

Play-Doh (Depravity Of Man) (Sin)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9

The Basic Bible Truth

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, sin was introduced into the universe and all of humanity has suffered as a result. We inherited a sin nature that has kept us from a perfect relationship with God, and instilled in us the capacity to commit all kinds of vile and disgraceful actions against God. We, as individuals, and as a society as a whole, are potentially capable of every kind of depravity and wrong. None of us is immune to the possibility. We are all one wrong choice away from ruining our lives.

The Object

Several containers of “Play-Doh”



I introduce the subject and a definition of depravity to the class, and at some point during the discussion, give each person a container of “Play-Doh”. I then give them this simple instruction, “Make something for me.” When they ask what they should make I simply reiterate the same phrase, “Make something for me.” All questions are fielded with the same response. They are given 5 or 10 minutes to make their creation, all the while I am listening to their discussions among themselves for comments to bring up later in the teaching time. When enough time has passed for everyone to finish, they each present their “gift” to me. I leave all of the items on a table in front of me and I then ask them a question. “How many of you thought only about me while you were making this item? How many of you seriously considered what I would have liked best? How many of you did your absolute best that you could possibly do for me?” The obvious answer is they thought little about me; their minds were full of all kinds of things. And they did not do their absolute best. I then bring out some of the comments that I heard during the entire process.

Depravity, in it’s simplest definition is anything that we do that is less than 100% motivated by or guided by our love toward God and His love toward us. That perfect relationship fell by the side when Adam and Eve sinned. No matter how hard we may try, we fall short of the mark of doing everything out of total love for each other and God.

The Lesson

In theology, we often use big words that few actually understand completely. John Calvin put forward as one of the main 5 points of Calvinism, the *total depravity of man*. I would like to take a moment and make

sure that we all understand the concept of depravity from a purely Biblical perspective, leaving denominational preferences aside.

When God created Adam and Eve they were both perfect, and would have lived forever had sin not entered into the picture. Their relationship with God was without any blemish or fault. They were created as the consummate reflection of God, communicating with Him and living their lives in complete, impeccable harmony with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They were complete, lacking nothing whatsoever, as God, in the Trinity, is complete. Everything they did would have been absolutely in tune with God's will and desires. No questioning, no wandering off on a tangent, always in blameless conformity and friendship. They were perfect. They were not depraved.

God is love. That statement, found in I John 4:8, may be the most profound phrase in the Bible. Love is the greatest thing in the universe, and God is the embodiment of pure, perfect, love. He could have told us all about what love looked like or explained to us how love behaves, but He chose instead to display His love for all to see first hand and understand. *For God so loved the world* is that love on display, with even angels watching this whole issue of salvation, amazed at the great love of God at work. God is perfect. God is certainly not depraved.

Adam and Eve experienced that perfect love themselves. They were without fault and enjoyed a flawless relationship with God, behaving and acting as absolute reflections of the God of love. Basically, that means that everything they did was motivated and guided by unblemished love for each other and for God. The unlimited joy and contentment that resulted from that unanimity would have been incredible. They were perfect. They were not depraved.

But then sin was introduced into the world and that perfect relationship was lost. No longer were we as humans capable of doing even one thing 100% in love with only God in mind. Distractions cloud our thoughts, creeping in uninvited, leading to selfishness, among other things. And if our actions, whatever they may be, are not a result of that perfect love of God, then we are less than we could be. We are less than perfect. We are depraved.

Depravity is not calculated by it's depth, but by it's breadth. What I mean by that is that even in the unsaved world there are people who show a glimmer of positive character. They are not all murderers and thieves. They may have problems, but they do have a least some civility. When we discuss the possible scope of sin that we might fall into, we must admit that we are all capable of committing any sin known to exist! Even the greatest among us is not impervious. We are all one bad decision away from ruining our lives. We are less than perfect. We are depraved.

Our only hope is a relationship with God and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is a part of that contract. With His leading our lives, maybe we can avoid some of the pitfalls that tempt us so. We will still sin and He will still forgive when we confess, but we need to understand our frailty. We are less than perfect. We are depraved.