

T. Total Depravity

DEFINITION

Definitions - Review from last week

Total Depravity

Man is totally depraved, spiritually dead and blind, and unable to repent. God must initiate the work of repentance. Human beings are so affected by the negative consequences of original sin that they are incapable of being righteous, and are always and unchangeably sinful; human freedom is totally enslaved by sin so we can only choose evil.¹

Total Inability / (aka Total Depravity)

Man has sunk so far through the Fall that he is no longer capable of believing the gospel. He can no more repent and believe than a dead man can rise up and walk. This is all the result of the sin of Adam, who communicated this absolute inability, this loss of free will, to all his posterity.²

Total Depravity

This is the doctrine that affirms the whole corruption of man's nature -no one is capable of pleasing God through the efforts of his own natural disposition – all parts of our beings are corrupted by sin, and therefore there is nothing in us which can naturally commend us to God.³

Scripture reveals the terrible effect of sin upon all of mankind

Many of these are verses typically used to describe Total Depravity

- Rom 3:10-12 ESV as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."
- Eph 2:1 ESV And you were dead in the trespasses and sin
- Eph 2:3 ESV among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
- Psa 51:5 KJV Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- Jer 17:9 KJV The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?
- Gen 6:5 KJV 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.

¹ http://www.ccfestus.com/books/taylor_calvinism.htm

² <http://www.auburn.edu/~allenkc/openhse/calvinism.html> (Calvinism Critiqued - by a Former Calvinist, Steve Jones)

³ <http://www.christianconversationsnow.com/2011/02/07/r-c-sproul-calvinism/#sthash.173pycOU.dpuf>

- Romans 3:23 ESV for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- Romans 5:12 ESV Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned--
- Isa 64:6-7 KJV But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. 7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Most Evangelical Christians would agree with the idea of Total Depravity if you are speaking about the effects of sin in our lives including our inability to do anything to merit salvation [as described above]... However Calvinism takes the concept of total depravity much further than this and forms certain conclusions that are not biblically sound.

Further Implications of Total Depravity

Total Inability is another term used to describe Total Depravity. According to Calvinism the state of Total Depravity mean a person is “dead” thus unable to respond in any way to Christ or the gospel. Spiritual death to a Calvinists means the elimination of all human ability to understand or respond to God, not just a separation from God. According to the Calvinists, the unregenerate man is unable to receive Christ as Lord and Savior, believe in Christ or the Gospel when preached to him, or do anything to accept the free gift of eternal life offered to him and be saved. When you start with a foundation of Total Depravity defined this way, then you can easily see how some of the other 4 points of the TULIP acronym become essential.

I will center the rest of the discussion around these scriptures in Ephesians 2

- Eph 2:1 NIV As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins
- Eph 2:5 NIV made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.
- Eph 2:8-9 NIV For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

We will look at:

1. Does being dead in sin mean we are unable to respond to the gospel?
2. We are indeed made alive with Christ - but when does this happen?
3. By grace we have been saved through faith -- it is a gift of God -- not by works so that no one can boast. What is the gift of God? Faith? Grace? Salvation? Where does faith come from? Is it a gift from God or the response of man’s heart from hearing the gospel? If man is responsible for faith and believing does this equate to “works-based” salvation?

1) Does being dead in sin mean we are unable to respond to the gospel?

From a Calvinist

But if men are dead in trespasses and sins and ***totally unable to respond to Christ until He raises them from the dead through regeneration***, [emphasis mine] then there is no reason for a man to boast. God receives all the glory. "Just as Lazarus would never have heard the voice of Jesus, nor would he have ever 'come to Jesus,' without first being given life by our Lord, so all men 'dead in trespasses and sins' must first be given life by God before they can 'come to Christ.' Since dead men cannot will to receive life, but can be raised from the dead only by the power of God, so the natural man cannot of his own (mythical) 'free will' will to have eternal life (cf. John 10:26-28)."⁴ The gospel really is good news. Jesus Christ actually saves sinners.⁴

From a non-calvinist (describing The Inoperable Will)

What we cannot do because of Total Depravity, from a Calvinistic Perspective, is of course very important to a Calvinistic definition of Depravity, especially as it relates to a gospel presentation directed at the unregenerate. That is, Calvinistically speaking, the unregenerate are not only unable to do good (as well as unable to refrain from doing bad) spiritually in a general sense, but more specifically, they are unable to respond to God or the Gospel (to any degree) while in an unregenerate state or before being born again.

According to this view, the will of unregenerate man (in so far as responding to God, the Gospel, etc., is concerned) is ***dead and therefore inoperable***. [emphasis mine] This idea of an inoperable will is very crucial to a complete understanding of a Calvinistic definition of Total Depravity.

Thus, according to Calvinism, the unregenerate man cannot receive Christ or believe the Gospel preached to him, as an unregenerate man. He cannot do anything to accept the free gift of eternal life offered to him and thereby be saved.⁵

Scripture teaches that man can & must choose *even if he is spiritually dead*

- Luke 16:27-31 - "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'
 - Jesus indicated that the unregenerate [DEAD] could listen to Moses and the Prophets and in the listening be convinced

⁴<http://www.graceonlinelibrary.org/reformed-theology/total-depravity/an-examination-of-the-five-points-of-calvinism-part-i-total-depravity-by-brian-schwertley/>

⁵ THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM - "Weighed And Found Wanting", p.10

- Romans 1:20 “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”
 - A spiritually dead person can perceive the truth of God to the extent that he is without excuse in acknowledging God
- In Mark 2:17 Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”
 - Along with being dead in sin, the Bible also uses “sick” to describe the sinner
 - The sick are not unresponsive, but can be aware of their disease and be seeking help - so the “dead like Lazarus” analogy falls apart here.
- John 5:24, “Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.”
 - The spiritually dead can hear Jesus’ voice, and must also believe
- Jesus sometimes "marvelled" at the unbelief of his hearers (Mark 6:6). But there would be no reason to be surprised by this if Total Inability were true...it would be the expected response.
- Joh 5:40 KJV And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.
 - He did not say you CANNOT come to me
- Mat 23:37 KJV O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!
 - Jerusalem was not willing - it was never a question of inability - it was a question of willingness

Summary of this section

We would agree that man is deeply affected by sin, and unable by any good work to merit eternal life. But we would not go as far as to say that the unregenerate man’s will has become inoperable as a result of total depravity, nor would we agree with the idea that being dead in trespass and sin makes us totally unable to respond like a literal dead person. There is all the difference in the world between depraved and inability. Man’s will does still function and we use our will to choose God when we are enlightened by the preaching of the gospel.

2) We are indeed made alive with Christ - but when does this happen?

Being “dead” with an *inoperable will* dovetails with the Calvinistic belief that regeneration must come BEFORE faith. According to Calvinism regeneration comes BEFORE faith. A Calvinist MUST put rebirth before faith - it is the only way to overcome Total Depravity. Since man is Dead and cannot respond he must be first made alive [regenerated] so that he is able to have faith.

Calvinist, R.C. Sproul, writes: “The Reformed view of predestination teaches that before a person

can choose Christ his heart must be changed. He must be born again.”⁶

Sproul adds: “A cardinal point of Reformed theology is the maxim: ‘Regeneration precedes faith.’ Our nature is so corrupt, the power of sin so great, that unless God does a supernatural work in our souls we will never choose Christ.”⁷

The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not--indeed he cannot--choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ--it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature.⁸

The Calvinist view of Total Depravity requires regeneration BEFORE faith

If as described by the Calvinist, a Totally Depraved person is unable to choose to repent or have faith - then the LORD must intervene with “Irresistible Grace” - [this is assuming the person in question is one of those have have been “Elected”].

Note: by **regeneration** we are talking about being born again.

- From G3825 and G1078; (spiritual) rebirth (the state or the act), that is, (figuratively) spiritual renovation; specifically Messianic restoration: - regeneration.
- G3825=anew
- G1078=genesis - nativity, nature

We agree that we are “made alive” in Christ - the question is “When does this happen?” -- and “Why is it important?”

In Scripture we see that faith comes BEFORE regeneration

- Joh 1:12 KJV But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
- Acts 16:30-31 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household."
- Joh 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.
- Rom 1:16 KJV For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
- Ephesians 1:13 states, “In whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.”

⁶ R.C. Sproul, Chosen By God, p.72

⁷ *ibid.* pp. 72-73

⁸ <http://withchrist.org/5pts.pdf>

- John 3:16 “...that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life”.
- Romans 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”.
- Rom 10:17 NIV Consequently, ***faith comes from hearing the message***, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

And it is important because how we view this can influence our views of evangelism

On the one hand - if we would hold that faith comes by hearing, and that we are responsible to preach the gospel, we will take the mission to preach to good news seriously.

- Rom 10:8-14 & 17 NIV But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: 9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11 As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ... Rom 10:17 NIV Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.
 - How can the call if they have not believed?
 - How can the believe if they have not heard?
 - How can they hear without someone preaching to them?

On the other hand if we believe that regeneration comes BEFORE belief and it is solely the work of God without human response, we could find ourselves believing as this man did, and extract ourselves away from the calling to preach the gospel.

Note: not all Calvinists believe this way.

An extreme view of this doctrine is what some call 'hyper-Calvinism' which is the philosophy that it doesn't matter if we 'spread the Gospel' because God will save who He will save with or without us. This is NOT Christianity and, I'm afraid, most of those who hold this type of belief will have missed the boat, so to speak. True Christianity, as I see it, is 'spreading the Gospel' as we're commanded to do (Mat. 28 & Rom. 10) with both our mouths and our lives. But I've recently begun to understand a difference between 'living out Christ' - which is the 'spreading the Gospel with my mouth and life' - and evangelizing. I see evangelism as more of a proselytizing thing now than before. And, I've become convinced that **it is not my responsibility to help God save those whom He has elected to save. Salvation is God's responsibility - period.** [emphasis mine] My responsibility, I've come to understand, is to: love God with all my heart strength, mind, and soul.

Summary of this section

We see that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. We are able as unregenerate men to hear and believe, or to hear and harden our hearts. Heb 3:7-8 KJV states it simply this way...Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: Because the hearing of the gospel is a critical component, we are compelled to share Christ and to call men to repentance as Peter did on the day of Pentecost, and as Paul did with the Philippian jailor in answer to the question..."Sir, what must we do to be saved"

- Act 2:37-39 KJV Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.
- Act 16:30-33 KJV And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

3) By grace we have been saved through faith -- it is a gift of God -- not by works so that no one can boast

The Calvinists believe that if repentance and faith are the responsibility of man [in the sense of his responding to the gospel], that salvation becomes works-based...it is something that man does rather than God. This work of regeneration they believe is solely God's work, man is completely passive in the process. This is why many would not call people to repent, or to believe, this is why many would not encourage people to "pray a prayer for salvation", this is why many would teach against the concept of an altar call.

They believe that God draws men [the elect] to himself

There is no question but that God draws men, the question is how he draws men, is that drawing just for the elect, and does the fact that God draws people preclude bringing man to a place of making a decision?

John 6:44-45 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:44-45

The words of Jesus in John 6:44 are often appealed to as a proof of Total Inability: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." The "drawing" here is assumed called the work of Efficacious Grace renewing the sinner so he can - and ultimately will - believe the gospel.

Just what is the "drawing" of which Christ speaks? Calvinists make much of the Greek word, *helkuo*, which conveys the idea of "dragging." That seems, however, to run counter to what they often make pains to teach: that the sinner, once renewed, comes willingly.

John 6:44 must be understood in the light of verse 45: "It is written in the Prophets, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me." Here the sinner comes to Christ by listening to the Father, not by passively experiencing "Efficacious Grace."

Look for a moment at the parallels in these two verses. Verse 44 says that no one can come to Christ unless drawn by the Father. Verse 45 says that all who listen to the Father and learn from Him come to Christ. It would seem clear that the teaching ministry of God through His gospel and word is the means by which men are brought to Jesus. There is nothing in the text that necessitates an "effectual call" on a totally disabled unbeliever. This is confirmed by Peter (1 Pet. 1:23) and James (James 1:18), both of whom declare that *the Word of God* is an agency of the new birth.⁹

The drawing of men is not just the elect --- Jesus said I will draw all men unto me
Joh 12:32 KJV And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, **will draw all men** unto me.

How does God draw us

The Lord opens hearts (she had been attended unto)

- Act 16:14-15 KJV And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, **heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.** 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

It is easy to see in these verses that she was involved - there was a cooperative work between God and man

- She was seeking God - a worshipper and pray-er
- She **heard** Paul
- The **Lord opened** her heart
- She **attended** [take heed, pay attention to] unto the things which were spoken of Paul
- She was baptized
- She was judged to be **faithful** to the Lord

The Holy Spirit convicts

- Joh 16:8 KJV And when he is come, ***he will reprove the world*** of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

The word of God is the agent

- Jas 1:18 KJV Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.
- 1Pe 1:23 KJV Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

⁹ <http://www.auburn.edu/~allenkc/openhse/calvinism.html>

Jesus is the light that lights every man

- John 1:6-9 "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light, that was the true Light, WHICH LIGHTETH EVERY MAN THAT COMETH INTO THE WORLD".

But Men choose to love light or darkness

- Joh 3:18-19 KJV He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

The light comes from the preaching of the gospel

- 2Co 4:3-6 KJV But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

God Draws man must respond

- John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
- John 8:24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins."

He reasons with us

- Isaiah 1 : 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

A great example of the interplay between God and man

- Act 2:36-40 NIV "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." 37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "***what shall we do?***" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."
 - Peter's reply was not - "I am not going to say because you may not be one of the elect. If you do something to secure you own salvation it would be works-based. However if you are one of the elect God will sovereignly move upon your heart for regeneration and you will find yourself to have been saved

- then you can believe.

Faith described as a Gift from God

For example, Shedd says: "The Calvinist maintains that faith is wholly from God, being one of the effects of regeneration" [*Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. II, p. 472].

This results in a strange plan of salvation. According to Shedd, because the sinner cannot believe, he is instructed to perform the following duties: 1) Read and hear the divine Word; 2) Give serious application of the mind to the truth; 3) Pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit for conviction and regeneration [*Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 512-513].

Arthur Pink agrees with Shedd saying that the sinner is to "ask God...to bestow upon him the gifts of repentance and faith" (*The Sovereignty of God*, pp. 198-199).

Here is Roy Aldrich's excellent comment: "If the sinner is so spiritually dead that he cannot believe, then how can he hear the divine Word, give serious application of the mind to the truth and pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit? The extreme Calvinist deals with a rather lively spiritual corpse after all...**The tragedy of this position is that it perverts the gospel. The sinner is wrongly instructed to beg for that which God is already beseeching him to receive. He is really being told that the condition of salvation is prayer instead of faith**" [*Bibliotheca Sacra*, July 1965, p.249].¹⁰

Calvinists would say that **repentance is granted by God and faith is a gift from God**...therefore we cannot be called to repent or believe apart from him, or this would constitute works. They would say if you are to be saved God must grant you repentance, and God must give you the gift of faith - so that your salvation is not of works, so that man has nothing to boast about.

God granted [gave] repentance to the Gentiles is a scripture used by Calvinists

Act 11:18 NIV When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life."

- This is that he has offered the path to eternal life [through repentance] to all nations
- If the granting of repentance means a precursor to salvation, then we would expect all Gentiles to be saved

God gave repentance to Israel is a scripture used by Calvinists

Act 5:31 KJV Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

- But you can see that this too is not a specific granting of repentance to an individual to bring him to salvation, rather it is that God paved the way through Christ to open the door for salvation to Israel through repentance and forgiveness.

Grace is the Gift

Eph 2:4-8 KJV But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in

¹⁰ <http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/reformed/godgift.htm>

Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Calling people to believe is not works-based salvation - in fact it is in line with how Abraham received righteousness

Yet when we speak of Abraham -- we see that he "believed God" and it [his belief] was counted to him for righteousness...and it is clear from Rom 4:2-3 that his belief as NOT considered a work - yet it brought about righteousness.

- Rom 4:2-5 ASV For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God. 3 For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.
 - Abraham believed God
 - His choosing to believe was not counted as a work - nothing to glory about before God
 - Concerning works - His belief in God stood in contrast to the work of circumcision
 - We are saved by grace through faith [belief] not of works [circumcision or any other thing]
 - We receive righteousness just like Abraham, by believing
 - When we call people to repent and believe we are not asking them to a works based salvation - we are asking them to respond to the LORD's grace and salvation just as Abraham

Summary of this section

While I would never want to diminish the work of God in our hearts, opening them, pricking them, sending someone to preach to us, convicting us of sin, righteousness and judgement, and even granting repentance to us as Gentiles, it still does not take away from scriptures that make it clear that man must respond - salvation is not a passive process for the unregenerate - it is a loving response to the kindness of God that leads us to repentance. The work of God and the response of man in salvation are compatible in my view. God draws man in various ways to a place where he recognizes the need for salvation at which point he can choose repentance and faith or choose to love darkness rather than light.

These words of Jesus sound like human responsibility and accountability

John 8:24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins."

Why would God command that all men everywhere turn to Him and repent, if they are unable to?

- Act 17:30-31 NIV In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

If man's depravity means he cannot choose to believe, then what can we make of Jesus's comment "He that believes has everlasting life" ?

- Joh 6:47 KJV Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

Why would Jesus denounce Chorazin and Bethsaida for not repenting as well as indicate that Tyre and Sidon '*would have repented*' if they had seen the miracles. His rebuke indicates that people have the ability to choose to repent.

- Mat 11:20-21 NIV Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Salvation is both a work of God's calling and man responding

Act 2:37-40 NIV When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

- They heard and were cut to the heart
- What shall WE do
- Repent and be baptized is the response
- It is a promise for all whom the Lord our God will call - [God's call]
- Save yourselves from this corrupt generation - [man's response]

The Bible does teach that it is IMPOSSIBLE for mankind to save himself. Mark 10:25-27 reads, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, **With men it is impossible**, but not with God: for with God all things are possible).

Yet, the Word of God also proclaims that "**whosoever will**" (anyone) can get saved, a view that Calvinists and Hyper-Calvinists do NOT hold. Romans 10:13 plainly teaches, "For WHOSOEVER shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

We must embrace both truths:

- 1) It is impossible for man to save himself
 - a) this does not remove from man the ability or accountability to choose when the offer is made
- 2) Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved
 - a) this does not remove the fact that salvation is totally from God

Appendix

Here are some examples of unregenerate people who do not seem to be bound by the restraints of a Calvinistic definition of Total Depravity

An unregenerate man has faith

- Luke 7:6-9 ESV And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. (7) Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. (8) For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." (9) When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

An unregenerate woman has faith

- Matthew 15:26-28 ESV And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." (27) She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." (28) Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

An unregenerate man was told he must rule over sin

- Gen 4:6-7 NIV Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."

Unregenerate men could have chosen to love light - but instead chose darkness

- Joh 3:18-19 KJV He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Unregenerate man had the free will to choose to reject

- Luke 13:34 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing

Unregenerate men suppress the truth

- **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, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown [it] to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible [attributes] are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify [Him] as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the

glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

- Man has suppressed truth
- Man has the revelation that comes through creation
- They refused to glorify Him as God [an act of will]
- They became futile in their thoughts and their hearts were darkened because of their refusal to acknowledge God - [a progressive decline into deeper depravity] - the point is that the depravity of man is not set in stone at birth - man can become "worse" throughout the course of his life by "choosing" to reject God...If man has the ability to choose to become worse, why does he not have the ability to choose to do better?

Unregenerate men obeyed from the heart

- Romans 6:17 But God be thanked that [though] you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Unregenerate men seeking God

- **Acts 10:1** There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, 2 a devout [man] and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. 3 About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!" 4 And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God."
- **Acts 13:42** So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.
- **Acts 16:13** And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met [there]. 14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard [us]. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged [us], saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

He calls the unregenerate to seek him

- Isaiah 55 :6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.