

# No Condemnation

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[0:00] Well, good evening. The Apostle Paul came into Corinth with a specific resolution, a determination. He says, when I came to Corinth, I resolved to know nothing while I was with you, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

This was the main thing to make known, the crucial reality that we must keep coming back to. And Patrick Leahy said, or Frederick Leahy said, It is my conviction, and at times my sad experience, that as the cross goes out of focus in the Christian's life, coldness and backsliding set in. I wonder if you know the reality of that. That it's as the cross goes out of focus in our lives that coldness and backsliding set in. And what's the remedy? To focus again on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's why we've come tonight. The Lord knows our tendency to lose our focus. And so He's given an ordinance by which we can focus on Christ and Him crucified.

We're here to get clearer views of our Savior. And let's pray that God would strengthen our faith to that end and set Christ before us. Let's pray together. Our Father, how good of You to have given Your one and only Son to save us from our sin and that which we deserved.

[1:31] How good of You, Lord Jesus, to have come willingly to lay down Your life for the sheep. And Holy Spirit, how kind of You to have come to our hearts when Christ meant nothing to us.

And to have quickened us to new life and to new interests. Would You come again to our hearts tonight and reestablish our focus upon the Savior.

Would You give us clearer views of Him. That seeing Him, we might know Him better. And knowing Him, we might love Him. And loving Him, we might serve Him. And would You so lift up the Lord Jesus tonight.

That it would be harder for us as we leave to sin against Him. That it would be our great joy to live for Him. That He might be magnified in our lives.

We ask it then in Jesus' name. Amen. The Lord Jesus comes to speak to us in His preached word. Let's hear Him now. You may be seated.

[2:31] Amen. Please turn with me in your Bibles tonight to the book of Romans. Paul's letter to the Romans in chapter 8. Romans chapter 8.

Before we read some verses from this passage, I want you to imagine with me for a moment a courtroom scene. A court where you are the one who is on trial.

And you know that you are guilty. And everyone in the courtroom knows that you are guilty. And by law you are eligible for the death penalty.

And there's no reason that you shouldn't receive it. If the judge is a just judge, he will pass down a verdict of guilty and a sentence of death on you.

And so, that's what you're waiting for. For those words to be proclaimed to the court. This is a court with no jury and just a judge. And where the verdict and the sentence are given all at one hearing.

[3:37] And you're just waiting to hear the words. Guilty. Sentenced to death. But instead of those words, you hear this. No condemnation for you.

The law condemns you. But I, the judge, am going to do what the law cannot do. I'm going to set you free from the penalty of having broken the law.

I'm condemning your sin in my own son. Now don't go from here and live as you once did. But go from here and live as my son did. Because to do otherwise would be to bring shame on the name of the one who is setting you free.

Well, that's us in the courtroom. We're guilty. We're deserving of the sentence of death. Condemnation.

And we're waiting to hear that sentence passed. That we're condemned to hell for eternity. But instead of hearing that we're guilty and doomed to die.

[4:35] We hear Romans 8 verses 1-4. Notice those verses with me. You're there in the courtroom. And you hear this. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do, in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful men, that is, in the likeness of sinful flesh, to be a sin offering.

And so He condemns sin in sinful man. That is, He condemns sin in the flesh. In order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us.

Who do not live according to the sinful nature, the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Well, there are some remarkable words for those of us who are guilty.

And that's all of us. We stand guilty before the law of God. But instead of hearing the words guilty, we hear the words no condemnation. For those who are in Christ Jesus.

[5:44] It's a remarkable, glorious declaration that God makes. And it's possible because of what we've come here tonight to remember. And that is the work of Christ. It's for those who are in Christ.

That there is no condemnation. And so we want to see that it's a glorious declaration that is made. Paul makes that declaration. Or God makes that declaration. No condemnation for you who are in Christ.

And then we want to see how that declaration can be made. First of all, the declaration itself. And then how it can be made. So it's a glorious thing that God tells us.

That there's no condemnation. Why does Paul arrive at this point in Romans chapter 8? Why is he saying this here? Why is he saying this now? Well, he's discussed a lot of things to this point in the book of Romans.

He's discussed the universal problem that man has with God. And that is that our sin separates us from God. We're all in rebellion against God. And that's true for Jews, Paul says.

[6:43] And it's true for Gentiles. And after showing us our problem with sin, he shows us the solution to that problem. And that is justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

And the solution is the same, he says, for Jews and for Gentiles. It's for all who have sinned. The only way you can be right with God is to be justified through the work of Christ.

But sadly, having been justified, it doesn't mean that as long as we're on this earth, that our sin goes away altogether, he says. You're to be living as a new man.

You're to be living as Christ did. Walking in the light. Not walking in the darkness any longer. But that doesn't happen perfectly. And he tells us in Romans 7 that there's an ongoing struggle with sin and the inward man.

That the struggle doesn't go away. And if you've been a Christian for any period of time, you know that the struggle with sin doesn't go away. You know what Paul means when he says, the thing that I want to do, I don't do.

[7:48] And the thing that I hate, I do. Oh, wretched man that I am! Would that I would be delivered from this body of death. And he says then, thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And from chapter 7, he's going to launch in chapter 8 into a discussion of how to live in the Spirit.

About living in the Spirit. Not living according to the flesh. The sinful man. And to bridge that connection between that struggle with sin and the inward man in Romans 7 and living in the Spirit in Romans 8, he gives us these words in verses 1-4.

Now why does he do that? Here you are. You've been justified. And you're assured of that. There's peace for you.

Romans 5 and verse 1. But now you find yourself struggling with sin. You're going, well maybe, maybe I'm not justified because I'm still struggling with my sin.

Because I still do the thing that I hate. And maybe it causes your assurance to wane. And you begin to struggle and to say, am I really a child of God?

[8:57] And Paul says, right on the heels of having talked about that inward struggle with sin. Right on the heels of talking about wretched man that I am. Still sinning.

Though I should be living for Christ. He says, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Even if you're struggling with your sin. No condemnation for you.

It's not a ticket to complacency and to saying, well I'll sin all I want. We'll talk more about that in a moment. And Paul does in the rest of Romans chapter 8. Live by the Spirit. But there is comfort here for the Christian.

Even though you're still struggling, don't despair. There is no condemnation. And that's the glorious declaration. For those who are in Christ, there is no condemnation. Condemnation. He'll say later in Romans chapter 8.

Who will bring any charge against God's elect? Or against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is He that condemns? There is no one that can condemn you if God has justified you.

[9:58] There is no condemnation for you. Because of what Christ has done. Condemnation, you see, is the opposite of justification. If God has declared you righteous because of what Christ has done, then no one can declare you guilty.

No one can condemn you. Because you are right in the sight of God. And so the verdict is not guilty. The deadly wages of sin do not rest upon you.

The law of the Spirit of life through the work of Christ has set you free. It's in verse 2 there. Because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit of life set me free.

Actually, probably better set you free. There's some differences in the manuscript. It could be either one, but it's the same thing. It's true for Paul. It's true for the Romans. It's true for Paul. It's true for us. For any who are in Christ, the law of the Spirit of Christ has set you free from the law of sin and death.

You have been set free. That Spirit of life who is the Holy Spirit has given you a new heart that's no longer enslaved to sin. A heart that's actually able to follow after God by His grace and in His strength.

[11:10] And so you've been set free from that law that brought sin and death. You've been set free of that tendency towards sin. You still struggle with that tendency. You're free in Christ, but you've been set free from that tendency to struggle with sin.

And now your tendency, because of what God has done in you, is to live for Christ. And there is no condemnation for such who are living in this way.

It's a glorious truth. It's a glorious declaration. You understand that the sentence isn't just physical death. It's not just that your life will come to an end. It's eternal death. That's the wages of sin.

Punishment forever. In hell. Where the worm doesn't die and the flame isn't quenched and there's weeping and gnashing of teeth and it's painful and it doesn't stop.

It never stops. I don't think we can, here on this side of eternity, comprehend what eternity is. For the Christian, it's a glorious contemplation. Everything that we know in life.

[12:10] Have you ever stopped and tried to wrap your mind around eternity? and tried to think. Everything you know of comes to an end. This church service will come to an end. It'll last about an hour and will be done.

Your day comes to an end. Your school day comes to an end. Your work day comes to an end. Everything that we know of has limits on it and eternity doesn't have any. And that's a glorious thought for the Christian.

That after a year, it's not over. It doesn't stop then. And then after a hundred years, it's still not over. And a million years, and we've been there less time than we will be for the rest.

I can't, my mind starts to short circuit when I try to think that far out. Because we're finite creatures. But for all of eternity, there is a glory to be had for those who are in Christ.

And the glorious thing is that you're delivered from that long, that eternity, as glorious as a thought is for a Christian, it ought to be equally terrifying for those who are not in Christ.

[13:13] Because it never ends. The torment of hell never, ever, ever, ever ends. And that's why Paul's words, God's words, there is now no condemnation are such a sweet thing for the Christian.

Because we've been delivered from the sentence of death. Eternal death that never ends. And so it is a glorious declaration. And that does several things for us.

It ought to be one profoundly comforting for us. Instead of fearing the pronouncement of and the carrying out of that judgment, we can live in confidence. It's the gift of assurance for God's children that there's no condemnation.

It comforts us. It encourages us. When we slip and fall, as we read in Romans 7, we go back to our God to seek, and we always find forgiveness, no condemnation.

Because you are in Christ. But it does something else for us. It comforts us. It assures us. But it motivates us to holiness. Now some people might say, the thought of no condemnation, well, great. [14:20] I'm going to go and sin all I want. And there's no condemnation. There's no judgment. I can sin without any fear of the consequences. And so I'm going to go and sin. And I'm going to sin as much as I can.

And live for myself. But Paul says that's the opposite. This thought of no condemnation is actually a motivation to holiness.

The other thing that it's a license to sin is a lie from the devil. Those who have been set free and declared righteous because of Christ will seek to live a life of righteousness.

They will want to bring honor to the name of the One who set them free. And so the fact that there is no condemnation for us motivates us to greater holiness. It motivates us to live for our Savior.

Striving to become righteous even as we have already been proclaimed in Christ. The Spirit who sets us free enables us to live with our minds set on what the Spirit desires.

[15:17] Paul says a few verses later here in Romans chapter 8. That is what we are to be doing. Living with our minds set on what the Spirit desires. And so our justification, the declaration that God has declared us righteous in His sight, must never be confused with our sanctification, our living in holiness, God working that righteousness in us, but it can't ever be separated from it either.

Because if we confuse the two, we start to bring our sanctification back into our justification. We say, look at these good works I've done, and we try to earn our standing with God.

And so we must never confuse the two. But we must never separate them either. Because always, the person who has been justified, the person whom God has declared righteous, will seek to live a life of righteousness.

So never confuse them, but never separate them. It's important that we understand these glorious truths. We're declared righteous because of what Christ has done, and then we're called to live a life of righteousness in His strength, with His help, by His grace.

And so it is those who have been declared righteous who must and will go on to live a life of actual righteousness, walking in the Spirit. You see what Paul says in verse 4. In order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us who do not live according to the Spirit, but according, or who do not live according to the sinful nature, the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

[16:52] The result of this declaration based on the work of Christ is for those who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. It's for Christians. It's for those who are now living a life of righteousness.

These are the ones who have been proclaimed right. Not because of their righteousness. Their righteousness follows that declaration. Christ met the fulfillment of the law.

He met the requirements of the law. He fulfilled it for us. And now we are to walk in it. Well, how can this be? How can Paul make such a declaration? No guilt.

No condemnation for those who are in Christ. How can God do such a thing? How can a holy, sin-hating, sin-punishing God look at me, a wretched sinner, and say, no condemnation for you? How can God do it? Well, there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Look at verse 3. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.

[18:05] And so He condemns sin in sinful man or He condemns sin in the flesh. It's not by the law that there's no condemnation for us.

I don't misunderstand. The law is good, Paul says. God says. It shows us our sin, but it can't take that sin away. The law is holy, righteous, and good, Paul says, back in Romans chapter 7.

And it shows us how to live, but it produces death. And so it can't save us. It condemns us because when we stand next to the standard of God's holy law, it becomes obvious how far short we fall.

And so we deserve condemnation. And if you're not in Christ, that's where you stand. If you're not trusting in Christ tonight, here is the law of God. And it must be kept perfectly.

And here is you. And you haven't met up to the standard. And that means there is condemnation for you. You are guilty. There is judgment coming for you who are not in Christ.

[19:10] The problem isn't with the law. The law is good. The problem is with our sinful flesh that's unable to keep that law. The problem is with weak men who fail to obey God's Word.

The law is weak because of us who have broken it. So the law can't save you. But what the law couldn't do, the law can only condemn you.

It only shows you how far short you fall. But what the law couldn't do, God did. And how did God do it? He did it by sending His own Son.

The promise of no condemnation are for those who are in that Son. And what Jesus did is what we remember here at the Lord's table tonight. God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.

That's caused commentators all sorts of problems. I think it simply means that Jesus came as a man. Everything in this earth has been subject to the fall and to sin since the fall.

[20 : 11] And Jesus came and took on a body like ours yet without sin. He never sinned. Don't misunderstand. It's the likeness of sinful flesh. His body was, He was a real man just like us and yet was without sin.

But His body had, He got tired. His body was subject to the same effects of the fall. Although He was without sin. He came and took on sinful flesh.

And concerning sin, well, God condemned sin, but He did it in the flesh. He didn't condemn us. You notice the word in verse 3 is the same as the one in verse 1.

And so He condemns sin in sinful man. He condemns sin in the flesh so that there is no condemnation for us. The condemnation that we deserve fell on Christ in His flesh.

He had no sin of His own, but if sin was to be condemned in the body, in the flesh, it had to be in Christ's body. In Christ's flesh. And so Jesus took our sin on Himself since He was without sin.

[21 : 19] He took our bodies. He took a body like ours. And then He took our sin on Himself. And God condemned sin in His Son. 2 Corinthians 5.21 God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

God punished His Son. He condemned His own Son so that we don't have to face that condemnation. The sentence was passed on Jesus, guilty.

And the sentence was executed at the bloody cross where Jesus was punished in our place. Jesus didn't just face the angry torture and abuse of Roman soldiers carrying out the wishes of angry Jews.

He faced the punishment of His Father there. The punishment that all of our sins deserved. The deepest stroke that pierced Him was the stroke that justice gave.

A holy God acquitting us and punishing His own Son. There on the cross He endured His Father's wrath.

[22 : 27] The wrath that we deserve. There on the cross He endured being forsaken by His Father so that we don't have to be forsaken by God for all of eternity.

He took our place. God condemned sin in the flesh of Christ so that we don't have to be condemned. Well, what do we say to that?

What a remarkable thing. We deserve. If there's anyone here tonight that thinks you don't deserve judgment, you do. Read the Scriptures.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death. You deserve judgment. I deserve judgment. And yet, we aren't going to face condemnation because of what Christ did, because of what we remember here tonight.

And so what do we do? You guilt-free Christian tonight, you forgiven saint, never forget the price of your freedom. Never forget the cost of your innocent standing before God.

[23 : 37] It's the blood of Jesus that purchased this for you. There's no condemnation for you because Jesus was condemned in your place. And so we gather tonight to make sure we don't forget.

Do this in remembrance of me. Don't forget what Jesus has done. What a blessing that God has given us a picture of what Jesus has done. We don't need stained glass windows and drawings of it and pictures of it.

God's given us the only picture we need in the Lord's Supper. And so we thank Him for it. We remember. We draw near tonight to feed upon our Savior, to draw near to Him, to have our hearts warm to thanks and praise.

And then we go from here, not emboldened to sin, saying, well, there's no condemnation for me. We go from here saying, look at what Christ has done for me. How then could I sin against Him? How then could I bring dishonor to this One who has done so much for me? We go from here emboldened to live by the Spirit, seeing what a great price was paid for our sin.

[24 : 42] So God, help us to worship Him, to thank Him, to obey Him. You understand your life of obedience is an expression of your gratitude to God for what He has done for you in Christ. And so,



It is finished. Saints from this your comfort draw. Saints from this your comfort draw.  
To your hearts of beauty, serous. Joy to sing the glorious name.  
All in earth and all in heaven. Joy to praise in heaven's name. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.  
[ 34 : 06 ] Glory to the bleeding man. Glory to the bleeding man.