

I. The Importance of Biblical Doctrine

The Bible has a specific teaching and a specific theme. We have talked about it many, many times. The Bible has one central concept that God wants to get across to man, and He wants you and I as Christians to know and understand that. Along with that, the Bible also contains many practical teachings or doctrines that may be on a lower level as far as what they deal with, that form biblical principles. These are the things you hear me talk about all the time that are the key to success in your daily Christian walk with the Lord.

Bible doctrine is simply God's right teaching on all the issues of life that we have to face down here as we live our lives on planet Earth. In fact, you will find that in 2 Timothy 3, and we have talked about this passage many, many times, that the Bible says that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. The first thing that it is profitable for is doctrine, because you and I as God's people have to have a sense of right and wrong. For you and I to have a relationship with God and to really be used of God, and what we are going to talk about today, you have to have a common sense or an understanding of what is right versus what is wrong.

My grandmother, God bless her soul, was a great lady and she had all kinds of wisdom. I wish back then that I had written down many of the things that she said, but many of the things that she said I did remember. She told me one time, she used to say this to all of us all the time, when we were going to church, she would always say to us before we left the house, we all had our little Bibles tucked on our arm. She used to say, "Now Bobby, the Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible." That is a great little piece of wisdom that she shared, because that is why we have to learn doctrine. You have to learn right teaching. The Bible's design, one of the designs—there are many aspects to the Bible—but the Bible's design is to keep you from sin. When you learn the Word of God, that is exactly what it does when you understand the principles.

II. Understanding Man's Depravity and God's View

That is why last week we began to talk about the depravity of man. We saw some great truths, because I told you that the key to your real success as a child of God is having that balance of understanding who you really are and seeing yourself as you really are versus how God sees you. Let me just state some obvious things again, so we can get into context, because there are people here that were not here last week, and just by way of remembrance: When you get saved, at that point in your life, God sees you as sinless. He sees you as absolutely perfect. In fact, the Bible says the moment you get saved, in God's mind, you are already seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. You are already as good as in heaven. Just as an unsaved man or an unsaved woman, if they are not saved, they are just as good as in hell. The Bible says the wrath of God abideth on him already.

But a saved person, once you get saved—we know the process, we went through it a couple of weeks ago, spiritual circumcision—we saw how the soul is cut loose from the flesh. At that particular point in time, God views you as sinless as far as your soul is concerned. We talked about it last week, what God had to do to have fellowship with you and I, who were totally worthless and are totally sinners. God had to separate part of me out. The new nature, my soul, was sealed by the Holy Spirit of God unto the day of redemption, and that forms my new nature. The old nature is my flesh, and you and I will be struck with our flesh until Jesus comes back. That is one of the great themes or one of the great doctrines in Romans 8. As we get a little bit farther down the line, you are going to find that Romans 8 deals with the redemption of this body. Someday you are going to get a glorified body, and this corruptible flesh that we all struggle with right now is going to put on incorruption. That is the day that we are all looking for, and that is the day when Christ comes back and we get our glorious body.

But you have to begin to understand the process of how God looks at you and how God sees you in those two lights. There is a balance in that. I know today that I am saved, and because I am saved, I know God looks at me as His child, and God looks at me through His blood that was applied to my sin. But I am not under any illusion that I do not struggle in the flesh. I also know, as the Bible says in Romans 7, that "in this flesh dwelleth no good thing." So the battle we have is the battle between the flesh and the spirit, or the old nature and the new nature. When we start to talk about the depravity of man, when you and I got saved, we were saved from our depravity, but we still have the flesh that is totally depraved and just as vile as it ever was. In other words, what got saved about you the day you got saved was not your flesh; it was your soul. There is coming a day when Christ gives you that glorified body, that even your flesh gets changed and glorified, and you put on the Lord Jesus Christ in a physical sense, a spiritual-physical sense, but not today. We still have to struggle with it.

In fact, I likened it last week to your flesh being a dead corpse. I told you that before you got saved, you were stuck to a dead corpse. Once you got saved, God separated you from that dead corpse, your flesh, but now you still have to carry it around. It goes everywhere that you go and everywhere that I go, and that is where the battle really takes place in your life and my life. We have talked about it many, many times. On Memorial Day, I talked about the soldier and talked about in the book of Ephesians the armor of God. All of that armor that is in there is nothing more for you and I to get over the victory of our flesh and the struggles that we have to go through.

III. The Depravity of Man: A Biblical Portrait

Now I want to go back to Romans 3 this morning, and I want to look at this passage again in these ten verses and read them. We will come back and we will begin to break these pieces down and look at it, and it shows you how we can really be used of God even though we are still totally depraved as far as our flesh is concerned.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

Their feet are swift to shed blood:

Destruction and misery are in their ways:

And the way of peace have they not known:

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus, and Lord, we love You. We ask You today to take the Word of God to quiet our hearts, that each one of us may confess whatever sin is in our life that may be lingering there, Lord, that would hinder the Holy Spirit of God from coming in and giving us the doctrine and the teachings that we need today. We pray, Lord, for those that we mentioned earlier, Lord, and with all the different issues and struggles that people are going through in their lives, both physically and spiritually, and losing a loved one. We pray, Lord, that You will comfort them. But today, Lord, we ask You right now that the Holy Spirit of God will take over this time, quiet our hearts, give us what we need today to see and understand these great truths, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name. For His sake, we ask it. Amen.

There are a couple of things that if you are really going to be effective for God, you have to understand about yourself. One of the things is you need to understand what your strengths are. What makes a marriage a good marriage for Christian couples is, and this is where the balance comes in, what makes a really good marriage is when a Christian husband and wife look at each other and they both have strengths and they both have weaknesses. Maybe the wife's strength will be the husband's weakness, and vice versa in the husband's case. That is a good thing, because what makes it work is the fact that you recognize what your strengths are and then you recognize what your weaknesses are, and you balance each other out in that.

It is the same way in a church. Not everybody has the same strengths here; not everybody has the same weaknesses. We all have strengths and we all have weaknesses. Therefore, a good church, a working, viable church—if you ever pastor a church, you always want to remember that concept—because what you want to do is blend the two together. You want to let people's strengths offset people's weaknesses, and then the other people who may be weak in this area will be

strong here, and you balance it out, and it becomes a total concept. To do that, you have to understand what your limitations are. Many times we go beyond what we can actually do.

I have talked to men who owned businesses before, and when they interview somebody to go to work, the person wants the job, obviously, and they know it is a good place to work, so they will overstate their qualifications, so to speak. They will say they can do a lot of things when actually they cannot do them very well. When you put them on a job someplace and you see their work, or you put them out with somebody else and they have to make a cabinet, or they have to put in a hardwood floor, or they have to do some things, it is very obvious that their limitations were not stated exactly correctly when they were hired. With God, we are all that way. We all, and I think one of the key things that you need to have in your life, and certainly I need to have in my life, is to be able to understand what our limitations are and then work within those limitations.

I think that the bounds of those limitations should continually be pressed forward. As you grow and you learn more, there is more that you can do. Some of your weaknesses turn into strengths, and your limitation bounds begin to move outward. But I do not ever know a time in our lives where we will not have limitations to some form, and I think being honest with ourselves and realizing that is really key to understanding who we are and understanding what we are all about, and how at our very best, we still fall short of God.

What I want to do today is this: I am going to paint a really black picture, and this picture, because we are going to talk about the depravity of man, and I want you to see and understand, because I think you need to see that, we need to see that about ourselves. I want to show you how that in the Bible there are seven things that make up the depraved man. They fit in an unsaved person, but I told you last week, I have never met, I never found anything that a saved person can do that a child of God cannot get into, other than dying and going to hell, and you will see how that does not work. But then I want to come back and I want to show you the fact that we are depraved, the fact that everything that I do, everything that you do, everything I attempt to do for God, has to be washed and continually washed in the blood. How in the world, when we understand how depraved we really are, how in the world can we ever do something for God? I want to show you how that works today.

It is going to be a very key time this morning in helping make sure, I guess, of all the messages that I have preached and all the things that I have laid out, the one that is going to save you at the Judgment Seat of Christ is going to be what you are going to hear today. I think that most of God's people, when they wind up at the Judgment Seat of Christ, are going to go there with a lot of grandiose ideas. They are going to think, "Wow, I did this, I did that, and I did all of this, and I built this, and I accomplished this." I think when they get there, they are going to find out that it was absolutely worthless as far as God is concerned. I do not want you to be in that state. I want you to come to the point in your life where you grow and have everything that God has for you at the Judgment Seat of Christ. My job is basically one-fold, and that is to give you and help you understand everything that you need to know, that you have the best shot at standing at that Judgment Seat of Christ and getting a full and assured reward. That is what I want to focus on today.

So we are going to come through some of this stuff, and it is hard when I talk about the depravity of man. The Bible says, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." The Bible says that "none that understandeth, none that seeketh after God." The Bible says that the very best state we are in is "all together vanity." I mean, it is, when you look at that, if you do not get it in perspective, you will walk out of here saying, "Well, what the heck, why should I even try? Whatever I do is..." And it is not that way, but I want to paint it that way and then I want to come back and show you how it all works.

Man, left to himself—talking about an unsaved man for a moment—man left to himself only gets worse; he does not get better. The worst thing, and I have told you this before, the absolutely worst thing that God can do to anybody is to take His hand off of that person, allow that person to go through what they are going through in life, whether it be God's chastisement. I have heard a lot of people say, "Well, the chastisement of God is really hard, and I do not like when God comes down and has to deal with me." You would like it a lot less if God did not come down and deal with you, because let me tell you something: what you have in this world today, if you have ever been to Europe in the last ten, fifteen, twenty years, what you have in Europe is a country that God has completely taken His hand off, and He simply says, "Just go do whatever you want to do. I have no interest in this nation anymore." There is a reason for that in history. You find a lot of the same stuff down in South America, you find it in Central America, you find it all through this world, and you are beginning to see it in the United States.

All of these nations have had at one time the Word of God that impacted them. Maybe you do not see it in the last twenty or thirty or forty years, but if you go back and take a biblical examination of history, you will find that God gave the Word of God to every nation today that is now in apostasy. America was the last great nation to get that Book, and she has done the same thing with it. Right now, what we are seeing around us in our world, this is a scary time. But the bottom line is this: what you are seeing, and I say it all the time, you have now seen the results of a country that for over a hundred years has thrown God's Word out the window, and we are slowly seeing God take His hand off this once great country. Brother, when that happens, it is an incredible thing, and it is a terrible thing to go through. The worst thing that can happen is when God takes His hand off anybody or any nation.

IV. The Seven Makeups of Man's Depravity

Now I want to talk to you about the seven things in your life and my life that make us the problem child that we are with God. I call these things the seven makeups of my depravity. I am not talking this to you this morning; I am talking it to me this morning. This is where I am at, and this is what I have to understand.

- The Heart
- The Mouth
- The Eyes

- The Feet
- The Thoughts
- The Imagination
- The Hands

V. Living for God Despite Depravity

Now quickly, in the last few minutes we have here, I am going to give you the answer to this, and I am going to show you three things that you have got to get down and have in perspective and have them in a balance in your life. An unsaved man can never do these things. Frankly, an unsaved man can, but unfortunately, most of them will not. I do this every hour of the day. I remind myself of these three things every situation I am faced with, every circumstance I deal with.

- Keep Your Heart Tender Before God The first thing has simply to do with your attitude of heart. You need to keep your heart tender before God. You need to quit being so thin-skinned when it comes to preaching. You need to take rebuke, take correction, enjoy it. Learn to develop an attitude that you enjoy the things of God, that you do not become indifferent to God. The Bible talks about putting on the breastplate of righteousness, protecting your heart from the things that come at you, the fiery darts of the wicked. Ask yourself on a regular basis throughout the day, or whatever you are doing, "Why am I doing what I am doing? Am I doing this for me, or am I doing this for the Lord?" Work at loving God, work at loving God more every day of your life, and that is a constant effort right there. How do you do that? You focus on what He has done for you. Do not focus on what you have done for Him, and that is what we all do. There is a balance. This is the balance. Do not get up tomorrow and go through your life focusing on all that you have done for God. I am not saying you should not enjoy that, but you have got to balance that out with all that He has done for you. You have got to realize that it is a balance, it is a perspective that you cannot lose. I gave you last week a great passage, I hope you put it in your Bible, Psalms 40:1-3: I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. That is a great passage to keep you where you need to be, where He brought you from. You keep your perspective of who you are, who you really are, and do not get puffed up with what you know or what you have done. That is so easy for us. It is so easy for us to get puffed up, because when we do something, one, we are happy about it, two, we are glad about it, but we do not have the balance yet, so it gets, it is that "look at me" attitude. It is that, "Well, I will show you." It is about when you feel like you are in competition with somebody else, and you are trying to, you are not trying to please God, you are trying to upstage the other person so you look like you are more spiritual than they

are. You have got to keep the perspective. You have got to keep that attitude of heart, and you have got to constantly ask yourself, "Why are you doing, why am I doing what I am doing?"

- Act in Accordance with Biblical Principles The second thing: whatever you do, whatever I do, we are to act in accordance with a biblical principle. For God to accept my work or whatever I do, it must be based on what the Bible tells me to do. You cannot as a Christian fly by the seat of your pants, using your grandmother's homespun theology or your own concoction of what you are going to get through life, or be like the butterfly woman and survive in this world. If you are going to be accepted by God with what you do, then you better have a biblical principle behind what you do, and that is why I bring it back to doctrine. You have to learn in time. Now God cuts a lot of grace right now, a lot of slack. He knows where you are at, and I am not talking about tomorrow, but I am saying this: you have got to learn biblical principles, and with everything you do, you better have a principle to back up what you have got to do. There are times in your life, especially if you become a pastor, that you are going to be put in situations where there is really no right thing to do. The right thing was taken from you. You do not have that option. You will find yourself in situations where the problem situation is so bad, or it was so bad, or it is a situation that the right thing to do is impossible, and sometimes you are left with a decision of doing the less wrong thing. Now that sounds terrible, and some of your pious gas bags out there are saying, "Oh yeah," until you find yourself in that situation. You cannot do the right thing, not because you do not want to, the circumstance came to you, you do not have the option to do that. But you have got to try to solve this problem, fix this issue, so you have got to look at the one that is going to cause the less damage in a situation where the damage has already been done, and you better have a principle behind what you do when you do that. You better not just say, "Well, let's just flip the coin here and see which way we are going to go." I will tell you, you will be criticized either way you go. You better go the route that you can defend yourself with biblical principles instead of, "Well, I just did this because I felt like this was the right thing to do." You better understand the principle behind what you do and every circumstance you do, because there is too much in God's people flying by the seat of their pants. "Well, I want to do this because I want to do it, and I am going to say, 'Well, God help me do that.'" "Well, no, how God, I know, God helped you do it or not. I wanted you to do it. Give me the principle. Give me the principle. Give me the principle." Whatever you do, whatever I do, my friend, you have to realize that you have to act in accordance with the biblical principles that apply, and that is why I am going to say it again, you have to know biblical principles. I have three goals for you in everything I do. You notice that is nine goals now that I said I only had one for you in each thing. I just keep finding these things to add to your plate. Sorry. I have three goals for you when I preach, when I teach, when I work one-on-one with you. In the back of my mind, I have never told you this, probably never give it to you, you will probably forget it after I tell you, but I have three goals. Three goals. It has nothing to do with teaching you the Bible. It has nothing to do with who the Antichrist is. Nothing to do with what we talked about last Thursday night, though that was great stuff to talk about. My three goals are much more basic than that. I have three goals that everything I do, behind everything I say, behind everything I preach, behind everything I try to accomplish, I have in the back of my mind for every one of you the same three goals, and I will have these same three goals. They will

never change. There will not be four, there will not be two, I will not delete one. They are the absolute same three goals that I will have fifty years from now if Jesus does not come. They are what I had thirty years ago, and it will be everything and every day of my life when I see you, when I work with you, when I preach, when I teach. This church is about these three things: I want you to know what you believe. I desperately want you to know what you believe. I want you to understand the Bible. I have the passion for that. All of my teaching, all of my preaching, all my one-on-one, all the time that we spend going through the intimate, intricate things of the Bible, is for point number one. I want you to know the Bible. I want you to know the Word of God. Not only do I want you to believe it, but the second goal is I want you to know why you believe it. Is it not enough for me to say you know it? I want you to know why you believe it. I want you to be able to go into that Bible in any given circumstance, a situation, maybe open up the Scriptures and lay out and show out everything that you have got for me. It is not enough for you to say, "I believe it." I want you to know why you believe it. Most of you believe the King James Bible is the Word of God, but very few of you could get up this morning and say, "This is why I believe it is the Word of God." That has to change at some point in your life. Most of you could stand up and say, "Well, I believe that I cannot lose my salvation," but you could not get up and lay out why you know that. The third thing: I want you to know how to apply what you know. It does you no good to believe the Book. It does you no good to know why you believe it. You see, those are the academics. I can teach you the Bible, and I can teach you church history and show you all the things, the manuscript evidence, and give you all of that. But the real thing I cannot do, but the other two I can push you that way, is to get you to be able to apply to your own life what you believe and what you know why you believe. Application is everything. Application is everything. I try to get you to the point where I move you along and get you up to different things. I like when challenges come into your life or circumstances come into your life, things that offset you, off-counter a little bit. Sometimes I will do it on purpose just to see, because if you are not pushed, if you are not pushed to run and you are not pushed to move forward, most of God's people just stay where they are at. The only way you move ahead is by learning to apply what you know, applying what you know. We are like sponges. How many times have you heard that with little kids? "Boy, be careful what you say around them because they are just like sponges." We are all sponges, and around here the bucket is always full, and you are like a sponge. It gets down in that bucket and you pick it up after it has been soaking in that bucket for about an hour, and it is just running water everywhere, and if you try to pick anything up with it, you just put more water down and you pick up. Why? Because that sponge has to be wrung out before it can pick any more water up. Some of God's people sometimes get like that sponge. The Bible says, "The full soul loatheth the honeycomb." You can get so much of the Bible, learn so much of the Bible, and it will turn you against the Bible if the other two concepts are not working for you. You can get all the Bible you want, you can be a full soul, you can have all the honeycomb, you can stand and wind up loathing it because you are not applying what you are learning. You are warehousing it. You become like that proverbial sponge.

- Do It in the Right Spirit The last thing: what we do for God must be done in the right spirit. Right attitude of heart, a principle involved behind what we do, and then what we do for God

must be done in the right spirit. In the book of Ecclesiastes 3 talks about four spirits that are in this world: you have an animal spirit, you have man's spirit, you have God's Spirit, you have an unclean spirit. A man can have three of those four. Over there in Job 25:1-5, you have what I believe to be the six questions God is going to ask every believer at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The last question has to do with everything that is with the five before. The last question is, "Whose spirit came from?"