

No Condemnation

Romans 8:1-4

We come today to one of the greatest chapters in the whole Bible. Commentators describe this chapter as the “mountain peak” of Scripture and as a triumphant “hymn of hope.” Douglas Moo refers to it as “The inner sanctuary within the cathedral of Christian faith.”

Personally, I have come to Romans 8 again and again when I’ve been discouraged in my Christian life. Think of all the wonderfully comforting verses we depend on from Romans 8:

- 1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,**
- 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,**
- 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**
- 26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.**
- 28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**
- 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?**
- 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?**
- 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.**

And every other verse in the chapter is just as good and just as meaningful and helpful to us as believers. I am so excited about what awaits us in Romans chapter 8.

Today I want to concentrate on the great truth of Romans 8:1. As we study it today I want you to think about four simple questions that we will seek to answer from this verse: Why, when, what, and who. Keep that in mind as we read the first four verses of Romans chapter 8. This is God’s holy, inspired, inerrant word. May His Spirit write its eternal truth upon our hearts today.

- 1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**
- 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.**
- 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,**
- 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**

Did you hear verse 1? **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”**

This verse is so full of precious and practical truth that I think it would be helpful for us to take it one phrase at a time as we consider the why, when, what and who of no condemnation.

I. Why – “There is therefore”

Romans 8:1 is the great conclusion drawn from the previous 7 chapters. The word “**therefore**” serves to tie the proceeding seven chapters with chapter 8. It links this truth in verse 1 with everything that Paul has already established so far in Romans.

Paul has already shown in Romans 1-3 that all men fall under the condemnation of God, for all have some revelation which they have rejected. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. In chapters 3-5 Paul has proved that although man is totally incapable of earning acceptance with God, God has provided righteousness in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, Who died in the sinner’s place. God justifies the ungodly sinner by faith in Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:18 says, “**Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.**” We were condemned in Adam.

Chapter 6 shows how our union with Christ makes holiness, our sanctification both necessary and how it makes it possible through the grace of God. In Chapter 7 Paul explained how the law cannot make us holy and how believers still struggle with indwelling sin. Chapter 7 ends with a very desperate cry for deliverance and a brief summary of the nature of that deliverance: “**O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.**” (Romans 7:24-25).

Paul will explain in Romans 8 the nature of God’s provision for our deliverance. Those who can identify with the agony of Paul in Romans 7 will rejoice with him in the ecstasy of Romans 8.

II. When – “Now”

Believers live in the “now” of verse 1. There was a time when we were condemned, when we deserved the wrath of God, when we were sentenced to die for our sins, when we had the terrible dread of the judgment of a holy God. But not now!

What has changed? God sent His Son into the world to save us.

For the born-again believer there is assurance that there will be no judgment to come in the future but I want you to notice that we can and should experience this assurance right now in the present. Therefore there is today no condemnation. If you are redeemed then right now, at this very moment you are secure. One pastor put it this way: “No condemnation means there is neither judgment from God on me, nor annoyance with God with respect to me—neither on the last day nor today!”

III. What – “No Condemnation”

One of the most important words in this sentence is the word “no.” In fact, in the original Greek, the first word of the sentence is not “therefore” but rather the word “**no.**” We say that it is in the emphatic position. Paul is emphasizing it. In addition, Paul chose a strong negative to make the point that there is absolutely nothing by way of condemnation for the Christian. We could say it like this: “*Not even one will now or*

ever be condemned who is in Christ Jesus.” God doesn’t condemn the Christian – not even one, not even one bit.

The word **“condemn”** comes from two Greek words; one which means “down” and the other which means “to judge.” Literally it means to “judge down” and was used of the Roman emperor as he sat on a throne when prisoners were brought before him. As he heard their cases he would either “judge down” or “judge up.” Friend, if you have put your faith and trust in Jesus as your sacrificial substitute, the Almighty Judge gives you a “thumbs up.”

God won’t “judge down” because He sent Christ to “come down.” The judgment we deserved settled on the Savior and now God’s blessings “rain down” on us. God has a gavel of grace for the believer as He pronounces this verdict: *“No condemnation – you are now a saint, not a sinner; you are not unrighteous because I have declared you righteous.”*

Jesus said it this way in John 5:24: **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”**

God’s judgment will not come down for the believer not now nor forever.

Why? Because of what Christ Jesus has done for us. Look at verse 3, **“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.”**

God sent His Son for sin. Those in Christ will not be condemned because Jesus was condemned in their stead; there is no punishment because Christ bore the punishment.

When God says “no condemnation” it’s not based upon our performance but on our position. God declares it to be so because of the finished work of Christ on our behalf. He doesn’t revoke it when we rebel or suddenly seethe with anger towards us when we sin. We have peace with God and we are not condemned.

Having said that, let’s think about what this *doesn’t mean*. Paul is not saying that there’s no cause for our condemnation. There are plenty of reasons for us to be condemned. If you’re not convinced, just reread the first seven chapters of Romans. Or just look at the sins you committed this week alone and you know that God has cause to condemn you. He’s also not saying that there’s no *failure* for the follower of Christ because we all fail. He’s also not saying that saints don’t *struggle* or *stumble*, because as we saw in chapter 7, we do.

Ray Pritchard offers this perspective: *“When Jesus saved you, he didn’t say he would take away all your problems. No, but he did say this. In your problems, there is no condemnation. In your struggles there is no condemnation. In your going astray there is no condemnation.”*

One of my favorite hymns is *“And Can it be that I Should Gain?”* by Charles Wesley. The last verse could have come right from Romans 8...

*No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach th’eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.*

IV. Who – “to those who are in Christ Jesus”

This promise of no condemnation is available for all but applied only to those who are in Christ Jesus.

It's not automatic just because you go to church or just because you've given some money or done good things. It's only for those who are **“in Christ Jesus.”** This is one of Paul's favorite phrases, using **“in Christ”** 164 different times. To be a Christian is to be in Christ.

The Bible is very clear. You are either “in Adam” and doomed to condemnation or you are “in Christ” and destined for commendation. You are in the light or in the darkness. You are a child of God or a child of the devil. And if you're in Christ, when God looks at you, He sees Jesus Christ and credits you with all that is said about His Son and you will never be condemned. If you are in Christ, then what happened to Him happened to you.

Because we are “in Christ,” His righteousness is credited to us. Because Jesus is free from condemnation, so are we because we are in Him. It doesn't matter how mature or immature you are in the faith. You are either in Christ or you are not.

And if you are in Christ Jesus, you are not condemned. Not now, not ever. Listen to what Paul writes later in this chapter, Romans 8:31ff

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

God is for us, not against us. Christ is for us. He died for us. He intercedes for us. If God will not bring a charge against us, who else could? And even if they did, it wouldn't matter. God is for us.

I like what John Piper had to say about this:

It is not as though some days He is against you with wrath – and those days are bad days – while other days He is for you with love – and those days are good days. That is emphatically not the case and not the way to think about it. It may seem that way. But that is precisely why we need the truth of God's revelation in His word. Most of the time in this world of pleasure and pain things are not what they seem. To understand what things are really like and what is really happening we need to put on the lens of God's Word...in Christ Jesus God is always for you. Always!

Let's face it. Some of us think this is too good to be true. In a sin-soaked world filled with sickness and disappointment and pain and agony, how can this be possible?

It's in verse 3 again, did you see it there? **“God did by sending His own Son.”** God did it. Your acceptance by God is not dependent on who you are or what you do. It is only because of who Christ Jesus is and what He has done.

If you have accepted Christ God is not angry with you, regardless of what you have done. He loves you and cherishes you. He's giving you a thumbs-up because you matter to Him.

Let's say it together, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”**

If you are struggling with sin and your failures cause you to fall short, God says to you,

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

If your memories of what you did in the past are paralyzing you, remember:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

If life has gotten tough and you have begun to think that God is somehow paying you back for your sins, say it with me:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

If you find yourself thinking that God is angry with you and out to get you, believe God says to you:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

If someone around you is condemning you and putting you down and you think you are worthless, hold on to the truth:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

If your children are breaking your heart and you feel like it's all your fault, cling to the promise:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

If you find yourself falling continuously short when you compare yourself with other Christians, we say to you:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

If Satan is accusing and condemning you as he will because he is the accuser, tell him that he has nothing on you:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

What if we believed it? What if we lived our lives on the basis that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus? We'd be free, or at least a lot freer than we are. Without the voice of condemnation ringing in our ears, we'd be more sensitive to the voice of God. We'd be more deeply connected to His Spirit, His love, His power and His leading.

If you are in Christ revel in the fact that God is crazy about you. If you are outside of Christ you are condemned already and judgment is still in front of you. Come to Him now. Run to Him for safety.