What We Believe

Lesson 5

Man’s Condition

(The Total Depravity of Man)

*Romans 3:22-23 Ephesians 2:1-3*

Introduction: “Anthropology is the study of humans, past and present. To understand the full sweep and complexity of cultures across all of human history, anthropology draws and builds upon knowledge from the social and biological sciences as well as the humanities and physical sciences.” This is an important field of study which seeks to understand who we are. But when one endeavors to understand anything about our present situation there is no better place to start seeking than in the Word of God. Our lesson today will not answer all of your questions about man, however it will highlight one of the most important truths about ourselves. This is an unpleasant subject to some, but should leave us humbled and in awe at God’s great mercy.

**The Total Depravity of Man**

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19)

1. We Must Measure With the Right Standard
   1. If we compare ourselves among ourselves we are not wise.
      1. In the eyes of God we are all equally holy and sinful.
      2. Even our righteousness is like filthy rags in God’s eyes.
      3. The actions of those around you are not the standard by which you will be judged.
   2. “Nobody’s perfect right?”
      1. God’s expectations of righteousness are not unrealistic, they are impossible for us to meet in our own abilities.
      2. Our present situation of sinfulness will never change the timeless standard of Holiness set by God.
   3. The standard has been given to us in God’s perfect moral law:
      1. Exodus 20:3-17

*“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*

*Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;*

*And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

*Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:*

*But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:*

*For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

*Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

*Thou shalt not kill.*

*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

*Thou shalt not steal.*

*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.”*

Transition: This truth should be obvious to most of us this morning. But why do we fall short?

1. We fall short of God’s standard because of the natural choices we make.
   1. Our fallen condition is because of our fallen nature.
      1. This nature has been passed down to us from Adam. Romans 5:12

*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

* + 1. This does not absolve us of responsibility. We are still responsible for our actions.
    2. We are all born with sinful tendencies:
       1. Pride
       2. Selfishness
       3. Lust
       4. Anger
       5. Fear
       6. These are all common to the human experience.
  1. We sin because of our choices. James 1:13-14

*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

* + 1. God did not create sinful temptations, but they are part of our lives. When we fall short of His standard the blame falls squarely on each individual sinner for each individual sin.
    2. The devil made me do it is never a valid excuse because it is not biblically true.

Transition: The Bible is clear about how bad we are, but it is equally clear that God had a solution for this problem.

1. God demonstrated His love toward us in spite of our condition.
   1. Romans 5:8

*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

* + 1. He is the initiator in our relationship.
    2. We love Him because He first loved us.
    3. How have you responded to His love?
  1. Everything Jesus did in this world was motivated by His love for sinners.
     1. Luke 19:10 *For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*
     2. John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*
  2. Because of His sacrifice, born-again believers have amazing spiritual resources at our disposal.
     1. God’s Word is a gift from Him to teach us His ways.
     2. We can come to God boldly through prayer.
     3. The Holy Spirit dwells within believers helping and guiding our lives.

Transition: In Christ we are new creatures, but we must always remember that the old nature is going to be a constant force we fight while in this flesh.

1. Because of our sinful nature we must depend on Christ.
   1. First, if you have never been born again then you face the punishment for all the wrong choices you make.
      1. Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death…*
      2. Hell is a real place where sinners will pay the price of their sins.
   2. But because Christ has shown His love for the world (John 3:16) if you simply place your trust in Christ for salvation He will do just that. He can do it today if you are willing to respond.
   3. If you are already saved remember what you are, a sinner, but know that the Lord is with you and wants to equip you to live a victorious Christian life.

1 Corinthians 10:13

*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

* 1. Depend on Him to help you live for Him:
     1. In your marriage
        1. Husbands loving your wives.
        2. Wives reverencing your husbands.
     2. In your family
        1. Parents teaching and raising godly children.
        2. Teaching them and incorporating Christ in your family.
     3. In your church
        1. Depend on Him to be faithful to church
        2. To bring people to you who will help you grow closer to God
        3. To make you a person who will help others grow closer to God.

Conclusion: If you find yourself feeling like a failure at life sometimes, remember that it is because we are all failures at living a holy life. We are all sinners, but thanks be to our God who has looked beyond our faults and made a way for us to have a relationship with Him. We are not mostly good people who mess up sometimes, we are actually wicked people who do good only by the grace of God. Praise God that we did not have to stay that way. Embrace the goodness of God in your life, remembering that when He saw you hopeless and lost in darkness He showed Himself to you. Don’t allow the blessing He gives you to lead you to think that you have earned His favor. He loves you in spite of what you were. Because of that we must not remain in sin but take full advantage of His help to live lives that honor such an amazing God.