

SCRIPTURE READING: Exodus 20:1-17 & Ephesians 2

SINGING: 400:1-3, 7 – 342:2-3 – 23:1-6 – 390:1-3 – 446:1, 3, 4

OPENING OBSERVATIONS

- Diagnosis of our real condition is already a doctrine of grace
- Our real condition can only be seen in reflection on God's law of love
- Why dwell on such disheartening truths?

GOD'S DIAGNOSIS OF NATURAL MAN (2)

- I. We are lost as we miss our purpose II. We are deplorably self-centered
III. We are completely unable to change

III. We are completely unable to change: *doctrine of absolute disability*

A. Why is the study of this doctrine so relevant today?

1. because many teach a more pleasing doctrine: *man is basically good*
2. because many others abuse the doctrine as a fatal pillow

B. The Catechism's statement about *total inability* (q/a 5)

1. definition of 'prone'
2. definition of 'hate' (Gen. 29:30-31; Ex. 20:4-5)
3. sum up: *we are 'living dead'*

C. The Scriptural teaching examined as support

1. Genesis 6:5 *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*
2. Jer. 13:23 *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil?*
3. Jer. 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*
4. Eph. 2:1-5 *And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins ... but God ... even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.*
5. Phil. 1:6: *Being confident of this very thing, that **He which He hath begun** a good work in you ...*

6. Titus 3:3-5 *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after the kindness and love of God our Savior ... **He saved us***

D. The Scripture's teaching on *total inability* is a crushing truth: *dead!*

1. Don't mistake *total inability* as *total inactivity*
 - a. Rom. 6:20: *the unregenerate is a willing servant of sin/Satan*
 - b. Rom. 8:5-8: *we cannot please God because we are actively hostile — not subject to His law because we don't want to*
 - c. John 5:40 and 8:44: *we will not come as we want to serve Satan*
2. Don't misunderstand *total depravity* (substitute for *total inability*)
 - a. total depravity doesn't mean *every human being lives out the potential of his evil – deprived mind/will/feelings!*
3. Don't weaken *total inability* to be being 'handicapped'

CLOSING APPLICATIONS

A. God works out His sovereign grace through the preaching (John 11)

1. The raising of a dead Lazarus is an illustration of saving grace
2. It is also a most powerful work only God can accomplish

B. How do I know if *God is/has exercised power of His grace* within me?

1. Ps. 110:3 *Thy people shall be willing in the day of His power*
2. Ezek. 36:25 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh*
3. Eph. 1:13 *In whom (X) ye also trusted (believed), after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.*
4. Rev. 5:12 *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing*