

Bible Study

Topic: The Bible in the Wesleyan Heritage

Lesson #4: Vital Bible Doctrines, Part Two

“The Doctrine of Universality of Sin” Key Verse: Romans 3:23; Titus 2:11

Proposition: Every human being is a sinner with a depraved nature that is at war with God; and is in need of God’s redeeming grace.

1. The universality of sin or “original sin”.

2. The Article of Religion: VII Of original or Birth Sin (The AME Zion Book of Discipline)

“Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly say), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil and that continually.”

- a. Original Sin: the disobedience of Adam & Eve that plunged humankind into sin and has been followed by every person (except Jesus Christ) receiving a sin nature and choosing to sin. (Romans 5:18, 19)
- b. The Fall: the result of the first human sin which marred the image of God in humans and created an environment for and a tendency towards sin for all people. (Romans 5:12)
- c. Depravity: a state of sinfulness, corruption, helplessness and enmity with God in which every human finds himself (or herself) before salvation and redemption. (Romans 3:10-12; 5:6-10)
- d. Actual Sin: the sins that humans commit by thought, words, and deeds; which are the direct result of the human’s sin nature. (Romans 3:13-18)
- e. Condemnation: the declaration of guilt for sin which involves not only temporal punishment, but also eternal damnation (hell). (Romans 3:19, 23; James 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)
- f. Justification: sinners may be forgiven and put right with God not through their works or goodness, but only through God’s grace and their saving faith in Jesus Christ. (Romans 3:20-28, 5:1-2; Galatians 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9)

3. Preventive Grace or Preventing Grace

The Spirit of God is present in every person enabling him or her to know the difference between right and wrong, and thus to be able to recognize the Savior and respond to Him.

- a. Definitions:
 - i. Preventive: means “going before”

- ii. Grace: is “God’s unmerited favor.”
 - iii. Prevenient Grace: is the presence of the Holy Spirit even before salvation, helping the sinner on his or her way to God.
- b. Man is depraved, but not “totally” depraved. God gives every human enough grace to answer God’s call to repent and believe the Gospel.
 - i. Jesus gives light to every person to either accept or reject. (John 1:9; 3:17-19)
 - ii. God has put His law in the hearts of people who do not even have the written law so that they are able to tell right from wrong. (Romans 2:15)
 - iii. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts and convinces the world about sin, righteousness and judgment. (John 16:7-11)
 - iv. No man can come to Christ unless the Father draws him or her; and whoever comes to Christ will not be denied by Him. (John 6:37, 6:44)
 - v. God wants everyone to repent of their sins, be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9)
 - vi. The grace of God which brings salvation is being offered to everyone. (Titus 2:11)