

The Spirit and No Condemnation

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Date: 09 June 2019

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[0:00] As a means of review, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus makes a connection now with verse 2.

The Spirit of life has set you free. And what's going to be really important for us this morning is to work out and to understand what is that connection.

How does one relate to the other? How does one lead to the other? What is first and what is second? What is the beginning and what is the end?

And I appreciate as a summary statement and helping to provide some clarity to our message this morning, John Piper has put it this way.

He says this, The only sin that you can defeat in life is a forgiven sin. The only sin that you can defeat in life is a forgiven sin.

[1:23] Now, how in the world does that relate to our passage this morning? Well, because in verse 1, There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus describes the work of justification.

Now, that is a really technical word, a theological word for something as simple as to be declared righteous. You, if you are in Christ, have been declared righteous.

A verdict has been given by God the Father on you. Righteous because of Jesus. And then what we find in verse 2, For there is, For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death, Now begins to describe for us the work of the Spirit in our life to sanctify, To purify, And to make us more like God.

Now, what comes first, And what comes second, Will make all the difference in your eternal destiny. Because if you get this wrong, You are not in Christ.

If you get this wrong, You have everything turned upside down, And you, like the Pharisees, Will be called the father, Or the son of your father, the devil.

[2:53] That's what Jesus said to the Pharisees, Who got it all wrong. This is gigantic for us this morning, In terms of understanding the significance of the work of justification, In leading and necessitating the work of sanctification in our lives.

We must begin with a right standing before God, Before we can begin to move to right actions for God.

There must first be a work of justification that will empower sanctification in you. Your eternity depends on this.

Your life with God springs from a correct understanding of verse 2. And that's why we're going to take the time this morning to develop this truth, And hopefully lock it in to our thinking.

We saw a summary of no condemnation last week. The declaration of the Apostle Paul there at the beginning of chapter 8, There is therefore now no condemnation.

[4:09] And what preceded it is seven chapters, Not to try to describe why there is no condemnation, But describing why there should be condemnation.

See, every one of us in this room deserve condemnation from God. There is condemnation, as we saw last week, That should come because of creation.

The testimony of God in creation that calls attention to who He is, And instead of exalting Him and His attributes that we can clearly see in creation, Instead, we defer to our own flesh and decide, We're just going to worship the creation, Rather than worshiping the creator.

We are condemned by creation. We're also condemned by conscience. We're condemned by that inner moral compass that is inside, Helping us to understand that the very things that we condemn in others, We should be condemning in ourselves.

That God has hardwired us to understand a bit of the moral code, And it in turn then condemns us. We're also condemned by the commandments, The written laws that God has given.

[5 : 28] And condemned by the human condition, By the sinful tendencies that we have in ourselves, And also condemned by the ongoing captivity of sin in our lives.

That even after we are saved, Even after we have the indwelling Holy Spirit, There is still these fleshly tendencies in us, That, in a sense, bind us, And seemingly move us into sinful, ungodly behaviors.

Paul talks about the wrestling warfare that takes place. He talks about that in chapter 7. All of these things should actually condemn us, But the statement that he makes at the beginning of chapter 8, Is no condemnation.

So what in the world has taken place? And we find, and we'll look at a little bit more later, We find that the purpose for no condemnation, Is because of the work of Christ, In absorbing the wrath of God, In receiving the condemnation in our place.

Romans 5:8 says this, But God has demonstrated his own love for us, In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

[6 : 50] He took your condemnation, If you are in Christ. And because of his life-giving sacrifice, The justification, The declaration of God on your life, That great eternal exchange, Jesus taking your sin, And replacing it on you with his righteousness, That is the great exchange.

We have been justified because of Christ, And as a result, No condemnation, No penalty, No debt, No punishment.

The wrath of God lands on Christ, Rather than you. So what is the relationship then, Between verse 1 and verse 2?

It begins with this word for. For, The law of the spirit of life, Has set you free from the law of sin and death. Now, that can be really confusing, Because the word for, Both in English and in Greek, Can be taken two different ways.

It can be the basis or ground of reason, For which something happens, Or, It can be the evidence that something is true. For example, My daughter took the ACT yesterday, And any of you students who have taken the ACT, Will know how difficult that is.

[8 : 24] And so, She could tell me, Hey, Dad, I know I did very well on this test, Because of all of the hours, That I put into this.

That would be the basis, Or ground, Or reason, Maybe even the cause, For why she has this confidence. Or, She could get the ACT back, And she could see the grade, And she could show me what that grade is, And say, See, Here is the evidence, Why I believe, That this is true.

And that's what we're praying for. But it's all in God's sovereignty, Right? So, That is the question.

Is, Verse 2, The ground, And the basis of justification? Meaning, That we are justified, Because, Of this working for God, That produces merit in His eyes.

Or, Is, The working for God, A result, And the evidence, Of what He has actually accomplished, In our life, Through justification.

[9 : 41] Does that make sense? What comes first, And what comes second, Will change everything for us, In terms of our eternal destiny. We cannot get this wrong.

We must understand, What is taking place, In this verse. Which meaning is it? Well, As we look at this, I don't want to be, Really technical this morning, But, But I want to draw your attention, To a part of the answer, Which will then now be, Begin, The beginning of the message, And, What will start for us, In terms of, Of the evidence, Then, Of, Of the life, That is marked, By no condemnation.

Look at Romans 8, Verses 3 and 4. Because it's related, To verse 1. For, There's that same word again, For God has done, With 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. Now that is your answer. 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.

Do you see it? We'll talk about this more next week. Jesus came, In the likeness of flesh, To absorb, The wrath of God, And the condemnation, Of God that you deserved, So that you wouldn't have to.

[11 : 20] And that's the relationship, Between the cause, And the effect. The cause, Is the work of Christ, The reason, Pointing to no condemnation, And now the evidence, Is what we find in verse 2.

A life that is marked, By the spirit, Shows, That the work of Christ, Has taken place, Already, Declaring, No condemnation.

And as a result, Then, As evidence, Of that work, In verse 2, Now there is a life, That is dominated, And marked, By the law, The law of the spirit, Working, In your life.

There are three things, That we find in verse 2. Three things, That must always be true, Of an individual, Whose life, Is marked then, As evidence, Of one, Who has no condemnation, One who is, In Christ Jesus.

There are three things, That are going to be, Brand new for us, If you are in Christ. First, Is that there is, A new law. There is a new, Law.

[12 : 35] Verse 2, Talks about the difference, Between the law, Of the spirit, And the law, Of sin. I want to just take, A brief look, At some of the, Standard, Understandings, And the ways, That the scripture, Conveys law, So that we can kind of, Get an appreciation, For where, Where Paul is, In all of this.

What is he talking about, When he's talking about, Law? Well first, I want to just briefly, Look at the standard, Use of law, In the New Testament. There are at least, A couple of ways, That law is used, Throughout the New Testament, To speak of, The scriptures.

First, To speak of the, Scriptures, Specifically, Related to, The Torah, Or the first five books, Of the Bible. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, And Deuteronomy.

These would be, The laws, That God had given, To Moses, For the people of Israel, Who were part, Of the old covenant, To help them, Be a people, Of God. We find, One of these uses, In Luke chapter, 24 verse 44, Let me just, Listen as, As I read, It says, Then he said, This is Jesus speaking, These are my words, That I spoke to you, While I was still with you, That everything written about me, In the law of Moses, And the prophets, And the Psalms, Might be fulfilled.

Jesus speaking, Specifically of the law of Moses, The first five books, Of the Bible. The second, Law is used, In the scriptures, To address, The totality, Of the old testament.

[14:15] Jesus, In a different occasion, In John chapter 10, Is speaking, Is speaking, To the religious leaders, And he's, Addressing their, Ignorance, Of the law, And he's speaking, Specifically, Drawing from a quote, In Psalms, And he says this, Is it not written, In your law?

And then he, Quotes a phrase, Directly from the Psalms, Which helps, Them understand, And helps us understand, That the law, Can also refer to everything, In the old testament.

The writings of God, For the people, To help them, Live a life, That is, Consistent, In alignment, With God's, Standard for them.

From a Jewish perspective, The law dominated, Everything in life. Absolutely, Everything. The religious, And relational, Aspects of life.

Marriage, And worship, Both resting, And working, Interacting, With strangers, And those who were foreigners, From them. There were codes of morality, Codes, Codes even related to their clothing, And what they would wear.

[15:27] Dictating the feast days, They were to observe. Dictating the year of sabbatical, That they were supposed to take off, The year of jubilee. How to treat servants, How to deal with physical issues, Among themselves, Blemishes, And leprosy, And other various things.

How to deal with rebellious children, How to interact with war, How to farm your fields, And how to pay your laborers, How to raise cattle and sheep, How to plant orchards, How to eat various foods, How to honor the elderly, Buying and selling, Mortgaging property, Making vows, Every aspect of life, Every aspect of life, Was dominated by the law, So that it was all encompassing, And there were blessings, And there were curses, That were attached, To obedience, And disobedience to the law, We find that in Deuteronomy chapter 28, In Leviticus chapter 26, I will bless you if you obey, I will curse you if you disobey, And of course, This led to some unhealthy assumptions, And we see some of those unhealthy assumptions, When we look in the Old Testament, We evaluate the life of Job,

And his great friends, Come alongside him and say, Hey Joe, You know that bad things are happening to you, Because you must be a bad person, Because you know, Based upon the law, That those who are doing what is right, Get favor from God, And those who do what is wrong, Get cursed by God, So obviously, You must be cursed by God, And disobedient, The Pharisees, And the scribes of the New Testament, Were no different, They were those who elevated their righteousness, And wanted to make sure that everyone around knew about it, They thought they were a cut above everyone else, And were a little displeased with Jesus, For mixing it up with sinners and tax collectors, If he was really a righteous guy, If he was really a holy man, If he was really from God, The Father, Then certainly he would have a different set of requirements,

In terms of who he associates with, But Jesus makes it clear to them, You have no part with me, Because they got it all mixed up, They got the working ahead, Of the declaring, They got the obedience ahead, Of the declaration of righteousness, They thought they could earn righteousness from God, They did not realize, That God had to establish righteousness for them, Through Jesus, Who alone could fulfill, All of the moral standards of the law, Paul, In his use of law throughout Romans, Has at least three different ways, That he uses law, And briefly, We find in Romans chapter 2, 15, That he is dealing with the law, In terms of moral code, Just, If you would,

Turn back with me, Just for a second, To Romans chapter 2, Verse 15, Let me read this for you, So you can see it for yourself, Romans 2, 15, Says this, They show, That the work of the law, Is written on their heart, While their conscience, Also bears witness, And their conflicting thoughts, Accuses, Or even excuse them, Now certainly, This isn't the sum total, Of the law, That was given to Moses, Certainly not, Because it's defective, In so many ways, But, But in terms of a moral compass, That was polluted, And corrupted in some respects, There was still some sense, Of morality that God gives, To every individual, In Romans chapter 3, On the adjacent page, Verse 20, He's dealing with the law, In terms of what we're familiar with, We've just talked about, The law of Moses, Here's what he says, In Romans 3, 20, For the, By the works of the law, No human will be justified,

[19 : 48] In his sight, Since through the law, Comes knowledge of him, Speaking about, The written law, To the Jews, Through, The first five books, Of the Old Testament, And then finally, In Romans chapter 7, Verse 22, And 24, We find this, Paul is talking about, This inner struggle, That's taking place, And he says, Beginning in verse 22, For I delight, In the law of God, In my inner being, But I see in my members, Another law, Waging war, Against the law, Of my mind, And making me, Captive to the law, Of sin, That dwells, In my members, Wretched man, That I am, Who will deliver me, From this body, Of death, Here, Paul is dealing, With a principle, He's dealing, With an inner power, This inner struggle, This inner authority, That seeks, To overcome, The things,

That he wants to do, As a person, Who has been, Claimed by God, So three different ways, That we see, Throughout the letter, That Paul is using, This word law, So how is he using, Law here, In chapter 8, Verse 2, The law of the spirit, Versus the law of sin, In what sense, Are we to take, This law to mean, Well, I think, It's best for us, To understand, That chapter 8, Verse 2, Is in the normal flow, Of conversation, We take, Chapter 7, Verses 22, To 24, Into account, And we realize, That Paul has already begun, To define for us, What he means, In the flow, Of this conversation, That in fact, What he is, Pointing to, In chapter 7, Verses 22, And 23, As a law, In his members,

Could not actually be, A list of do's and don'ts, Because our hands, And our feet, And our legs, Don't contain, Do's and don'ts, But actually, Principles, Or powers, Or authorities, Things that seem, To overcome, The other principles, That are in place, And so, In that sense, The sense in which, It is a principle, Or an authority, Or a power, Is what Paul seems, To mean here, In this passage, It's a principle, That is making war, In your life, He refers to it, As the law of sin, In chapter 7, He builds on that, Here as the law, Of sin, And death, In chapter 8, Verse 2, Because he wants you, To understand, Inevitably, Where sin leads, Sin,

That is unchecked, Will inevitably, Lead to your, Destruction, And Paul, And Paul, Wants, You to understand, The significance, Of that contrast, That those, Who are actually, In Christ, Who are actually, Not condemned, Will be existing, In the power, Of the Holy Spirit, The spirit, Who gives power, Over, The law, Of the flesh, The law, Of sin, And death, Again, Not another list, But the authority, Of the Holy Spirit, Himself, Who works contrary, And wages war, Against the sin, That is so present, In our life, Now notice, That he says, It is the law, Of the spirit, Who is doing this work, It is the Holy Spirit, Who sanctifies, The believer, And that should give us, All great,

Opportunity, To rejoice, And to say, Thank you Lord, That you are the one, Who is working, Sanctification, Out in my life, Refined from, Philippians chapter 1, 6, I'm sure you all know this, He who began, A good work in you, Speaking of, Jesus, He who began, A good work in you, Will be faithful, To complete it, That is the work, Of sanctification, The Holy Spirit, Is accomplishing, In your life, A couple chapters later, In Philippians, He says this, It is God who works in you, Both to will, And to work, For his good pleasure, We are meant, To serve God, In a whole new way, And we can, Do that through, This new law, The law of the spirit, The power of the spirit, Working, In our life, Because there is no condemnation, We are ushered,

[24:52] Into a whole new, Realm, Of existence, And in this sense, This does not, Lower the bar, For us, But it actually, Raises the bar, Of expectation, And standard, To a whole new level, If any of you, Remember the sermon, On the bound, You know exactly, What Jesus is, Talking about, And how that relates, To our subject, You know that as he is, Referring to the law, He is helping his hearers, Understand the significance, Of their faulty thinking, He says, You have heard it said, And he fills in the blank, With the moral code, The code that had been written, In the law, But I say to you, And raises the bar, To impossible, And supernatural, Levels, It is only through, The power, Of the Holy Spirit, Working in our life, That doesn't help us, Just make it in life,

And just happen to please God, Proportionately, But helps us to please God, To the nth degree, As the Holy Spirit, Is refining, And maturing, And growing us, And leading us, Into obedience, This is, The principle, Of the new law, Working within, New power, That now leads us, To new life, New life, That is, The second, Characteristic, The second feature, Of what we have now, As those, Who have no condemnation, New life, He refers to, The spirit of life, And he refers, To sin, And death, These two, Are at odds, With one another, And it might be beneficial, For us to understand, Since we're probably, More acquainted with sin, To understand sin, And then contrast it with, The spirit of life,

If you want to turn back to me, With me to Romans chapter 3, Romans chapter 3, Gives us, Perhaps the, The most comprehensive, Understanding, In a, Short summary form, Of, Of where we are, In terms of the totality of sin, Confronting, And waging war, In our life, Romans chapter 3, Verses 10 to 18, It says this, As it is written, None is righteous, No, Not one, No one understands, No one seeks for God, All have turned aside, Together they have become worthless, No one does good, Not even one, Their throat is an open grave, They use their tongues to deceive, The venom of asps, Is under their lips, Their mouth is full of curses, And bitterness, Their feet are swift, To shed blood, In their paths, Are ruin and misery,

And the way of peace, They have not known, There is no fear of God, Before their eyes, Now talk about, The absolute, Comprehensiveness, Of sin, This is a very, Dismal picture, Of you and I, Before Christ, The totality of individuals, Regardless of geography, The totality of wickedness, In every person that exists, That affects not only their feet, You notice this, And their mouth, But they're also their eyes, And they have all together become worthless, There is no part of us, Before Christ, As we know from the prophet Isaiah, That has any credibility, Any value, Any righteousness, All our righteousnesses, As Isaiah says, Are as filthy rags, The totality,

Incomprehensive nature, Of depravity, Within our lives, Should lead us to despair, If not, For the wonder, Of the grace, Of Christ, That is who we are, By nature, And once we are, Saved, Once we are delivered, And rescued, Unfortunately, The war continues, To reign, The law, Only compounds, The problem for us, As we find, In Romans chapter 7, Turn with me, There for a second, Romans chapter 7, Beginning in verse 7, It says, If it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin, But sin, Seizing an opportunity, Through the commandment, Produced in me, All kinds of covetousness, For apart from the law, Sin lies dead,

[30:02] I was once part from the law, But when the commandments came, Sin came alive, Sin came alive, And I died, The very commandment, That promised life, Proved to be death, For me, For sin, Seizing an opportunity, Through the commandment, Deceived me, And through it, Killed me, If it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin, Maybe you're familiar with the statement, Ignorance is bliss, But as human creatures, We are people, Who once we are given a prohibition, Long to have it satisfied, By doing the very things, We are told we are not supposed to do, So, For example, I'm going to put a picture, Up here for you, There we go, Up to this point, You were not thinking about food, And certainly not thinking about hamburgers, But now with that succulent,

Piece of meat there, I am sure you can not only smell it, You can virtually taste it, And perhaps even now, There is this little rumbling in your tumbly, Is that Winnie the Pooh, Rumbly in the tumbly?

And this is the plight, This is the human condition, When faced with a prohibition, We crave it, And the longer the prohibition exists, The more we want the forbidden fruit, But by God's grace, There is also new liberty, New liberty, New freedom, For the law of the spirit of life, Has set me free, Set you free in Christ Jesus, From the law of sin and death, Now there are several things, I want to draw to your attention, But focusing just on two here, And then building on this truth, In conclusion, First, I want you to notice, In this verse, Verse two, That every Christian, Has the Holy Spirit, Every believer,

Whoever who is in Christ Jesus, Has the Holy Spirit, The Spirit is not a second leg, For those who are now, Becoming more sanctified, It's not a second step, But the Holy Spirit comes, Immediately, For those who are in Christ, Helping them, To live the way, God has commanded, But if you don't have Christ, As we find, In Romans chapter 8, Verse 9, If you don't, Have the spirit, Then you aren't, A Christian, You can't have, No condemnation, Without the spirit, You cannot be in Christ, Without, Without the spirit's work, That is, The next observation, No condemnation, Also comes, For those,

Who are in Christ, If you are a, Believer this morning, You are not working, To get Christ, You're not working, To be justified, Because that transaction, Has already happened, Because of Jesus, There is, No condemnation, For those, Who are in Christ Jesus, And as a result, You can stand, As one, Who is, Reveling, In the wonder, In the mercy, Of God, In that, That work, That he has accomplished, For you, Through Jesus, On the cross, But it does, Raise the question, How does, The working, Of the power, That we find, In verse 2, The spirit power, How does that, Working of spirit power, Relate, To the declaration, Of no condemnation, In verse 1, Because we,

[34 : 29] Don't dare, Get this backwards, You turn that around, And we don't have, Christianity, We are either, Fighting, To get justified, Or, You are fighting, Confidently, Because you are, Justified, And that, Is an important, Understanding, It's a difference, Between freedom, And fear, It's the difference, Between giving, All the glory, To God, As the only one, Who can get credit, For salvation, Or, Embracing some, Of the credit, For yourself, Some of the glory, For yourself, But we find, There is, No condemnation, For those, Who are in, Christ Jesus, And, That the law, Of the spirit of life, Has set you free, In Christ, From the law, Of sin and death, Because,

Of the work, Of God, In our life, Because, Of the declaration, Of God, Over you, You now have power, To live, In freedom, And obedience, Through the power, Of the Holy Spirit, He has set you free, To follow, In his footsteps, You have, The victor, Living within, The Holy Spirit, Who is, Triumphant, The Holy Spirit, Who is God, Who is sanctifying, Will help you, And deliver you, From the wickedness, Of your day to day, Close with, One more verse, Turn with me, If you would, To Galatians, Chapter 5, Galatians, Chapter 5, Verses 16, To 18, Galatians 5, 16, To 18, Paul says this, But I say,

Walk, Walk, By the Spirit, And you will, Not, Gratify, The desires, Of the flesh, Do you get that? Walk, By the Spirit, It doesn't say, You might, Not, Gratify, The desires, Of the flesh, It says, You will, Not, Gratify, The desires, Of the flesh, Why?

Because, The desires, Of the flesh, Are against, The spirit, And the desires, Of the spirit, Are against, The flesh, For these are opposed, To each other, To keep you, Guard you, Prevent you, From doing, The things you want to do, If you are led, By the spirit, You are not, Under, The law, Because, You're under grace, You're under the control, And the principle, Of the law, Of the spirit, Of life, So this morning, If there is a perpetual, Struggle, With sin, In your life, If there is a, An unwillingness, Even, To rebel, Against the things, That God has said, Clearly in his word, I will not do them, Because, I don't want to, They're too hard, They're too hard, Then you may not,

Be in Christ, At all, Because, To be in Christ, As we find, In Romans chapter 8, 2, Is that the law, Of the spirit of life, Has set you free, From sin, And death, It will have nothing, To do, With controlling, And directing, Your life, The spirit, Will help you overcome, And conquer, And have triumph, And victory, Over that war, That rages within, And then, That is the evidence, Of those who are marked, By no condemnation, The verdict, Leads, To indwelling power, Let's pray, To indwelling power, To indwelling power, Thank you.