

# Psalm 14

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Date: 12 July 2015

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] If you guys have your Bibles, I want you to open up to the book of Psalms.

We're going to be in Psalm 14 this morning. Psalm 14 this morning. That shouldn't surprise any of you because we were in Psalm 13 last week and we've got one more week in the Psalms. So Psalm 14 this week and then Psalm 15 next week.

My family is out of town this week, so I'm the only Trousdale here. They're all in Fort Worth to see Allie's nephew get baptized this morning.

But yesterday I was talking to Eli and he wanted to know if the church that he was going to go to today, if they would have any singing. Are they going to have singing, Dad? And I said, well, yeah, I'm sure they'll have singing.

Well, do all churches have singing? Well, pretty much. I mean, there are a few churches that don't, but pretty much, yeah, Eli, all churches have singing. He said, good, that's my favorite part. And I said, wait, what about when Daddy preaches?

[ 1 : 0 5 ] And he goes, well, that's good too. I like playing with my Bible. And I said, you mean like reading your Bible? And he said, no, I like to pretend that it's eating me. And he did this motion with a book he was holding.

So I thought about that. It's kind of the backwards metaphor. The Bible says we're supposed to sort of take God's word into us rather than pretend that it's going to eat us. But there are times when we feel like the word has come upon us and it's going to do some damage.

That may happen this morning to you as we look at Psalm 14. So I want you to be warned. The word can consume us even as we try to make it a part of ourselves.

With that in mind, though, I want you guys to stand as we read Psalm 14 together. Psalm 14, to the choir master of David. The fool says in his heart, there is no God.

They are corrupt. They do abominable deeds. There is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

[ 2 : 0 9 ] They have all turned aside. Together they have become corrupt. There is none who does good, not even one. Have they no knowledge? All the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon the Lord.

For they are in great terror. For God is with the generation of the righteous. Would you shame the plans of the poor? But the Lord is his refuge.

Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion when the Lord restores the fortunes of his people. Let Jacob rejoice. Let Israel be glad.

Father, as we contemplate a most difficult doctrine this morning from this text, help us at the end of it to rejoice and be glad.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I'm going to be honest with you guys. I have struggled the last few sermons. I have struggled in my preparation time.

[ 3 : 11 ] I've struggled in my delivery time because we have been dealing with some psalms that are fairly emotional. Where the emotions of David are really on the surface.

And the point of those psalms is very much to express David's emotions. To show us how David, and then by inference, how we can respond to certain circumstances in our lives.

But I'm not the kind of person who generally wears their emotions on their sleeve. I'm not the kind of person who really understands that very well. I don't understand very well people who are really outwardly emotional.

It's not as if I don't experience any sort of emotions at all. We all do. I get pretty excited when I preach the word sometimes. But on the spectrum of those who are emotional spectrum, I'm not very far down the road there towards the emotional end.

And so as we've really wrestled with these last few psalms, or at least I've felt like I've been wrestling with them. I've been struggling to really convey the emotion behind the psalms because I struggle in general to convey emotion.

[ 4 : 20 ] Which is why I'm really glad to get a break from that this week in Psalm 14. Which is, for all practical purposes, it is a teaching psalm. It aims to teach us about who human beings are.

This is very much a doctrinal psalm. Now we don't usually, a lot of folks today don't like the term doctrine, and we certainly don't like the phrase to indoctrinate somebody. But a doctrine is just a teaching, and any time that you teach someone something, you're indoctrinating people.

So when you teach your kids the kind of values you want them to have, you're indoctrinating them. When you come here week in and week out, and you listen to the preaching of the word, you're being indoctrinated. But this week especially, as we've been doing while we've been in Romans in previous months, we're going to be really confronting clear teachings from Scripture because whereas the last few psalms have taught us by way of showing us how to respond to situations, this psalm teaches us directly about human nature, about who we really are.

Now there's a tendency though, I have to say up front as we read through this psalm, to automatically not identify with this psalm very well because we automatically assume that David cannot possibly be talking about us.

He cannot possibly be talking about all of humanity. David must have in mind a subset of humanity. He must have in mind those who are extremely wicked, extremely evil.

[ 5 : 48 ] In fact, he begins this psalm by saying that the fool says in his heart, there is no God. And so we might assume that this is a psalm that's directed toward atheists. And since we're not atheists, at least I don't think any of us are, we're gathered together for worship this morning, there probably aren't any atheists among us.

So we think perhaps this psalm isn't really directed towards us. Maybe it's directed towards people out there and we might be able to benefit to learn a little bit about what some people out in the world who don't believe in God are like.

But in terms of really personal application, we can sort of check out because of what the first verse says. But that ignores two facts, I think. Number one is the fact that what we think of when we think of atheism, the denial of the existence of any sort of divine being really did not exist at the time that David was writing this psalm.

There were those who denied the true God, but David lived in an extremely religious world. Everybody had a God or many gods. So that when David talks about someone saying there is no God, he's not referencing what we today think of as atheism.

More importantly, and more to the point though, the text says that the fool says, in his heart. So this is not about what somebody actually believes. This is about how they live.

[ 7 : 08 ] This is about what is internal. This is not about an outward confession. Nobody around David is saying, I don't think there are any gods. God doesn't exist at all. That's not what David is dealing with here.

David is dealing with people who live as if God doesn't exist, who live as if his law does not exist, who live as if his commandments don't matter at all.

That's what David is addressing. So we cannot write this psalm off as applicable to a small subset of people out in the world and not applicable to us, because this is not about atheists.

This is about people who live their lives in such a way that you would think that they didn't believe that God existed at all. But of course, even at that, we are tempted to say, well, I'm excluded from that because I try my best to live my life as if God does indeed exist.

And as we read through the psalm, we see a reference further down in verse 5 to the generation of the righteous. And so we think, I feel like I would probably identify with the generation of the righteous more than I would identify with those who live as if there is no God.

[ 8 : 17 ] So let me give you a few reasons why I think that this passage does not have a limited application to a select group of people, but I think this passage is about all human beings, you and I included.

The first reason I think that is because David is drawing upon familiar language. If, as most Israelites at David's time would have been familiar, if you were familiar with the law, the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament, then you might have noticed that David uses some key words and key phrases that come from a particular section of the Torah that would be brought to mind.

I have in mind Genesis chapter 6, the beginning of the story of the flood. You all know the story of the flood with Noah. Humanity had corrupted its way so much, just in a matter of generations between Adam and Noah, so that by the time Noah comes on the scene, wickedness has reached such a level that God decides to judge the entire earth and all humanity.

And David, I believe, is expecting his readers to recall that event by the language that he uses. Notice what he says in verse 1. He says, They are corrupt.

They do abominable deeds. There is none who does good. And then again down in verse 3, he says, They have all turned aside. Together they have become corrupt.

[ 9 : 41 ] Now hold your place there in the psalm and turn all the way back to the book of Genesis chapter 6. And I want you to see this. I want you to see the repetition of that word corrupt in Genesis chapter 6.

It's not one of the most common words in the Old Testament. It is found in a handful of other places, but it's found in a concentrated way in these passages. Genesis chapter 6.

If we jump in at verse 5, we'll see this. The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continuously.

And then if you move down to verse 11, we'll see the key word. Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and the earth was filled with violence and God saw the earth and behold, it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

So this key word that is so central to Moses' description of humanity, all of humanity at the time of the flood, occurs two times here in Psalm 14.

[ 10 : 45 ] But it's not just the language of corruption. We saw there in Genesis chapter 6 that God looks down upon the earth. He does the same thing in Psalm 14.

Verse 2, the Lord looks down from heaven. And upon whom is he looking in Genesis chapter 6? Well, he's looking upon mankind. And the word that we saw there in verse 5, the wickedness of man, is the word Adam or Adam.

It is not only the proper name of the first man, but in Hebrew it's a word that means man or mankind. And so God looks upon man or mankind in Genesis chapter 6.

And then when we arrive in Psalm 14, God looks down from heaven on the children, or literally the sons of Adam. So in Genesis chapter 6, God's looking down upon Adam.

In Psalm 14, God's looking down upon the sons of Adam. There are all these verbal connections between Psalm 14 and Genesis chapter 6 that I think that David intends for his readers who are steeped in the law to make a connection between what he says here in Psalm 14 and what we see represented as reality in Genesis chapter 6.

[ 11 : 56 ] And that is that just as in Genesis chapter 6, all of mankind was corrupt and doing evil things, so in Psalm 14 we see a description, not just of a select few, but we see a description of humanity in general.

The children of Adam in general are described here in Psalm 14. But then there's, of course, one more reason that I think we should take this passage as a reference to all of humanity.

And that's because the Apostle Paul quotes from Psalm 14 in the book of Romans. So hold your place in Psalm 14 one more time and turn all the way over to Romans chapter 3.

We're familiar with this passage, at least those of you who've been traveling through Romans with us are, because we've had occasion not only to preach through this passage, but to look back at it and look forward to it throughout our series in Romans.

But in Romans chapter 3, beginning in verse 9, Paul says this, What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.

[ 13 : 02 ] So Paul's point that he's making is to prove that all human beings, whether Jew or Gentile, all of us are, he says, under sin. And now he's going to prove that with the Old Testament. As it is written, None is righteous, no, not one, no one understands, no one seeks for God, all have turned aside, together they have become worthless, no one does good, not even one.

That's Psalm 14. So the Apostle Paul assumes that Psalm 14 is a description of humankind in general, and he specifically applies it not simply to Gentiles, but even to the Jewish people in Romans chapter 3.

So no one is excluded in David's description of the fool here in Psalm 14. No one is excluded. This is David's picture of human depravity.

In fact, the technical theological term for what we're talking about here is total depravity. We sometimes talk about what we call Reformed theology, or at times you will hear the term Calvinism, and I don't use these terms a lot as I'm preaching because I find that they can confuse people or they can mislead people as they go on internet searches to look up these terms and get misinformation.

But we are a church in doctrine, in our teachings, that is Reformed or that is Calvinistic. And many times people like to sum up Calvinism. It doesn't sum up all that we would want to say about Reformed theology or about our understanding of how God saves people.

[ 14 : 36 ] But many times people want to sum that up in five points. So you may have heard of the five points of Calvinism. Well, the first point is total depravity. It speaks to the nature of man.

And this particular psalm is aimed at total depravity. We get a description of what that looks like. And there are three things that I want us to draw out of this psalm so that we can understand the state of man apart from God's grace.

I want us to understand who we are apart from God's grace and who our neighbors are, who our family members, who our co-workers, everyone apart from God's grace is going to be described now by David in Psalm 14.

And there are three things I want you to notice. Number one is that our morals are corrupted. And in number two, we have our minds being dulled to spiritual realities. And thirdly, our wills have been affected.

So our morals, our minds, and our wills. Now, those three things aren't really, in reality, separate from one another. Our morality flows out of what we think, that is what we believe. And our beliefs determine what we do.

[ 15 : 44 ] They determine our choices or our will. So those three things are really so tangled together that you can't, in reality, separate them. But we can talk about them as distinct things, just as David does here.

So I'm just going to take them in the order that David does, although that may not be the most logical order that we would want to discuss these if we were writing, say, a textbook or giving a theological summary of total depravity.

But I want to take them in the order that David does. So first of all, I want to look at how David describes our corrupted morality. Notice, in the middle of verse 1, he says, They, that is the fool, that is the children of man, they are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.

And verse 1 is then reflected in verse 3. Verse 3 stating basically the same principle from a different perspective. He says, They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt, there is none who does good, not even one.

Twice here, David says, There is no one who does good. To which we might say, Really, David? I've seen people do all sorts of good things in the world.

[ 16 : 55 ] I have seen people help the elderly. I have seen people help those who are poor. I have seen all kinds of acts of kindness in the world around me. I see them all the time.

You're inundated. If you're on social media, you're inundated with one of two things. Bad things that are happening all around you, or nice things that people are doing all around you. That's about the others. There's nothing in the middle there. Either that or somebody's going to tell you about the sandwich they ate for lunch the day before.

But that's kind of what you're going to see in social media. And so you might think, I'm aware of people doing good things all around me. So what does David mean when he says that no one does good?

In fact, it goes to the heart of what we mean by the term total depravity. Of course, depravity means fallen. It means sinful. But to be totally depraved is not to be as sinful or as fallen as you possibly could be.

That's not what it means. Total depravity means that the totality of who you are, all of who you are as a human being, is affected by sin. All of it.

[ 17 : 59 ] There's no part of your person or your being that is unaffected by the fall of Adam in which you and I were participants. No part of us. There's not a hidden away corner where there's a secret pocket of good hidden within us.

No. Every part of who we are is fallen. Of course, we could commit more sins than we do commit on any given day. Anyone around us could be more evil than they are at the moment.

But nevertheless, everyone around us, including ourselves, apart from God's grace, all of who we are is affected by sin. This is not to say that on an external, outward level, we never do anything good because the Scriptures recognize that.

Even the Apostle Paul, who quotes from Psalm 14 and includes that phrase, no one does good, even he recognizes that externally, people do good.

So, for instance, in Romans chapter 2, we read this in verse 14, that when the Gentiles, who do not have the law by nature, do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they don't have the law.

[ 19 : 09 ] In other words, Paul's recognizing that there are people in the world who don't even have God's commandments, who've not even heard them read ever in their lives, and yet they're not murdering people.

They might be helping an old lady across the street. They're doing acts of kindness on occasion. Paul recognizes that, and yet, one chapter later, continues to uphold what David says, there's no one who does good.

Which means that David's focus is still where it was in verse 1. It's on the heart. The fool says in his heart, and in our hearts, we are not capable of doing what is good.

We do things externally that compared to others around us are relatively good. You might be a kinder person than your neighbor. You might be a better employee than the person who sits in the cubicle next to you.

You might be a harder worker than the person who works at the plant with you. But nevertheless, despite all those external acts of goodness, in our hearts, those actions do not flow from a desire to glorify God and honor Him as God and give thanks to Him for all that He has done for us.

[ 20 : 24 ] And therefore, at their core, even the best things that we do are tainted by our fallen, sinful nature. That's, I think, what David means when he says that no one does good and what the Apostle Paul means when he quotes David and says that there is no one who does good.

Truly, deep down in their heart, there is no one whose actions, apart from the grace of God, are untainted by our fallen, sinful nature. So we have corrupted morals.

Even the best that we do is tainted with our corruption. But then it's not only our morals, but it's the things that drive us to do the things that we do and make the decisions that we do.

So that our minds are also affected by our fallen, sinful nature. Take a look there in verse 2. The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand.

And then verse 2 is reflected again in verse 4, where it's posed as a question. Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread?

[ 21 : 33 ] Is there no one who understands? Have they no knowledge? In fact, the Apostle Paul just turns this into a statement and he says, no one understands. He just paraphrases because that's David's point.

This is a rhetorical question. David is not actually wondering, hey, do you know anybody who has knowledge? That's not what David's saying. David's asking a rhetorical question and the expected answer is no.

And we might say, but what kind of knowledge are you talking about? Because we possess knowledge of all sorts. There are engineers among us. There are people who are experts in all sorts of different fields. There are lots of moms teaching home school and they have to know all sorts of things.

We all have knowledge. So David does not mean knowledge in general. He means the kind of knowledge that would lead a person to salvation, to trusting in the Lord.

In fact, when he asks the question, is there no one who understands? The word understand is a word that conveys the idea of understanding with wisdom. Is there no one whose mind is directed by wisdom?

[ 22 : 38 ] True wisdom. Wisdom that comes from the Lord because there is a wisdom of the world, of course. We might call it common sense. We might call it all sorts of things.

But it is distinct and it is different from the wisdom that comes out of God's word and leads us to saving faith in Christ. Paul actually contrasts these two kinds of wisdom in 1 Corinthians.

If you want to understand human depravity, if you want to understand the difference between those who are saved and those who are not, 1 Corinthians chapter 1 is a great place to go. But let me read you Paul's contrast between the wisdom that comes through faith in Christ and the wisdom of the world.

1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 18 says that the word of cross is folly or that word means foolishness to those who are perishing, that is to the lost, to those who don't know Christ, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart. Down to verse 21. For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the foolishness or folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

[ 23 : 56 ] So there is a kind of wisdom in the world that God seeks to bring down and destroy by His own wisdom. It is foolishness compared to the wisdom of God.

And yet to the world the wisdom of God appears as foolishness. That's how it appears. And David says is there anybody who possesses real, genuine wisdom?

No. There's not. Apart from the grace of God, there is not. Our minds as well as our hearts have been affected by our participation in the fall of Adam.

And so for us to be totally depraved is for us to have minds that are not naturally inclined to God. They are not naturally inclined to giving honor and glory to our Creator.

But not only are our minds corrupted, but you might say that our hearts or our wills are also corrupted. Notice what he says in verse 3. He says at the end of verse 3 that God is looking to see if there are any who seek after God.

[ 25 : 10 ] And again, it's a rhetorical question that Paul turns into a statement. No one seeks for God. And then it's repeated in different phraseology in verse 4. At the end, he asks the question about those who do not call upon the Lord.

To call upon the Lord or to seek the Lord are the same thing. And David is saying that there's nobody that actually seeks God. There's nobody that actually calls upon the Lord.

Why? Because they're not inclined to. Because their minds are not filled with the wisdom of God and because their hearts are inclined to go in the other direction.

So that when we talk about the fallenness of man or when we talk about the doctrine of total depravity, we mean, first off, that our minds are not captivated nor drawn to the wisdom of God and the way of salvation and our hearts are not given over to seek after God, to seek either His will or Himself.

Not apart from the grace of God. And because of those two things, we arrive where we started with corrupted morals. People who do not possess the capacity to do that which is truly good.

[ 26 : 29 ] Which is why Paul was able to say in Romans chapter 8 that those who are in the flesh cannot please God and that those who are in the flesh cannot submit to God's law because we are fallen, depraved people.

This is reality. This is all of humanity. And left to ourselves, we would always end up right where Genesis 6 picks up. If we were left to ourselves with no grace of God to restrain us, with nothing to hold us back, we would always arrive immediately back at judgment after a matter of a few generations.

Only the restraining grace of God keeps us from falling headlong off the cliff into the misery of our own depravity. So, how do you climb out of that kind of hole?

How do you escape this kind of condemnation? Or more to the point, how can you become a part of the group that David labels the generation of the righteous?

Notice verse 5. Judgment is going to come upon those who are the fools, all of humanity. He says, there they are in great terror. Why? Because the Lord is active.

[ 27 : 48 ] For God is with the generation of the righteous. And then he speaks of the poor, sometimes uses a synonym for his own people. You would shame the plans of the poor, but the Lord is his refuge.

He says in verse 7, salvation is going to come for Israel, and Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad. How do you move from being a person who is trapped in your own depravity, not willing to seek after God, not desiring to seek after God?

How does a person move from that position to generation of the righteous, rejoicing in God's salvation of them? How does that happen? And it would be wonderful if I could give you a list of things to do.

Well, if you'll just do X, Y, and Z, you'll get there. But here's the thing. Even if I had a list of X, Y, and Z for you to do, you're not inclined to do it apart from the grace of God. You and I don't have the will to seek after Him.

That's what total depravity is telling us. Total depravity is not telling us that God is holding us back from seeking Him. It's that we own of our own will and volition naturally will not seek Him.

[ 29 : 00 ] And there's no list of things that I can give you to do that will change that. The good news of the Gospel, though, is that God can change your heart.

In fact, if you look again in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, if you didn't turn there before, I want you to turn there this time. Because there we are told how a person goes from being in a state of depravity and enslavement to their sin and their sinful desires to set free to believe in Christ and follow after Christ.

1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 26. Consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards.

Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even the things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

[ 30 : 07 ] And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that as it is written, let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.

Now there are two words here that I want you to underline and highlight that occur in this passage. The first one is the word calling. Consider your calling, brothers.

Calling. You've been called. How did you move from not having a will that would seek after God to being one for whom the message of the cross is the wisdom of God saving you from your sin?

How did you move from a state of fallen and totally depraved with no inclination to follow God to now being a follower of Christ? How did that happen? According to the Apostle Paul, it happened because you were called by God.



Because God intervened and God did something. Notice what he says in verse 30, it is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus. He does not say it is because of you that you are in Christ.

- [ 31 : 10 ] It's because you walked down an aisle, you made a decision, you prayed a prayer. There's no list of things that he gives. He says it's because you did this that you are in Christ. No, he says it's because of Him.

It's because of what God has done that you are in Christ Jesus. And the thing that God has done in your heart to change your heart is that He has called you.

And when God calls us, He calls us with what is often known as an irresistible call. If you walk through those five points of Calvinism that I mentioned earlier, the first is total depravity, the second is unconditional election, the third is limited atonement, the fourth is irresistible grace, and the fifth is perseverance of the saints.

That spells the word tulip, okay, if you want to try to remember that. You can look it up later so you can get all those phrases, but it spells the word tulip. And so we have total depravity out of the way.

And calling is another word for this phrase, irresistible grace, the I of the word tulip. When God calls a person, He's not dragging them to Himself.

- [ 32 : 19 ] That's not what we mean by irresistible. He's not dragging them to Himself against their will. The word irresistible is a word that we might use to describe somebody who is simply drawn to look at a sunset.

If you've seen a beautiful sunset, maybe you're in the mountains, or maybe you're looking out over the ocean, and you know the sun is rising, and you look at it, and you just can't look away, no one would say that you're being forced to look at beauty.

It's beauty itself draws you to look. And that's what we mean when we say that God's grace is irresistible. His grace actually does something inside of you and changes you so that now you have a new heart, you have a new inclination, and now you will seek God because your heart and your will have actually been changed by God Himself.

That's what Paul means when he says, consider your calling. There was nothing in you that brought you to faith in Christ. Notice all the things he listed. You weren't wise, not by worldly standards.

You weren't powerful. You didn't have a noble birth. In fact, according to the world, you were foolish. You were foolish, and God chose you to shame the wise.

- [ 33 : 31 ] You were weak, and God chose you to shame the strong. He even says that you were low and despised in the eyes of the world. His point is, there was nothing in you prior to God's work in you that would have saved you or brought you to Christ or inclined God to call you.

God of His own free mercy calls us to faith in Christ. He produces life within us. Another term for that that we find throughout the Bible is regeneration or being born again.

There's this misconception among a lot of Christians that we are born again because we believe in Jesus, which gets things backwards entirely because the reality is we believe in Jesus because we have been born again.

Jesus says in John chapter 3 when He's speaking to Nicodemus about the new birth, that the new birth performed by the Spirit is like the wind. You don't see where it's coming from or where it's going.

It just happens to you, and it just blows upon you. And when God so chooses, He creates new life. He regenerates us and causes us to be born again and calls us to Himself.

- [ 34 : 47 ] And those who formerly would not seek God, those who formerly did not have within them the moral capacity to respond to the gospel in faith, now find themselves believing, trusting in the One beforehand that they rejected.

That's what we mean when we talk about irresistible grace. That's what the Apostle Paul means when he talks about calling. Of course, there are a lot of Christians that don't agree with things as I'm laying them out for you right now.

There are a lot of Christians who would not want to describe God's work of salvation in this way when they talk about doctrine. But the reality is when they begin to describe their own conversion, they begin to sound like the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians.

So the well-known writer, you may be familiar with C.S. Lewis. He wrote the Chronicles of Narnia series and a lot of other great books. He wrote a great book called Mere Christianity that I think everybody should read, even if there are some things in there that I don't prefer.

Everybody should read that book. He's a great author. But C.S. Lewis would not have agreed with the way that God causes salvation among His people the way that I'm describing it to you. He would not have fallen into the camp of what's often called Calvinist or Reformed.

[ 36 : 05 ] And yet, when he described his own conversion, he described it like this. He said that he got on a bus as an atheist. He was an atheist when he entered the bus.

And, of course, he had had debates about Christianity with believers before. He had thoroughly rejected all that he'd been told, the gospel that he'd heard preached. And he said, but he cannot explain it.

There were no arguments, nothing presented to him. Nothing external happened. He said he got on the bus as an atheist. And by the time he stepped off the bus, he believed in Christ.

That's the work of irresistible grace. That's the work of regeneration. Not caused by faith, but causing faith. That's the calling of God. That's how you move from being the fool to the generation of the righteous.

God calls. But who does he call? He calls those whom he's pleased to call. Notice, verse 27, God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

[ 37 : 13 ] God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even the things that are not, to bring to nothing the things that are. this is of God's sovereign, inscrutable, secret will.

You cannot explain it away. You cannot come up with a rational explanation for it. It is just simply God doing what God is free to do. He owes no one salvation.

He owes no one eternal life. All of us are fallen and depraved and deserving of hell. And He owes it to no one. And yet, for reasons beyond us, God simply chooses to call some to faith in Him.

And the only reason given to us in the text is so that He might receive all the glory and the praise. This is, by the way, the U of the word tulip.

Unconditional election. Election just meaning to choose. And the word unconditional emphasizing exactly what Paul says here. There's no condition met by us. Not our own wisdom. Not our own strength.

[ 38 : 20 ] Not our own willingness. There's no condition met by us that causes God to choose us. He does it freely of His own sovereign mercy. And He does it so that He might receive all the glory and all the praise.

Verse 29, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And then verse 31, so that as it is written, let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.

The doctrine of total depravity is not a happy doctrine. It's not a doctrine that makes you smile. It's not a doctrine that makes you feel better about yourself.

But the doctrine of total depravity leads you to a place of rejoicing. Because you recognize that you are not in Christ because of your own doing. You're not in Christ because you were clever, smarter, or better than anyone else.

You are now among the generation of the righteous because of God's sovereign hand working in your heart. Verse 7 of Psalm 14, Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion when the Lord restores the fortunes of His people.

[ 39 : 29 ] Let Jacob rejoice. Let Israel be glad. The doctrine of total depravity leads without fail to the doctrine of irresistible grace which leads without fail to the doctrine of unconditional election.

Which leads without fail to our rejoicing in the presence of God forever. Let me finish up here, guys, by going back to where we started.

to the tendency in all of us to think that this is not about us. We have a tendency to think that this is about those out there and not those in here.

But this is a passage that if we can see and understand that it's about us, then we can see and understand the magnitude of the grace of God toward us who have been saved.

And we can see the power of God to save those who live as if there is no God, who are corrupt and do abominable deeds, who cannot do that which is good, who do not seek after God, who will not call upon the Lord.

[ 40 : 42 ] We can see the power of God to overcome all of that obstinance. Which is, to be honest with you, the reason that I have hope for people that I love who are outside of Christ.

I do not know anyone, nor do I believe that they exist, who is too rebellious or too far gone or too fallen for the sovereign grace of God to overcome them.

He can and He does. And in fact, Paul tells us in Romans chapter 10 that He does that not out of the blue, but He does it through the preaching of the gospel.

The word of the cross that in one moment was foolishness to them becomes the wisdom of God as He works in their hearts. And so my encouragement to you guys is not to stop preaching the word of the cross.

Don't give up on the obstinate. Don't leave out those who have rejected the message time and time again. Because there may come a moment when you have shared the gospel the same way you have a hundred times.

[ 41 : 52 ] Or when someone else shares the gospel with them the same way that you have time after time after time when suddenly the grace of God intervenes and the man or the woman the boy or the girl that you thought could never come to faith in Christ is rejoicing in the salvation that God has brought to them.

Because in the end they are no different than you or I. Fallen and without hope and yet they could be the called. You could find them someday rejoicing with you and boasting in the Lord and the Lord alone.

Let's pray. Let's pray.