

No Condemnation

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[0 : 00] Father, your Son has just warned us that there's different ways for us to hear your Word. And Father, we know the devil never misses church.

And so, Father, in the name of Jesus, we ask that he would be silenced and bound this morning in our midst. And we ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would enter into our lives, that your Holy Spirit would make us good soil so that as your words enter into our lives, you will turn our hearts into honest and good hearts, and that you would use your Word in our life to bear much fruit for your world to your great glory.

And this we ask in Jesus' name, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, I didn't receive the original thing myself directly, but I became aware of, through an email, of somebody who heard something that our church was doing, and they basically completely and utterly condemned us.

Well, more me, because you folks, me and a couple of others, because most of you aren't directly involved with it. But from the sounds of it, it was a full-scale condemnation of me and, I guess, a couple of other leaders who were involved in this particular thing.

And, you know, in a sense of being a conversation which condemned me and several others, it means that charges were made against us, we were found guilty, and our judgment was, in a sense, spelled out, and all in a very, very hostile and emotional type of way, and not pleasant for the person who had to be the immediate receiver of this.

[2 : 01] Why is it that often Christians seem to be so prone to condemn each other? Like, why is it that we often seem to be so prone to condemn each other?

Because this condemnation came from people who went to another church. Now, in fact, you know, if you think about it for a second, I think, and I don't know, we have people here, you know, praise God from all sorts of different stages in their walk with Jesus, and maybe there are people here who are just trying to figure out who this Jesus person is and what Christianity is all about.

But for many people in the world, if they think of Christians, many people in Canada nowadays, they think of Christians, they think of people who are very quick to condemn, that, in fact, condemnation of others' behavior is part of our DNA.

That would be a very common, I'd say, stereotype of Christians, but as sometimes happens with stereotypes, there's some truth. Probably every single one of us here has been the recipient of great condemnation from other people in the church.

Maybe, hopefully, not this church, but maybe from other Christians. So the Bible passage that we're going to look at today has a lot to say about this topic of condemnation. And, you know, one of the things about condemnation, just before we get into the text, it's going to be Romans 8, verse 1, if you want to sort of try to find it in your Bibles, Romans 8, 1.

[3 : 32] But one of the things about condemnation is that often those of us who are very, very prone to have a great condemnation of others are blind to it ourselves.

In fact, many of us, by this introduction, we're probably thinking of times that we have received this condemnation, but probably very few of us think of the times, maybe even just within the last 24 hours, when we've unleashed condemnation on others.

Like, it's a very curious thing about us and our human hearts, isn't it? That we often immediately, when we think of this, think of the times that we've been the victim. But we probably rarely think of the times that we've been the perpetrator of condemnation.

And in fact, not to put too much of a point on it, the problem of condemning others is a human problem. It's not a particularly Christian problem.

It's very clear if you read The Citizen or The Post or other newspapers, that there seems to regularly be complaints about how with social media and Twitter and other things that people who make some odd comment can be flooded and overwhelmed with hateful, condemning rhetoric. [4 : 49] And yet, at the same time that people do this, outside the church, they often don't realize that they themselves maybe are filled with condemnation. Maybe even condemning Christians, they've passed judgment on you and me, but they somehow think that they're doing that is not a sign of condemnation, it's somehow accurate.

And in other words, that we can pass condemnation on others and be blind to the fact that we've done it and only see ourselves as victims. Don't you think that's really a human problem? So the Bible's going to say some real wisdom about this for those of us who are prone to condemn others yet see ourselves only as victims. And yet, at the same time, we often live with great wounds of condemnation that have been leveled against us.

So it would be a great help to me if you open your Bibles and you turned in your Bibles to Romans 8, and we're going to begin at verse 1. Romans 8, verse 1. And I know it's sort of in the middle of the book, and it's been, I think, six or seven weeks since we've looked in Romans.

I'll give you a bit of a background in a moment. But let's at least start with this stark opening phrase. In fact, actually, Andrew, could you put it up?

[6 : 03] Or Rebecca, could you put it up on the screen? I'd like you to all read this with me. Nope, that's Romans 8, 1. Could you say this with me?

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. I can't remember how many words it is in the Greek. Thirteen words in English.

These are very, very, very, very powerful words. And most of us either forget it in a Christian life or we, in fact, think it's wrong. But if you get nothing else out of this sermon other than to have this stick in your head, then this is a good thing.

Can you say it with me again? There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. It's a very, very, very powerful, powerful text.

Now, you'll notice it says there is therefore now no condemnation. It's chapter 8, verse 1. That means there's been seven chapters beforehand. And I don't expect people to always remember these things. It's hard enough for me to remember them myself.

[7 : 09] But the way the book of Romans is written, and we're going through the book of Romans, is that the way the book of Romans is written is Paul is writing this letter, which is now considered to be scripture from God, the Bible, and he wrote it around the year 56 or 57.

So he wrote it about 35 years or so, 25 years or so after the death and resurrection of Jesus. And he's writing it to a group of churches, a group of Christians in churches in the capital city of the empire in Rome.

And Paul knows a few of these people, but he's never actually been to Rome. So he doesn't know most of the people. And so in this letter, he sets up the great themes of the Christian faith, the great themes of the gospel.

And the way he writes the letter is in the first six or seven verses, he gives a very standard, well, extended form of the standard greeting in Roman letters, grace and peace, et cetera, et cetera. And then he goes and he spends about seven or eight verses, basically just saying a few things about himself. You know, I'm sort of finishing up some stuff here. I've always meant to see you and come and visit you.

[8 : 13] And I hope to be going somewhere else. And on my way to going somewhere else, I hope to drop in on you. And then Paul does something which is a bit unique in the ancient world. He writes in verses 16 and 17, he writes what we would now call an abstract or a praesi of the entire rest of the letter.

Those of you who are still in school or those of you who remember when you were in school in academic papers, in journal articles, there usually is an abstract that goes with it. And the abstract describes the content of the paper.

In fact, when I was in university, I had friends who wanted to pad their bibliography. Basically, they pad their bibliography by reading a whole pile of abstracts and then listing it in their bibliography as if they'd read the entire article, which I'm not encouraging you folks to do to pretend you've read articles that you haven't.

But that's how a lot of modern papers are. And that's how Paul actually writes the book of Romans. He, in verses 16 and 17, he sets out a praesi of everything he's going to talk about for the rest of the letter.

In fact, actually, could you put this up and why don't we say it together again? Because this is going to be important. Romans 1, 18. There we go. Can you just say this with me? For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

[9 : 37] For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. And as I'm going to tell you about in a moment, we're going to see how this fits in.

But Paul then writes, he tells us that's a whole book is all going to be an unpacking of this phrase. And then immediately he goes in verse 18 to try to sell the problem. Why is it that we need a power of God to make us right with himself?

And then he describes what Jesus does upon the cross for us. And that sort of goes from the last half of chapter 3 up until the end of chapter 6. He describes the positive and negative aspects of what Jesus does for us on the cross.

And then in chapter 7, he talks a little bit about what it means to be human. And then he comes to chapter 8, verse 1, after having talked about all of these things, and he begins. Could you put verse 1 up again?

Chapter 8, verse 1. Could you put that up again, Rebecca? You're having to really work hard this morning. Can you say this with me again? There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[10 : 46] Most Christians don't really believe this. Most of us believe that we're maybe tourists in this place where there is no condemnation, but that once we've come to be in Jesus, that it actually describes the entire rest of our life that we can never be out of condemnation, that we are always in a land, in a place, in a realm where there is now, there is therefore now no condemnation if we have put our faith and trust in Jesus.

There might still be people who condemn us, but God who sees every human heart and sees us perfectly and knows everything there is to know about us, with nothing left over.

And every act of evil, whether done something that we've done or every good thing that we should have done that we didn't do, which is also wrong, that every act of evil is also an act against God and he is the true judge who knows us truly and perfectly and completely and thoroughly.

He knows the times that we really have done something wrong. He knows those times when we've been doing something right, but while it's technically right, we've been doing it so we can boast or for our own glory or for our own power or to manipulate people, which is another day of power.

And he knows every single thing there is to know about us, but that when we are in Christ Jesus by faith, there is no condemnation ever, ever, for all eternity.

[12 : 40] That's what this text says. So Paul immediately sort of goes into a little bit of just going to unpack it.

The rest of chapter 8, he's going to continue to, to describe what that means and the power and the importance of this in the Christian life. But if you listen, he goes, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

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 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

I'm just going to read this again. Remember that the big point, the shocking point, I'm not encouraging people to get tattoos, but if you got a tattoo, maybe 8 verse 1 would be a good thing to get tattooed somewhere on your body so you could read it for yourself.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And then it says, for the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

[14 : 15] And this version of the Bible that I'm reading, it likes to keep the same Greek word the same Greek word all the way through a text. But in the book of Romans, the word law actually has different types of meanings depending on the context.

And in this particular case, it doesn't mean a set of rules of the Holy Spirit. What it means is it means that there's a type of logic and power to the work of the Holy Spirit.

A type of logic and power of the work of the Holy Spirit and that this law, this sort of logic of how the Holy Spirit works, this power of how the Holy Spirit works is that the Holy Spirit always works in such a way that the Holy Spirit, even before you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit is working in your life to come, to try to get you to come to a place where you will put your faith and trust in the person and the work of Jesus.

who he is and what he did for you on the cross. And the logic and the power of the Holy Spirit to lead you to this faith in Jesus and what he does for you on the cross, it's not just a logic and a power that works until you become a Christian and then after you've given your life to Jesus, it has some other plan.

Paul is saying here that throughout your entire Christian life, the logic and the program and the power of the Holy Spirit will always continually be bringing you back to the person of Jesus and what it is that he does for you on the cross.

[15:49] That that's what the Holy Spirit's project is, its first and primary and recurrent project in our lives. And then in verse 3 it says, for God has done what the law, and now here he means law as a set of perfect rules.

See, he's taking it for granted that in what we call Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy that that comes from God and that it's a perfect set of rules to prepare people to understand their need for Jesus and how it is that they are to live in covenant with God.

And he's saying, for God has done what a perfect 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.

Remember I told you just before the sermon began I asked you to pray for me because the book of Romans is so stretching and I don't know if I can even do justice to it here but it's something that can't be just gulped down.

It keeps demanding us to pay attention to the details. And so what the text is saying is this. Okay, here's the thing. We all know that knowing better rules doesn't help you to live a better life.

[17:13] I mean, every one of us knows that maybe the other night I passed out to people in my family those little tiny bags of chips. They'd been on sale at Costco.

And, you know, each one of them you know, there's a little tiny I don't know if you've ever seen them. You get a big box of small bags of Doritos and potato chips and Cheetos. And, you know, some of us just ate one and some of us ate way north of one.

And everybody knows that it's not healthy to eat way north of three. I'm giving you a little bit of leeway. You know, you don't need to have a big flashing sign in the living room that comes up you know, or the kitchen.

Eating more than three bags of Cheetos in one sitting is probably not wise for your waistline your cholesterol levels you know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. We all know that. We don't need a flashing light to tell us that but it's so easy to do it, isn't it?

I mean, many of us know how we could be better off financially. We all know many of us know how we could be better off physically. Many of us know how we could be better off spiritually. We don't need more laws. There's something about us that even when laws are very, very wise and rules and advice is very, very wise that we just can't keep it.

[18:25] And Paul has shown earlier that what the purpose of these things is is to try to make us come to the point to say one moment it can't be that religion and spirituality has to be about more and better and more perfect laws because there's something in me that just can't keep these laws.

And unless God does something I can't keep doing these things. And I can't leave myself to fix myself.

And it doesn't matter if there's a hundred or a thousand or a thousand million or several billion people who are all exactly like me. You multiply people like me.

You just get more of like me. And you can't just unless God does something I can't fix myself in terms of my relationship with him.

I just cannot unless God does something. And so here it says for God has done what the law what perfect laws weakened by who we are the flesh we could not do it.

[19:34] And what did he do? He sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.

And what does this mean? it means if you go back and you read the gospel of John later you'll see that the very very first time that Jesus comes into the story that it's John the Baptist the greatest and the last of all the prophets and he points to he's with his friends his disciples and he points to Jesus who's walking along and he says behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That's how Jesus is introduced. Behold the Lamb of God that guy right over there yeah yeah the guy with the hair down you know halfway down his back yeah I know he needs a haircut and the beard behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And in this text what it's saying is that God sends his son the second person of the Trinity and the second person of the Trinity while remaining God he takes into himself our human nature and he comes and walks amongst us and he lives a perfect life.

he's made of the same stuff both body and soul of you and me. He's made a man. Likeness here is a technical philosophical term.

[20 : 58] It doesn't just mean he appears to look human it's actually a way of a technical way of describing that he's both fully human but at the same time that he's it's creating a little bit of a distance from the fact that he's going to whether or not he's going to sin or not.

And so it's saying here that Jesus comes and lives a fully human life and the purpose of his coming to earth is to die for sin. Notice that in verse 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.

Some of your versions there might say and as a sin offering and it's it's what it's a technical word and in the Old Testament for the Jewish people who are familiar with this and all of the pagans even if they weren't familiar with the Old Testament they understood the nature of sacrifice and it's a technical language of a type of offering and imagine here that I have a nice imagine here that I have a nice little lamb and in the Old Testament it would require that there is a lamb that's perfect in terms of it has no blemishes and the lamb comes and there's this offering where you put your hands I would put my hands on the head of the lamb and then the lamb would be sacrificed and would die and the image is that in a sense when I put my hands on the lamb all of the things for which I can be condemned all of the things that I've done that are wrong all of the right things that I should have done that I didn't do everything that keeps me far from God every part of my project to be like God myself

I in a sense by touching the lamb's head that is transferred from me to the lamb and at the same time there's something else that goes on is that as I touch the lamb's head and in a sense I'm giving the lamb all of the things that I've done that are wrong the lamb's innocence is transferred to me and so that when the lamb dies the lamb dies bearing the punishment that I deserve and I walk away bearing the innocence that was the lamb's and so what the bible is saying here it's reminding us how when Jesus was introduced is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world Paul is hoping that people understood that sacrifices are pointers to something that only God that God needs to do that we can't do for ourselves because we have to keep going and doing these sacrifices time and time and time and time again but Paul is saying what if God provided the lamb what if God provided the lamb and God in a sense is shameless when I gave my life to Jesus when I was in grade 12

I didn't really understand any of this all I understood was that there was this great lack and inadequacy and bentness in me and that Jesus would accept me and he would deal with it that's sort of all I really sort of understood but what the bible is saying here is that God is shameless when we in a sense come to the point where we realize that unless God does something we have no real hope that we need God to do what I cannot do and only he can do that it doesn't matter about my rituals my spirituality my rules my membership I'm going to die and I'm separate and distant from him and so I reach out to Jesus and call for Jesus and what this text is saying is that Jesus then reaches down to me and he puts his hands in mine and when my hands go in the hands of Jesus and the hands of Jesus go in my hands even though

[25 : 20] I don't understand maybe that he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world I am touching the Lamb of God the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is touching me and at that moment even though I am not complete and I am not aware of it at all maybe some of you are but many of us are not even aware of it it is exactly the same as if I have placed my hands in that image on the Lamb and at that moment that I put my hands out to Jesus and he reaches across that infinite distance to put his hands in mine and take his hands in mine and my hands are in his at that moment there is an exchange and his purity and innocence becomes mine

and my all that I can be condemned for becomes his and that Jesus' death upon the cross is not just an act in history that happened once but because

Jesus is God the Son of God it is an act that is always available for every human being even those who come after and so it is and could you put up the first point Rebecca Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world so by faith in him there is therefore now no condemnation there is therefore now no condemnation if I preach a good sermon there is therefore now no condemnation if I have done a really poor job this morning there is therefore now no condemnation if I do a really really really good job of resisting sin this week there is therefore now no condemnation

If I do a poor job, there is therefore now no condemnation. If I go through a period of great depression, in a couple of months, a season of darkness, there is therefore now no condemnation. If I go through a season of profound apparent success in ministry, there is therefore now no condemnation. No matter what you want to put before or after, when you put your hands in the hands of Jesus, and he takes your hands in his, there is therefore now no condemnation. Forever. That is the gospel. Could you put that up for us? Could we say it together? Could you put up verse 8-1?

[28 : 26] Could you say it with me? There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So what on earth does this mean in terms of how we live our lives?

In verse 5, which comes after what we've just read, the Holy Spirit causes Paul to write something which is both a description of how we live our lives and a litmus test as to whether or not we've put our hands in the hands of Jesus.

It's a very, very clever type of thing because, of course, it's easy for some of us to hear this and take it in a way which really actually doesn't mean that we're calling out to God, but we're presuming upon God.

Let's read it, and then I'll try to give you an analogy to explain it. Could you? We'll read it. It's verse 5. In fact, if out of this sermon you only get two things, if you memorize chapter 8, verse 1 and memorize chapter 8, verse 5, you've done a good thing.

The rest of chapter 8 is going to try to start to continually unpack verse 5, but this verse 5 is both a litmus test and also a description. Here's how it goes.

[29 : 47] For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

And here the word flesh doesn't mean like sex. You know, often we refer to sins of the flesh, and we really mean that you drink too much and look at pornography or do naughty things in that direction. I'm not saying that drunkenness isn't a sin or that pornography is not a sin. I'm not saying that. What I'm just saying is that the devil uses that language to make us blind to our pride, arrogance, anger, envy, condemnation, hypocrisy, greed, laziness, etc., etc.

We can become completely and utterly blind to all of these other sins because we can become...

The devil uses it to get us fixated on a couple. But here the word flesh means basically from an earthly perspective, from the perspective of just the way that people just generally talk.

And that if our minds are set on this, the logical consequence will be that it will just continue to get what the earth gets, which is death. But if our minds are set on the Holy Spirit, it will end up leading to life and to peace.

[31 : 06] Increasing peace with God, experienced and lived, and increasing life. And the rest of it's going to work. It's going to explain a little bit more about what that means.

But what's going on here with the text? Well, the first thing is... Could you put up the next point for me, please? The Bible isn't saying that when we put our hands in the hands of Jesus that we stop becoming human beings and now live perfect lives.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. As I tried to give it with an illustration, if it means I perform... If I, Lord, have mercy upon me, if I do some horrible act of sin next month, there is therefore now no condemnation.

If I do some unbelievable act of generosity and spiritual sacrifice that leads to great glory to God, well, there is therefore now no condemnation.

The Bible doesn't say that when we put our hands in the hands of Jesus that Jesus now instantly turns us into something other than a human being.

[32 : 18] Chapter 7 has shown that we live in the already-not-yet with a divided and contradictory self.

We live in the already-not-yet with a divided and contradictory self. That even before we become a Christian, the already-not-yet means that Jesus is risen from the dead and he's going to come again. That's the already-not-yet.

It means other things as well. And the divided and contradictory self is, as we say, on one hand, we maybe know that we should lose some weight, save more money, be more generous. You can make a whole long list of different things.

Even if you're not a Christian, you know that there's a whole pile of these things, but you also know that there's forces within you that make you want to do the opposite, and that even after the Holy Spirit, the logic of the Holy Spirit starts to work in your life, there's a bringing you to Jesus, and there's going to be like a type of pressure to walk with Jesus, but at the same time, I'm living with a divided and contradictory self, and I'm going to have a divided and contradictory self until Jesus comes again.

It's going to be just the way I am. And that's why when you take these two things together, it's to deliver us from the play-acting of Christian legalism, whereby we can pretend that everything is all right and all perfect, and we're living perfect lives, all by our own efforts.

[33 : 41] And you can also be protected from this tendency to just say, well, it doesn't matter if I'm doing all of these bad things because there's therefore now no condemnation.

It's protecting us from this type of legalism and just dispensing with all human laws. But I said verse 5, remember I said verse 5 was like a litmus test.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. It's possible to hear this, there is therefore now condemnation, by just responding that I can do whatever bad things I want.

And if that is how we respond, it's a litmus test that we haven't really called out to God for him to do what we cannot do. Maybe here's a bit of an illustration.

I have to watch my time. I've been a minister for quite a few years and one of the things I've discovered about being a minister is I can't predict when I do a marriage whether the marriage will somehow hold or whether it will break up and divorce.

[34 : 52] I've done marriages where I thought this is, you know, I've even told my wife, this is a really great young couple. They really seem to be deeply in love. They seem to be really keen. And then a year later, the marriage is broken up.

I can think of one preeminent marriage that I did. And this is quite a few years ago when I was in another city. And I met this, the young woman went to my church and this fellow didn't.

And he was a bouncer at one of the roughest bars in the entire Ottawa Valley. Not making up, a bouncer at one of the roughest, toughest, regularly big fights.

He was a bouncer there. And when we met, he, I mean, he swore and cursed and used foul language all the way through our meeting. I mean, he was really, really rough.

And I, and she was this like really sweet young thing. And I, I went home to Louise and I said, wow, I don't, I just can't, I can't understand this. Like this is, this is a disaster.

[35 : 56] 20 some odd years later, they're still married. And, um, he was completely transformed. Like when he entered into the marriage vows, he meant it.

And he, he stopped being a bouncer. He set up several businesses. He became relatively prosperous. And the foul language and all of that other stuff, it all started, it didn't change overnight, but there started to be the, the, the, the, the, the importance of the marriage vow and the importance of that woman started to change him.

See, some people take the marriage vows as an excuse that they no longer have to try. Well, we're married, you can't do anything about it, so I can be just as big a jerk as I want.

And other people, not, I mean, obviously everybody has times when things are bad, but the marriage vows somehow become a means by which our life starts to change for the better.

And that's what Paul is saying here. Because remember, what the Holy Spirit does, the logic or the power of the Holy Spirit is it leads us to a faith in Jesus.

[37 : 19] it leads us to this point where we realize that I need God to do what only God can do.

I have come to the end of the Lord, I have come to the end of the Lord, I have come to the end of my rope. And you call out to Jesus. And Jesus reaches down across that infinite space that we

cannot bridge ourselves.

And he takes our outstretched hands symbolically. I mean, we probably don't maybe necessarily reach our arms out, but he takes our outstretched hands in his, and he takes us to himself.

And he has been our sin offering when he died upon the cross. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And even though I do not realize it, when my hands go in his, all of the condemnation that is due on me has fallen on him.

And all of his purity and life and innocence is somehow bestowed upon me. And there is therefore now no condemnation. And the Holy Spirit will continually lead us back to the gospel.

[38 : 34] And as the Holy Spirit leads us back to the gospel, and as we become disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, the gospel starts to become, and the other teachings in light of who it is that Jesus is and what he's done for us on the cross, it becomes the ground upon which we start to live and how we understand things.

And the actual gospel itself starts to shape us. And as the gospel grips us, and as it grounds us, and it starts to shape us, and it starts to nudge us to do things that we hadn't thought of doing before, and it draws us to do things that we hadn't thought of doing before.

And as we think about the fact that in Jesus there is now therefore no condemnation, and all of a sudden as that starts to grip us, we start to realize, we know maybe I shouldn't condemn others.

As the gospel grips us, and knowing that Jesus died upon the cross, and this profound act of generosity, you know what? Maybe I should be a bit more generous.

And as we realize that all of the things that we've done that are wrong have been laid on him, and his purity and goodness is given upon us, then all of a sudden, the shape of maybe living a life where we forgive others starts to make some sense, that we're drawn to that, that we're nudged by that, that we're standing in a place by which we can understand that maybe forgiveness, and turning the other cheek, and being one that swallows evil, and be the place where the cycle of evil stops, that maybe that makes sense.

[40 : 15] That maybe if God, through Jesus, that he, Jesus sets aside all of his riches, so to speak, in heaven to become poor for me, well, maybe this odd thing of tithing, maybe that starts to make sense.

Maybe that makes sense. And so you see, like in those marriage examples, it could be that when we hear what Jesus has done for us on the cross, we think, oh good, I can do whatever I want, which is wrong, and God's not going to do anything about it.

And all that means is that we really haven't given our lives to Jesus. And others of us, as our minds are set on what the Holy Spirit's mind is set on, which is first of all, Jesus and what he's done for us on the cross, it starts to free us.

It starts to free us. And we start to have peace. Now, some of you might say, George, do you know, I've been a Christian all these years, George, and do you know what goes through my mind?

Do you know sometimes the violent and dark thoughts that I have? Do you know sometimes, George, I don't know, I'm not like you, you look like you think about all these holy things, and you read all these books, and if you just saw the rage I have, if you just saw how angry I am, if you just knew the hold that money had on, if you just know, if you just knew how I sometimes can't sleep at night because I just can't get my mind off of what that person said to me, can you put the scripture back up?

[42 : 09] You know what I have to say? Why don't you say it with me? There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Say it with me again.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. If you're really, really, really successful at dealing with all of these things, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

If you're having a real problem with rage or greed after you've given your life to Jesus, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

the Holy Spirit is going to keep bringing you back to that. I've run out of time in my sermon.

The other points I was going to say, we can, it'll be online, but this verse 5 isn't just saying that if you don't do it perfectly, you're not in Christ Jesus.

[43 : 18] it's telling you that whether it's just every once in a while, you just realize that it's, it's telling us this bit of a mystery that setting our minds on the Spirit is, I mean, we should call out in God, we should say, Father, please make me a disciple of Jesus gripped by the gospel who's living for your glory.

Father, my mind is completely and utterly fixated on this lust, on this anger, on this rage, on this, on this desire for revenge, on this wound from the past.

My mind is complete. Lord, help me to set my mind on the things that the Holy Spirit's mind has set on. That the thing is, it's, it's not telling us that unless we keep this perfectly, we're under condemnation.

everything in the text, even this thing to call out for God to help us to have our mind on the thing, everything in the text flows from there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

It's always about the power of God. The Christian life grows out of humble gratitude. The Holy Spirit will lead us increasingly not to think of how profound we are as spiritual athletes, but how we are beggars in need for that which only God can do.

[44 : 51] Please stand. Bow our heads in prayer.

Father, if there are any here who have never put their hands in the hands of Jesus, Father, silence the devil from telling them that they should think about this more before they put their hands in the hands of Jesus and may your Holy Spirit, the logic and the power of the Holy Spirit come upon each one so that they know there is no time better than right now to call out to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

To take their hands in his hands. And we thank you, Jesus, that you know every single thing there is to know about us. You know everything about our past.

You know what our life was like even in the womb. You know, Father, what terrible things were visited upon us in the womb. and you know everything that happens to us every moment of our life. That you know even the dreams that we have at night that we don't remember when we wake up. And you know everything about our future. You know whether we are going to live another 70 years or whether we aren't going to live another seven days.

[46 : 08] And you know every single thing, Father, about everything that we've done and haven't done. That you know every single thing there is to know about us, Father. And we thank you and praise you that in Jesus those are all dealt with.

That he, Father, we thank you that he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We thank you, Father, that there can be nothing in our future that catches you by surprise. We thank you that when we put our hands in the hands of Jesus that he takes our hands and that there is therefore now no condemnation for us.

We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would move in our lives to make us disciples of Jesus, gripped by the gospel, learning to live for your glory, learning to live by grace, learning to live and be fed by your grace.

Father, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and make us disciples of Jesus, gripped by the gospel, who are learning to live for your glory. This we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.