

Total Depravity

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[0 : 00] Thanks for being with us today. Hope you can stay and be with us. Some others, if I haven't met you or want to talk to you, have a chance.

So that's good. I was telling Carrie that, and she already knows, that it took us a little while to get into that school across the way.

There was a hold up for a while, but God finally opened that door there. It's been great.

And then the number of different workers we've had there, we've had some, you know, we had Shannon and Diane and Susan.

So God's taken away a few of our folks. Yeah, Bart. He's been there, yeah. So I was kind of thinking back to, you know.

[1 : 00] So we're really grateful to have that. God has, you know, I mean, we're right across the street. So I want you to be my neighbor. Kind of, you know, and then some.

So, yeah, so we're grateful to be part of that. Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to the book of Ephesians, chapter 2.

We're walking through Paul's letter to, it's called the Ephesians, but really it's to a whole area of churches. It's a very general letter that could be applied to any church at any time.

And he's writing about what is, what I've called healthy Christianity, which begins with the first half of the book is about what is true.

What is God doing? What has God done, right, for us? And then the second half is all application.

Therefore, you know, walk in a manner worthy of your calling.

[2 : 01] So it's about what we do. So first of all is what we have, what are our riches, how we've been blessed with every blessing, and then how God has empowered us to walk in a manner worthy.

How do we do that? Well, the first half is how he fills us, what he's given us, in order that we might walk in a manner worthy of him as we rely on him. So we come to chapter 2.

So one of the great foundations, one of the great riches and graces is that we've been saved. So this is Paul, though, as we remember. This is Paul, and he doesn't just say you're saved.

He wants to dig in. He diagnoses not only how we're saved, but what we're saved from. And so we began to look last week and this week at what we're saved from, the incredible position that we had been in, and our need for grace, how desperately we needed God to work, right?

And then how. So if you have your text, Ephesians chapter 2, we're going to look at the, we'll just read the first five verses, and we'll dig into verse 3.

[3 : 18] There we go, verse 3. That'll be nice and easy. Just one verse, that's... So if you're able, please stand as I read from Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 to 5. And you, being 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.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace, you have been saved. So it reads. Let's pray. Father, open our eyes. Help us to see and help us to grasp.

Father, it's not our purpose to dwell on these things just for... to theologically cross our T's and dot our I's, but to practically understand what we've been saved from, how bad we were, and how greatly we need your grace.

And so show us that, not only for ourselves, but in order that we might understand the condition of the lost. Lord, that our compassion would be enriched and enlarged, that we might be truly motivated to love folks that don't know you and to speak to them to open doors.

[5 : 28] This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. So before 1960, anybody remember 1960?

Anybody here? I remember because I was born one year before that. Before 1960, when a criminal was convicted of murder and a judge determined a sentence of death, the prisoner was put in an area of the prison called Death Row.

And when the guards led that prisoner down the highway, they would call out, dead man walking. Dead man here. Dead man walking. They would do that to designate a man who was condemned to death.

Well, it's the same way Paul describes us before Christ. You were dead. In your trespasses and sins.

[6 : 47] Not physically dead, obviously, but spiritually dead. Dead to God. So I want us, we began looking at this last week.

We're just kind of, as Paul, as he does, he diagnoses, he breaks it down. To be fair to Paul, we want to walk through his words and understand how it is that he understood it that we might understand it.

So he began by sharing this grave, showing us this grave condition in verse one. And in this whole section, the sentence is really 2, 1 to 10.

This is the subject, chapter 2, 1 to 10. And it starts in verse one as dead, a great contrast of dead. And then verse five, made alive.

Even when we were dead, made alive by God. So that great contrast. And then it's more, we're not just made alive. We're not just changed and saved from sin to life.

[7 : 53] But we're transformed as well from a life dominated by sin, as we saw last week, dominated by, you know, trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to two things.

According to the course of the world, we were conformed to the world. That's all we knew. And we were following the prince of the power of the air. We were following Satan, though we may not have deliberately or intentionally done that, we were doing that because he is in charge of this world. Right? So that was our condition. And then it's transformed to life, but not just life, but he says in verse 10, we're new creations.

We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, for good works, which God prepared before and that we should walk in them. So we were, verse one, walking in sin.

Now we're walking in good works, a transformation. Not just a salvation, but a transformation. Transform life. So that's what Paul is showing us.

[8 : 59] We looked last week at the first two conditions, or I call them disorders. A disorder is an unhealthy condition, right? An anomaly.

We weren't created this way, but this is what we had become because of Adam. What we're saved from, first of all, without Christ, we're all spiritually dead, which means we had a life characterized by sin, dead in transgressions and sins.

Both transgression, a rebellious, intentional sin, and sins, which are the falling short kind of sins. Just can't, not able to do any better. So no life, dead.

No spiritual response. A separation from God, as we saw Adam and Eve when they first, when their eyes were open, there's an immediate change and a separation from God as they hide from him.

No response. They are spiritually blind, spiritually deaf, spiritually lame. They are lepers. We were lepers in that sense.

[10 : 09] Everything that Jesus, all of Jesus' miracles are pictures of salvation, right? He made the blind see.

He made the deaf hear. He made the lame walk. He made the leper clean. He made the ones dominated by demons free.

He made the dead rise, right? So everything, those are all pictures, true miracles, but pictures, right, of what he would do ultimately for us in salvation.

So we saw we're dead and then secondly, verse two, we saw that we're dominated. Dominated by external evil influences. So in verse two, they're external.

One is the world, right? Paul says we're walking according to the world. We're following that world and then secondly, dominated by the evil influence of the ruler of this world, right?

[11:14] So now in verse three, we have two more conditions or disorders.

So dead, dominated by external influences. Now in verse three, we have two more. The third one, in the first part of verse three, we're enslaved to lust.

So we now are corrupted internally, not just external influence, but we have now this internal influence. And fourthly, ultimately, we are children of wrath.

We are under the wrath of God. We sang about in the second song today that we were, that Christ saved us from the wrath of God.

So we want to understand what that is. So the problem's even greater than we realize. We're not just people who are lost and need a little help.

[12:12] We're not just people who were caught in sin and need help overcoming sin. We were people that were dead and under, not just under the influence, but dominated by those influences because we had no other, we're dead to God.

So, and then now we have the internal issues and then the issue coming up is the wrath of God. So how bad is it? The third condition, we'll call it, right, the enslavement to lust.

Without Christ, we were all enslaved or driven by our inner lust. I would, this is where we get the term total depravity.

In fact, I titled it total depravity. The problem's greater in that it's, it's comprehensive. By total depravity, we don't mean that we're the worst that we could be.

We're not total to the worst, you know, but that we're totally affected, infected, tainted. Every part of our being, the totality of our being is corrupted, depraved.

[13:37] So, if you're unfamiliar with the word depraved, corrupted, total corruption, we have a comprehensive corruption. Our heart, our soul, our mind, our will, right, every part of us as Paul's gonna designate, our flesh and our mind, right, are dominated by this or influenced and tainted by this.

But that doesn't mean we're the worst that we could be. That's, I mean, there's, right, I mean, there's people who are unbelievers who are still the image of God and still do good things because they're in the image of God, you know, but they're still tainted.

We were tainted completely. And that's something I think that's important to understand. So, without Christ, we're all enslaved to our inner lust.

the corruption is total. So, Paul starts in verse 3 with, among them, we too, we all, also, right, among them, we too, all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh.

So, he was talking about you in verses 1 and 2 and now, verse 3, he talks about a we. So, we, Paul's including himself and he's, so he's primarily writing to Gentiles.

[14:53] So, he's, by the we, he's most likely thinking of Jewish folks, we too. Though we're religious, though we sought God, we too were living, conducting our lives in the lusts of our flesh.

So, it's not just a pagan problem, not just a Gentile problem, not just an American problem, it's a universal problem. We all, we all, the Jews are no better off, though they had advantages, they were not better off spiritually.

As, as Isaiah writes, all we like sheep, all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one of us to his own way.

What's the good news? That's the bad news. What's the good news? But the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all, the iniquity. So, that's the worst of our sins, right?

That was the coming Messiah. Isaiah 53, speaking about the Messiah to come. He came to solve that problem. So, we all once lived in the lust of our flesh, lived in.

[16:10] What is that? Lived in. How do you live in something? Right? Lived in the lust of our flesh. In is showing that we lived by means of.

Right? We lived in that sphere. We're living by means of the lust of our flesh. That's how we lived. That was what our life was composed of.

We lived in that sphere. Instead of living in, so now our new sphere is we've been transferred to Christ, right?

So, now we live in the sphere of Christ. We walk in him. We walk in the spirit. Right? So, we have a different, we've been transferred to a different kingdom.

Right? Now, that takes our active faith, but that's where we have been given to. We can, so this idea of lived in, verse, by the way, just a reminder, I'm using the New American Standard, so if you're using ESV or NIV, that's why, NIV, did I say NIV?

[17 : 26] New International, no, yeah. So, New American Standard has, we all too formerly lived in. So, the word there lived, that's kind of generic, it doesn't really grasp, the Greek is, we conducted our life.

Our life, it's the word that talks about, you know, the life that goes on. We conducted our life in it, in that sphere, in the lust of our flesh.

So, what's a lust? Well, this word for lust just means a strong craving. It can be good or bad, not all lust is bad. Jesus used the same word in the upper room when he said, I desired to eat this Passover with you.

Or, if we translate it lust, I lusted to have this Passover with you. So, it's not evil, obviously, he's using that same word, a strong desire, strongly desired.

Like, nobody translated it where Jesus and I lusted, but he translated, I desired, I greatly desired to have this Passover. So, it's a strong craving, a yearning, a passion.

[18 : 40] And then, flesh. So, the strong craving, the yearning of the flesh. What's flesh? So, theologians like to wax real eloquent about this word.

because it has about four different relations. But, in its basic sense, it means flesh versus spirit. What's opposed to the spirit.

So, walking in the flesh instead of walking in the spirit. Right? So, walking in the realm of the spirit. Flesh is also, in that sense, what is hostile to God.

If you're walking in the flesh, then you're hostile toward God. In your acts and your thoughts. But, flesh really is really doing what's natural.

I mean, if we're born that way, if we grow up and doing what's natural, that's fleshly. Because we don't know the other. We haven't been translated to the other.

[19 : 43] Right? So, so how do, so then he adds to that, we formerly conducted ourselves in the lust of our flesh, then doing what? How did that, how did that work out?

By indulging the desires of the flesh and the mind or by carrying out the intention of the flesh and the mind.

Doing the will of the flesh and the mind. I think, yeah, indulging the desires. Actually, this is a different word from the former desires.

This is a word that means will, intention, doing the will of the flesh and doing the will of the mind. So, in other words, it's total.

It's not just fleshly stuff that we're drawn by. It's mind, too. The mind has been corrupted. So, I mean, the corruption is total.

[20 : 44] And it's will. The will. Willing to do the flesh, the base lust, and then the mind. Mind, will, flesh.

Total corruption. Now, as I said, we can also will to do good. We do good things. I mean, unbelievers do good things all the time.

They give away stuff. They care about people. That's just because they're made in the image of God. That's still part of their nature. But, because of that, that whole nature has been corrupted, polluted, tainted.

So, the mind's tainted. The will is tainted. The flesh, the natural stuff is tainted. So, they are enslaved.

I like to call it enslaved. Enslaved to that inner corruption. So, indulging the desires. He talks about two kinds here.

[21 : 47] The will of the flesh and the will of the mind or the desires of the flesh, the body, and the desires or will, intentions of the mind.

So, again, of the flesh are the base desires, the cravings, hungering and thirsting, pleasuring for things, the affections. All of those are tainted.

When you are separated from God and you are without Christ, so hunger, now all those things, those are natural things, hunger, thirst, pleasures, affections, God has given us a world to enjoy.

Those can be all good things, but those can also be a gateway to something else. So, hunger can become what? Gluttony.

Right? Over, so, so, a lot of sin is just going, taking a good thing too far. Right? So, it's good things that are corrupted. So, that's why, you know, Eve is tempted by the fruit, but the fruit, she saw that it's good, right, and it's pleasurable, and could make men wise, so those seem like all good things, so go for it.

[22 : 58] What was wrong with that? Well, God said no. Right? That's what was wrong with that. so, so, so, hunger, thirsting, and pleasure, pleasure, if I, if I become a hedonist, right, if I live for pleasure, if I live for a factious, I live for just what feels good.

If all the, if any of those things become unchecked, then I become a very unhealthy person. I'm already unhealthy, but then it becomes an extremely unhealthy situation, right?

And I, and the, the, the enemy can, can pull us in any of those directions. Then he talks about the will of the mind and the desire of the mind.

The mind meaning, the word there, meaning thoughts, thinking, ideas, right? So, so ideas that could come from feelings and affections, from our biases, ideas that are selfish and worldly, so we have been, become totally depraved, or depraved in a total comprehensive way, our will, our desires, our thoughts.

So let's, let's bring in Paul's commentary on this. In Galatians 5, Paul describes the Christian battle of flesh and spirit. This is a very helpful section. It helps us kind of put into connection what he's talking about here.

[24 : 25] So our old condition was that's what life, life was dominated by that, our lusts of the flesh. Now as we have been saved from that, what are we battling as Christians?

We're still in a battle, but now we have new resources. So, Paul says it this way in Galatians 5, 16, I say, he's going to simplify life for us.

I say, walk by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. That's all you got to do. All you need to do, it all bottles down to this, walk by the spirit, and guess what?

You don't have to worry about the desires of the flesh. It's all taken care of. Walk by the spirit, you're good. Got it? It's simple.

Simple. But it's not easy. Simple. The concept is simple. It's not difficult. Right? Walk with God, I won't walk, right? So just, okay, but the problem is, I still got this natural part of me that pulls me back this way.

[25 : 31] So Paul says, walk by the spirit and you won't carry out the desires of the flesh. Why is that so? Because, he says, for the desires of the flesh are against the spirit. And the desires of the spirit are against the flesh.

So they're opposed to each other. For these are, well, there you go. For these are opposed to each other. To keep you, here's an interesting statement. They're opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

Isn't that interesting? So in one sense, once you're saved, you're in a battle to do what you want to do. Before you were saved, there was no battle.

You just did what you wanted to do. Now you got the spirit and the spirit saying, no, there's a better way. No, it's going to bring pain.

Right? And we got the flesh going. Come on. Remember how much fun we had? Remember how great it was just to explode at somebody? So opposed to do things.

[26 : 33] But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. Ha, freedom. Now the works of the flesh are evident. So here's some examples of flesh. Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

He's not exhaustive. He says, I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things, continually practice such things, will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Why? Because those who inherit the kingdom of God are transformed people. They might slip, but they don't keep doing those things. Right? And when they slip, they hate that they slip.

They can't even enjoy it anymore. Right? It's just, ah, that's not the new me. so, before Christ, there was no struggle.

The lust of the flesh controlled us. It was without opposition, no influence from within. We were, it was unchecked. And note that what Paul calls the works of the flesh are not just outward things, there's a lot of inner stuff, the anger, envy, strife, jealousy.

[28 : 01] And Jesus says all that stuff starts in the heart anyway. It's all coming out of the heart, shows what the heart's full of. So how bad is our condition without Christ? So, we saw that we're spiritually dead.

Two, we saw that we're dominated by external influences of the world and the devil. And then, now third, we saw that there's internal corruptions that are affecting us, drawing us away from God. So, fourthly, comes to even worse situation because here's the result of it all. we are children of wrath. We're under wrath. What does that mean? We need to slow down here a little bit and understand that because it's a greatly misunderstood and unpopular subject. So, our fourth disorder or condition before Christ, without Christ, we all justly deserve God's wrath. That's the fact. Apart from Christ, we justly deserve God's wrath. So, note, Paul says that at the end of verse three, he says, we were by nature, children of wrath. We were by nature. We were.

[29 : 12] He does not say we ultimately became that, but that we already were. And then, two phrases to understand here, children of wrath, is a Hebrewism, Hebraism.

Yeah, okay. Which meant, it's a Hebrew way of speaking, which simply means children of, right, son of, means deserving of, right? So, a child of wrath is someone deserving of wrath, right? So, so, so, Judas was called the son of perdition, right? He was called the son of perdition, which simply means he was deserving of perdition.

And then, the second phrase is by nature. We were by nature, children of wrath, which just means by birth, by, we inherit from Adam.

We looked at that last week in Romans, that that was because, because we all sin means we're connected to Adam. Adam sinned, and we all became sinners. We inherited that nature, right?

[30 : 24] We sin because we're sinners. We don't, we're not sinners because we sin, we, we're, we sin because we're sinners. Who we are. It's who we are.

So, we're not neutral beings. So, what is the wrath of God? Let's look at this. It's un, it's unpopular. People don't want to look at it. It's like some of those hard words in the Bible, like election, and, you know, I don't want to talk about that.

I don't believe, I don't want to. Well, it's because we don't get it. So, wrath is like that. It's, we kind of invest our thoughts into it instead of understanding what the term means.

So, people that misunderstand the wrath of God would argue, how do you reconcile God's wrath with a loving God? That's the most common objection.

How could God, God's loving, he's not wrathful, right? my God, my God, right? He's loving, he wouldn't be wrathful.

[31 : 28] Well, you don't understand the nature of God if you limit him just to some things. So, in the context, we're seeing the view, God's view in this whole thing.

So, what's God's view in this whole thing? Not man's view in this whole thing. I object to wrath, I don't like that idea. So, what is God's view in this whole thing? Well, let's go back to the beginning. Who created who? Did man make God or did God make man? Because whoever was the creator is the one in charge.

Right? So, God created man. Which means man belongs to God and man owes everything to God. Just the way it is. I mean, well, I didn't ask to be created.

I understand. man. But you were. You were made. So, we're made by God yet we go our own way.

[32 : 30] I mean, it's just Adam and Eve, right? I mean, they were made by God, given paradise, given everything they needed. They were even given a job, right? They had work to do. They weren't just sitting around.

They were taking care of the garden and all that. And they had one restriction. Just one. tree. All these trees, just that one tree. Oh, that one tree. Come, I can't have, you know, and so that's where they went.

They went their own way. They were convinced that God was keeping something from them and they wanted that. So, we go our own way.

We reject and spurn the love and the paradise God has given to us, the gifts that God has given to us. We want to do our own thing. So, how should a just God respond?

If I, if he has created us and he has made us for his purpose, to exist for his purposes, but I want to do my own purposes, how should God respond?

[33 : 31] Shall a creator, all powerful, all loving, all gracious God, just let it go? Sit idle?

Is that how a real God? No. He doesn't sit idle. He reveals his wrath.

Let's understand the word wrath now too. That's important. Passion. So, it's not wrath like we think of men who have wrath. With men, we rage, we fury, we lose it, we explode.

We think that's wrath. It's an explosion. It's just a sudden boom. I'm so angry. That's not wrath.

That's not this word, wrath. Yeah, we do that, but that's not what wrath is. For God, wrath is the expression of his holy justice.

[34 : 39] It's a settled opposition to sin. It's not a sudden explosion. It's simply a settled opposition to sin. God in his holiness is opposed to sin. It just comes with who he is.

It's not like he's surprised or disappointed in us. Can God ever be disappointed? That's important. Is God ever disappointed in us? I've heard preachers say that.

They stir up guilt in me. God's disappointed. Well, it's actually theologically impossible for God to be disappointed in you. Because he already knows what you're going to do. Was he disappointed in Peter?

I think not. Peter was disappointed in Peter. Right? Not disappointed. He doesn't get disappointed in us. He doesn't explode in anger as if we shocked him.

Right? It's impossible. Does he grieve? Yes. He grieves because it's hurting us and so it hurts him. All right?

[35 : 41] So he feels that but he doesn't feel this explosion like you people. So it's rather well so it works in two ways.

Wrath is a condemnation of those who ignore and reject him and ultimately that wrath will lead to the final end. So we think of that kind of wrath when oh he's going to throw him in the lake of fire.

Well how long away is the lake of fire from you know when people sin? How long does God put off his anger by the way? Both Old Testament and New Testament.

I mean he doesn't give Israel what they deserve right away. He keeps suffering with them. He keeps warning them but putting off. Right?

So and then secondly wrath is shown toward believers or to some folks when he awakens them.

[36 : 50] And they're humbled and it sets up the grace. So he awakens folks to understand ooh wrath and then they see the grace of God and come to him.

So wrath is think of Adam's sin. Adam and Eve's sin. Right? What was God's response to them? It's the same. It's his wrath.

But when we read Genesis chapter 3 do you sense a wrath? Or what you think of is it what you would expect wrath to be? I mean God's walking in the garden.

He calls out. Where are you? As if he didn't know. Try to play hide and seek with God. It doesn't work. And then he asks a question.

Did you eat from the tree? You know we talked about. I mean he's very gentle. you know and then they hide right?

[37 : 52] And then they're drawn away from God. They're the ones that rebelled and yet they immediately their eyes are open.

They feel the shame. They're suddenly self-aware which they apparently weren't before and then they hide from God. They suddenly know there's a separation from God.

And then what happens next? They lose paradise. And what happens next? Well the corruption spreads to their children particularly one called Cain.

Right? And his corruption seems to get even more self energized right? As he kills his brother who has more favor with God than he does.

So it spreads. Listen to how Paul describes wrath of God in Romans 1. What does the wrath of God look like in today's life?

[38 : 56] Romans 1.18 For the wrath of God is revealed. Okay? The wrath of God is revealed. This is before he says this statement he's talking about the gospel, the coming of the gospel, the need for the gospel.

Why do we need the gospel to come? Because the wrath of God is revealed from heaven. How is it revealed? Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Who, what's their unrighteousness?

Who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. They know the truth and they push it down. God's unrighteousness and they suppress the Why? Why can we say that they suppress the truth?

Because what can be known about God is plain to them. Because God has shown it to them. They're not atheists. They're not even agnostic. They have seen God.

For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen, clearly perceived. Ever since the creation of the world, God, it's always been this way.

[40 : 00] In the things that have been made. So through creation, we know there is a God. We know very clearly that he's divinely powerful. So he goes on, so they are without excuse.

No one will stand before God and say, you didn't show yourself to me. I never believed in you. I never saw you. Wrong. I showed to you.

God will point out the day we saw that sunrise or we saw that, right, we saw the stars late at night and we saw and we started thinking and then we suppressed. Nah, I don't want to believe in a God. Nah. No, I don't want a God that powerful. Whatever. For although they knew God, they did not, so they're without excuse.

Why are they without excuse? Because although they knew God, every person knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him. How ungrateful.

[41 : 11] They did not honor him or give thanks to him. They took all of his creation for granted. But they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened. So they start making up theories to explain God away.

Claiming to be wise, they became fools. That's what God calls those genius minds that make these things up. And they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

See, we make our own God. Therefore, so how's the wrath of God revealed? He gave the reason for the wrath.

How is the wrath of God revealed? What does it look like? Therefore, God what? Exploded on them? Sent a lightning streak across the sky to pierce their nicely parted hair or lack of?

So what did he do? He gave them up. He didn't draw closer to them. He pulled away. He gave them up in the lusts of their flesh to impurity.

[42 : 24] He let them go to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever.

Amen. And the text goes on and Paul will talk about two more times where God gave them over. God gave them up. In other words, every time they reject him and suppress the truth, right, he lets them go.

He moves back from them. And then they carry that so far and he moves back further from them. His restraining grace is, you know, he had restrained.

His grace restrained us from being real super bad, you know, right? He's kept, we're image of God. But then we prove ourselves to be ungrateful and so he goes, okay, I'll let you go.

Pulls back that restraining grace. Okay, be all that you can be. Live out your nature. Now I'm showing a little attitude.

[43 : 36] I don't think God has that attitude towards me. I'm too corrupted to imagine how probably with tears in his eyes he's doing this.

Right? He's not taking any pleasure in the sins of the wicked. But he lets them go.

Go. That's what you want. Oh, it's sad. But let us recognize, I mean, take Paul's words seriously here.

That's what the wrath is. The wrath is not, it's a gentle pulling back. In fact, that's scarier, isn't it? So as man suppresses the truth, God pulls back his restrained grace. He gives them up to their lusts. In other words, what the depraved condition that they were in becomes even worse.

[44 : 41] Right? Because now it's not just lusts, but now it's impurities and it goes down the line. So look at the picture that Paul has painted for us in this diagnosis. We are dead to God.

We are dominated by external and internal influences. And we deserve his wrath. And it's a very serious problem. It's not just that we're lost.

It's not just that we're hurting. The true matter of the bad news is that we're under the wrath of God. We don't want to talk about it. How do you I mean, is that part of the gospel? Under the wrath of God?

Is that? It is. It's not the gospel good news part of it. It's the bad news part of it, obviously. But some people need to hear how bad it is before they might be awakened to recognize, I really need grace.

[45 : 49] I don't just need a little help from God. Right? As if God helps those who help themselves. Right? No. God helps those who can't help themselves. God helps those who are desperately sick. God helps those who are absolutely stuck and can't fix themselves. Who are permeated with this corruption. We are helpless.

We are hopeless. We are rebels who have shunned God. Yet the very God that we send against is the very God who provides a way to deliver us.

God loves the world who rebelled against him so much. He loves the world that hated him and suppressed his truth so much that he, what? Gave his only son.

Right? That whoever believes in him may not perish under the wrath of God. Right? That's the context.

[46 : 55] Those are the kind of words Jesus used. To pay our debt. Jesus, he sent his son to pay our debt for sin to awaken us from the dead to rescue us from the evil influences both without and within and to transform us into a new creation.

That's salvation. We sing amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. When I was in seminary over at Biola, Schuller sent his choir from the Crystal Cathedral to Biola, but they wanted them to sing amazing grace.

They said, we'll sing amazing grace, but we're taking the word wretch out. And so Biola, I was glad, said, well, then don't sing here. We believe in the whole truth.

See, Schuller, they don't believe that man is totally depraved. And I think they just misunderstand. They still see good in man.

Well, yeah, there is still good in man, because man is in the image of God. But he's totally comprehensively infected, and he needs a total comprehensive deliverance.

[48 : 19] All of us, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way, but the Lord has laid the iniquity of us all on him, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray. Father, we pray as at the beginning, we pray that you would open our eyes to understand how desperate is the condition of the lost, lost, is the condition of what we were.

Help us to understand our own lost condition that we would see how great our need is for your grace. We pray, oh, Father, that it would enrich our compassion for the lost.

It would motivate, Father, our desire to reach out to our loved ones who do not know you, to our neighbors who do not know you, to those whoever you make appointments for us to meet, Father, to get to know, to build a relationship with, that you would give us the opportunity at some point, oh, Father, to tell them the truth.

And to know that even as we do it, we're not going to be the ones that convince them. We're not going to be the ones to suddenly help them see when they can't see or hear, but the trust that your Holy Spirit works alongside of us as we speak to them, and he opens their eyes and helps them hear and pierces their heart that they might truly, truly believe.

[50 : 02] So, help us to make this information of good use. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.