

Review of “How bad is man’s problem” (Total Depravity)

- Rom. 8:7-8
- Man is only free to do what he wants to do
- Our hearts are corrupted by sin in every way possible so that no part of us wants to obey God by faith for His glory

If this total inability is true...

- How do some people do it?
- If faith and repentance are a gift, how do I get and give them?
- How am I a Christian since I had no desire or ability to love God?
- If I was totally unable and unwilling, how do I now love God???
- As we witness, what hope is there for others???

That hope is being born-again!

- To understand this, how we use the word “saved” needs clarity
- Most people say, “I was saved when I repented and believed”
 - We typically mean “justified” when we use “saved”
 - There are many other aspects to our salvation
 - Not every part is accomplished by repentance and faith
 - Unfortunate that many today confuse being born again with being justified
 - If you have ever heard someone says “In order to be born again, you must do _____”
 - This confusion comes from not clearly thinking through the order of salvation and what the Bible says

1. We head a general call that comes through the presentation of the Gospel
 - This is what we present to everyone everywhere
 - This is one of the main reasons we are left here on earth
 - This is also the means that God uses to save people
 - Our goal is faithfulness
 - What is faithfulness???
 - He is the One who decides who to save and when

2. This genuine call is given by us to **EVERYONE**
 - Go into ALL the world...

3. This is a **GENUINE** call that is given by us to everyone
 1. Many say that God doesn't really mean it if He hasn't chosen everyone
 - What makes it genuine?
 - NOT "Jesus died for you"
 - NOT "God loves you"
 - Notice how the NT Christians presented the Gospel
 - It is genuine because of the promise and the One who promises
 2. This is a genuine call because it is a promise
 - We are not telling sinners they **HAVE** been forgiven
 - We are telling them they **CAN BE** forgiven
 - It is absolutely true because God cannot lie
 - Just because sinful man refuses to repent and believe doesn't mean that God was just kidding when He said He will forgive **EVERYONE** who will repent and believe

But if man is as bad off as we have seen, how can he have hope of obeying???

- If we always do what we want to do, and as unbelievers, we never want to obey God out of faith and for His glory, how can our WANT TO change???

Effectual Call

1. Only for those whom the Father has chosen
2. **Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Cor. 1:22-24; Jude 1:1** (ESV missing “the”)

In spite of total inability, I am now ALIVE - **Eph. 2:4-5**

- How?
- Why is it that I now love the gospel rather than ridicule it?
- Why do I now understand and love God’s Word rather than reject and ridicule it?

This miracle is called regeneration / new birth / being born-again

Let’s ask an answer 4 questions regarding regeneration / being born-again

1. Who Does This?

- The Bible makes it abundantly clear that this work is accomplished by God alone
- We may and do play various roles in different aspects of our salvation
 - For instance, how is someone justified???
 - It is by repentance and faith
 - These are both gifts given to us by God
 - But God does not repent and believe for us
- Not so with regeneration / being born-again
 - No human being plays a role in being born-again
 - Man is entirely passive
- This is clearly seen in the illustrations used to picture what has happened
 - New birth - **John 3:3-8; 1 Pet. 1:3**
 - Jesus compared it to the wind
 - Neither the wind nor new birth is controlled by us
 - But you do see the results
 - Regeneration - **Titus 3:5**
 - Our English word “regenerate” comes from the Latin of “created again”
 - The Greek is παλιγγενεσία
 - παλι (again / new) + γενεσία (origin / birth / generation)
 - Again, God acted on us
 - New creation - **2 Cor. 4:6**
 - When God called the light to shine, it didn't exist
 - He spoke it into existence
 - In this work, God unites the general call with His calling to create new life
 - His work in you creates what it is commanding -“let there be light / life”
 - In this series, we said earlier that God is glorified in commanding you to do what you are unable to do because it highlights His grace
 - This is why we must protect this doctrine of regeneration
 - This is where God provides what you need
- John makes it clear that it is not by man’s works / attempts - **John 1:13**
 - You’d have just as much luck going to local cemetery and trying to raise people
- God caused us to be born again - **1 Pet. 1:3**
- This is seen in the New Covenant promises - **Ezk. 36:25-27**
 - I will, I will, I will, I will, I will, I will...

2. What Happens?

- The result is a fundamental change in ALL of you - **2 Cor. 5:17**
 - Just as sin has a “total” effect on you
 - New life has a “total” effect on you
 - Mentally, emotionally, and volitionally, man is captive to sin
 - Regeneration changes all of this
 - Blind eyes are opened - 2 Cor. 4:4, 6; Eph. 1:18; Acts 26:18
 - Mind of the flesh is now mind of the Spirit - Rom. 8:5-9
 - Ignorant darkened mind is not the mind of Christ - 1 Cor. 2:16
 - We now love what God loves and hate what God hates - Matt. 5:4, 6; John 3:21; Psalm 27:4; 42:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:16
- This result is seen in **Phil. 2:13**
- Sinclair Ferguson
 - “Regeneration is . . . as all-pervasive as depravity. . . . [W]hile the regenerate individual is not yet as holy as he or she might be, there is no part of life which remains uninfluenced by this renewing and cleansing work.”
- Now that we have eyes that see, we turn from what is worthless (sin) in repentance and by faith pursue what is infinitely valuable (Christ)
 - This is what is meant when we say we are “irresistibly drawn”
 - Its not that God’s grace can never be resisted
 - We see everywhere that many reject God’s grace to them in the general call
 - In the work of regeneration, God overcomes your natural resistance to the gospel by shining light into your heart and opening your eyes to the glories of Christ
 - Grace now frees your will from sin’s mastery so you can value what is truly valuable
 - Christ become irresistible because you see Him for who He is!
- No one with a new heart and new life and new sight will resist the Christ they have been blind to their whole life
 - He will be embraced by faith because He is now loved by you!

3. The Means of Regeneration

- Scripture clearly identifies the Word of God in general and the gospel message in particular as the means of regeneration
- **James 1:18**
 - The Father's will is the ultimate cause, but His Word is the means
- **1 Peter 1:23,25; 2 Thess. 2:14**
- It is by means of God's Word being preached that He opens blind eyes
 - Remember, the external call is not effectual
 - God is pleased to use it though
 - The Spirit internally calls people through the external call that we make
 - Through our mouths or media or sermons or whatever is used
 - Though the external call is not sufficient, it is necessary
- **Rom. 10:17**
 - Faith (God's gift) comes by the external call

4. The Relationship of Regeneration to Repentance and Faith

- People are use to hearing that a person is born again once they believe
 - Not only is this wrong, but its backwards
 - People believe once they are born again
- Though faith is inseparably linked to regeneration, there is a logical order
- For those who teach that man's faith causes regeneration
 - They don't understand man's sinful state
 - They don't understand the dead-ness of man
 - Natural man, unsaved man, is unwilling and unable to repent and believe
- **John 6:65**
 - Coming to Jesus - Another way to say believe...
- **1 John** offers several results of being born-again
 - **2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:18**
 - **5:1** is grammatically identical to 2:29; 4:7
 - Surely man is not born again because of good works
 - Titus 3:5 explicitly denies this
 - Notice another result that John gives in **5:4**
 - Because you've been born again, you will overcome the world
 - NOT the other way around

Why does this matter?

- This determines your philosophy of ministry
- This causes you to be more humble with your salvation
- This helps you understand Isa. 42:8 - God does not share His glory...
- This causes yo auto have hope for everyone that you know and see
 - NO ONE IS SOO FAR GONE THAT REGENERATION WON'T CHANGE THEM

Next Week...

- It is clear that I had a real change in my will when I was born-again...
- How can I keep changing???
- I still have moments when I sin, and I don't want to WANT to sin anymore...
- What has God provided for me to change in my sanctification?