

Why there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus

January 17, 2010

Romans 8:1-11 - NIV

¹Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ²because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. ³For 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. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

⁵Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

¹²Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,

Imagine with me today that you have a very wealthy grandfather. In fact, he's worth 50 million dollars. He tells you that he wants you to have it all; on two conditions. Condition one: He moves in with you to live until he dies. Condition two: You need to treat him well. His final decision on whether you get the 50 million will remain sealed in his will until 7 days after his death.

So you make arrangements for him to move into your place. For the first while things go well. But there are times when you're tired. And you wish that you had a little more space to blow off steam. One time grandpa is watching a TV show when you really want to watch a movie. You don't have any patience left. So you let him have it – "listen old man; you're a guest in my house and if I want the remote control, you're going to give it to me." But then you remember your promise to treat him well. "Oh, sorry Grandpa."

Things go on like this for awhile. Most of the time, things are good. But there is the occasional time you're frustrated with Grandpa. You give him the silent treatment or maybe ignore him. You don't want to treat him like that but you couldn't help it. Then you come back and say "I'm sorry." He forgives. But you wonder what

he really thinks. Finally, after four years his health begins to decline rapidly. In two months, he's gone. You make the arrangements and host the funeral. It's a wonderful memorial time.

Seven days after his death, it's time to meet at his lawyer's office. You're there along with other grandkids who hope they get a piece of the pie. You think back to the many times you snapped at Grandpa. Did you lose it once too often? Did that time you ignored him finally push him to remove your name? You will not know until the lawyer opens the will and begins reading.

Well, I'm not sure many of us have grandparents with a 50 million dollar inheritance looking for distribution. But Christians here all have God Almighty who holds an eternal priceless inheritance for His children. Yet there are times we wander away from God. Sometimes we're tickled with God and other times ticked. We find ourselves wanting to honor God in our minds, but sometimes in our actions we dishonor Him.

Does this mean our inheritance is in doubt? Do we have to wait until the Last Day to find out if we made it? Well friends, our text today brings some very remarkable news. It reveals that our God is unlike Grandpa or anyone of us when it comes to news about our inheritance.

Last week our study brought us to the end of Romans 7 where Paul cries out "wretched man that I am, who will rescue me from this body of death?" Then Paul says "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! Now Paul puts on display how God has rescued believers in Christ Jesus. I want you to see what God declares about your inheritance if you're a Christian. Then we'll see what evidence backs up this claim. Finally, we'll see how we're called to respond to what God has done. My hope is that you'll leave here with any picture of God as a watchful Grandpa with 50 million erased. Instead, you'll see God for who He really is.

What does God declare about our inheritance?

Romans 8:1 – Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." *You're inheritance is completely secure.* The verdict that will be pronounced on Judgment Day about you is "not guilty."

Condemnation is the sentence of God's judgment and punishment hanging over a person because of their sin. Condemnation means a person has violated God's holy law and will receive a guilty verdict on

Judgment Day. Commentator Doug Moo writes “It is lostness and the estrangement from God that every person apart from Christ will experience for eternity.”

But here in verse 1, God declares that there is therefore, now, no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. No more will condemnation of any kind be a threat. Those who receive no condemnation are no longer on bad terms with God.

Who does this apply to? Those “in Christ Jesus.” People who have taken refuge in Christ Jesus crucified in their place are no longer under condemnation.

How can Paul declare this? Well he says “There is *therefore* no condemnation. Therefore looks back. It’s a summary statement of what’s come before. So it likely looks back to the rescue God provided through Jesus Christ our Lord. That rescue occurred on the cross through Christ’s blood. There, the penalty for our sin was paid by Christ. Therefore, there will be no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus on Judgment Day.

But the word “now” in Romans 8:1 announces the future verdict today.

So this verse brings the past and the future together into a present result. Our future rescue depends on God’s saving act in the past resulting in the declaration; Therefore, there is NOW, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Do you hear that Christian? Do you receive it? Will you use Romans 8:1 to fight off the enemy’s attacks when he whispers in your mind that God has rejected you for good?

But why would God tell us now what the verdict would be then? Is He crazy? He’s just given up all His leverage over us in a sense. If I was God and held power over people’s inheritance, I would not let them know they’re guaranteed to get in. I’d keep them guessing so I could constantly threaten them with the potential loss of inheritance. Then I could ensure good behavior. It’s kind of the like the sway or leverage we may apply to children or people who work for us. We hold out the promise of some reward. But it’s conditional and there’s always the possibility of losing it.

Why might God do it this way? One reason might be to prevent us from keeping our distance from Him. He doesn’t want us to think of Him as an angry Grandpa looking for any reason to cut off our inheritance. Certainly there will always be an immense difference between Almighty God and us frail humans. But Scripture does not reveal a God who desires a distant relationship with His children. I see a heavenly father

who wants deep and intimate fellowship with us. Perhaps He gives us this reassurance to encourage us that it's okay to get close to Him, even though we'll blow it. He can bear that.

But perhaps much more important is this reason: The Gospel is ultimately about God and not about us. By announcing the verdict now, the glories of His grace are already on display. We cannot help but notice how unlike this is to us. This is a non-human strategy. This is grace like we wouldn't even touch in our wildest imagination of kindness. By revealing this, He gives another opportunity to enjoy Him and glorify Him forever.

This is our God who brings the future verdict back to our present for our assurance, comfort and hope. But how could God declare this? Did He cut corners so we could get a break?

Why is there now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus?

Reason #1 - One law displaced another law. A law of life set us free from the law of death. Verse 2 – “Because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit of life, set me free from the law of sin and death.” What might that mean? Well remember last week back in Romans 7:22-23 we read, “For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.” He seems to be using law to describe not a written law but a reality in his life. This reality or law is that indwelling sin is powerful. So he desires to do good and honor God's law. Instead he found this law, this reality of sin's power rising up.

But now there is the law or power of the Holy Spirit that sets us free from that law or power of ruling sin. This sets up the rest of chapter 8 with all its talk about the Spirit. But he uses the image of one law setting free from another law to draw this picture.

It's kind of like the emancipation proclamation under President Lincoln in the 1862 and 1863. That law, giving freedom to slaves, overruled the laws that legalized slavery at that time. When Lincoln proclaimed that law, it released slaves from the other law.

We are no longer under condemnation because through Christ's death the power of the Spirit overwhelms the rule of sin in our lives. The law or reality of the Spirit displaces the law of sin and death in our lives.

When you get onto a plane, the law of gravity keeps that plane on the ground. But then the engine starts and the plane reaches a certain speed the law of aerodynamics takes over and frees the plane from the effects of gravity. When we receive Christ into our lives, the law of the Spirit and life gives us those wings to take off and gain freedom from the law of sin and death. We no longer live under the law as a solely condemning agent. By His Spirit, we are empowered to obey God's law more and more.

Why is there now no condemnation now for those in Christ Jesus? **Reason #2 God fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law in Christ Jesus and applied it to us. (8:3-4)** God provided the only person in the universe who could actually live out a perfect life according to His holy law. Then God applied His life to our life. Verses 3 and 4.

³For 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. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

God's law requires holiness. But it was unable to produce holiness in us not because it was flawed but we were flawed. "The law, weakened by the flesh could not do it." So God provided the only human who could do it. God sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh. Jesus lived as a real human. But his flesh was not sinful.

He lived that perfect life. He fulfilled the law perfectly. Then God takes the right life of Jesus and applies it to us. It's like He took our filthy clothes of sin and put them on Jesus on the cross. Then when we trust Christ, God clothes us with Jesus' royal robe of right living.

Notice who shows up in these verses. God the Father sent His Son in order that we might walk by the Spirit. The Triune God works together in each of His persons so that there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. I know this is deep stuff. But please spend some time in this glorious mine. It's like the gold is so thick here you can just scrape it off the walls. Each person of the Trinity worked together so that you and I could enjoy the declaration about us – there is therefore now no condemnation for you in Christ Jesus.

Why is there now no condemnation for you in Christ Jesus?

Reason #3 - God gave us the Holy Spirit proving we are in Christ (thereby confirming we are not under condemnation). (8:9-11) God provided the Holy Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance. God's Spirit in our lives serves as proof that He will see us through Judgment Day and the verdict will be not guilty. Verses 9-11 –

⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

So you can't be a Christian and not have the Holy Spirit. All true Christians have the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Though we still live in the body of death that struggles with sin, we also have the Spirit of life in us; the Holy Spirit.

¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

This Spirit will not only give life in our spirits today. He will give new life to our bodies of death tomorrow.

Christian, the Holy Spirit will bring your body back to life after you die and give you your resurrection body.

He will bring the mortal bodies of your loved ones who have died in Christ back to life and will give them their resurrection bodies. So we will all come safely through the Last Day with our resurrection bodies hearing the verdict not guilty and enter glorification, freed from the presence of sin. That will be beyond imagination and wonder then.

But what about today? How now shall we live? .

How do we respond to the gift of no condemnation:

Live by the Spirit.

Chapter 8 contains a lot of information about that. Today, we're going to look at just one way we live by the Spirit. Verse 12 and 13. Specifically put to death the misdeeds of the Body by the spirit. At the same time we are "in the flesh" and "in the Spirit."

¹²Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,

So we are called upon to actively put to death the misdeeds of the body. Check out Galatians 5:19-21 or Colossians 3:5-8 for a list of the misdeeds of the body. We are not to struggle alone. We put these things to death *by the Spirit*. God himself comes to our aid. We enlist the help of God's strong Spirit to fight against and to defeat our sinful nature.

How does this "work?" Well we need to be defensive and offensive. We need to enlist the Holy Spirit's aid when temptation comes with an invitation to engage in an act of the sinful nature. We pray and ask for the Holy Spirit's help to say no. We ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom to stay away from temptation. Ask Holy Spirit to remind us when we're moving towards temptation. That's the defensive response.

Then we go on the offensive. If you know anything about the armor of God in Ephesians 6, you know there's only one offensive weapon; the sword of the Spirit – God's Word. We learn and use God's Word to cut through the fog of Satan's lies. So when anxiety about the future tempts us to doubt God, we go to Matthew 6:31-32; "Do not be anxious about food or clothes. The Gentiles eagerly seek them but your heavenly Father knows you need them. When our impatience provides opportunity for the devil to tempt us with plowing ahead regardless of who we hurt, we speak Psalm 27:14 – "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." When a situation arises where Satan tempts us to nurture bitterness we fight back with Ephesians 4:30-31 – And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." When we're tempted to be proud and arrogant because of our knowledge, or accomplishments or success; when we're tempted to comfortably settle in as a church and not engage the reality of the world around us we fight that sin by the Spirit using His Sword in James 4:6 – God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. When lust seems inviting we fight back with 1 Peter 2:1 – "Lust wages war against our souls." Instead we fill our minds with Philippians 4:8 things. Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if there is anything excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. We ask the Holy Spirit to grow His fruit in our lives.

Then we empowered by Him in the way He wants us to live. So more and more we leave behind that sin. More and more we move towards holiness by the power of the Spirit.

If you're not a Christian, Romans 8 does not describe you. There is God's just condemnation hanging over your head. But it doesn't have to stay that way. God calls you to embrace His rescue. Will you turn away from sin and turn to Christ? Then the Gospel will come into your life and Romans 8 will suddenly be true of you.

Christians will we today glorify God for His immeasurable gift of no condemnation? Then with the Holy Spirit's power, put to death the deeds of the sinful nature and continue to pursue holiness. God is not like a cranky Grandpa holding our inheritance over us and threatening to disown us. He calls to us and through the Holy Spirit empowers us to grow in holiness.

Questions/For further study

- What does it tell you about God that He reveals to us now that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus?
- What's our mind set on – the things of the sinful nature or the things of the Spirit? Romans 8:5-8. (Check out Philippians 4:8).
- Read Galatians 5:19-26
 - What acts of the sinful nature does the Spirit point out are part of your life?
 - What act of the sinful nature might be blinding you from those needing mercy on the Jericho Road?
 - What actions do I need to take in order to put to death the deeds of the flesh?
 - What fruits of the Spirit do you see growing in your life?
 - What fruits of the Spirit do you see absent?
 - (Ask someone who knows you well for they're perspective on this).
- How are you to rely on the Holy Spirit's help for victory?
- What difference might it make today in your life that there is no condemnation now for those in Christ Jesus?