

Belgic Confession of Faith – 14 – Part 1– The Great Fall of Man

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Someone said that when God made man he commanded man to have dominion over the earth and to worship him. Today, man worships the earth and wants to have dominion over God. Man has completely reversed the duties God gave to him. But don't let this surprise you. The sad reality is that man is unable to do these things-to have dominion over the earth and to worship the God-as God commanded him. Why is man unable to do these 2 things that God has commanded and how can man remedy this problem? This is the subject for today. Know that if you get this right, your view of man, Christ, and salvation will improve.

Our headings are:

God created man holy and pure

God condemned man for his sin

God caused a little light to remain

Our goals are: That you will be **refreshed with the knowledge of your sinfulness** so that you can be **moved to fix the problem of sin and more faithfully praise God** who saved you through Christ.

We believe that **God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after His own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things** to will agreeably to the will of God.

But being in honor, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but willfully subjected himself to sin and consequently to death and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil. **For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God**, who was his true life; having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal 肉体的 and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse 丧心病狂, and corrupt in all his ways, he has lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and **retained only small remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse**; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not; where St. John calls men darkness.

God Created Man Holy and Pure

1. You can only get proper sense of the fall of man when you get a proper understanding of your creation! God formed Adam and personally breathed life into his nostrils. He made man with dust and subjected him to gravity, time, and space. God did not make him from gold. On one hand, this would give him a degree of humility, but...

2. Even though God made man from dust, yet he crowned man with honor, showing him he was rich. (Humility and wealth are not exclusive of each other.)

a. While God did not make Adam from gold, he gave him gold.

Genesis 2:11 The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

b. God only created man after everything in the world was ready for man. Man was the highlight of creation – the crown of creation. Man outranks级别高于 even the angels of heaven who were not given charge of creation. This must make you praise God for this honor! If you are the special guest at an event, would it be proper to arrive and then someone starts cooking? No. But you would feel special when things are prepared for you.

c. God made man in his image. “The image of God” means that man had some of the communicable characteristics of God: good, just, holy, loving, the ability to rule, etc. Man was made that he would act like God does in some circumstances – reflecting God to other men. Man was to rule like God rules, love like God loves, and be holy as God, etc. An Ambassador is to act for the Prime Minister in a limited way in a foreign country. He doesn't have to physically look like the Prime Minister, but he has the authority of the Prime Minister. So it is with you. You are to reflect God with the capacity he has given to you.

3. Lessons:

a. The fact that you were made out of the dust must make you humble. You must be willing to serve instead of demanding to be served. How you talk to the waitress in the restaurant will reflect if you are cognizant认识 of how you were created. How you act when you are in the supermarket and you see people counting out dimes一角 to pay their bills, reflect how humble you are. Even when you react to someone of a different skin color or from a different social status tells about your view of creation. God did not tell you to be something he was not! If you believe you were from primordial slime原始煤泥, then you will act slimy狡诈. But since God created you from dust, you must be humble! You even show your humility by how you rule the animals and plants.

b. The fact that you were made by God with honor means you must have continual desire to praise him. If you think that your honor is from your abilities, then you will not care about worship. And remember, even your ability to worship God has been restored to you in Jesus Christ. The non-believer can't worship.

God Condemned Man for his Sin

1. Man did not consider his great position with God great enough, so he transgressed违犯 God's law and ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. No one was holding a gun to Adam's head. No one was twisting his arms. It was willful and free. It was a sin of mature deliberation熟思. On his own, Adam performed a reckless disobedience in the Garden. And Adam is held primarily responsible for the sin because he was the covenant head.

2. Because of his sin, God separated himself from Adam. This separation was death to man; man spiritually and physically died. Man is not spiritually sick, like some churches teach, but man is dead in his trespasses犯 and sins.

Ephesians 2:5 ...even when we were **dead in trespasses**侵犯, made us alive...

3. What is the result of man being dead in sin?

a. Because man died in his sins, **no man could approach God any longer**. The evening meeting between Jesus and Adam were gone.

Psalm 103:3 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

b. Because man was dead in sin, God took away his gifts he had given and **God put man out of the Garden**.

c. Because man was dead in sin, **man was not able to have dominion over the earth** and wanted to rule God instead.

d. Because man was dead in sin, **man became enemies of God**.

Romans 8:7 - ...Because the carnal mind is enmity against God

e. Because man was dead in sin, he **had to wait for his just condemnation to eternity in hell**.

4. What is the extent of man's death in sin? Man became totally depraved.

a. Man's actions, thoughts, and words are totally and continually evil. Man can do nothing good. Worse, man loves to do evil.

Genesis 6:5 - Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that **every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**.

Romans 3:13-18 - "Their throat is an open tomb墓; With their tongues they have practiced deceit谎言"; "The poison of asps虺蛇is under their lips"; "**Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.**" "Their feet are swift迅速to shed blood; Destruction毁灭and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known." "**There is no fear of God before their eyes.**"

This is extremely strong language, but it is truth. This depravity caused a father to pour sulfuric acid硫酸 down the throat of his infant son. This is what caused Idi Amin to steal men's wives, kill the men and make soup with their livers. Amin was a close friend of the man who named himself "king of kings," Gadaffi. He routinely abused young children and then put drugged them and put them into mental institutions.

b. This sinfulness begins from childhood. Our children aren't born pure and corrupted by society as Freud said, but were sinful from their mother's womb. Callan and Melinda proved this to their parents.

Genesis 8:21..."I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, **although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth**...

c. And because Adam sinned, all his natural descendants are sinners and continue to sin.

Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 3:9-11 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

5. Lessons:

a. Arminians argue that man is sick in sin, not dead in sin. (They might say "dead in sin" but they mean "sick in sin.") They rob their hearers 听众 by not showing them the severity of their need. They are like a doctor telling a cancer patient that he has an ulcer. How unkind, how catastrophic 灾难性的! It is an egregious violation 令人震惊的侵犯 of God's law to called sin, sickness. On top of that, the saved can never praise God as he should!

b. Others argue the same thing: The adulterer is sick, the drunkard 酒鬼 is sick, the murderer is sick. So man does not need Christ; man needs medical doctors to treat his problem. They think that God would be unfair to punish a sick person. This takes away any incentive to repent and turn to God for forgiveness. This is typical of liberal churches.

c. Others blame the environment for the person sin, not the person. So they argue that governments or social organizations could fix the problems by throwing money at it. They say if everyone has guaranteed incomes, they wouldn't steal. But these things can never fix sins. They only exacerbate sin. You see a rabid failure of this in Baltimore recently where President Obama, etc. argued Baltimore needed more investment in the young people. The truth is, those who argue this have been leading Baltimore for 50 years and conditions have gotten worse.

d. For man to be able to worship God and have dominion over the earth, man needs to be re-created in Jesus Christ in his soul. Only the renewed man can do this great work!

God Caused A Little Light to Remain

1. Yet, God kept a small measure of light that man could know God exists and see a measure of his sin. So the man who tries to excuse himself that he is sick...or acts like he is not bad...or blamed the government, or his environment, is indeed lying. For all men have consciences. Yes, man can deny his conscience, but it is there.

Romans 1: 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although **they knew God**, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

However, this flicker 闪烁 of light is not bright enough for man to fully see his sin nor bright enough for a man to know how to find help. So you can see man has a great dilemma.

2. This is why man today needs the "Light of the World," the Lord Jesus Christ. You can only learn of this Light in the Word of God. If you read the Bible, with God's help, your spiritual eyes will be opened, you will see your sin, and your heart will be moved to believe that Jesus died for his sin. **If man rejects that flicker and does not search for full Light, God will further condemn him.**

3. Lessons: Do you see how much men need the Gospel of Jesus Christ? This is where you come in!

Conclusion:

God created man perfectly good for his praise and glory. God created man in his own image. He gave man everything he needed and more. Yet man chose to act contemptuously and attacked God. So man died – physically and spiritually, and all his children with him. He became sinful in his whole being. He lost the ability to fulfill his purpose in life: To worship God and have dominion.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Do you think you are really a terrible sinner who fell into sin? Do you think you can kill your own child? Do you think you can abandon your husband and go live with someone else? Do you think you can walk away from serving the Lord? Can you betray your best friend? Did you say “no?” The Bible says: “Yes.” You can do that and much more. Remember how Joseph’s brother sold him as a slave. Remember how Jesus’ “friends” betrayed and executed him. Remember how the Jews threw their young children in fire. You are unable of yourself to do your duties, including ruling and worshipping!

2. Knowing this, daily thank God that your Lord Jesus obeyed perfectly in his life for you – he never lied, he never hated, he never committed adultery, he never murdered, he kept the Sabbath Day holy – all for you. He imaged his Father. **And do you thank God that in his death Jesus took the full punishment for when you** do not obey. Brothers and sisters, praise him like you never did before!!! For in Adam, all died, but in the 2nd Adam, Jesus Christ, many are made alive.

Finally, for our non-Christian friends here today: Everything I have talked about the human condition is true for all of us. The only difference between you and us is that God accepts Christ’s perfect life and sacrificial death as a substitute for us. You too could have Christ as your substitute if you ask him.