

A Case Against Calvinism – Lesson 5

Tulip: Total Depravity

Romans 3:23-28

Introduction: Up to this point in this class we have been looking at the history of Calvinism. We could probably do a whole quarter just on the history portion. But now we are going to move into the part in which I would dare say that most of you are interested. We will now deal with the theology of Calvinism. Calvinists explain their theology by using the acronym TULIP. Over the next several lessons we will take each letter and look at what the Calvinist say it represents. TULIP stands for:

- T =
- U =
- L =
- I =
- P =

It seems to me that one of the difficulties that we have with Calvinism is the terminology that they use. At face value we look at the terminology and we recognize that these are principles of which the Bible speaks. We like the words that they have chosen to use. It is only when we get into the way that they are defining what they mean by the use of the words that we realize that we are not talking of the same thing in the same manner. The Calvinist is quite happy with the way that they define their theology with the use of TULIP.

It was the Synod of Dort that gave us the 5 points of Calvinism. This was in response to the 5 points of Arminianism. William Cunningham speaks for most Calvinists when he says that “No synod or council was ever held in the church, whose decisions, all things considered, are entitled to more deference and respect than the Synod of Dort.” I am of the opinion that the Bible alone is our authority, not the beliefs of either John Calvin or Jacobus Arminius, or any council, synod, assembly, or creed.

In this lesson we are going to look at T - Total Depravity. If you were ask the average church member do you believe in the total depravity of man the response you would get from the majority would be “Yes.” However, would there understanding or belief of what total depravity is match the teaching of Calvinism? The answer to that question is an easy “No.”

The understanding of Calvin and the Calvinist here is important.

I. The Calvinist definition of Total Depravity.

- Total Depravity: that man, because he is spiritually dead to God “in trespasses and in sins” (Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13), is incapable of responding to the gospel, though able to make other moral choices.
- The Westminster Confession of Faith declares, “Our first parents...became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body...wholly inclined to all evil Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation...being altogether averse from that good, and

dead to sin, is not able by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.”

A. Man's total _____.

B. Man's total _____ to be _____.

II. The importance of this definition to the Calvinist.

III. The issues that it raises.

A. There is the issue of _____.

B. There is the issue of the _____ of _____.

C. There is the issue of _____.

IV. The Scripture and Total Depravity.

V. The questions we need answered.

A. Where does the Bible say one must be regenerated before one can believe the gospel?

B. Which comes first, salvation or faith?

C. What God are you describing?

D. Why does God stive with man?