

REVIEW

- There are 2 main views of “free will”
 - You made a free choice if you could have done something else
 - You made a free choice if you did what you wanted to do
- They argue that without their view of freedom, then
 - You can’t have genuine love because you can’t NOT love
 - The problem with this is:
 - Our love is genuine and necessary
 - Because of the heart we received in regeneration
 - Seen in our glorification
 - Seen in the Trinity
 - You can’t be responsible because you can’t NOT do what you did
 - God is responsible for sin because people are only doing what He decrees

The reasoning we want to focus on this morning is this:

- According to those who believe in the freedom of contrary choice, to deny free will makes it so that people are not responsible
 - If you can’t do anything other than what you do, then you’re not responsible
- Everyone knows good deeds should be praised and bad deeds punished
 - According to them, this only makes sense if the good or bad deeds were chosen INSTEAD of the other

Again, if Mary stopped to help someone change their tire, she should be praised

- They say she should be praised because she could have kept going
 - She made the choice to stop and nothing compelled her to do it
- If you take this situation and apply our definition of freedom, Mary should be praised because she truly wanted to stop and help
 - She intended to help this person
 - This is what makes people responsible in judgment in Scripture
 - God judges our actions and intentions
 - What she could have done has nothing to do with her free choice
- 1 Cor. 4:5 - God judges our actions and intentions / motivations
 - The praise or blame received is tied directly to the heart's motives
 - God will judge what you did and why you did it
 - NOT *could* you have done something else
 - This applies to God's actions as well
 - God acts righteously and can't act sinfully
 - Yet we praise Him for His righteousness
 - This is because He intends to do the things that He does

Scott C. makes a great point that their definition of free will actually undermines their whole argument

- But I don't want to get into that too much right now
- It is worth your time though, and it is found in chapter 2

Ought Does Not Imply Can

For them, moral obligations, or commands / prohibitions ,
prove moral ability and freedom

- If we “ought” to do something, we can do something

- God would never tell us to do something if we CAN'T

Does the Bible teach this???

- MLJ - If the Word of God as revealed in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments is our sole infallible source of knowledge of God and the world in which we live, then properly understanding what God has revealed to us is of utmost importance
- MLJ - I can be seated with the Bible in front of me; I can be reading its words and going through its chapters; and yet I may be drawing a conclusion which is quite false to the pages in front of me
- How sad it would be to wrongly draw a principle out of the Bible and therefore conclude something wrong about God
- We must I've our best Spirit-fueled effort to never do this
- One of the easiest ways we do misinterpret the Bible is by using our pre-understandings / assumptions

One of the assumptions people bring to the Bible is this

- They come to the Bible and read this into it even though the Bible never says it
- It becomes a grid through which every command is sifted

Again, they say, and some of you may say, that the fact that you are morally obligated to perform a certain action means you are able to perform that action

- For them, it would be immoral for God to hold people responsible for not doing what they can't do

This seems right

- You wouldn't blame a blind guy for not finding Waldo

I want to make 3 affirmations as clear as possible

1. Man is commanded obey God

2. Man is incapable in and of himself to come to Christ

- John 6:44; Rom. 8:7-8; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3

3. Man is accountable to obey and will be punished if he does not

- John 3:18, 36; 2 Thess. 1:8

If you affirm these 3 things, you must deal with this problem...

- Can God justly punish human beings for not doing something that they are unable to do?

This issue has been handled differently throughout Church history

Pelagius

- Augustine had a prayer that was being circulated
 - Grant what You command, and command what You desire.
- Pelagius heard this and thought it was crazy
 - He blamed spiritual laziness on this idea
- God wouldn't command what we can't do
- We don't need his grace
- He commanded what was in our power to do
- He believed Adam's sin effected only himself

Charles Finney

- He also affirmed man had a natural ability to obey God
- He believed all men could obey God without divine assistance
- He went so far as to say that God should not be credited with man's obedience

Arminians and Wesleyans

- They recognized the heresy of Pelagius
- But they also steered clear of what was known as calvinism
- Their solution was to invent a whole new doctrine completely void of any text
- They affirmed man's depravity and need for divine grace
- They also affirmed commands imply ability
- So this caused them to create the doctrine of prevenient grace
 - That is, before conversion, a special grace neutralizes the effects of Adam's sin
 - God has graciously restored all men to be able to do what He has commanded
- There is no way to prove this doctrine from Scripture
 - God says non-Christians are blind, dead, ignorant, hard-hearted, hostile to God, unable to submit to Him, and a slave to sin

All three of these solutions should be rejected

- The Bible makes it clear that a command does not mean lost people are able
- The “ought” doesn’t not imply “can”
 - Is there biblical proof of this???

John 6

- 6:35, 37b, 40
- Non-compatibalists read this and assume everyone is capable of “coming” and “beholding”
- This same chapter contradicts this interpretation
- 6:37a, 44
- John 6 shows it is unmistakable that all men ought to come to Christ, but it is only those whom the Father draws that can come to Christ

Matt. 7

- Jesus warns about false prophets
- 7:16, 18
- Notice the moral inability
- 7:19
- Jesus affirms that false teachers will be held accountable for their failure to bring forth good fruit

Romans 9

- Paul is discussing God's absolute freedom in His saving purposes
- He spoke of the twins to show His choice of Jacob over Esau had nothing to do with them
 - 9:11
- Salvation depends on God, not man
 - 9:16
- Pharaoh is proof of this
 - 9:17
- The summary is clear
 - 9:18
- PAY ATTENTION TO THIS NEXT PART
 - After talking about God's sovereignty and salvation, he anticipates a question
 - If you explain these same things and DON'T get these questions, you're explaining it wrong
 - 9:19
 - In other words, HOW CAN MAN BE BLAMED FOR THEIR UNBELIEF WHEN THEIR DESTINY HAS BEEN DIVINELY DETERMINED?
 - Does this sound familiar???
 - Those who disagree with our understanding of freedom would offer this same argument
 - Isn't it wrong of God to find fault if He is the cause of the person's behavior???

- First thing to note is those who make this argument, Paul assumes you are arguing with him...
- Paul is arguing with someone who is saying ought must imply can
- Second thing to note is this argument only comes up because Paul affirms our 3 principles
 - Man ought to repent and be saved
 - Man lacks the moral ability to repent and be saved
 - God still holds man accountable to repent and be saved and will punish them for their failure to do so
 - This argument wouldn't exist if Pelagius was right
 - This argument wouldn't exist if prevenient grace was true
- Third thing to note is Paul does not correct the questioner's misunderstanding
 - Paul could have easily said, "I must have misled you; I never said that God decrees or chooses for us to do evil deeds. I can see how you would wonder how it could be fair to hold us guilty for what God decided we would do. But, I'm not saying that God decides everything that happens."
 - INSTEAD, Paul re-affirms God's absolute sovereignty
 - 9:20-21

Hopefully you are convinced that Scripture teaches these 3 principles

- Man ought to repent and be saved
- Man lacks the moral ability to repent and be saved
- God is righteous in holding them accountable

But why would God do it this way???

- It is a popular opinion that this question shouldn't be asked or answered
 - J.I. Packer, in what is otherwise an excellent book you all should read, says that the answer to why God would do this is a secret
- Rom. 9:19
 - Paul's immediate response is to rebuke the questioner who seeks to impugn God's righteousness
 - BUT this is not the full response of Paul
- It seems Paul sees this as a valid question, but this rebuke is given because of the motivation of the questioner
- If you sincerely want to know why God would hold men accountable for what they can't do, keep reading
 - 9:22-23
- It is ultimately because God grants what He requires
 - By commanding the impossible, God magnifies our inability and His powerful grace
 - Again, we are back to Him concerned with His glory
 - God would not be glorified in man accomplishing righteousness on their own effort
 - By granting what He requires, God shows Himself as all in all
 - He keeps us as the beggars who need Him, and He secures His praise and glory in accomplishing what we can't do but must do
 - If ought implies can, we lose a biblical aspect of the goodness of God

In summary of last week and this week,

Our actions can be caused by God and still remain free actions

- Love is genuine
 - NOT if I can choose to not love
 - But only if I am truly loving from my own heart

And man is responsible for everything we do

- NOT because we are able to do anything
- But because what we do is always done because we intend to do it

And God is righteous in holding man responsible for not doing what man cant

do BECAUSE that promotes His glory

- He is robbed of glory with every little action you ultimately attribute to man
- He is robbed of His goodness if our faith and repentance are gifts from Him