

Sin, V

Our task for this lesson is to spend some time on the ability/inability discussion. We are thinking about the effects of the Fall. To put things in a bigger view, original sin brings results in terms of guilt and pollution. Under the moral category of pollution we have both depravity and our topic for tonight: inability.

Paul is the theologian of original sin. There is no debate on that. It is worthwhile to investigate Paul's writings to see what he says unsaved people are able to do to rescue themselves from their plight. I would like to focus our attention on three important questions, understanding we can ask questions of the Bible that it does not answer. So the fact that we make up questions does not mean that they are necessarily going to be answered, but let us take a stab at it. First, how does Paul describe the will of an unsaved person? Is his will morally free or morally bound, or can we not decide? Second, what can an unsaved person do to be saved? Specifically, is an unsaved person able to believe in Christ for salvation? Third, is either the Arminian or Calvinist view of prevenient grace correct, or is there another view that is correct? You all understand the last time we talked about the Arminian view we gave credit to Wesley for teaching that prevenient grace—grace that precedes salvation—is universal, nullifying the effects of original sin, specifically on humanity's will by virtue of this universal preceding grace. Arminians talk about "gracious ability." There is a gracious ability to believe the Gospel, no merit involved. Or is the Augustinian/Calvinist tradition correct, which understands prevenient grace as efficacious and, therefore, particular? Again, I acknowledge that the text may not answer these questions.

Let us turn to 1 Corinthians 2. This discussion is not asking the question of whether people in fact believe unto salvation. Of course they do. Sometimes it has been assumed that if you say that, you have already answered the question: "Are they able to believe and be saved?" Not necessarily so. The fact that they believe and are saved, nobody disputes. As to how that comes about is the point of discussion. First Corinthians 2:14-16 says, "The man without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned." The spiritual man makes judgment about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Paul says that when he came to Corinth his preaching centered on the crucifixion of Christ. He did not rely on human wisdom or preaching ability alone when he preached the Gospel to the Corinthians. His confidence was in the power of the Holy Spirit to use the Gospel and bring about results, verses 1-5. In another sense, the Gospel message is a message of wisdom. Mature believers recognize this but the world does not. This is not worldly wisdom, whose source is the mind of man. Rather it is God's wisdom in a mystery, verse 7. NIV says, "[...] secret wisdom." NAS does it better by saying, "God's wisdom is a mystery." Perhaps that word mystery should be reflected; it is a theme in Paul's thought. God planned to give the wisdom of the Gospel to believers before creation; the final goal of God's wisdom in the Gospel is the glorification of the saints, verse 7. The first century worldly leaders did not understand the wisdom of God. They demonstrated this par excellence when they murdered the Son of God. God was not defeated, however, by the death of His Son. God has now revealed the wonderful things which He has prepared for His people—things which were made known not by any human being figuring them out but by revelation from God. They are beyond human ability to figure out. I think of Jesus' words in John 3 to Nicodemus, one of the leaders of Israel and a prominent teacher: "I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?" The earthly thing He was talking about was regeneration by the Holy Spirit. How is that earthly? It is not earthly in its source, but it is earthly in its sphere—it takes place on Earth. But if Jesus'

meaning is that if He talked straightforwardly about what happens in heaven, there is no way they could understand or we could understand, but here God reveals that there are great blessings in store for the people of God. Nowhere does the Bible give us the furniture of heaven in any detail, but it tells us all that we need to know. It is the Holy Spirit who has access to the secrets of God. There is a parallel in the human sphere where only an individual knows his or her deepest thoughts. In the same way, only God's spirit knows the thoughts of God. The apostles have not received the spirit of the world system that is at enmity with God from which they would learn the world's wisdom. They have received the Spirit from God from which they learn the wisdom of God. In turn, the apostles communicate to their hearers this wisdom from God. They preach the Gospel not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit. In so doing, they express spiritual truths in spiritual words. It could possibly be translated as, "They express spiritual truths to spiritual people."

Paul contrasts the *psuchikos* (the word he uses), the unspiritual person, with the *pneumatikos*, the spiritual one. In context, these two words must mean lacking the Spirit of God and hence, unsaved, and having the Spirit of God and hence, saved, respectively. So the NIV translates the *psuchikos* man, the soulless or natural man, as the man without the Spirit. It expresses the sense very well. The unspiritual man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. The implication is because he does not have the Spirit of God. By the way, that is an interpretation, but I think it is the right interpretation. I do not think it would be debated. There are different kinds of present tenses in Greek. If you are describing your mailperson's activity and you have a little child at home and ask if the mailperson is coming, the child may say, "The mailperson is coming down the street." That would be a progressive idea in Greek; it means he or she is actually doing it—a progressive present. This is not that. The understanding that I have of this particular usage is not saying that it is happening right now in somebody's life. If you ask when the mailperson is coming and are told that he or she comes at around 3 o'clock, that is the sense. It expresses the regular state of affairs. That is it is the regular state of affairs, the ordinary situation for unsaved people to not accept things in the Spirit of God. It is not saying this particular unsaved person right now is rejecting the Gospel. It is making a general statement about the way things work. So for example, light shines and birds fly and horses run and unsaved people do not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God—which things have to be defined in this context. In fact, the wisdom from God is foolishness to an unsaved person since he evaluates from the perspective of the world's wisdom. The man or woman without the Spirit cannot understand the things that come from the Spirit because those things are spiritually understood. Since he lacks the Spirit, he lacks spiritual discernment. This seems to be Paul's thought. In contrast, the person with the Spirit, the spiritual person, exercises discernment about all spiritual things. Just be careful about verse 15; it does not mean you do not have to study for your geography test because you are a Christian. You could prove really quickly that is not what it means when you get an F in your geography test by not studying. It means, of course, all spiritual things. The spiritual person is not subject to the evaluation of unsaved people in the spiritual sphere is the context, since he has access to and is subject to the revealed mind of God in Christ. I am trying to set verses 14-16 in the context, especially 14.

Let us look at verse 14 in more detail. What are the "things of the Spirit of God" referred to in verse 14? It seems to me you can simply go backward through the whole context and we have them referred to repeatedly. They are the spiritual things expressed in spiritual words, verse 13; they are what God has given, verse 12; the thoughts of God, deep things of God, what God has revealed by his spirit, verse 10; they are His secret wisdom, they are a message of wisdom, Paul's message, the message about Jesus Christ and Him crucified and the testimony of God. Paul has been talking about the same idea all the way through the chapter. In other words, the things of the Spirit are the revelation given by God to the apostles. That revelation centered on the saving work of Christ. It included other topics as well, for example, what God has prepared for those who love Him, verse 9. I thus have defined the things of the

Spirit of God from the context as the revelation God gave to the apostles that they in turn preached, that is, the Gospel of Christ understood in its broadest sense. The Holy Spirit plays two important roles in this passage. We must interpret verse 14 within the context of the Spirit's two works. First of all, He reveals the things of God to the apostles. Be careful. Verses 10-13 do not teach that the Holy Spirit is going to give us direct revelation. They speak of the apostles and their special ministry in the first century as authorized representatives of Christ, eyewitnesses and ear witnesses of the risen Christ who are commissioned by Him to preach the Gospel. They got direct revelation from God and, unlike preachers today, they preached direct revelation from God—the very Word of God equal to the Word of God in Scripture. In fact, some of their preaching was written down as they directed messages in writing to different churches and so forth.

So, first, the Spirit reveals the things of God to the apostles. As argued above, “the things of the Spirit of God” is a reference to the apostolic preaching of the Gospel, which had its origin in the Spirit's revelation. Second, the Spirit enables people to understand the apostolic message. So He is on the broadcast side and the reception side both. He gives the message in the first place; He brings the message home. First Corinthians 2:14-15 includes the second aspect of the Spirit's work too. The Spirit works dynamically to enable sinners to apprehend the truth of God. We might label the two aspects of the Spirit's work revelation and illumination, even saving illumination seems to be in view.

Although revelation has ceased, how are we to understand the Spirit's work in believers' lives? Does not the Spirit teach us, guide us, lead us, and even give us insights? The important distinction is that those insights and that guidance and so forth, and the prompting and leading of the Spirit, is not revelation on a par with God's Word. I was gratified to see in those meetings in the past decade of the International Congress on Biblical Inerrancy—deliberately believers from many different perspectives gathered, including charismatic Christian scholars. They were unanimous in emphasizing that point, that the canon of Scripture is closed, that any revelatory claims today must be evaluated under the authority of God's Word. Some of us have minimized the Spirit's role in guidance and so forth. The Bible here and in John 14 and 16, in my estimation, speaks of the apostles specifically. First John 2, however, speaks of the Spirit plainly teaching believers who are not apostles. So that concept is indeed biblical. Does He not teach the believers chiefly the apostles' enscriptured revelation? Yes, but the Spirit does work in our lives and lead and guide and so forth. There is a question of authority and that is invested in God's written truth.

Here are some theological conclusions from this passage—what does 1 Corinthians 2:14 teach concerning the unsaved person's ability to take in, believe, the apostolic message? First, the unsaved person does not accept it. Second, it is foolishness to him. Third, he or she cannot understand it. This passage does not account for the inability of the unsaved to respond to the Gospel by appealing to their condition of spiritual death as does Ephesians 2, nor does it ascribe the rejection of the Gospel to Satan's working as does 2 Corinthians 4, a passage that is scary. Amazingly, Ephesians 2 talks about Satan working in unsaved people. Amazingly, this passage merely labels the unsaved “natural” or “unspiritual” and in so doing says that they do not, indeed cannot, believe because they do not have the Spirit of God. Apart from the Spirit one is locked up to the wisdom of this evil world. From the standpoint of the world's wisdom, the Gospel is foolishness. It is so-called wisdom—Paul probably speaks with sarcasm here, for it is only the Spirit who gave the Gospel who can cause sinners to savingly apprehend it.

The issue of the freedom or bondage of the will is not specifically addressed by our passage. I am addressing the three questions. Some type of bondage of the will is implied, however, it seems to me the unsaved person does not accept and cannot understand spiritual things; they are foolishness to him.

Inasmuch as he is limited to worldly wisdom on his own, his will, which does not receive, and his mind, which cannot understand, are bound by sin. Our passage seems to answer the second question by saying that an unsaved person cannot do anything to be saved; he cannot understand the Gospel—it is part of the normal state of affairs that the unspiritual do not accept spiritual things. The passage would seem to attribute the ability to believe to the work of the Spirit and therefore, when we see a spiritual interest in someone, we ought to be encouraged that the Lord is working. It may not be an absolute guarantee that the person is going to be saved, but any interest in spiritual matters I would attribute to the Holy Spirit working in somebody's life and that would encourage me.

Our passage does not directly address the question about the nature of that prevenient grace. The best we can do is test the Arminian and Calvinist models. This passage does not teach a universal work of the Spirit that enables all people to be saved. I have to be open to somebody claiming that other passages do that, and I am open. The passage rather distinguishes between a spiritual and unspiritual person on the basis of the possession or lack of possession of the Spirit. The Spirit's saving work is not universal here. It is the Spirit who makes the difference between those who understand spiritual truth and those who do not. The passage does not attribute possession of the Spirit to faith or lack of possession of the Spirit to unbelief. It attributes faith and unbelief to the presence or absence of the Spirit, thus on the basis of this passage I would incline toward the Calvinist view of prevenient grace. In sum, unsaved people, on their own, do not accept the Gospel. It is foolishness to them. They cannot understand it. They could be professors of theology, religion, or Bible and understand it on a certain level, but this biblical concept of understanding here is equivalent to believing. There have been professors of New Testament who have memorized the Greek New Testament and who could very much tell you what the Gospel is according to Paul, but who do not themselves believe it. So I want to be very clear as to what I mean by "understanding."

You say, "What are the implications for evangelism?" We dare not try to manipulate anybody into the kingdom of God; we cannot do that. We want to love people. We want to follow Jesus' example and be friends of sinners. We want to pray for people since it is only the Holy Spirit who can convert them anyway. We do not want to try to manipulate people or get them in an emotional state where they are going to say yes, otherwise they would not have; no, we do not need to do those things. As a matter of fact, it is wrong because we might end up giving them false assurance or causing them to think they are saved when they are not because they conformed to our pressure. No pressure. We share the Gospel, we love, we pray, we seek for people to make professions of faith, and then we feed faith. Many a person has really been saved in discipleship. They say, "I did not understand the cross" and you are thinking, "Do not understand the cross, then did they really believe when they professed Christ a few weeks back?" It does not matter. Go on and feed faith. By the time you have done your study they will be sure and you will be sure that they are sure. Praise the Lord. Always disciple, otherwise we do harm; we do not help people.

I am saying the Spirit can bring about an interest in spiritual things in an unsaved person. And I am also saying then, conversely, when we see an interest we ought to go with that as a place, to the best of our imperfect knowledge, where we conclude the Spirit is at work. That is it is pretty hard, although not impossible to account for that interest. It could be a bad interest or from bad motivations or something, but a sincere interest in the things of the Lord I would attribute to the Spirit's working. This does not mean everybody who has an interest gets saved, but we want to be working where the Holy Spirit is working and that would be an exciting opportunity indeed.

We have one more passage to go over, and that is 2 Corinthians 4. The context is Paul being criticized. "Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have

renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception.” See his enemies are saying these things and he is on the defensive. “Nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every person’s conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” Paul has been speaking in the end of chapter 3 of the glory of the new covenant. The glory of the mosaic covenant fades away completely. Remember Moses’ face coming down from the mountain just filled with glory; the Jews could not handle it, “Veil your face, Moses, we cannot handle this.” So there was glory but compared to the glory of God in Christ and the Gospel and the ministry of the new covenant that glory was as no glory. The new dispensation brought by Jesus Christ is altogether glorious. Consequently, the ministry—this is a good passage for discouraged preachers—of the new covenant is glorious too. My own pastor made me laugh when he said that it took him less than one year in ministry to learn something he never had learned in seminary: that sheep have teeth. I thought that was good. On certain days you cannot look at your flock for the encouragement you receive because some days you just do not get any. The people just assume that you know that you are greatly appreciated although they sometimes do not say it, but you always can turn again to God’s Word and passages like this to lift you up. The ministry of the new covenant is glorious. Paul is a minister of the new covenant of the glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

In exposition, the words, therefore, in verse 1 point back to the preceding discussion of the glory of new covenant ministry. The clause that follows does the same: “since we have this,” he means in context, glorious new covenant ministry. It is only because of God’s saving mercy that the apostles had their ministries. Paul says just as we received mercy. That really makes a difference, too, in the way you minister. If you never forget that your situation as a servant of God is because of God’s mercy, then we ought to be merciful to others. An unmerciful Christian is a contradiction in terms. Think of the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew’s gospel. It is a contradiction in terms. Christians are experts in mercy because they are Christians themselves as a result of God’s mercy. We have drunk deeply from the fountain of God’s mercy; how can we be less than merciful to others? May we never be in the place of the guy who had been forgiven all his debt and shook down this fellow who owed him just a small amount of money. He owed millions by comparison and sent the other guy to prison. Did not he hear his words coming back to him from the fellow who asked for mercy? Apparently not; that is a terrible travesty and a contradiction in terms for Christians not to show mercy. Somebody who consistently does not show mercy may not even be a Christian at all. Jesus said truly happy are the merciful, for they will ultimately receive mercy from God. Since Paul has received from God a part in the glorious mystery of Jesus Christ he does not despair in spite of the attacks he is receiving. The glorious Christ and the privilege of serving Him are great encouragement to the apostles. In verse 2, the apostles are not discouraged about serving the Lord, appearances to the contrary. On the contrary, they have nothing to be ashamed about, nothing to hide. They have renounced the shameful hidden things, though their enemies falsely accuse them of ungodliness. The ministry of the new covenant is full of glory, and that glory shines on everything the apostles do. There is thus simply no place for hidden sins; all is open to God and human beings. “We do not walk in craftiness” means that they do not act with trickery. “Neither do we falsify the Word of God by saying one thing and doing another, which contradicts the message of holiness, but by means of open proclamation of the truth, the Gospel, we commend ourselves to every person’s conscience in the sight of God.” The ministers of the new covenant look with unveiled faces at Christ’s glory. They have nothing to hide from God or fellow human beings. They proclaim the truth of the Gospel openly.

Paul's opponents will reply, "If your message is so glorious and clear, why do all not see it the way you do? Paul, your message is not clear. You are a false apostle and your message is your own invention, you cultist." Something like that is coming his way. Paul says, "Even if our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing." Paul will not fault; he refuses to fault the glorious Christ or His Gospel. Instead, darkness, he insists, resides in the hearers who reject the message of light. In fact we can gauge our spiritual condition by our response to the Gospel. Those to whom the good news is hidden reveal at that point in time anyway that they are unsaved and heading for destruction. Of course they could believe at some other time before they pass away. Verse 4 is the most important one for our purposes. The perishing ones are further described by means of a relative clause: "[...] in whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers," or you possibly could translate that as, "has blinded their unbelieving minds." There is no difference. Paul teaches that those who reject the Gospel are in serious trouble. They not only show themselves to be lost by their negative response to the good news, but they are also in the clutches of a sinister force. I am not denying the personality of Satan, person and force, he is more powerful than they. The devil has blinded their thinking. There has been a satanic effect upon their minds—I am not saying that they are Satanists; they could perfectly well deny the existence of Satan and still be blinded by him. Paul contends that the Gospel is so glorious that it takes Satan himself to blind unbelieving minds from the Gospel's light. That is an exaggeration. Satan's blinding work is so that they might not see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God. This is either Satan's purpose or the result of his work. They both are very close in meaning. The evil one has a very specific intent; he wants to keep the unsaved from believing in the Savior. He works in the thinking processes of the unsaved so that they will not be savingly illuminated by the Gospel. Notice the light words here: blinded, see, light, glory, and image. Paul is emphatic that there is no lack of clarity or glory to the Gospel. The good news is a message of the glory of Christ who is the very image of God. The Lord Jesus reveals the invisible God to all who have eyes to see. The reason given here why those who are perishing do not see is that Satan has blinded their spiritual eyes.

Let me skip down to 4:6. The reason why Paul preaches the Gospel of Christ is that the creator God savingly illumined Him. "For God, who said, 'Let light shall shine out of darkness,' made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The great Creator of light—the quote of course is from Genesis 1—and of everything else is responsible for giving spiritual light to Paul. The Gospel is luminous but the devil blinds the minds of the unsaved. One stronger than Satan, the Creator Himself, illumines the minds of the people of God with the Gospel. I believe that Paul is implying that God's work of saving illumination of the Gospel is a work of recreation. In any case, it is as much a work of the Creator as creation was. To sum up, thus in response to enemy attacks Paul holds firm to his conviction that the Gospel is full of light. They can criticize him and that hurts him, but when they criticize the Gospel, those are fighting words to the apostle Paul. Men do not believe the Gospel only because they are perishing and are blinded by the false god of this present evil world. The Creator God savingly illumined the heart of Paul and will do so for the rest of the people of God. A theological conclusion from this passage is that one reason why unsaved people do not believe the Gospel is because Satan has blinded their thinking. How does Paul describe the will of an unsaved person? Paul does not specifically mention the will of the unsaved in this passage. He does mention the thoughts or the minds. The unsaved person's thoughts or mind have been blinded by Satan so that he will not believe the Gospel. That blinding is not merely hypothetical, but effective as a comparison of verses 3 and 4 will show. Paul talks about two actual responses to his preaching ministry. Those to whom the Gospel is hidden are those who are perishing in whose case Satan has blinded their thoughts. The language is given in terms of a metaphor of light and darkness rather than a bondage and freedom. Nevertheless, the message is plain; a more powerful being than sinners has blinded their unbelieving minds. They are thus bound or blinded until a greater one comes to free them. Second, it appears that our passage answers a second question which we initially asked thus: an unsaved person

can do nothing to be saved. He is blinded by the devil and in need of divine illumination. He cannot illumine himself for he is blinded. He cannot even believe the Gospel for it is hidden to him. The reason given here, again (it is proper to appeal to other passages, I have to be open toward that, but I am starting with some that seem to pertain to this question). The reason given here for unbelief is that Satan has blinded those people who do not believe at this time. Third, this passage does not mention the word “grace.” It speaks rather in terms of illumination. Saving illumination is the work of God the creator. It is only when God shines in hearts with the light of the Gospel that people are saved. There is no general illumination of mankind taught in this passage. There is an efficacious and particular enlightenment, which is the work of God.

It has been asked if a person can believe and yet not accept the Gospel? This is a question of semantics. Biblically speaking, in the Gospel of John for example, believing the Gospel, accepting Christ, coming to Jesus, are different ways of talking about the same thing: receiving Him. In fact, “believe” is used 99 times in John’s Gospel. Though the term “believe” is used sometimes referring to a false or partial belief, so it ends up being a complicated matter. Could a person not understand the Gospel? Yes. Could a person even give assent to the facts of the Gospel and not be saved? Yes, they can. In that way, James 2 says that the demons believe and tremble. Luther had a witty comment. I think he said, “At least a tremble; some of his hearers did not even have any response to the Gospel and he thought the demons had a better response.” The demons know the Gospel is true, so yes one can assent and not be saved. I am talking here of a saving belief, of an acceptance, of a coming to Christ, however you want to say it, that is saving—that results in salvation.

We do not have time to do anything with Ephesians 2. I will just mention to you it is a passage that speaks of people being spiritually dead. You are probably already familiar with that. They are children of wrath or deserving of the wrath of God, which we looked at a couple of weeks ago.

Let me give you a point of clarification; I am saying that a person on his or her own is not able to believe in order to be saved. Now people do believe and they are saved and we rejoice in that. In fact we want to be part of that; we want to be involved with people and see many people saved. The reason that I am bringing this up now is because somebody could say, “Well that is just going to hinder it. With any luck you are going to get saved anyway, so why witness the Gospel?” We witness the Gospel because it is God’s ordained means for bringing His people to Himself. Because God is God, He does the electing, He does the dying on the cross and rising again, and He does the opening up of hearts, as seen in Acts 16 where the Lord opened Lydia’s heart and she believed. We do not do any of that. Neither do we create the world or hold the world together, but we are servants of God who, under God, share the Gospel person-to-person and we look for God to work. It is a great strengthening thing to me to think of Paul’s words that the same God who called the light out of darkness is going to do a work of the new creation in people’s lives. I cannot control it or predict it, but we can be part of it and God, who is in the business of saving sinners, will use us. So this does not stifle evangelism, as it should not; it should foster it by guaranteeing us of results, not in particular cases, but overall it guarantees us results. If we get out there where the fish are and get our fishing line in the water, God wants to bring people to Himself. And people apparently are unable to save themselves. I might just point to one section of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Chapter 9 deals with the freedom of the will and is a very nice treatment. It deals with four different states. In our state of innocence man had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well pleasing to God, but yet mutably so that he might fall from it and as you know, as the story played itself out in fact, he did fall from it, but in the state of innocence there was a real freedom of will. Man by his fall into a state of sin, the second state, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation so as a natural man being altogether adverse from that

good and dead in sin is not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself thereunto. Third, the state of grace, when God converts a sinner and translates him into the state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage under sin and by His grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good. Yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he does not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but does also will that which is evil. In a state of innocence, Adam and Eve had real freedom of the will, within creaturely limitations, but they were able to sin and in fact they did. The state of sin we are unable to recognize ourselves. State of grace, by God's grace we have been freed, God has overcome the bondage of the will and set us free so we can do His will but yet not perfectly and only His will. State of glory is the last state, the fourth, the will of man, is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory only. I commend to you chapter 9 of freewill of the Westminster Confession of Faith as an apt summary of my understanding of the Bible's teachings concerning some of those matters.