

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” 1 Cor. 1:18-21.

Are you here, Mr. Worldly Wise-man Disputer, who contends that *“the preaching of the cross is foolishness?”* Well, sir, God’s Word plainly declares that the reason you contend such a thing is because you are perishing. You are on your way, irreversibly, to everlasting Hell. You are the smart-mouth who passes our pickets, daily, for 20 years, on the mean streets of Kansas & America. We tell you plainly, sir, that WBC has preached the 5 points of Calvinism in this humble house and throughout the world. You cannot deny that you have heard it many times. But you laughed and mocked and rejected our message, out of hand – even as the ancient Jews rejected the prophets of the Old Testament dispensation; to wit:

“And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.” (2 Chron. 36:15,16)

To which we at Westboro say a great big AMEN (!) and a great big DITTO (!) The apostle Paul referred to a passage in the Old Testament (Isa. 29:14), which said, *“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent;”* John Gill: *“The sense of the prophecy is, that in the times of the Messiah, under the Gospel dispensation, the mysteries of grace should be hid from the wise rabbins among the Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees, who, with all their sagacity, parts, and learning, would not be able to comprehend the doctrines of the Gospel; by these their wisdom and understanding would be nonplussed, so that they would reject them as foolishness, because their carnal reason could not reach them; which shows what an infatuation they were given up to; and if this should be the case, as it was with the wise and learned philosophers among the Gentiles, it need not be wondered at; it is what was foretold in prophecy concerning the Jews, who had the oracles of God, and the advantage of a divine revelation; and therefore it need not be stumbling to them that are saved, that the Gospel should meet with so much scorn and contempt among them that perish in the Gentile world.”* These words are very pertinently cited by the apostle in Isa. 29:14; but I wonder why neither Isaiah nor Paul cited the beautiful context; to wit:

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me; and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay; For shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?” (Isa. 29:13-16)

The initial citation of this sermon – as does much of the Scriptures – involves what is called an ellipsis (ellipsis: A construction leaving out one or more words which must be understood for the grammatical completeness of a sentence); to wit:

“For the preaching of the CROSS is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” (1 Cor. 1:18)

Here, the word CROSS is ELLIPTICAL. We must add many more words to convey (by the preacher) and grasp (by the auditor) the true meaning of the word CROSS. Preliminarily, I must say, that the preaching of the cross involves the whole counsel of God and the five points of Calvinism for a small start; to wit: *“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD (another ellipsis). And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, (another ellipsis), shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD.” (another ellipsis) Acts 20:24-27.* Indeed, Beloved, we scarcely leave the **Corinthians, the 1st chapter**, before we confront one of the most beautiful ellipses of them all; to wit: *“BUT WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED.” (1 Cor. 1:23.)* Not to mention this bouquet of Gospel magnificence; to wit: *“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” 1 Cor. 1:30,31.*

Then we pass immediately to the **2nd chapter of 1 Cor.**, and continue the valuable lessons of the holy ellipses; to wit: *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you THE TESTIMONY OF GOD” (another ellipsis, and what a grand one!). 1 Cor. 2:1.* Just think, Beloved, if the Lord our God – in His wisdom, grace, and condescending power – deigns to take the stand, as it were, and gives all relevant testimony to the sons of men, thus conveying to all mankind of all ages, THE TESTIMONY OF GOD, how wonderful is that? With what holy reverence should we regard and handle that TESTIMONY in whatever form He doth vouchsafe it to us. *“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save JESUS CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED. (Wow, another glorious ellipsis.) And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought; But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” 1 Cor. 2:3-7.*

Early on in this sermon I said that as a preliminary matter, I must say that THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS involves and requires preaching the whole counsel of God, and implicates preaching and expounding the Five Points of Calvinism. Let me say further, that if your preacher does not regularly preach and expound the whole counsel of God and is not a proud contender and advocate for the TULIP Baptist position, you had better get yourself another preacher. Without the least doubt, your old pot-belly will soon take up residence in Hell. Probably doesn’t even know what TULIP stands for. TULIP is an acronym, a 5-letter acronym. Each letter stands for an essential Old School Baptist doctrine. And, each doctrine is blessedly elliptical. Thus, the T stands for the doctrine of Total Depravity & Total Inability; the U stands for Unconditional Election; the L stands for Limited Atonement; the I stands for Irresistible Grace; and, the P stands for Perseverance of the Saints.

Some of these goofy preachers running loose prate about being 4-Point Calvinists. Watch out. Those guys are Totally Ignorant as well as being Totally Depraved. Now let us look at the TULIP, beginning with the T, standing for the doctrine of Total Depravity or Total Inability. At the outset, let me make a few preliminary remarks; to wit: This subject is of the utmost importance. If we have a shallow or deficient view of this matter, then it is almost inevitable that we shall have defective, and it may be erroneous, views upon other vital tenets of the true faith. To understand the kinship or relationship between Adam and his posterity is essential to a right understanding of Holy Scripture.

The depravity of the human stems from the original offence committed in Eden's garden. Here the whole race of mankind was, as it were, placed on probation, on trial. Adam acted, not for himself alone as a private individual, but he transacted for all who would issue from him. Adam stood as federal head, and as such, legally represented the whole human race. It crops up everywhere as *"that sin,"* meaning the original depravity of our nature and the vicious habits wherein it consists; e.g., Eph. 4:22; to wit: *"That ye put off concerning the former behavior the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."* John Owen says that no expositor doubts but that it is the original depravity of our nature that is here intended.

***"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* (Eph. 4:25-32)**

John Owen correctly maintains that the *"That Sin"* taking different forms above is indwelling sin, – Total Depravity – which exposes us to all sorts of temptations, and gives advantage unto all disheartening, weakening, discouraging, still aiming to make us faint, and so at length to depart from the living God. *"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."* Heb. 3:12-14. To depart from the living God, and to forsake the course of our profession, are the same. And the cause of them is, *"an evil heart of unbelief."* Jas. 1:21; to wit: *"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."* Which is the same as above instances. 1st Pet. 2:1-3; to wit: *"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."*

Now, Beloved. If you forget everything else I've said about Original Sin & Total Depravity, please, please, PLEASE – remember Heb. 13: 1; to wit: *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, AND THE SIN WHICH DOTHSO EASILY BESET US, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."* I have tried to give you many Bible examples of Indwelling Sin, aka Original Sin, and Total Depravity. But if you will look to the dear Lord Jesus, bearing our *"SIN WHICH DOTHSO EASILY BESET US,"* you will find the best and most assessable working definition; to wit: Indwelling Sin, aka, Original Sin, Total Depravity is *"That Sin"* which doth so easily beset us, and which we must continually *"lay aside"* along with *"every weight;"* to wit:

***"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."* (Heb. 13:1)**

Original Sin is said to be Indwelling. *"Sin dwelleth in me."* (Rom. 7:17) Not something that comes and goes, not a visitor which pays an occasional call, but an inhabitant and a very troublesome one. It is set upon hindering all the good and producing all the evil it can. Original Sin is a Law. *"The law of sin."* (Rom. 7:25) It has force and power; authority which binds its subject to allegiance. It reigns not as a king, but as a tyrant, for it reigns *"unto death"* unless grace prevents it.

Original Sin is a positive actor. It is not something passive, for it not only cuts a man off from God and renders him spiritually dead, but also it is active hostility to God. Because of Original Sin man becomes by settled purpose in his own heart, a transgressor, making him an enemy of God. There is a deep-seated enmity in the will which is against God, and with this all are born. Man's will, aggressively, will cross God's will, to fulfill his own. ***"Enemies in your mind by wicked works."*** (Col. 1:21) Original Sin binds men. Through original sin they are bound as captives; ***"taken captive by the devil at his will"*** (2 Tim. 2:26); ***"all their lifetime subject to bondage"*** (Heb. 2:15).

Original Sin makes man uninstrutable. He is void and incapable of spiritual instruction; ***"the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"*** (1 Cor. 2:14). Original Sin renders a man dead. What could be more expressive of human depravity? Is it possible for the Almighty to convey with human clarity IS TOTAL? We are just like Lazarus in the tomb, bound hand and foot, corruption upon us, and not a spark of life in us; ***"dead in trespasses and sins"*** (Eph. 2:1). This is the description that God has given of fallen man; his utter ruin, and the depths into which he has sunk.

All are born in this sad and hopeless condition. THIS, IS ORIGINAL SIN. It is a vigorous and active principle within us, and is the cause of all actual sin. Original Sin is worse than actual sin. Whilst actual sin may be the more scandalous, Original Sin is the more heinous, for the cause is ever more important than the effect. Original Sin renders us dead unto God and to spiritual matters, and alive unto Satan and to evil. Man in his fallen state fulfills the ***"desires of the flesh and of the mind."*** (Eph. 2:3). This is his natural bent and inclination; he can rise no higher; nor does he want to. The thought of a Holy God and any claim He might have upon him is not countenanced! NO sir(!)(!) Man deliberately chooses the evil and not the good. Sinners love darkness rather than light; they do not retain any knowledge of God in their minds – He is dismissed. This is not an involuntary ignorance. It is not passive, it is active. When confronted with the truth about themselves and inescapable judgment to come, men do not repent. Rather do they view God as their enemy. As One bent upon their eternal punishment. There is in the mind of every unregenerate person an aversion to the Almighty. The Scriptures give us an apt summary; to wit:

"THE CARNAL MIND IS ENMITY AGAINST GOD." (Rom. 8:7)

The doctrine of TOTAL DEPRAVITY or TOTAL INABILITY – (the "T" here providing the First of the Five Points of Calvinism) – is logically followed by the "U" in the TULIP acronym and stands for the doctrine of UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION. Election as set out in the Word of God is unconditional and absolute.

A little reflection and simple logic will show that this must follow, for if man is dead, with zero strength to help himself, then it is obvious that only some almighty power outside himself can remedy his lost condition. ***"Salvation is of the Lord."*** (Jonah 2:9) The doctrine of Unconditional Election is plain, simple, and without difficulty to explain and preach. The Scriptures unmistakably reveal that God made choice of certain persons from all eternity. Before the world was framed, or time or matter existed, a people was elected to salvation in Christ and predestined to partake of His glory. The world viciously hates the precious doctrine of Election, and those who preach it. The goofy Arminian preacher cries aloud hysterically; NO, NO, NO. Free will, free will. If you will take the first step, God will meet you and carry you all the rest of the way.

The Catholics have a lying legend about St. Dennis, who was martyred by decapitation; whereupon, St. Dennis stooped over, picked up his severed head, and walked 1,000 miles holding his bloody head. A skeptic proposed a simple test: If Dennis will only take one step with his head cut off, I will give him the 1,000 miles.

I love you.

Amen.