

No Condemnation

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[0 : 00] We are going to begin our service and we're going to read from Psalm 86. Psalm 86 and we're going to read from verse 10. Because the word exceeding great and works by thee are done which are to be admired and thou art God thyself alone. Teach me thy way and in thy truth O Lord then walk will I.

Unite my heart that I thy name may fear continually. O Lord my God with all my heart to thee I will give praise and I the glory will ascribe unto thy name always. Because thy mercy toward me in greatness doth excel and thou delivered hast my soul out from the lowest hell. O God the proud against me rise and violent men have met that for my soul have thought and thee before them have not set.

But thou art full of pity Lord a God most gracious long suffering and in thy truth and mercy plenteous. These verses.

Because thou art exceeding great and works by thee are done which are to be admired and thou art called thyself alone. Teach me.

thy way and live thy truth O Lord then walk will I. Unite my heart that I thy name may fear God may fear God did. Lord and live thy truth O Lord then walk will I. Unite my heart that I thy name may fear God Almighty.

[2 : 18] Oh, when I unite my heart, that I thy name may fear continually.

O Lord my God, with all my heart, to thee I will give praise.

And I the glory will not shine, but to thy name always.

Because thy mercy covered me, in greatness doth excel.

And thou deliver us my soul, out from the lowest hell.

[3 : 49] O God, the proud against me rise.

A violent man have met, that for my soul have sought and thee.

Before them hath not said. But thou art born of pity, Lord.

A God most gracious, long-suffering.

And in thy truth, a mercy plenteous.

[4 : 59] Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. O Lord our God, we give thanks for the opportunity to meet around your world.

And for the opportunity to reflect for our time upon the God who is before us. May we be led by your spirit to contemplate your glory.

May we find our mind, our thoughts gravitating towards your word. And that your word will speak to us of the greater glory of the God who is most high.

The God who inhabits eternity. For whom this world is no bigger than a speck of dust.

For you created this world. And you created it out of nothing. By the word of your power. In the space of six days. In the space of six days, we are told, and all very good.

- [6 : 15] We give thanks that you are a God who is eternal. That you are the Ancient of Days. That you are the one who inhabits eternity. And you cannot be measured as to your greatness. You cannot be bound by anything that is given to us. So as to measure the span of time or the expanse of the universe.
- Because you fill all things. We bless you and thank you that your word describes to us a God who is omnipresent.
- A God who is omnipotent. That your power is without equal. That it is inexhaustible. That you are a God who is the sustainer of this world.
- The universe in which we live depends upon its very existence. We are led by the sciences to reflect upon the very nature of this world in which we live.
- [7 : 31] The distance that exists between ourselves and the sun. That ensures life is continuous. If it were any greater or any less, then it would mean destruction.
- But you have appointed all things. Not only the beginning, but the end of all things. But it will not happen by reason of accident.
- But according to your appointment. And no one yet knows the day or the hour when you have decreed when this world will have run its course.
- But you have said to us explicitly that there is a day coming when this world of ours will melt with a fervent heat. It will be dissolved.
- It will be reconstituted. Because there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Wherein dwelleth righteousness. We often reflect on these words and marvel at their meaning.
- [8 : 42] But they are your words and we give thanks that they give us hope. Even the hope that the gospel has introduced to us. In and through the passion of your son Jesus Christ.
- In whose name we come. And upon whose message we rest. So hear us today as we call upon you. And ask your blessing to be upon your word as it is preached and proclaimed by whosoever you have ordained by which that may take place.
- Wherever your word is heard. Wherever your word is heard. Wherever your word is heard. We give thanks for the agencies that you have appointed. By which this word is disseminated to the four corners of the earth.
- Even these words that are uttered in this place. Who knows who will hear them. Or when they will be heard. We know that by reason of the advances made.
- That there are many who have preached the word in a past generation. Who are now in eternity. And yet although they are dead.
- [9 : 52] They are still being heard. And it is true of all. That by their fruits they shall be known. We give thanks for the way that you have ordained life.
- Through the preaching of the word. And that those that you have chosen to come to yourself. And acknowledge their need of you. Will come in their time appointed.
- So enable us to trust in the provision that you have made. And the word that you have given. That we may proclaim it fearlessly. Without any sense of embarrassment.
- We pray that you would remember. Our nation at this time. A nation that is wayward. A nation that is godless. A nation that is full of self.
- And yet so devoid of the true sense of what self is. We pray Lord that you would mercifully undertake for us.
- [10 : 58] Emptying every vessel that is full. And ensuring that that sense of emptiness. Would make them.
- Enable them to cry out. To the fullness that is in God. We pray for our parliaments. For those who govern us. We pray for the loyal family.

We pray for those who are in positions of power. We pray Lord that you would remember those who. Are involved in keeping us safe.

The armed forces. The police service. The fire service. The ambulance service. Nurses and doctors. In this time of pandemic. Men and women upon. Who much depends.

We give thanks for the sciences. And the use. That is made of them. We pray that you would bless. The machinations of men to the glory of your name.

[11 : 55] That you would. Take away from. Any. That would. Wish evil upon. Others. The ability to do that.

Remember the grieving. The sorrowful. The broken hearted. Remember those who are. Engaging with illness of every foreign. We pray that you would keep them.

And that they would be. Resting. In the arms of the Christ. Who is the savior of. Loved ones. We give thanks that underneath. Are the everlasting arms of. Of God.

Are all who are his. He gently. He gently. Leads those who are. Heavy with. With their young. He will carry the lambs.

In his bosom. We give thanks that your word speaks to us of the tenderness. The compassion. The loving kindness. Of a God who is. Who is a God of grace.

[12 : 53] And at the same time. The God who is a God of wrath. The God of wrath. Upon whom. This world. Will. This world will know.

That wrath upon. The world from. Your mouth. As you pour out upon us. That which we deserve as fallen creatures. Grant mercy to us.

We pray. Continue with us. Watching over us. Cleansing from sin. And doing all. That is to your glory. Through us. And by us. For giving sin in him.

Amen. We're going to read from the scriptures of the New Testament. From Paul's epistle to the Romans. And chapter 8. Reading at the beginning of the chapter.

There is therefore now. No condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Who walk not after the flesh. But after the spirit.

[13 : 50] For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do.

In that it was weak through the flesh. God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh. And for sin condemned sin in the flesh.

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. Who walk not after the flesh. But after the spirit. For they that are after the flesh. Do mind the things of the flesh.

But they that are after the spirit. Do things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded. Is death. But to be spiritually minded.

Is life and peace. Because the current mind. Is enmity against God. For it is not subject. To the law of God. Neither indeed can be.

[14 : 47] So then they that are in the flesh. Cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh. But in the spirit. If so be that the spirit of God.

Dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ. He is none of his. And if Christ be in you. The body is dead because of sin.

But the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the spirit of him. That raised up Jesus from the dead. Dwell in you. He that raised up Christ from the dead.

Shall also quicken your mortal bodies. By his spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore brethren. We are debtors not to the flesh. To live after the flesh.

After the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh. Ye shall die. But if ye through the spirit. Do mortify the deeds of the body. Ye shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God.

[15 : 48] They are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage. Again to fear. But you have received the spirit of adoption. Whereby we cry.

Abba Father. The spirit itself. Beareth witness with our spirit. That we are the children of God. And if children then heirs.

Heirs of God. And joined heirs with Christ. If so be that we suffer with him. That we may be also glorified together.

And so on. May the Lord add his blessing. To this reading of his word. And to his name. Be the praise. I would like us to turn for a short while.

To the beginning of this chapter. That we read. Romans chapter 8. You can read again. At the beginning of the chapter. There is therefore. Now no condemnation to them.

[16 : 49] Which are in Christ Jesus. Who walk not after the flesh. But after the spirit. But after the spirit. And so on.

It may be that many. If not all. Are familiar with these words. Of the apostle Paul. Indeed the epistle to the Romans.

Is considered to be. The crown jewels. Of the New Testament. The more. You read the words. Of this chapter. The more.

You become aware. Of the work. Of the Holy Spirit. In the life. Of the Christian. Not only. Do you become aware of it. But.

You are reminded. And instructed. As to. The necessity. Of it. The fact. That Paul. Uses the word. Therefore. Seems to.

[17 : 49] Connect us. With. What he has already. Been saying. Prior to this. And. We can only. Concur. With that opinion. Where it's clear.

From the various. Opinions. That are expressed. That there is debate. Amongst. Many theologians. As to. What. What. Exactly. The therefore.

Is connecting. With. It seems. However. That because. Paul. Has argued. Prior to this. That those. Who are under the law. Were.

In the flesh. And. Those who are in the flesh. And. Those who are in the flesh. Were. Under. The dominion. Of sin. And.

Those who are in the flesh. Were. Under. The dominion. Of sin. They were. Servants. To sin. They were. Servants. To sin.

[18 : 44] Whereas. Those who were in a state of grace. Those who. Were. Converted. Those who were born again. Are. No longer. Servants. To that sin. But.

Servants. To God. The argument. As one has put it. Is. Something like this. Since. You are dead. To sin. And. Alive.

To God. You must be a subject of grace. Therefore. You are free from the law. And. Because you are free from the law. You cannot be condemned. So.

I want us to. Consider. Very briefly. The relationship. That Paul describes. To us. Here. In these opening verses. The benefit.

That it. That it. Confers. That relationship. And. That it. The life. That it. Encourages. Three things. The relationship.

[19 : 40] Of which. It speaks. The benefit. That it. Confers. And. The life. That it. Encourages. First of all, there is a relationship. He speaks of being in Christ. In Christ. There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, he says.

Some have reduced these words to mean membership as a Christian. However, there is clearly more to it than simply being a member of a Christian organisation, Christian body.

If you remember what Paul has already said, if you go back, for example, to chapter 6 and verse 3.

Know you not, he says, that so many of us, as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

[21 : 07] For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection and so on.

Again, what we have is the thought of membership, but clearly from the effect wrought by the in Christ relationship. Something very radical has taken place.

There could be three ways, and each way is suggested by scripture, where a person can consider himself to be in Christ.

Theologians describe for us each one of these. First of all, there is what is called the federal union with Christ.

That is, Christ is the representative head of his people. If you think about what the Bible tells us about when sin came into the world, Adam is described as the head of his people.

[22 : 27] He was the representative head. When he sinned, not only did he sin for himself, but everybody else who was his descendant suffered because of that sin.

Not only did he go on to add to that sin, but the sin that Adam sinned was sufficient to condemn them.

Now, Christ is considered to be the federal head of his own people.

In him, as all were in Adam, and Paul dwells upon this relationship at length. If we again go back just a few chapters to chapter 5.

Verse 12.

[23 : 50] Now, he goes on. Take up the reading at verse 17.

Verse 13.

And so on. And so on.

And so on. So on. So on. Verse 13. And so on. And so on. And so on. So on. So on. And so on. And so on.

And so on. And so on. And so on. And so on. And so on. And so on. And so on. And so on. And so on. And so on. And so on.

[25 : 07] And so on. So on. in him and as they are in him they are made righteous. Secondly there is in him rightfully. Again if you think of the words of the scriptures and the gospel of John in chapter 16. John is there describing to us the relationship that exists between Christ and his church. He compares them to the vine and the branches of the vine and in chapter 16 and verse 4 we read these things have I told you that when the time shall come you may remember that I told you of them and these things I said not unto you at the beginning because I was with you but now I go my way to him that sent me and none of you asketh me where goest thou and so on and

Christ goes on to describe there that relationship that he has with his disciples and those who are believers in him. Christ is the very source of life to all the believers. Those who are in him have life those who are out of him they are dead. Thirdly there's this in Christ relationship of faith. That is what is called the union of faith. Again can I direct you to the words of the apostle Paul and he's writing to the the church in Galatia. And the church in Galatia have heard the gospel and they believe the gospel but they've been seduced into reverting back to thinking that they have life by following the law of God and by by doing what the law of God would have them do. And we read there is neither Jew nor Greek.

You can read from verse 26 of chapter 3. You are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. And so on.

Each of these separate descriptions describe to us in their own way the nature of the relationship that exists between the believer and Christ. The in Christ relationship which is central to the ability that the believer has.

us to put their trust in Christ and to derive life from Christ. Now because of this relationship Paul argues that there can be no condemnation. That is, they are free from the guilt that exposes them to condemnation. By nature the sinner is apart from Christ. There are different ways in which the Bible describes that to us.

[29 : 16] They are children of wrath under the curse of a broken law. God has declared and we find these declarations in his word that no sin would be allowed to go unpunished.

And that all who are under the law would perish because of the law. This is what the scripture teaches us again and again. That the curse of a broken law exposes people to the condemnation and what results. In Galatians again, for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.

For it is written, curse it is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. The fatal mistake of many is that they are law keepers. And they say, well I've done my best.

I've striven to fulfill to the best of my ability and the best of your ability is insufficient to fulfill requirements of the law.

There's one sentence that is described as the gospel in a nudget which is the words of the apostle there.

[30 : 51] Condemnation is the opposite of justification and as John Murray said, that itself implies the absence of condemnation. The opposite of justification and justification implies the absence of condemnation. Absolute freedom, not only from the guilt of sin, but the power of sin.

And that by the blood of Jesus Christ, by the sacrifice for sin, by the paying of the penalty that the death of Christ involves. If you ask the question, what does that freedom from condemnation mean for the believer?

Does it give them license to sin? It will. Some people are of the opinion and they live their life as if that was exactly what it means. Not in any way. By implication it means that it will be evidenced by new life in them that confirms it.

Later on in this chapter of Paul's in Romans 8, in verse 13, It's a new life that produces in you new activity.

Paul asserts the duty that belongs to the believer. Clearly he believes that it cannot be achieved without the aid of the Spirit, either personally, which the Countess suggests, or as a result of the principle of life within them.

[32 : 42] The Puritan preacher John Owen writes the following, For those who have an interest in Christ, and are made partakers of Christ, although sin may grieve them, trouble and perplex them, and by its deceit and violence cause them to contract much guilt in their superficial, or in their lives.

Yet they need not despond or be cast down. There is a stable ground of consolation provided for them. Yet it is only they who give up themselves to the conduct of the Spirit of sanctification and holiness that have an interest in this.

Those who allow indwelling sin to better them are deluding themselves. Go again to the start of this chapter, There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

All that the law requires by way of conformity to the will of God is now realised in the lives of those controlled by the Holy Spirit, and are released from the servitude of the old order.

I can't remember who it was that made that statement. To run and work the law commands, yet gives me neither feet nor hands, but better news the gospel brings.

[34 : 35] It bids me fly and gives me wings. These lovely words, no condemnation. That's what is true about the believer in Christ, but only in Christ.

It bids me fly and gives me wings. May God in his mercy direct us to that Christ, through whom these things are made possible.

But only through him. Let us join together in prayer. Lord God, we give thanks that you are indeed a God who endows your own people with the grace by which salvation is possible, only possible in and through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks that your word teaches us that your people are those who are justified by faith, and because of that they have peace with you, but only through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is that Christ by whom we have access, through faith into this grace wherein we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

[36 : 03] Lord, we bless your holy name for that ability to rejoice, and that grace that is the portion of your people for this time that they are in the world.

Bless us together, we pray. Remember all we entrust to your care and keep and cleanse from sin. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always.

Amen.