be.

As a matter of fact, God's mercy restrains us from being as bad as we possibly can be. Praise God for his mercy, right? What total depravity does entail, what it is trying to address, is the reality that every aspect of our person is impacted by sin. So sometimes individuals will argue that it's just a moral or a volitional impact such that our wills are depraved, but our thinking can still be relatively clear.

Yeah. Again, total depravity would say, no, that's not the case. As a matter of fact, every aspect of your person has been impacted and affected by sin from the thoughts that you think to the actions that you make.

Your biology too. Yeah. So sin is so pervasive that it has impacted our whole person.

And because we're body and soul, it has impacted both our body and our soul. There are realities of total depravity that are total in that sense. It affects our total person.

So I just think that's a good caveat to put in there. That's helpful. Because sometimes people will reject total depravity just because they think what's meant by that is absolute depravity.

Yeah, that's good. It was the late, great R.C. Sproul in his work, "Chosen by God," as he walks through each one of these categories. The way that he describes it, he kind of re-words each one of these categories.

And in total depravity, the way that he describes it is absolute inability. Because sin has been so pervasive in our persons that we are absolutely unable, apart from the gracious work of God, to do anything that pleases him in any proper sense of the word "pleasure," right? Yeah. We're unable to do anything that would please the Lord.

We are unable in and of ourselves to turn to the Lord. We are unable to love the Lord, trust the Lord, because we are absolutely unable to because we are totally depraved. Our whole persons are affected by sin in this world.

Yeah. I think that's a concise and maybe a helpful definition that if somebody is just

wondering, "What do they mean when they say total depravity?" Exactly. It's not that we're as bad as we possibly can be, but it is our whole persons being affected by sin, our whole persons, body and soul.

Okay. And then last thing real quick, can you speak to just Arminian partial depravity? Sure. Well, I think it's important that we understand that Arminians, historically, if you are a classic Arminian, you're not going to have any disagreement on the issue of total depravity.

There was at least a point of commonality there. So, since then, you've got different iterations of classic Arminianism, some who would argue for more of a partial depravity, where, again, certain aspects of your being have been impacted by sin, while others are preserved from the effects of sin. But classically speaking, classical Arminianism wouldn't differ from the classically reformed perspective on total depravity, the answer that was different, right? How does total depravity overcome that the answer is different in Arminian system versus a confessional reform system? Do you want to potentially speak to that, Trent? Yeah, I mean, it seems, especially since, like the days of John Wesley, and how with the grappling with total depravity, and basically, like you said, the classical Arminian, they wouldn't disagree that man's totally depraved.

Really, the question then comes down to, you know, how do we then, how does one come to faith? Is it entirely a work of God, or is there a synergistic aspect to it? And really, especially among modern Arminianism, and like my, personally, my own background in the Pentecostal church, which Arminianism seems very prevalent in some charismatic circles, one of, kind of the safety net doctrine in Arminianism is the idea of prevenient grace. And so, you know, obviously, if you have the starting point of total depravity, something has to, the spirit has to do a work in order to bring a person to a point of faith and repentance. And in the classical Reformed understanding that that is entirely a work of God, that the spirit regenerates, he works in the heart, he draws you to the Father through the spirit, draws you to the Son, which will effectually bring you, which again, we'll get more into that as we go through the other points of the doctrines of grace.

But there's an effectual drawing that what God intends to do when he begins the work, he does bring it through to completion, and it is a totally a work of God. Whereas, prevenient grace, I mean, just from the name, grace that comes before, is this idea that, of kind of a partial regeneration where the Lord will do a work that enables you to respond, but the response then is, it's kind of neutral. It can be, you can either respond positively to the call to faith and repentance, or you can respond negatively.

And if you respond negatively, that it kind of undoes whatever your generation had taken place, which again, when we talk biblically speaking, seems to, it works within that system. The idea of prevenient grace from a philosophical standpoint, you could say,

works within that philosophical and theological system. It just doesn't seem to have the biblical backing, because it does kind of fly in the face of, if God has begun this good work in you, he will see it through to completion.

And I think that's where you run into problems. Prevenient grace is, again, the safety net where it kind of holds the Arminian system together and understanding how can we be totally depraved and have a predisposition and bent of heart and will and mind and all these things to be turned away from God. How do we get to a point where we actually can come to faith? Both would say, God has to do a work.

It's just the efficacy of that work and the extent of that work is what's in question. And so, prevenient grace would say, partial regeneration and then man kind of, in a synergistic way, kind of takes it from there. I'm going to make the decision for faith.

You give that little bit, take that first step, and then God will take over again and take it from there. But in the classic Reformed understanding, it's the Lord regenerates and he sanctifies. He's become the good work in you.

He will see it through to completion. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you to do it to will according to his good pleasure.

One thing that might just be helpful is if somebody's listening and they're like, "Oh, he just used the word synergism and monism. And what do those words mean?" Synergism is just the understanding of a working together, right? Just soon and ergos brought together. It's a compound where it just means working together.

Whereas monism, it means God's work or an alone work, which is implied as God's work alone. And at risk of oversimplifying, and I recognize that this is oversimplification, it's not meant to be rhetorical or anything like that. But I mean, there is a sense in which Pervini and Grace, it is a doctrine that is developed amongst classical Arminians and in the Wesleyan tradition in particular.

But it is a doctrine that basically argues that the playing field's been leveled. And it's been leveled for all of humanity. So it is not particular in that sense.

It's a universal reality. And texts that might be brought forward as descriptors of that doctrine in particular, you know, you think about the true light that gives light to every man who's coming into the world, John chapter one. I don't think that's what John one is talking about.

But nonetheless, those are some texts like those are texts that people would point to to say, well, look, it's something that is true for all men. There's light being given to all men. Is that teaching the doctrine of Pervini and Grace? I don't think so.

And I think that there's a way of understanding those texts that are more faithful to the

actual context of the passage. But nonetheless, I think that that's at least, again, at risk of oversimplifying it. Pervini and Grace does address the doctrine of total prep.

I'm saying this is a grace that goes before for all mankind, basically making them able now to respond by their own volition to the gospel call, the general cause goes forward. Exactly. Cool.

So and we really see in this this whole doctrine of total depravity, God's absolving all ability for man to boast. It's all his work. And that's that's the beauty of it.

And that's why it's worth understanding biblically. And also, I did add some articles from Monergism.com, which is one of my favorite reform websites. They do a good job and they have a lot of resources.

So if you guys can go check that stuff out. Well, thank you, brothers. Appreciate it so much.

And then you guys are about to hear Bryce and I talk some more about this. So thanks for listening, guys. This is for the King podcast.

Just wanted to switch it up a little bit because I usually just say the same thing whenever I open up a podcast. So I don't know. I wish I wanted this or so.

I know that was super manly, wasn't it? Yeah, I would. You could have a beard down your nipples from that. Nice.

Stop doing that. Whenever we start the podcast, you say something weird. Okay.

You would think that just by the voice though. Yeah. Okay.

So I think we're good to go. We're starting. Okay.

So this is the brand new series on the for the King podcast. This is the Sunday series I do with my brother Bryce. We just finished up last week with a conclusion to fear of the Lord and what biblical wisdom looks like and how we've exchanged that.

We've not only lost the fear of the Lord, but by default of not fearing God rightly and fearing man, we have now let in wrong fear and then wrong wisdom. So we established that all last week and we left off on Romans one through chapter three and we ended that that whole procession that Paul gives ends with in verse 18 of chapter three. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

They are not wise. They are debased in mind. They're degenerate race and there's none who is righteous.

No, not one. So we left off on this deplorable state of humanity in and of themselves. But

we also that entire series talked about how there is a way to be wise.

Humans can be wise. It's possible for a human to display wisdom. Now we established in the part three that where does that wisdom comes from? It comes from God, not from us.

All of chapter one and two of Romans lays a framework of displaying the futility of mind of the sons of Adam, all of us humans. And our mind is now completely futile. So that's what we left off last week.

Please go listen to that biblical wisdom series because it does lead perfectly into what we're about to talk about next. There is a branch of theology in the Christian tradition called soteriology. So we're going to drop some terms that you guys probably haven't heard before, but we really think they're useful.

And they're, you guys think of it like the Trinity. Everybody's familiar with the Trinity. We have a father, son, and Holy Spirit.

The word Trinity is not found in scripture. It is a theological term we use to describe what we see in scripture. So here's the word that we're going to talk about today.

It's in the branch of soteriology, which means the study of how one is saved. How does God save mankind? That's what soteriology is. And the branch of soteriology we're going to talk about today is the depravity of mankind.

And there's different theories of that that we're going to get into. We come from the Reformed tradition of how you would think about soteriology. And one of the central tenets of the Reformed tradition is it comes from an acronym TULIP.

And we're going to do this whole series on TULIP. And TULIP is an acronym that describes each one of these theological terms. So for depravity, a Reformed person would say we are totally depraved.

So today we're doing a podcast on the total depravity of mankind, from original sin that Adam plunged us in by the first sin in the garden, and we talked about all throughout that last series on wisdom and fear of the Lord. So please go listen to that. That's the foundation that we're starting on.

We want it to be logical and flow from Scripture. So we just finished with Romans 1-3. We're actually going to pick back up there and not only describe how we've become unwise and have no fear of God, but how it's actually infiltrated every part of our being and how that's seen all throughout Scripture.

We're going to walk through some stuff in that. Right. Now listen to this.

Some of these words are unfamiliar. No doubt they will be. Just bear with us.

Hopefully we'll get through some key texts and it'll make a little bit more sense as we go through. So bear with us and come do this with us. Yeah, come alongside your brothers in Christ and learn what God has to say.

Cool. So I'm going to read two quotes real quick to get us started. And these are just from men that follow Christ, just like us, that have lived in the past.

One is still alive. One is already dead. So the first I want to read from is Malcolm Mugridge.

He was like a journalist in the 20th century. He's now dead, but he was a Christian man journalist and this is what he said. "The depravity of man is at once the most empirically verifiable reality, but at the same time, the most intellectually resisted fact." And this comes a lot out of the Enlightenment and rationalism and the humans can figure it out on their own.

Right. Right. We can do good things.

We can figure it out. It's within us, within the realm of reason. Exactly.

And that comes with modernism and then postmodernism. Postmodernism has totally gotten away from that, but modernism was all the truth is from within. Right.

Yeah. Postmodernism is just crazy. There's no truth at all, instead of there being truth within.

And then Paul Washer, who is a pastor in Virginia, I think. I forget what his ministry is at, but he's just another fellow brother in Christ, pastor of a church somewhere in America. And this is what he says.

He's actually a missionary. He's a missionary? Yeah. I thought he pastors a church though.

He has an eldership role within it. Oh, but it's not like a... He's usually somewhere in South America a minute as a missionary and reaching the nations. So he said this, "When you refuse to teach on the radical depravity of men, it is an impossibility that you bring glory to God, his Christ and his cross, because the cross of Jesus Christ and the glory thereof is most magnified when it's placed in front of the backdrop of our depravity." Again, most Christians always want to hear the good news.

That is our hope. It's the good news. But we also have to remember and be sober minded with the bad news.

Total depravity, what we're getting into today, it's literally the bad news. We're totally depraved. We cannot save ourselves.

We're evil by nature. Right. This is what warrants the good news of Jesus Christ coming, living the perfect life, being upright and righteous while we were totally depraved.

Jesus was totally upright. That's the difference here. Do you think it'd be helpful to get a little concise definition of total depravity before we go forward? Sure.

Yeah. Let's define it real quick. Yeah.

So a good way to just concisely understand it is the complete inability to both do good and to choose and seek after God. So that's as we go forward, that's the working definition that we need when we say that. And I guess I'll sort of define one more term.

When we use good here, we're talking about moral good. There are things like, for instance, all humans are made in the image of God. Therefore, all humans have some element of there's a good beneficial thing about them.

Now, can they do moral good? No. Yeah. So when we talk about good, we're talking about moral good, not that everybody is worthless.

Everybody is made in the image of God and therefore is of some value. We're just totally morally corrupt is what total depravity is talking about, morally. Good.

We're also not talking about perceptive goodness. Just because you see somebody, what they may perhaps be appearing by doing good, that isn't necessarily mean they're doing a morally good act. So that's also not what we mean.

So when we're talking about good, we don't mean the way you perceive somebody. We're specifically talking about internal intrinsic moral goodness with the man. Humans can do tons of civil good.

We talked last episode about how Bill Gates can do philanthropy all he wants, but it is coming from an unholy evil place. That's right. Yeah.

So you can do philanthropy, you can do civil good all you want, but that does not mean it's moral good. You might help your fellow human out, but God sees it as filthy rags. That's right, unfortunately.

For us, God does not see it as good. So let's get into the text. So we left off Romans 1 through 3 last week.

So the point of us going through that last week was to show that the futility of our minds, the unwise living that we've now plunged ourselves into by having no fear of God and therefore no wise living because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Because of that, we now are in a deplorable state as humans. So all of chapter 1, we see in verse 22 of chapter 1, "Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man in birds and animals and

creeping things.

Therefore," verse 24, "God gave them up to the lust of their heart to impurity to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator who was blessed forever." So this is the state of the Gentiles. Chapter 1 is all dealing with the total depravity of the Gentile world. Although they have the law written on their hearts, they do what is foolish, thinking themselves wise, they became fools.

All right, that's all of chapter 1. Now chapter 2, he says, "Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges for impassing judgment on one another, you condemn yourself because you the judge practice the very same things." The Jews who had the oracles of God, who had the law, which is a judge, which is a pupil, sorry, like a teacher, schoolmaster, it judges you based on what you're doing, right? And he now moves in chapter 2 to show that the Jews, although they have the law, they have what is shown to be the standard that judges them, they themselves don't even do it. Right. So he ends chapter 2 saying, "A Jew isn't one that's one outwardly nor circumcision outward and physical, but a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart by the Spirit, not by the letter.

His praise is not from man, but from God." So we see it's not about just following the law, it's not about doing philanthropy, it's not about doing "civil good" to in a society or this or that, it's about being upright before God, having faith. In Hebrews it says, "Without faith, is it impossible to please God?" So then the main text for today that we even got in last week, and we're going to reread it again because it's so important to understand total depravity, is after he makes this argument against both the Gentiles and the Jews in chapters 1 and 2, he gets into chapter 3 and he says in verse 9, "What then? We a Jews any better off? No not at all, for we have already charged that all both Jews and Greeks are under sin." So that word "charged" legal term, he's accusing them of being all totally guilty and having done nothing but evil and not followed the law. As it is written, and then he quotes Psalm 53/ Psalm 14, they both say the same thing, "None is righteous, no not one.

No one understands, no one seeks for God. All have turned aside, together they have become worthless. No one does good, moral good.

No one does good, not even one." So there's not, in and of ourselves, us humans being born, both Gentile and Jew, which encompasses all of humanity, there's not a single one that does any good whatsoever. That's what total depravity is. That's what the Bible clearly teaches.

We're totally depraved. Yeah, and that kind of, it seems and appears like it's very bad, and quite frankly, it should. That's our problem.

We're under this state, and the whole beauty of the gospel is Jesus brings us out of this. Exactly. Yeah, we even see later on in Romans, in Romans chapter 8 verses 7 and 8, it says, "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law.

Indeed, it cannot." And here's the kicker, "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God." So there's this harsh reality, though it's just, it's a harsh reality that we lie under sin, and by nature, we're not neutral. We're not in this middle state where we... We're not partially depraved. That's right.

We're not partially depraved, where we sometimes want to choose good and sometimes want to choose evil. We totally always want to choose to do evil. And that beckons us all the way back to in Genesis 6, where God, in his judgment right before the flood, he says, this is Genesis chapter 6 verse 5, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil." Sometimes.

Nope. That's not what it says. Only evil continually.

So the reality of total depravity is that there is a perpetual, continuous nature within man to not choose the things of God, but instead choose the things of themselves. Right? Exactly. Yep.

Totally depraved. All the time, there's none who does a single good one in and of themselves. We're going to get to the good news in a second, guys.

Just bear with us on this doctrine of total depravity and why it's central to the... Really essential to the gospel. That's right. The gospel is not warranted if there's no bad news.

And that's why Paul Wasser said... Exactly what he said. ...that initial quote. Right.

It's key. It is key. So then the last text we're going to go to, and then we're going to exposit all of these and kind of put them all together so we can get a nice exegesis of this doctrine.

We just pulled a bunch of stuff all throughout scripture. There's many... Guys, we could have done... This podcast could be a couple hours long compiling the text about humans being totally corrupt and totally evil. But these are the big ones that we think.

They go so well with where we're going to go next week on unconditional election. So in Ephesians chapter 2, this is what Paul says to the church in Ephesus, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following who? The prince of the power of the air, which is Satan, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body, in the mind and we're by nature

children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God being rich in mercy..." Yeah, this is the good news.

"God being rich in mercy because of the great love which he has loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved." Right. So in that text we see imagery all throughout scripture about us being dead. We're spiritually dead.

There's no spiritual life within us whatsoever. You can't just be partially dead. You are 100% dead and unable to do any good thing, unable to get yourself to God.

That is why all throughout the scriptures we see whenever it's talked about our total depravity, it talks about by grace you have been saved because it's not anything that we could boast. We can't boast in our own. There's no goodness in us whatsoever.

And that's why this is crucial, crucial, crucial, crucial to the gospel. And this is why we reject Arminian soteriology in its entirety. It is completely wrong and against everything that scripture says.

Now if you're an Arminian, if you know what that means and you understand your soteriology, you know exactly what you mean when you try to explain it and how you would deal with these texts, we think you guys are making a grave category error and not actually dealing with the text of what God's word says about the state of humanity. And Arminian would describe their soteriology in terms of depravity as a partial depravity. We have some spiritual life within us, but it needs to be unlocked through God's prevent it grace in our life.

It grace is the grace that God applies before we are saved that opens up our eyes and gives us a chance to come to Christ. Now we would say as reform people that because we're totally depraved, God's prevent it grace is irresistible. They would say that God's prevent it grace that he gives is what? It's resistible grace.

If God gives you grace, gives you a spark of spiritual life, then you could reject God and still turn back to your sin. So what we think happens logically at the end of the day with Arminian soteriology is you have to, you have to at the end of the day say that although God sparked life in you with prevent it grace, it's still you doing the good of coming to Christ and choosing him. For us, reform people, we say that we're totally depraved and God doesn't just give us a spark of life that might ensure our salvation.

He does ensure it and it brings it to completion. He who began a work in you will bring it to completion. If God works grace in you, the Arminian says that it might not be brought to completion.

You might resist it. That's nowhere to be found in scripture, my friends. That's right.

I mean, it's just not. If God wants somebody, we see that it's called the story of God for a reason. It's his story.

If he wants something to come to pass, it will come to pass. There's no chances in scripture. There's no, there's nothing left up in the air.

It's just God's divine decree. It's his way or the highway. And we would reject in its entirety Arminian soteriology and it does eventually collapse into semi-Pelagianism.

But you would have to, you have to hold a lot of things in tension as an Arminian to resist semi-Pelagianism. But eventually, if you're logically consistent, it will end up there that there's some good within you. Right.

And that doesn't mean that we hate our brothers who are Arminians. We love you guys and we want you guys to know the truth of what scripture is talking about. Just notice when you're talking about these things, you must be using biblical language.

So it's very typical for Arminians to be going outside of what the Bible is talking about and have these different categories. Different sorts of graces, yeah, like free will. And then they can come with free will.

Yeah, exactly. So we need to be going back to always what does the Bible say. And we know guys, we know you have some passages that look as if it teaches what you're saying.

At the end of the day, the whole counsel of God, the whole totality of scripture vastly supports our total inability to ever choose Christ. Right. What do you do with Romans 3, 10 through 12 when it says, "No one seeks for God.

No one does good." Right. What do you do with Isaiah 64, 6 when it says, "All of our works are like polluted garments." Yeah. Right.

At the end of the day, is what separates you from being a non... Is what separates you from a non-believer, is it grace or is it your faith? And I know you will say grace. I know that's your point. I know you would say that.

But what you're teaching is not saying that. Your words say one thing and your teaching says another. It's only by grace that you have been saved and it's a gift of God.

Yeah. The providiate grace in our Arminian framework gets you far enough for you to do your own good. Right.

And not God to be the good in you. Right. Yeah.

So that's unfortunate. If that were true, if it were true that God gave some spark for a possibility of you choosing Him, guess what? Nobody would be saved because nobody

would ever choose Him. You would always go running straight back to your sin.

Yeah. If God's grace truly is resistible, then we would always resist it. Yeah.

Because that's what... It's our whole point of Stephen's speech. You stiff-necked people. You always murder the saints.

You always reject God. Yeah. That's what you always do.

That's why God has to do a divine act. And we'll do an episode on referencing grace, the irresistible grace that God gives to us. We're not talking about it kicking and screaming.

Uh-huh. Or you don't want to go. Yeah, we'll describe.

And God still brings you to Himself. We'll talk about that. But God's grace is beautiful and He will never reject it.

Exactly. So those are some of the big texts for today. Without faith, it's impossible to please God.

That's right. And there's none who seeks God. There's none who places their faith in Christ apart from God doing what? Making us alive by His Spirit.

Right. By His Holy Spirit. Again, going back to what I read at the beginning in Romans 2. Circumcision of the heart.

Done by what? The Holy Spirit. If you don't have the Holy Spirit and your heart is not circumcised, you're not a Jew. You're not an Israelite.

You're not one of God's people. It's all work of the Holy Spirit. It's not a work of the Holy Spirit that you might believe.

It's either the Holy Spirit or nothing. The Holy Spirit is not like plotting you along. He's doing all the work.

Yeah. You know, at the end of the day, you have to say, "Well, He opened up my eyes so I could make a good decision and then I did the rest. Then I came to God." That's you doing work.

That's you doing something. God removes all sources of boasting and pride in the human. That's why He does it fully and completely and why the Arminian is just not correct.

Yeah, and that's why Jeremiah says in chapter 9, "Let him who bows, boast in the Lord." That he owes me. And the only thing that you contributed to your salvation is, you know, Christ is your sin that nailed him to the cross. And that's not me.

That's a quote from Jonathan Edwards. But that is very true. There's no work that we do.

We just provide the sin that Christ came and died for. Exactly. Okay.

Well, I think that pretty much wraps it up. We have given you guys something to think about and hopefully articulated this depravity theology well and you guys can go back to the scriptures and see if it really does teach that we are completely debased in mind, unable to reach God apart from Him, doing all the work to get us back to Him. So this is what I'm sorry, what do you guys say? I was just going to say this ties in exactly with last episode.

So please go and watch that. Because this is getting exactly at how does, where do we get wisdom from? It comes from above, right? We can't ascertain it ourselves. It's something that's given by Him.

And what's also given? Every good and perfect gift comes from above. He's given us His Son. Jesus Christ said, "When I go up, I'm going to give you my spirit." So it's all a gift from Him, right? So these tie completely together.

So go watch last episode. Go read 1 Corinthians 2 and see how the natural man cannot please God. It's all through the spiritual man.

How are you spiritual, right? And this is what we're talking about. Yep. Okay, great.

I'm going to read a few things from the Westminster Confession of Faith, which I think really put what we're trying to say in really easy to understand terms. And then we are going to wrap this up. This is going to be a shorter episode.

In the next week, we are going to key you guys into the next part in the Tulip series, unconditional election. And we will put a backdrop of this original, or total depravity and original sin on that so we can understand why this logical flow from total depravity to unconditional election makes sense. Okay, so here's the Westminster Confession of Faith.

This is chapter 6 and then article 2, 3, and 4. By this sin, with the original sin, they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God and so became dead in sin and wholly defiled in all faculties and parts of soul and body. There's no good in them at all. There's no faculty in them that can bring them to do any good.

If God gives them a little spiritual spark, they won't get there. They're completely depraved. They being the root of mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed and the same death and sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by original generation.

So it's been passed on. This futility that mine has been passed on, we see in Romans all

throughout the Gentile world, all throughout the Jewish world. And then what does 4 say? From this original corruption whereby we are utterly disposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil do proceed all actual transgressions.

Yep. So there it is. And then the last thing I want to read is chapter 9 is of free will.

How do we think about free will with a total depravity? So chapter 9, article 2 and 3. Man and his state of innocency had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well pleasing to God, but yet mutably so that he might fall from it. So in the garden, they were living wisely. They had fear of the Lord.

They were able to actually do what is good because they had that. They had God walking with them. They had God with him.

And then they listened to the serpent and they were able to mutably fall from that. And what happened when they fell from it? Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to do any spiritual good accompanying salvation. So as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good and dead in sin is not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself thereunto.

And then I'll just read chapter 9, article 4 as well. When God converts a sinner and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good. Yet so as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth will also act which is evil.

So we need God to convert us. We need the Holy Spirit in order to do any good. So I think the Westminster Confession of Faith really puts it accurately and easily for us to understand it is completely accurate and true.

So main takeaway from today, guys, because of that whole last series of us being plunged into unwise living and having no fear of God, we need the Lord to come in and do a divine act, a miracle to save us. That's the moral of the story. We're totally depraved.

We can do no good whatsoever. We pass from death to life. We're dead men don't do no good.

You cannot rouse yourself to save yourself if you're dead. You are dead. You can't rouse yourself.

And you can't just be given just enough life to be partially dead. You're either dead or not. And that's where the Arminian errors in their understanding of Scripture.

Thanks for listening, guys. I hope this was helpful and a shorter episode. Hopefully you

guys like this, this series we're doing.

And if you disagree with us, please reach out and let me know what you disagree with or what I love hearing what you guys have to think. You don't have to think this to be a Christian, obviously, but we do think it makes the most sense with the Scriptures. So that's where we're at with this.

Thanks for listening, guys. We love you. This is the 4th and King podcast with Rocky and my brother Bryce.

We love you guys. Peace and grace. God bless you.

God bless you. (soft music)