

# **T U L I P**

## **29 The Reformation 3-Total Depravity**

The **Arminians** believed that:

- natural man's depravity... although real... is only partial
- natural man, before salvation, has not lost his ability for self-determination
- natural man can freely will... whatever is good in God's sight
- natural man is the author of repentance
- natural man is the initiator of saving faith
- natural man can freely choose to cooperate with God's Holy Spirit
- if all men would choose God... then all men would be saved.

The **Arminians** based their views on the following:

*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* John 3:16

*Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* Acts 2:38

*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.* Acts 16:31

*...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.* Romans 10:9

*This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.* 1 John 3:23

The **Reformers** at **The Synod of Dort** (1618-19)

- considered the **Arminian** view unbiblical & heretical
- replied with what we now call "The 5 Points of **Calvinism**" — which was reduced to the letters in the word, **TULIP**.

The **Reformer's** response to the **Arminian** first point was based on the reality of natural man as being in a state of — **T - Total Depravity**

They believed the foundation of a correct Biblical view was human sinfulness in all humanity. That man, when he enters this world enters it **Totally Depraved**.

R.C. Sproul states...."If you can accept the truth of Total Depravity.... then the other four points, without question, fall into place."

It is important to realize what the **Reformers** meant by "total depravity." They did not mean absolute or "utter" depravity—that man is always as bad as he could be... but that he is not capable of what is considered good works in the Bible. Lost man cannot produce the good works of God for His Kingdom.

*They said, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?" Jesus said, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."* John 6:28-29

When "self" is at the center of a life all works are self-motivated and self-glorifying, and the Creator-God is never a central figure.

Luther, Calvin, Knox (Scottish Reformer) believed that depravity was inherent in man, who was as spiritually dead as he could possibly be.

- that man was beyond all self-help
- that man was in bondage to sin and Satan
- that man's human spirit was dead to God from birth

We must realize that total depravity relates directly to our view of "**original sin.**"

Many of you will believe that when I say "original sin" I am referring to just Adam & Eve's first sin.

To be more explicit we must understand that "original sin" refers to the consequence of Adam & Eve's sin—i.e. how their sin impacted the entire human race.

So... the first sin by Adam & Eve actually produced original sin.

And... the consequences of that original sin is in the fact that... every human born, is born with Adam's inherent nature as a human being... our very identity is the results of Adam's sin—Lost and dead to God.

David wrote: *For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.* Psalm 51:5

David was merely acknowledging the human condition of fallenness.

- he didn't do something and become a sinner.
- he was born a sinner... therefore he sinned.

And the **Reformers** used phases like "to the core" meaning that sin permeates our entire being. The core was a reference to our "hearts."

Webster: "The state of sin that, according to Christian theology, characterizes all human beings as a result of Adam's fall."

**So....**original sin has to do with the initial fallen nature of all mankind.

I often talk about—Body / Soul / Spirit

- we are a human spirit
- that human spirit is born dead... to God
- it has no longing desire for God
- it cannot commune (back and forth) with God
- self is the central figure and purpose in life
- we are in bondage to:
  - **the lust of the flesh**
  - **the lust of the eyes**
  - **the pride of life**
- it causes the person... to be "self-driven"
- the mind is a slave to worldly thinking
- the emotions are stuck... on performance-based acceptance
- the will is in bondage to self-gratification

As you can see....

the entire person has been affected by the power of sin

So....ultimately....the question becomes to what degree is this depravity?

The **Reformers** said.... "Total" and....based their views on Scriptures like:

*When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone.... Romans 5:12*

Q. What is sin? — A. Disobedience to the will of God.

So - because of Adam & Eve's sin, all men and women born in the spiritual line of Adam come into the world under condemnation. They are dead to God, who is Spirit.

Paul reminded the Ephesian believers...

....you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. Ephesians 2:1-3

And... anyone who insists that unbelievers have even a spark of godly goodness are off-base! God's word responds...

As the Scriptures say, "No one is good—not even one. No one has real understanding; no one is seeking God. All have turned away from God; all have gone wrong. No one does good, not even one." Romans 3:10-12

Now the LORD observed the extent of the people's wickedness, and he saw that all their thoughts were consistently and totally evil. Genesis 6:5

Their judgment is based on this fact: The light from heaven came into the world, but they loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. They hate the light because they want to sin in the darkness. They stay away from the light for fear their sins will be exposed and they will be punished. John 3:19-20

Doesn't sound like "partial depravity" does it?

....you refuse to come to me to receive life. John 5:40

And why can't unbelievers come to Him?

"Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father." John 8:43-44

That is a slave... wanting to obey his master...

"Anyone whose Father is God listens gladly to the words of God. Since you don't, it proves you aren't God's children." John 8:47

Jesus replied, "I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God." "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus replied, "The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven. John 3:3-6

Question: What is the purpose of being born again? To have eternal life, to no longer be spiritually dead, because a dead person can't WILL to understand the ways of God.

Only God can turn on the light for us so we are no longer in darkness pertaining to the Truth of Jesus, God's Word.

With God's light... our understanding now includes God

- we have light on our purpose
- we are no longer depraved
- we now serve a purpose greater than our self
- we are freed from fear and uncertainty about our future
- we now understand about life after death

And the Scriptures make it clear that the natural man, the unbelievers in the world, are completely incapable of discerning this kind of Truth.

In fact, unbelievers think the things of God are ridiculous, silly, for the weak.

....the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 1 Corinthians 2:14

If you are spiritually dead then you cannot understand.

The Westminster Confession of Faith states it this way: "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto. (Ch. 9, Sec. 3)

Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are defiled. Titus 1:15

Jesus said.....

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But some of you don't believe me." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.) Then he said, "This is why I told you earlier that no one is capable of coming to me on his own. (KJV "no man can") You get to me only as a gift from the Father. John 6:63

Clearly he is saying that no one has the ability to come to God through "choice" or through his "free will."

What makes you better than anyone else? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own? 1 Corinthians 4:7

We can see that for us to become what God wants for us to become, to be conformed in the image of His son, Jesus Christ, requires a complete renovation, from inside/out, because we entered the world—**Totally Depraved!**