

The Spirit of Life Has Set You Free

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 04 October 2026

[0:00] All right, check, check, check. Can you hear me okay? You sure? All right, please turn with me to Romans chapter 8.

! Romans chapter 8. Just a few comments. One, in the announcements, if you're a man, we want you for every man a warrior. It's a great study that looks at not only our relationship with God, but relationships within our family unit, and then how we relate to the things of this world. So I'd encourage you, we're going to have a, one will be a morning study, and we're going to also have an evening study during the week. So if you could sign up, and then what we'll do is we will find out which night is the one or the evening that works best.

But I'd encourage you, if you're looking for a time, we work through a workbook, you want to get to know some of the other men in the church, this is the study for you. Number two, I just want to follow up on what Chris said. Yeah, I need some prayer.

And, you know, when he talks about what we, pastor appreciation, I'd really appreciate prayer for this month.

Just jumping in and out of different doctors. You all know I kind of had that, they thought it was a mini stroke, but it wasn't. It's some other muscle spasm in my brain. Dave Nannery said it's because my brain's too big, but I don't think that's true. So I'm doing that, and there's a problem with my endocrine system that regulates all the hormones, so I'm going to be seeing these different doctors. So finally, for the last year, the doctors have been experimenting with drugs, and they've had little to no effect, so they're digging deeper. So I'd appreciate those prayers. And the big one that I have, if you're here and you have a spiritual gift, that means if you're saved, guess what? You have one. I'd love for you to use it here at the church. I'd love to see you engaging and just serving this body, getting to know people and being known. And a great way to do that is even to connect with our growth groups, just to know people, to love them, to have people know you and love them, and just a great opportunity for that. So that would actually probably be one of the greatest gifts that you could ever give a pastor, is actually increase the work that's going on here that we believe Christ is leading us to. So before I get to this text, and this is an incredible text, I even gave you guys a handout with the outline. You're going to see it naturally flow. But man, it is deep and it's rich, and I've had to redo this sermon several times because it just expands into these absolute glories of God. But let's just pray. Dear Holy Father, we just thank you for the God that you are. We thank you that we can actually take our petitions and make them before you that we can pray for wisdom for doctors for us. We can pray for our families. We can pray for our children. We can even pray about work situations. Oh God, there is no prayer that is unheard. The other wonderful thing that we get to do is that we get to be thankful before you. This is the time as we get into this Thanksgiving holiday. But more importantly, I pray that we'd be thankful for the God that you are, the God that knows us, the God that, as Pastor Dave preached a couple of weeks ago, knows every hair on our head. We can't count them, but he does. He knows us intimately.

[3:49] Sometimes that's a little bit overwhelming. So Father, I pray that this sermon would come as both a relief and a motivation for the things that you have for us, for those who call you and know you as Savior. There's some incredible promises just as we begin this incredible chapter.

So Lord, I ask that you'd hear every prayer, that you'd hear our confessions of sin, that you would hear that we long to see your face and to be closer to you.

And for some, it means, Lord, we need to let you in. We definitely need to open our hearts to you and allow you to do the transforming work that needs to happen in some of our lives. God, you are great. You are an awesome God. And we thank you for the God that you are. In your name we pray. Amen. So we're looking at Romans 8. I'm just going to start by reading off the text. We're going to be dealing with verses 1 to 4 this morning. Last week, we spent some time in verse 1, which is an incredible verse. But the next couple of verses, it gives us some of the implications. Let me just begin. Verse 1, 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. Why? 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.

This chapter is what I shared last week. It's one of the most celebrated chapters in all of the Bible. Scholars throughout the years have stated it is clearly the most loved, the most beautiful, the most hopeful, the most theologically rich, and one of the greatest supreme life-changing chapters in all of the Bible. How can it not be when it begins that therefore there is now presently no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus? Now, if you're new to the church or maybe you're new to Christianity, some of these words don't, they're confusing. We don't understand the meaning. Even the wording of this text is a little bit awkward when we read it. We kind of don't get the significance of certain things, and that's what I'm hoping to unpack for us this morning. But last week, we really dealt with that issue of what it means to have no condemnation, that there is no condemnation. And there's another term that I want to define for you is that what does it mean to be in Christ? So first, what does

[7:38] Paul mean by condemnation? And we know that condemnation is a courtroom word. And what I mean by a courtroom word, it is a judicial term. It is a term of reality. And what I mean by that, it's not based on anything subjective. You know, there's some times in our lives we feel guilty about something. And I always say to people, and they say, man, I really feel guilty about this. And I said, you know, guilt actually isn't a feeling. It's either you are guilty or you are not guilty.

That's the term. We look at the facts. It's why you'd go to a court and the judge would declare guilty or not guilty. But for an unbeliever to hear those terms that we are under no condemnation, that means, whoa, we're under condemnation. What does that mean? Well, it doesn't mean that God doesn't like you. It doesn't mean that God thinks you're worse than everybody else.

That condemnation is a judgment that follows guilt. That guilt has been established. And we looked at that last weekend. We're under condemnation because we're of Adam. Our first father sinned and sin infected us. And because of that, we continue on sinning. And that doesn't mean we're as bad as we possibly could be. It's not because we've committed the same sins or offenses against God, but because, simply put, we have sinned against our creator, the holy and great God. And sometimes it doesn't mean that means we've gone and murdered or any such serious sin. But at its core, it means we haven't loved God the way we should love Him. It means we haven't worshipped Him, the God of the universe, in a way that He deserves it. We haven't obeyed Him as we should. And the reality is we have all fallen short of His standard. And that God being holy and just, He cannot simply pretend that sin didn't matter.

It's a reality. And He has to deal with it. But that's condemnation. We are guilty before God. And we understand that our guilty judgment deserves His judgment and restitution. But we learn then that Paul gives us this incredible qualification. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So what does it mean to be in Christ? And that's a term some Christians use a lot.

And it doesn't simply mean that you believe Jesus existed. It doesn't mean that you grew up in the church. It doesn't mean you consider yourself a religious person. To be in Christ means that your hope for being right with God is no longer found in yourself, but it's found in Christ.

[11:08] That means you're no longer trusting your goodness, your morality, your religious performance, your ability to clean yourself up. Your hope is in Christ Jesus.

You're trusting in who Jesus is and what He has done for you. It's another way to say you belong to Him. Now, how does that happen technically? And that's one of the questions we're going to answer this morning. But if you are here this morning and you're not sure that in Christ describes you, I can honestly say that I'm glad you're here this morning.

Because Romans 8 isn't telling you to become more religious. It's not telling you that you need to clean up yourself, that God will accept you. It's simply pointing you away from yourself and toward Jesus Christ.

That's what verse 1 is. That's our new verdict. And this morning, Paul is going to take us further because there is another question every Christian eventually has to face. That question is, if God has changed His verdict concerning me, has everything actually changed in me? What I mean by that, because I am in Christ, should things look differently before I was in Christ? And we ask, this

question, this question, it's natural, because we sin. We still struggle with sin. We still face temptation. And oftentimes, we know exactly what God says. And guess what? We don't do it. And we soon discover that knowing what is right does not give us the power to do what is actually right. Now, for those who've been paying attention, you would recognize that Romans 7 is actually quite similar to Romans 8. And they match up in a great parallel. Romans 7, we learned what we cannot do.

[13:36] Romans 8, we're going to learn what God has done for us. Romans 7 showed us the weakness of our flesh. The weakness of trying to do it on my own. Romans 8 shows us the power of the Spirit.

Romans 7 showed us that knowing God's law cannot change us. But Romans 8 shows us that God can change us.

Now, before we dig into the text, I want to call your attention to something. And it's going to be repeated several times. These verses, verse 2 to 4, are incredible, because we're going to learn that there is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

We're going to read that. God sends, the Son comes, and the Spirit gives life. What we're seeing here is the Trinity being involved in our salvation.

And here is the question driving us through these verses. Why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ? Why is there no condemnation who are in Christ?

[14:55] That's the main question that I'd like to answer for you this morning. So to answer that question, why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ, I turn to my first point.

Because the Spirit of life has set us free. The Spirit of life has set us free. Let's take a look at Romans 8, 2. And it's an interesting verse. It says, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Now, a lot of people get confused here, because Paul is using this word law. And we're going to learn that in verse 3, he's using that word law again, but he actually means something different. So often when we hear law, we think these are the rules. We think Ten Commandments. We think the law of Moses. Ultimately, God's revealed laws.

But that's not what Paul's talking about here. Paul is kind of like making reference to laws of the universe. Like the law of gravity, right?

[16:03] There's a principle at stake. When I throw something, gravity will eventually pull that ball down. And we even make up some laws.

Murphy's law, right? Whatever can go wrong will go wrong, right? You know, we kind of make up these laws because these are these truisms, these principles that happen in life.

And we saw this in Romans 7, 21. He said, I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil closes that hand.

So it's like whenever I make a choice to do something good, I'm feeling attacked. I'm feeling something is coming against me. Verse 23 of chapter 7 says, I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind.

Now, Paul didn't discover another set of Ten Commandments inside of him. He said that there's something operating against them. And if you remember, it's going back to Romans 5 and 6, and we know this, we live in a world that's under the power of death, right?

[17:21] Everything exists in this world ultimately to destroy the flesh. It's the battle between good and evil. And that evil is an actual power, and there's these principles working again.

It exerts control. Paul's trying to say there's these two ruling powers, the power of death and the power of life. Something is for God, that goes on this side, and something is not for God.

So that's what he's getting in here, of sin and death, the ruling principle. But then he tells us there's a ruling power of the Spirit who gives life.

One scholar describes this as the forceful and effective operation of the Holy Spirit in God's people. So the question ultimately, what has the Spirit done?

In the doctrine of original sin, we know this, it just gets down to, we know this world is messed up. It is. Whether there's war, poverty, famine, there is destruction.

[18:39] Just because we live in a great place where we get to enjoy all the things of the world and think it's hard, here's a newsflash. Life isn't hard here.

There's places where the government is actively attacking you. Like just when we were in Vietnam a couple weeks ago at our son's wedding reception, we were in a part of Vietnam where the

American base was during the Vietnam War.

And there's still these places that are rubble. Just been destroyed. And they just make life work around it. It's like this reminder of how evil this world can be.

And the question we always think of perfectly is, you know, we're confronted with, I may not be as messed up as the person next to me, but we know those places where we're messing up.

So if we look carefully at this verse, it says, has set you free from the law of sin and death.

[19:51] What he's communicating here, it's the spirit who has set you free from the power of death into the power of life. And this is big because he doesn't say the spirit gave you some help to go from death to life.

The spirit gave you some additional motivation to get from death to life or the spirit made sin a little easier to manage. No, no, no. It said he set you free.

Amen. Fact is, we are liberated. Before Christ, sin wasn't merely something you occasionally did. And Roman 6 taught us that when we, before we were saved, sin reigned, sin enslaved, and sin exercised dominion in our lives.

So the problem wasn't simply sometimes I make poor choices. Our problem is we lived under sin's rule. That's why becoming a Christian is far more radical than simply deciding to clean up your life. You see, in Christ, you don't merely have new habits. You literally have a new master. Amen. You don't nearly need more information.

[21:12] The truth is you need liberation. You see, it's like, some people use this example. We've got the, I'm going to give you guys a science lesson, right?

Law of gravity. But why does a plane fly? Right? Because the plane uses the law of aerodynamics, that with going forward, pushes up on the wings, and lets it fly.

So some people think, you know, the Holy Spirit is what just counteracts the law of gravity from happening. That's actually not, is not what happens in the Christian life.

The Christian life is, the Holy Spirit has killed gravity. There is no gravity. You have been made free. There is nothing that has the power to pull you down.

It tells us that you've gone from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of life, and now you live under this new authority. Now, we know we've asked this question.

[22:14] Does that mean that sin has disappeared from our lives? And of course not. Because we still live in this world. Sin is still present.

Sin will still tempt us. Sin still fights us. And Christians still stumble. But Paul told us in Romans 6:14, Sin will have no dominion over you.

Sin will never change you back to live under the power of death. You're free. You're free. Sin will never change you back to live under the power of death.

Sin will never change you back to live under the power of death. So we understand that the presence of sin is not the same thing as the dominion of sin. Now, because one of the most dangerous things we can say about something that God calls sin is for us to just simply say, well, that's just who I am.

No, it's not. You might have been doing that sin or living in that way for 20 years, but now that you are in Christ, you are no longer that person. You are no longer under this dominion.

[23:29] It doesn't matter. Maybe it's a temptation you've battled for decades. Guess what? You are now free. But if you are in Christ, when sin calls, you can simply say, I don't have to obey you.

Because on this side, why wouldn't you obey you? Obey him. You didn't care if you offended God or anything. You just wanted what you wanted. But now you know God wants something else for you.

But here's the reality. Just because you are now free doesn't mean you're all of a sudden spiritually strong. It doesn't mean you have perfect willpower.

But there's this truth that you need to understand before any battle with sin is that you have been set free.

And I want you to notice where that freedom comes from. Notice it uses the words, in Christ Jesus. The phrase, again, that we read in verse 1.

[24:34] Our freedom isn't found in ourselves. It is found in our union with Christ. And his spirit now dwells within his people. That doesn't mean we're passive.

We're going to read later on in Romans 8 that we pray. We are to resist temptation. We are to confess sin. We are to pursue obedience. But we all do that from not a position of we're fighting to

be free.

We've already been made free. You with me on that? So verse 1 gives us this new verdict, right? You're under no condemnation. Verse 2 tells us there is a new power that you have.

Guess what it is? Spirit of life. You have the spirit of life. Now, Paul is going to explain in verse 3 how this became possible.

It became possible, and this is point 2, because God condemned sin in Christ. That's kind of an awkward term. But he condemned sin in Christ.

[25 : 39] 8.3. For what the law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did. Now, we're going back to the Mosaic law.

And if you want to sit down, I can understand the Greek, even though he uses the same words, why it means differently. But in this verse, there's a definite participle that precedes the word. So it means he's talking about a specific law, which is the Mosaic law.

And he's talking about God's righteous commands. And we know from Romans 7, there was nothing wrong with God's law. It's holy. It's holy. It's righteous.

And it's good. The problem was never the law. The problem was our flesh, right? And I use that analogy of the mirror. The mirror can show us that I've got spaghetti on my face or in my hair, whatever, however you eat.

No judgment here. But it can't remove it, right? It just shows you, man, you look like a mess. Don't go out today. The law does the same thing.

[26 : 46] It reveals, man, I got some sin. I got some issues. But it doesn't clean them out. And nor does it even tell me how to do it. It doesn't give me the power to actually clean myself up or to make myself right with God.

But that's what's so special about this verse. And you'll see it on the outline that I gave you. It's in the middle.

This is the most important part of the passage. It reads, God did. God did. God did. What you couldn't do, guess what God did?

What your morality couldn't accomplish, God did. What your religious performance couldn't do, guess what God did? How?

And this is what we look at the verse. It says, sending his own son. Not just sending a son, his own son. And we know that Jesus did not start his existence in the town of Bethlehem.

[27 : 51] He eternally existed with the Father. And the eternal son of God entered the world. And it's important to note, every other false religion of this world is motivated by a way for man to get to God.

And here we see the wonderful action where God comes to man. Amen? Amen? Amen. It's a humbling story, and it rightfully should be. Our story begins with God coming down to us.

And notice how Paul describes how Jesus came. It says, in the likeness of sinful flesh. And I want you to pay attention to that word, the likeness of sinful flesh.

Paul does not say Jesus appeared human. It says that Jesus was truly human. But he's not regular human.

He is the likeness of human, but there is no sin. John Stott puts this distinction well. He says, Christ humanity was simultaneously real, yet sinless.

[29 : 13] You see, so what does that tell us? That Jesus entered our humanity? He knew hunger. He knew exhaustion. He knew suffering.

He knew temptation. And he knew death. But he did not know sin as his own.

That's why it says he came in the likeness of sinful flesh without himself becoming a sinner. The question is asked, why did God need to send his self?

Notice that term, N, for sin. And that's actually a Greek expression taken from the Greek. There's a Greek Old Testament.

But what it actually means is concerning sin. It has the understanding of a sin offering. So when it says that Jesus and for sin, it means Jesus as a sin offering.

[30 : 18] And as we all know, it's not for his sin that he came as an offering for. What Paul is directing us is towards the sacrifice of Jesus.

That God sent his son to deal with our sin, to bear its judgment through its death. In other words, Jesus didn't come us to teach us about sin.

He didn't come to show us how to live. He didn't come to be our moral example. The text is telling us that Jesus came to deal with sin.

And now we arrive at the heart of this passage. It said he condemned sin in the flesh. You see, our sin needed to be condemned. The reason we are under no condemnation doesn't mean he doesn't do anything about the sin.

There's still this sin, this brutality of evil that is sitting there. And it doesn't go away. So what he did is he placed it on his son.

[31 : 30] And the son accepted that and received the due penalty of that sin, which was death on the cross. That's what's going on here. There's a lot of depth, right?

There's simple words that carry so much theology. So there's a connection. Verse 1, it tells us that there's no condemnation.

In verse 3, it says God condemned sin. He's telling us where the condemnation went. You see, God could not simply decide that sin wasn't important anymore.

God could not lower his standards. God cannot look at our rebellion and say, ah, don't worry, I love you anyway. He can't.

He's holy and just. It has to go somewhere. This power, this evil. So it doesn't disappear. It fell elsewhere.

[32 : 30] It fell on his very own son. So yes, the sinless son of God is how God dealt with our sin.

That is the substitution that happens. And at the cross, Jesus stood in the place of us.

And it's important to realize that God, Jesus Christ, did not die because of the sins he committed.

He died for the sins that we committed.

And he bore the judgment that we deserved. You see now, verse 1 makes sense.

Why is there no condemnation for the person who is in Christ? It's not because there was no condemnation to bear. Not because God decided sin didn't matter.

[33 : 35] But because for those who are united in Christ, their condemnation has already been born by Jesus Christ. That, my friends, is the gospel.

If you're asking the question, what makes someone a Christian? It's someone who had had Christ die in their place for the sins that we've committed.

And I want you to notice how completely this teaching destroys any type of human boasting. We didn't accomplish anything here.

God sent his son. Christ bore the judgment. And the Spirit gives new life.

Life. You see, salvation is not the story of impressive people finally becoming good enough for God.

Salvation is the story of God rescuing people who have no ability to rescue themselves.

[34 : 44] And then there's still one more question. Why? Why did God do all this? Why send his son? Why condemn sin in the flesh? And Paul simply says there's a purpose.

So that. What is the reason? So that. And that brings me to my third point this morning. And it's simply found in Romans 8.4. This is a wonderful verse. So that we might walk according to the Spirit.

8.4 says, So that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And this is crucial.

God's purpose in salvation is not simply to change your eternal destiny. God's purpose in salvation is also to bring change in your life right now.

Right now. Right here. Remember last week, one of the most important words in that verse is now. Sometimes we often think, God, why?

[35 : 49] I don't want to be here anymore. It's hard. No, no, no. There's a purpose why God has you here. See, God has already justifies you.

But what God is promising here is the God who justifies also transforms you, which is another word for sanctifies you.

It is God who makes you holy. It is God who makes you holy. And I don't want us to mix up the order as so many do, right? It doesn't say, walk according to the Spirit and perhaps God will remove your condemnation.

This is amazing. He begins with, God's purpose. He begins with no condemnation. The Spirit has set you free. God sent his son. God condemned sin in the flesh.

He does all those things. Why? So that the requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us. Grace first, transformation follows.

[36:50] See, last week I simply stated, salvation produces obedience. Obedience does not purchase salvation.

I want you to pay attention to the wording. It doesn't say by us. It says the change happens in us. Right? That's important because Paul isn't taking us straight back to, here are the rules, now try harder. He's describing what God is producing in the people that he has saved.

And how is that fulfilled in us? Who do not work according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Notice that term walk. That's the biblical language for the direction and pattern of your life. It means to be, it's consistent.

[37:51] Like when we walk, we're going somewhere, we're in this direction. I'm not perfect. I'm not at my destination, but I'm going somewhere God wants me to go.

Amen? It's not sinlessness. It's a changed manner of life. You see, the person who belongs to Christ has not merely received a different verdict.

He's received the Holy Spirit. And now think about how beautifully this answers the problem we've been wrestling since Romans 7.

God's law says this is righteous. Our flesh says, I can't do it. Can't do it. I try, but I fall. And then we have Christ come and deals with our guilt.

The Spirit comes and begins transforming our lives. This is what is called the promise of the new covenant. It's what Dave read, was an early prediction of what the new covenant was, a prophecy.

[38:58] It simply said, God puts his spirit within us. Now notice how this passage comes together.

For those in Christ, there's a new verdict. No condemnation. You now have a new power. The Spirit of life. There's a new accomplishment. God condemned sin in Christ.

Why? You have a new walk, which is according to the Spirit. This is the work of the Trinity. The Father sends.

The Son comes and bears sin's condemnation. And the Spirit sets us free and produces a new life. This is why Christianity can never be reduced to try harder, be better, be more religious.

We need God. We need God. Let me conclude by asking you a simple question.

[40:08] Where is your hope? Where is your hope? If your hope is, I'm trying to be a good person. I'm here to tell you that's not enough. If your hope is, I'm more religious than I used to be.

I used to come to church twice a year. Now I'm doing twice every six months. That's not enough. If your hope is, I want to do better. I'm going to try harder.

It's not enough. You see, the law already showed us that the problem with that. But if you are in Christ, if your hope is in Him, listen again to what God says about you.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation. Why? Why? Why? Because the Spirit has set you free.

Why? Because God sent His own Son. Why? Because in Christ, God condemned our sin in His Son.

[41:14] And why did He do it? So that you and I can walk according to the Spirit. My friends, this is Christianity. It's never been, look what I do for God.

It's to say, look what God has done for me. And now, because of what God has done for me, I belong to Christ.

That His Spirit lives in me. Sin is no longer my master. And I can walk in a new direction. So I encourage you to remember these four statements.

The law commanded it. The flesh can't produce it. Christ secured it. And the Spirit works in us. And all of it rests on His glorious declaration.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Let freedom reign in the Spirit.

[42:19] Let me pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we just thank You for the God that You are. Such a, it's kind of a simple section.

A little bit awkward to read, Lord. But the truth it contains is not only rich, but it's freeing. It's great.

It answers the question. Not only do I know that there's no condemnation now, but not only that, but there's a purpose for me. And it's to walk in the newness of life.

It's my motto. It's my calling. Father, it tells us that You indeed do have a purpose for us.

You tell us that we are no longer slaves to the old, but we're set free to follow and worship You. So, God, we love You.

[43:26] We thank You. And I pray that just these simple four verses would ignite a passion in our heart to love You even more.

To allow You into the dark crevices of our life. To trust You. And know all that shame we may be hiding.

You already died for it. The condemnation that we're feeling can be dealt with right now. So, Father, we give thanks to You and we ask You to continue working in us through Your Spirit.

In Your name we pray. Amen. Amen.