

No Condemnation

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[0 : 00] Welcome to this week's message from Faith Bible Church of Lake Charles.! We're excited to share a practical Bible-based teaching that we hope will encourage you and strengthen your faith.

! Thanks for listening. Now, here's today's message. You have a voice in your head. Oh, come on, you know you do. And we often talk to that voice in our head. Sometimes I walk into the house and Catherine said, do you say something?

I said, I didn't think so, but I was probably talking to the voice in my head. And the voice in our head sometimes gets pretty loud. And at times it can sound like a prosecutor. I mean, it shows up sometimes on your drive to work.

You know, Thursday, you lost your temper. And this week on the job, you said something about somebody that maybe you shouldn't have. Or you looked at something you shouldn't have this week after the kids went to bed.

You didn't pray all week. Or maybe you didn't read God's Word this week. And that voice in your head acts like a prosecutor and says, oh, you're not measuring up.

[1 : 11] And by the time you sit in the pew on Sunday mornings, you're half expecting God to be angry with you. And you know, that voice sounds convincing. And a lot of followers of Christ live with that voice in their head that tells them they're not measuring up.

And they have such a difficult time with that, that they cannot enjoy the freedom that we have in Jesus Christ. You know, they walk into time of worship on Sundays and they half expect God to be angry with them.

And they're wondering if they've done enough during the week to stay in God's good graces. And there are some that I've heard that say, you know, I just don't know if I've lost it.

And I don't know if I'm still good with God because some of the things that I thought are some of the things that I did during the week. Well, we're in the book of Romans and Paul has been working through Romans and the letter to the Roman believers.

And we've seen all the way from chapter six through chapter seven, where Paul is dealing with some issues within the church, some issues concerning the law, some issues concerning grace.

[2 : 26] And in chapter number seven, the apostle Paul, if you remember, if you were here last week, you remember, and even if you have, and if you've ever read the book of Romans, Paul gets very transparent in chapter number seven.

Paul is talking about the law and what the law couldn't do for us. And what the law did was, and I find it very interesting when Paul says what the law did was the law awakened the sinfulness in him. And we mentioned a few weeks ago about our human nature. When we see a sign, we're walking down a hallway and it says, Do not touch wet paint.

Before the sign went up, not a single thought in your mind would have been, I want to touch that wall and see if it's wet. It didn't happen. But the moment somebody puts up the sign, do not touch wet paint, what does everything within you cry out for you to do?

And it does for me, and maybe you're just, maybe I'm just so weird, but is it really still wet? No, they probably did that last Friday and it's not wet. Yeah, it's still wet. And that's what Paul says the law does.

[3 : 45] The law, Paul says the law awakens sin in our life. We didn't really realize it was wrong, but the moment, just like a child, the moment you say, don't do this, you put a button somewhere that says, do not press.

What do people want to do? I wonder what will happen if I press it, right? And Paul is very transparent in Romans chapter 7. He gets to the point where he says, I know what's right.

I know what I should do, but I don't do it. And I know what I shouldn't do, but for the life of me, I have no clue why. I do it anyway.

And when we get to the end of chapter 7, Paul is at the end of himself, and he says, who shall deliver me from this body of death?

But I thank God. And in Romans chapter 8, starting with verse 1, we see one word that makes the difference. And there is, what's that word?

[4 : 51] There is therefore. Let's read verse 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

And what Paul is going to do through these first four verses of Romans chapter 8, he's going to give us four things about our standing in Christ, and each verse is going to build on the previous verse. So that by the time we get through, that accusing voice in your head will have nothing left to say. Hopefully, it will have been completely silenced, and you will realize that when God says there is no condemnation, no condemnation means no condemnation.

By the end of our time today, if you forget everything else, and you probably will, I want you to remember one thing. If you are in Christ, if you have trusted Jesus as your Savior, if you are trusting what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary as the finished work, and he paid our penalty on the cross, we can tell that voice in our head, no condemnation means no condemnation.

So the therefore looks backward. The word therefore looks back to what Paul has been saying. And what Paul is doing, and what Paul often does, is he expects an argument.

[6 : 20] He expects something that people will say, well, Paul, I know you said that, but... So what Paul does in his writings very often is, he will anticipate an argument.

He will anticipate a question, and he will preemptively answer that question. And it's what he's been doing all the way from chapter 6 on. But I want you to pay attention to that word condemnation in verse number 1.

There is therefore now no condemnation. That word Paul used is courtroom language. And it doesn't mean the guilty verdict itself.

What it means is the punishment that follows the verdict. So there is therefore no punishment that is going to come as a result of the verdict that we are dead in Christ, or that we are dead in sin.

And so what Paul is saying is, we, if we are in Christ, we will not have to pay the penalty for our sin. So he says there's no condemnation.

[7 : 30] It means the punishment that follows the verdict. It's the serving the sentence. And Paul is saying that for those who are in Christ, there's no sentence left to serve.

The judgment, the judge has already ruled. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, he said seven things. One of the things that Jesus said is one word in the Greek, tetelestai, and it means it is completed.

It is finished. So when Jesus said it is completed, what did Jesus complete on the cross? He will have completed, once he died and rose again, he will have completed the penalty, and he took our judgment, and he took the consequences for us.

So that's why Paul can say, there is therefore now no condemnation. The judge has already ruled. Now, notice Paul doesn't say there's no struggles. Is there a struggle in the Christian life?

You bet there is. As a matter of fact, when you come to Jesus and the Holy Spirit takes up residence within you, life can even be more of a struggle than it was before, because now you know what you shouldn't be doing.

[8 : 51] The Holy Spirit opens up your mind, and the Holy Spirit helps you to understand what it is that pleases God, and what it is that displeases God, and what grieves the Holy Spirit.

And so there is a struggle. And we look at Abraham. Abraham lied about his wife. David had someone killed to cover up his sin. So there is a struggle in the Christian life, but they didn't suffer condemnation because their trust was in God.

The Old Testament says that Abraham believed, and it was counted unto him as righteousness. So there's no difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament as far as how people came to God.

People came to God in the Old Testament by way of faith, just like Abraham. And today, people don't get in Christ, people don't come to belong in the family of God through work.

The Bible says that it is by grace that we're saved, through faith, and not of ourselves. It is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. So the judge has already ruled.

[10:03] Jesus paid the penalty on the cross, and Jesus took care of our punishment. In American law, there is a principle called double jeopardy.

If you have been arrested for a crime, if you have appeared in court, and the judge has ruled, and once the verdict is rendered, and the penalty is paid, the case is closed.

You cannot be tried again for the same crime when the penalty either has been paid, or if you have been declared not guilty. Well, Jesus paid the penalty for our sins on the cross, so the case is closed.

We don't have to pay the penalty. We don't have to go and do any kind of work for us to get close to God.

We don't have to do any penance to be able to get right with God, because why? The sentence has already been passed. The judgment's already been passed.

[11:12] The penalty has already been paid, and the case is closed. And so that's why Paul says, there is therefore now no condemnation.

I want you to also pay attention to two little words at the end of verse number one. There is therefore now no condemnation for whom? The world? Anybody? No, for whom?

Talk to me this morning. Those who are in Christ. So if we have trusted Christ, if we have been bought by the blood of Jesus Christ, and if we have been redeemed, we've been adopted into the family of God by faith, and Paul says, if you are in the family, if you are under the blood, he says, there is therefore now no condemnation.

And that's the key, because in Adam, we were condemned to death. We were condemned to total separation from God for eternity. But in Christ, and see, Paul made that connection between in Adam and in Christ.

In Adam, we were sinners. The wages of sin is death. In Christ, we have new life, and there is therefore now no condemnation.

[12:36] So your standing, your standing with God doesn't rise and fall on your performance this week. So you got angry with someone.

So you said something you shouldn't have said. That's still sin, but it's covered under the blood. And the Apostle John said, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And so, in Christ, there is therefore now no condemnation. And we look, we go on to verse number two. Verse number two says, for the law. And so Paul's continuing.

He's, remember, he's adding precept upon precept. In verse number two, he says, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Now he's moving on. He's using the same term for law that he used previously, and he's not referring to the Ten Commandments. He's not referring to the law of Moses here, but he's talking about a governing principle, a power that controls what happens, just like the law of gravity.

[13:51] In Romans 7, Paul described being controlled by the law of sin and death, that governing power in our life. It was pulling him down, just like the, just like the law of gravity, just like a rock that you throw into the water.

It is going to go down to the bottom. Why? Because gravity is at work. It is a law of nature that is at work, pulling it down. And Paul said, my human nature, the law of sin and death is pulling me down, and it's what's making me do what I do.

So now he says, in verse number two, a stronger law kicked in. So we had the law of sin and death before, but now that we are in Christ, he says, the law of the spirit of life in Christ has made me free. It has freed him from the law of sin and death. Death. When you came to Christ, if you, I know, if you have trusted Christ as your savior, savior, excuse me, the Holy Spirit's moved in and a new power has started working in you.

Now, sin is still around. It still has power if you allow it. There are still temptations that sometimes we fall prey to, but there's a greater power at work.

[15:12] Think about an airplane. Gravity doesn't stop working when an airplane takes off. Gravity is still there. The law of gravity is still at work.

Gravity is still pulling on every ounce of that aluminum tube as it is rising off the tarmac and as it's gaining altitude.

What happens is that a more powerful force, lift, overcomes the law of gravity. And I think that's similar to what the apostle Paul is talking about.

There's still a law at work. The law of sin and death is still trying to pull us down. But when the Holy Spirit is residing within us, the law of the spirit of Christ is greater than the law of sin and death. And it provides lift. It allows us to say no to sin and it allows us to be pleasing in God's sight. So the plane rises because something greater has taken over.

[16:14] And that's the Holy Spirit. That's what the Holy Spirit does in the life of the believer. And that's why the law of sin and death no longer has jurisdiction over us. Because we're now in Christ.

We belong to a new master. And as we see in the book of Romans, we see it in chapter 5, that sin has been rendered inoperative in our life.

It's destroyed, but it's not annihilated. It's just rendered inoperative. It's still there. And if we feed it, it can still take control over us. And then Paul says, we have been made free from the law of sin and death.

And the Greek tense that Paul used for that was a once and for all event. We were made free once for all. We don't have to be made free over and over and over again.

Paul said, it happened the moment we trusted Christ as our Savior. Past tense, completed action. You're not waiting on this freedom. We already have the freedom in Christ once we trust Christ as our Savior.

[17:22] And then we go on again. There's another four. What's four? What's four there for? Because Paul is again building on verse number one. Verse two built on number one.

Now verse three builds on verse number two. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh. God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh.

On account of sin, he condemned sin in the flesh. And what Paul does again is Paul anticipates a question from his readers.

So if the law is from God, and we know the law is from God, and the law is good, why can't the law save us? That's something Paul has been dealing with from chapter six on.

Remember, he's talking to Jews. The Jews loved the law. They loved the law of Moses, and they tried to live by the law of Moses. And when Jesus comes on the scene, what he's doing is he's giving them, allowing them to...he became the fulfillment of the law.

[18:37] He fulfilled every requirement of the law like we could never do. Jesus died on the cross. He made it possible for us to have righteousness that the law could never provide.

So what Paul does is he says, here is what the law is still good, and why couldn't it save us? His answer is the problem was not the law.

The problem is us. See, the law is like a mirror. Remember, when you look in the mirror after you've been out working in the garden or after you've been cutting grass, and you look in the mirror, you might see dirt on your face.

You might see, like I have sometimes, specks of mud when I'm weed-eating out in the ditch. And the mirror doesn't clean you up. What does it do?

What does a mirror do for us? It shows us the dirt. And Paul says, that's what the law did. The law showed us the mess that we're in.

[19:39] The law showed us how messed up we are. The law can't save us. And no more can the mirror clean us up than the law can clean us up.

I've asked a lot of people, how do you know, or when you pass off this earth, do you know where you're going to spend eternity?

And a lot of people will say, well, you know what? I don't know, but I've tried to live a good life. I've tried to follow the Ten Commandments. And what would Paul say to that? Good.

Good. But it won't save you. It'll just make you a better person. And there are going to be a lot of good people, if you will. I put that in air quotes.

Because the Bible says there is no one good. No, not one. So we need the righteousness of Jesus Christ applied to our account.

[20:35] The law could not make us right. The law could reveal and condemn sin, but it couldn't remove sin. So what God did was, He did what the law could not do.

He sent His own Son. He sent Jesus Christ, perfect God, perfect man, and He sent Him to earth, and He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.

Be careful here. He doesn't say He came in sinful flesh. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and He took on human nature. He got tired.

He got hungry. He wept. And He bled. But Jesus Christ never sinned. So He came in the likeness of human flesh.

And Jesus, it talks about Jesus being tempted, but without sin. So Paul's phrase, in the likeness of sinful flesh, protects Christ's sinfulness while affirming His humanity.

[21 : 41] We don't know how that could have been, Jesus Christ fully God, fully man. How could He be eternal God, living in a finite human body, yet without sin?

We can't understand it. But yet the Bible tells us that it is so. And that's the only reason Jesus Christ could have paid an eternal debt for you and me on the cross of Calvary. Another human being would have had to die for their own sins.

Jesus Christ, being eternal, could die, and perfect, could die for the sin of the entire world. He took our penalty upon Himself.

And then Paul says something. He says, He condemned sin in the flesh. Condemned. The same word from verse number one. There is therefore now no condemnation.

The same word Paul uses here. He condemned sin in the flesh. God passed sentence on sin, and He passed it in the flesh, in the body of Jesus Christ, on the cross of Calvary.

[22 : 42] Every bit of condemnation that you and I deserved, Jesus took on Himself on the cross of Calvary. God poured out His wrath upon sin, upon His Son, Jesus Christ.

Why do you think there was darkness covering the land for that span of three hours? And Jesus crying out, My God, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why?

Why would God have turned His back on Jesus Christ? Because when Jesus Christ took our sin upon Himself, God could not look upon Him. Because He had taken the weight of our sin upon Himself.

And so God poured out His wrath upon sin. He took our sentence. Jesus took our penalty. And He did that so the courtroom record of heaven could read, No condemnation.

And when that voice in your head says, You know what? You don't measure up. You're not good enough. You're not right with God. You're going to hell one day. The truth of God's Word can say, No condemnation.

[23 : 48] And what is Jesus doing today? Jesus, the Bible says, Jesus, when He arose again, and when He ascended into heaven, He says He ever lives, He sits at the right hand of God, making intercession for you and me.

So when our accuser comes and says, God, you see what they did? You see where they went? Jesus can say, What?

I covered all of that. God says, All I see is the righteousness of Christ applied to their account. That's the gospel. That's why Romans 8, verse 1 can be true.

Salvation is free. But it's expensive. Just like someone gives you a... I don't know what's expensive. Someone gives you a... A what? A Rolex. Or a piece of Swarovski crystal. You know what? They give it to you as a gift, and they don't expect payment.

[24 : 52] They just want you to enjoy it, and appreciate it, and receive it. My, it was expensive. Somebody had to pay for it. Salvation is free for us, but it costs Jesus everything.

And that's salvation. That's the gospel. That's why God can say, No condemnation, because Jesus Christ took it all. You know, picture...

Let's picture a courtroom. Let's say a young woman stands charged with repeated theft, and the evidence is clear. And the judge, who is known for being strict, but he's also known for being fair, he pronounces guilty, and he sentences her to the maximum fine possible.

But then, the judge stands up. He takes off his robe. He walks down in front of the bench, opens his wallet, and he pays the fine.

He's her father. He upheld the law, and he paid the price. That's what God did for you and me. God's our father.

[26 : 09] He passed sentence. He said, Guilty. But when Jesus Christ took our penalty, we place our faith in Jesus Christ, the righteousness of Christ, is applied to our account.

God looks upon us and says, penalty's been paid. No condemnation. God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son, paid the price for our salvation.

God, the righteous judge, who could not let sin go unpunished, dealt with it at Calvary. And he was also the Father who paid the price for himself, paid the price himself through his Son, Jesus Christ.

And then, we close with verse number four. That, the righteous requirement. So we had, therefore, we had for, we had for, and now we have that.

Everything that has preceded this builds into the next verse, and it culminates in verse number four. This has all taken place so that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

[27 : 18] And here is where Paul shows us the purpose of the whole thing. God didn't save you just so that you could go to heaven when you die.

There's a lot of people who trust Christ and use it as fire insurance. They don't ever intend on living for Him. They just want to make sure they don't go to hell one day. They want to make sure they don't go to everlasting torment one day.

So they trust Christ, and then, but they don't plan on following Him. I do question. Matter of fact, James questions that in his book, James. You know what?

You say that you're in Christ, but show me your works. Because if you are who you say you are, your life's going to show it. But, suffice it to say, God didn't save us just to bring us to heaven one day.

He saved you so that the righteous life that the law was pointing toward could be lived out in you here and now. So today, tomorrow, for the rest of your earthly life, we can live a life that honors and pleases Him, that points others to Jesus Christ through the power of God's Holy Spirit.

[28 : 34] The law said, be holy, but it couldn't make you holy. It can only show you that you weren't. In the Spirit, you can do what the law could not.

It produces life in you that the law has been describing all along. Notice the language that Paul used. He said that he, that the righteousness requirement of the law might be, what's that next word?

Fulfilled. Notice Paul's language. It might be fulfilled in us, not fulfilled by us. The Spirit does the work.

We yield and the Holy Spirit produces the fruit. That verb here is passive. It's not what we do. It's what the Holy Spirit does through us.

We don't fulfill the law. We don't fulfill the righteousness of the, we don't fulfill the new life in Christ on our own. We do it through the power of His Holy Spirit. Then he talks about walking according to the Spirit.

[29 : 42] It's a simple phrase. That just means walking in step with Him, following Him, walking in step with Christ. You listen when He prompts you. You read something in His Word and it convicts you and you repent and you do what God's Word says through the power of His Holy Spirit.

That's walking in Him. That's walking according to the Spirit. You're walking in step with Him and you follow where He leads. It's a relationship lived out day by day.

It's not a religion. You know, sometimes people say, well, you know, I'm going to change my religion. Well, I mean, you may have belonged to a religion, but if you come to Christ, you come to a relationship.

Because religion is man's way, religion is man's attempt to get right with God. The Bible says salvation is coming to Jesus Christ in a relationship, a brand new relationship.

and day by day we live with God according to what God teaches us. And here's the beautiful thing. When we walk in step with the Spirit, the very righteousness that the law demands starts showing up in your life.

[31 : 01] The fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, all these good, gentleness, meekness, all these things, the Holy Spirit can work out in our life. Imperfectly, although, this side of heaven, but genuinely it's the Holy Spirit working that out in us.

You know, walking in the Spirit is like walking on a trail that you don't know, but with a guide who's walked the trail before and says, we need to watch out this next one, this next point here is not really marked out very well, and so if you're not careful, you might miss it.

So we need to turn, we need to take this next little trail off to the right. That's what a guide does, and that's the Holy Spirit in our life as we walk with Him. And you know the guide, so you stay close, you take the next step, and you take the next one.

That's the Christian life, walking in step with the Holy Spirit. See, we don't have to figure it out. We don't have to figure it all out to be holy. We just follow the Spirit. We just allow the Holy Spirit to work out through us, and we follow the One who is holy as He works it out in us.

And here's the thing that I want us to do this week. When that voice shows up in your head, and it probably will, it'll convict you, it'll act like that prosecutor, I want you to answer it with the text.

[32 : 28] There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ. Answer that verdict that God has already declared in Christ no condemnation.

Maybe you lost your temper. Maybe you went to bed angry at your spouse. That voice is still there. Just tell Him no condemnation.

Now one of the things that we know that when we're walking in step with the Spirit, we keep short accounts. When we sin, when we get angry, when we do something we shouldn't, when we say something we shouldn't, when we have a thought and we play with it in our mind and we shouldn't, we confess.

We say, God, I know it's wrong. I'm a sinner. I've sinned. And thank you for your forgiveness. We keep short accounts. We take it to the Lord. We confess it.

We walk in the Spirit. We move forward. We do all that from a place of no condemnation because of our standing in Jesus Christ. And then, just imagine what a local church, what a body of Christ would be like if every one of us lived under this verdict.

[33 : 41] No condemnation. No more hiding. No more performing on Sunday. No more performing during the week to try to get right with God.

Just a room full of people who know that they're loved, know that they're known, know that they're forgiven, and know that they're free. People that don't have to worry about the penalty of sin, but who have the freedom to live out righteousness in Jesus Christ.

That's the church Paul is ascribing in Romans chapter 8. That's the church that Jesus Christ died to create. Today, if you this morning, if you are here in this room or if you are listening to this message at any point in the future, if you have never yet trusted Jesus Christ as being the full payment, taking the full payment for your sin, your condemnation is what the Bible calls the lake of fire.

An eternal separation from God. But right here, right now, God is calling out to you, and He has His arms wide open and says, all who call upon me will be saved.

So this morning, wherever you are, do you believe that what the Apostle Paul said is true? Those who come to Jesus in repentance and say, I know I'm a sinner and trust what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary, the good news is, Jesus Christ already paid the penalty for your sin.

[35 : 20] And He's calling you to a brand new standing in Jesus Christ. And all you have to do is trust Jesus alone today.

Today can be the day that the verdict over your life changes. Would you come to Jesus? Let's pray. Father, we come to You today. We thank You that it's possible for us to live under no condemnation because Jesus Christ took that penalty upon Himself and paid the punishment on the cross.

So Father, we pray that if there's anyone here today that is not sure that they belong to You, Father, I pray that You'd help them to understand and know that new life is available to all who trust Christ as their Savior, and Lord, we pray today that we may be able to rejoice with someone.

We just thank You for what You're going to do. Take us through this week. Help us to honor and glorify You as we walk in the Spirit, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

As our worship team is... Thanks for joining us today. We hope this message encouraged you and gave you something to apply to your life this week. If you'd like to learn more about Faith Bible Church or connect with us, visit our website at meetfaith.org.

[36 : 46] We'd love to hear from you. Have a great week and we'll see you next time.