

“What it means to be Reformed”; Session # 9 - “Sola Gratia – Introduction to the Doctrines of Grace”, Prepared for the Adult Sunday School class on August 31st, 2014, by Pastor Paul Rendall.

What are the Doctrines of Grace?

The Doctrines of Grace is a phrase which is used by Christians to describe those 5 doctrinal points which state why the Salvation of our souls, which comes only through Jesus Christ, must be all of grace, and not of ourselves. Everyone who is an orthodox Christian believes that they were a great enough sinner, before they were converted, that they had to have God, through Jesus Christ, do a work for them, and in them, that would save them from their sins. The Doctrines of Grace are the truths which show us just how great a sinner we are before conversion, and just how much God has to do for us if we are to be saved from our sins. A true Christian should love the Doctrines of Grace because they show them the glory of God in what He has done and will do for any sinner who trusts in Jesus Christ for salvation. The Doctrines of grace are the basis for the gospel achieving certain tangible results. The gospel is the truth of what God has done for sinners through sending His Son Jesus Christ into the World. Christ is the gospel. In His love He obeyed God’s law perfectly and fully. He went so far in His obedience to God’s purpose as to die on the cross in the place of sinners, to bear the punishment that was due to them for breaking God’s holy law. All sinners who trust in Christ will find, and have, eternal life if they are sincerely trusting in Christ alone for their salvation. The Doctrines of Grace explain for us why it was necessary for God to do so much for every person who comes to Christ for salvation. And, to a certain extent they explain how He accomplishes this great salvation for everyone He has chosen. So, as I explain these precious truths to you, I do not want you to think that God does not offer the gospel freely to any person, just because God is this sovereign. You are commanded by God to believe in Jesus Christ and it will only be your fault if you do not. It will not be God’s fault that you did not find grace in His sight. His offer is sincere and you are commanded to believe in Jesus Christ. Keeping this in mind, let us begin.

1st- Every person who has ever lived, with the exception of Jesus Christ, is Totally Depraved.

The words, totally depraved, seem to imply, to a person not familiar with the Bible, the idea that every man is always as bad as he could be. This is not true and we know it, but total is rather a word which we are using here, as theologians of old have, to describe the fact that sin has affected every faculty and part of man’s being. It is total in that respect.(1) The entrance of sin into the world through the first man Adam, affected his mind, his heart, or feelings, and his will.(2) Adam has passed on this sin nature to all his descendants. Sin also affects man’s conscience so that it does not do its job perfectly. Every person, apart from saving grace has a tremendous sinful problem with the way he thinks, the way he feels, with the choices that he makes, and with the motives for all that he does.(3) The inclination of his heart is not toward God from birth. He does not have to be taught by his parents to serve himself, he does so by nature. His bent is toward breaking or ignoring, or neglecting all of God’s commandments.(4) Even when his parents teach him right from wrong and hold him to it outwardly, yet in many ways he still sins in his heart. All that he does do, that is right, is done from selfish or sinful motives, or to merit favor with God by His own righteousness, which he cannot possibly establish before God.(5) He is unable and unwilling, apart from grace to come to God to be saved from this condition and he is spiritually dead in his trespasses and sins. This is true of the most moral man who has ever lived.(6)

1) Genesis 6: 5 Genesis 8: 21 2) Isaiah 1: 5; Romans 8: 7 3) Jeremiah 17: 9 4) Psalm 58: 3
5) Psalm 53: 3 Romans 10: 3 6) Ephesians 2: 1-3