

## **“THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION.”**

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### **Scripture Texts: Romans 8:1-4**

Remember when I said Romans 7 was one of the hardest chapters in the Bible to understand. Romans 8 is declared by many to be the greatest chapter in the Bible.

Martin Lloyd-Jones said Romans is the greatest book in the Bible and chapter 8 is the greatest chapter in the greatest book. He preached 77 sermons on this chapter alone.

Charles Spurgeon called it a banquet for the souls of God’s hungry saints, the very cream of the cream of Holy Scripture.

If you can’t memorize the whole book of Romans, consider memorizing Romans 8. It will be time well spent. Romans 8 contains some of the most beloved verses of comfort to believers in all ages and of all ages.

It is one of the most glorious chapters in the Bible as it unfolds God’s entire plan of salvation from justification to adoption, to God’s good sovereign providence to glorification, all grounded in God’s love from which nothing can separate us.

### **The grand declaration.**

The chapter opens with the grandest of declarations. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” When Paul says therefore he wants us to think about what he said before.

7:15 I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.  
There is therefore now no condemnation.

18 I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.  
There is therefore now no condemnation.

I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.  
There is therefore now no condemnation.

19 The evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.  
There is therefore now no condemnation.

20 Sin dwells within me.

There is therefore now no condemnation.

21 When I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

There is therefore now no condemnation.

23 I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

There is therefore now no condemnation.

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

There is therefore now no condemnation.

All of Paul's laments concerning himself are answered with therefore there is now no condemnation.

### **Condemnation.**

What is this condemnation?

First, there is the implication that there was condemnation. The entire human race has been brought before the bar of justice to be arraigned and is declared guilty and is a convicted criminal sentenced to die.

All of humanity is hopelessly and helplessly moving toward a great judgment which is the fruit of sin, rebellion and disobedience against a holy, righteous God. God's judgment is the inevitable consequence of our sin.

As Paul declared in chapter 1 the wrath of God has already begun to be revealed and the first installment of that revelation is death.

But now something is different. There is now no condemnation. Not there is no sin, no failures, no inconsistencies, no fleshly corruptions or desires, but no condemnation.

What a glorious phrase.

More than anything we want this verse to be true. "No condemnation." Can it be true and if so, for whom is it true?

Humanity divides into two conditions, those under the law and those under grace. By birth and by nature we are children of wrath as Ephesians 2 says, but once we are *in Christ* we are now no longer under the curse of the law, because Christ has borne it for us and redeemed us from it.

### **Who are those who are in Christ? How is that defined?**

Notice Paul doesn't say this is for him. He was talking about himself in chapter 7 but lest we think this good news is just for him, he switches to all those who are in Christ. This blessing applies to us.

In the NT the word Christian is used only three times, twice in Acts and once in I Peter. When the NT talks about Christians the most common phrase it uses is the phrase "in Christ," "those who are in Christ." This occurs over 150 times in the NT.

This union with Christ is a huge thing, and a most liberating thing. It means all that is in Christ is in us and all that is in us is in Him. Our sins are no longer just ours, they are Christ's, and all of Christ's righteousness is ours.

Picture a marriage between Christ and a soul. All the spiritual blessings, benefits and riches of Christ become the personal property of the soul. And the possessions of the soul, with all its sin and iniquity become the property of Christ, who in His perfect holiness abolishes our sin and clothes us in the richest of robes, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Our debt is transferred to Him, the demands of the law are met and satisfied. Union is the means by which we receive all our spiritual blessings.

**Ephesians 1:3-4** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us *in Christ* with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Union with Christ means we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, we died with Christ when He died, we rose with Christ when He rose, we ascended with Him to heaven, and are secure with Him who keeps us and intercedes for us who by faith are in Christ.

To be in Christ is to have the position, status, standing of one not condemned, but justified and forgiven.

Some Christians have the mistaken notion that a Christian as a person who, if he confesses his sin and asks for forgiveness, is forgiven. At that moment he is not under condemnation. But then if he should sin again, he is back once more under condemnation. Then he repents and confesses his sin again, and asks for pardon, and he is cleansed once more. So to them the Christian is a man who is constantly moving back and forth; condemned, not condemned.

No, a Christian is a person who can never be condemned; he can never come into a state of condemnation again. "No condemnation!" It means "Never." (D.M. Lloyd-Jones).

If you were on death row and the governor said he had issued a stay of execution for one year, would that be good news or bad news? I suppose you could call it temporary good news, but it just delays the inevitable. The Gospel is much better news than that. The Gospel says your day of execution was yesterday, it is done, and you are now free to go. Now that's good news.

**John 5:24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment (condemnation), but has passed from death to life.

If you are in Christ then Christ's condemnation becomes your condemnation, what happened to Him, happened to you.

For whom is this true? Those who are in Christ, those who walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. Don't say to someone who is living in unrepentant sin, that there is no condemnation. Don't cheapen the Gospel of Jesus by telling people who delight in their sin, who don't grieve over their sin, who have no fear of God or hatred of their sin, that there is no condemnation. That's not true.

If your Gospel has no cross, if Romans 7 means nothing to you, then you don't know your sin and the holiness of God, then you are not in Christ.

When you put your faith in Christ, the Spirit sensitizes you to sin, and the older you get the more you see your sin, and the more you read Scripture and worship God and fear God the more you see there is nothing good in you and the more you agonize over your sin.

**How is this true? Paul explains it in two statements beginning with for, or because.**

8:2-3 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By

sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

Paul says there is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why? Where did our condemnation go? By “sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, [God] condemned sin in the flesh.” Whose flesh? Christ’s. Whose sin? Ours.

God laid on Christ the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6) and Christ became smitten (punished) by God (Isaiah 53:4). Jesus became our substitute by drinking the full cup of God’s wrath. Christ was penalized in our place and bore all our condemnation.

**Galatians 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

*The law of sin and death*, is what the Law of Moses does to the unregenerate sinner (see Romans 7:7-12). The law exposes sin, condemns sin and results in death of the sinner.

The law cannot save. What the law can’t do, God does. He did it by sending His Son who took on all the weakness of our flesh and was tempted as we are and fully identified with us, yet without sin.

*The law of the Spirit of life.*

This law is the Gospel of which the Spirit is the author and source and power. The Spirit of Christ takes the obedience of Christ and imputes the righteousness of Christ to us and writes the demands of the good law on our cleansed, changed hearts.

**The Christian life.**

Do we struggle to lay claim to Paul’s joy and confidence? What assurance can we have of being free from all condemnation when we are still given over to so much sinning, and disobedience, and failing and falling?

The person who is in Christ is not one who is without any sin, rather he is the one is in the battle, who resist and fights and flees, and when he falls, he repents and returns again to Christ.

The Christian life is a mingling of joy and sorrow. As Paul said, we are always “sorrowful, yet rejoicing” (II Corinthians 6:10). And again he says, we “groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Romans 8:23).

Like Paul, the Christian life is a life of groaning on account of your sin, crying out for mercy, being greatly displeased with our sin, having godly sorrow over them, earnestly desiring to be delivered and actively praying for the power of the Holy Spirit.

Joy, when we walk in the Spirit.  
Sorrow, when we walk in the flesh.

Joy, Christ is our substitute.  
Sorrow, I have sinned again and need a substitute.

Joy, for the grace that comes to us through Christ.  
Sorrow (desperation), we feel from our ongoing sinfulness.

This is the path of our sanctification, hating our sin and loving God's grace. We will see this as we work through chapter 8, walking according to the Spirit is a constant labor of subduing and killing our sin out of sincere love for God and desire to please Him.

Yesterday morning I woke up, took a shower, got dressed and came over to church to help restore order after a busy Serve week. In the course of the work I got all hot and sweaty, my clothes were wet. I ended up having to go home and take another shower and change clothes.

This is the Christian life, there are days when we must wash off the old nature and go to Christ for cleansing and a putting on again our new nature. There are days when we will have to do that two, three, four, five times a day.

**Ephesians 4:22-24** Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Chapter 8 is written to give assurance and encouragement to believers who struggle with sin. As believers our failures with sin trouble us. We can't believe the things we do and we can't believe that we keep doing it.

But Paul is saying don't give up the struggle. He points to the cross and He points to the Holy Spirit who is in you and he says therefore there is no condemnation. Keep walking in the Spirit. The goal of chapter 8 is to make our experience of chapter 7 less and less.

Think about how glorious this statement is, how it blesses and encourages you. You love this grace, this kindness, but what about our children or grandchildren? Is this statement as sweet and precious to them? How can it be if they don't see their sin, if they don't see how often they don't do what they want and they do what they don't want.

Pray and work so your children know their sin and hate their sin, so they can rejoice in there being no condemnation.

The wonder is under the law of sin and death we were powerless and hopeless. The law told us to fly, but left us on the ground. Now the law of the Spirit tells us to fly and then the Spirit gives us wings to fly.

The wonder of the glorious statement there is no condemnation is that there once was condemnation and now there isn't any. What amazing grace! Thanks be to God in Christ Jesus.

**John 8:36** If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

**II Corinthians 3:17** The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.