

No Condemnation

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[0 : 00] I'll turn back to the passage that we read in Romans. Romans chapter 8 verse 1. There is now therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus.

As we read through this section here together, admittedly it's not the easiest passage to read. It's not the simplest to follow. It's best read slowly. And that probably goes for the rest of the chapters previous in Romans as well.

Paul goes into great theological truths. He goes back to Abraham's faith. He goes back to Adam's son.

And as he walks his way through these chapters to the one we're at here, it's almost as if he's developing things by asking questions. You read Romans yourself and you'll see all these questions he's asking as he goes through these subjects or whatever he's discussing, the faith, sin, the law.

[1 : 18] He's asking questions all the way through it. It's like he's taking stepping stones in his developing theology and his teaching. He asks as he's going, what of these things?

If we say this, what now? And therefore, if we are in this place, what is the result of that? What shall we say then?

What then? As he's dwelling on these theological truths, he's then going to the next step and the next step and the next step.

And these steps that he takes, he comes to the relevance of the law here. The law to the new believer and where it fits in their lives.

And he considers this law by which should be lived in obedience to. And he then naturally shifts when he considers this law into a personal assessment of himself.

[2 : 26] And as he does that self-assessment on himself, it's a reassurance to us. When we read his words here, that the great apostle, the great theologian, the great epistle writer battles with sin.

We read here there's a conflict going on within him. There's two differing sides, two differing wills at war. The old and the new man.

The spirit of life and the spirit of the flesh. Fighting against each other. The power of sin. Maybe we thought when we became a Christian, things would be easy.

There would be no struggles. There would be no battles. But when we see Paul here, looking in the depths of his own heart, we see this war going on.

And it's a war that I'm sure many of us can relate to. A conflict that many of us had felt in our lives. And the power of sin comes in.

[3 : 35] And it goes against what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. As we come to this passage, he considers the law.

Maybe just simplify what he's saying for us. Trying to break it down a wee bit. Paul is saying the law here is a good thing for him because it shows him what sin is.

It shows him who he is in the sight of God. It highlights to him that he has broken the law. He's broken the law just as we would break any law.

If you're speeding in your car, you've broken the law. The law tells you that you've done something wrong. It highlights your guilt.

Maybe it speaks to your conscience. And if you're caught having broken the law, you'd be expected to be charged.

[4 : 39] You'd expect that there would be some form of punishment for breaking the law. But if you went to another country where there was no speed limits and no laws, you could do whatever speed you wanted.

And there would be no condemnation. There would be no charge. There would be no guilt. You would not make any error. There would be no punishment for you because there was no law. So Paul recognizes the law here. It points out his sin. It points out and highlights that he would know sin.

He feels the guilt of sin in his life. So we read there in verse 7. The law is, if it had not been for the law, I would have not known sin.

It tells him when he's offended God, not when he's offended the government. And as we go through this passage, when he sees what is recorded there, the covetousness in his own life, he keeps going and it seems like the sins are prevailing in his life.

[5 : 55] It seems like every avenue of his life has some sort of sin in it. And as we continue reading it, the battle that goes on, it says that he is captive to the law of sin in verse 23.

He's captive to it. It's like there's no escape from it. The law condemns Paul.

But in spite of all these sins in his life, he knows that there is an escape from the punishment that should be his through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Where all that guilt is washed away, where the charge is non-existent, where there is nothing to condemn him, Jesus pays the price so that he can be free.

And to use that imagery of the speeding ticket again, it's like as if someone else is paying the fine that is given to you.

[7 : 11] Justice is done. The fine is paid. The government are happy. It's been settled. But if someone else pays it for you, it is of no cost to you.

Someone else has taken the punishment and paid the price. And it's just like that is what Christ has done for us. He satisfies God's justice.

He pays the price of our sins and all our offences against the law. And it is of no cost to us.

It is all done for us. It is all of his grace and mercy towards us. Paul, as he's going through this later, he's writing about the law.

He looks at himself. He sees that he is guilty. The sins that lie within him. He comes to that point where he sees that Christ has set him free from all the guilt that he deserves.

[8 : 28] And in light of what Christ has done, he goes on to write one of the most comforting chapters for the believer, where he emphasizes the great promises and privileges that the believer receives through Christ Jesus there in chapter 8.

It's a wonderful chapter for us to come back to now and again in our lives and come back to often, even if it is only that first verse that we read. There is now therefore no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus.

Jesus has satisfied the righteous requirements of the law for us there in chapter 8, verse 4, so that we are free from all condemnation.

Just to give our minds, give a few thoughts to that verse, that there is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Firstly, we must consider, well, what was the condemnation? What does it mean that he was condemned before?

[9 : 45] That there is therefore now no condemnation? And then secondly, we'll ask then, well, what does it mean to have no condemnation? So firstly, what does it mean to be condemned?

What is the condemnation that Paul felt prior to knowing that there is no condemnation? Well, if anyone's condemned, there is an accusation or a charge made against them.

And the law is condemning Paul here. The law is making a charge against Paul. For all his sins that he has committed and he admits he has sinned.

He's holding his hands up and saying that he is guilty. He says that the sins in his life are blindingly obvious and sinful beyond measure there in verse 13 of chapter 7.

they're completely evident to him. He holds up his hands. He says he is guilty. And as he makes a confession of his sin and he looks probing into himself, he can feel the frustration as he writes.

[11 : 12] He's still committing sin, even as a believer. He's still condemning himself by the law before God.

He explains the battle and turmoil within himself. He continues fighting and warring between the old man and the new.

The flesh still has its desires. The body is still seeking its natural inclinations. You can almost hear his groaning as he writes from verse 15 through to verse 20.

Where he looks at himself and he's saying, I do this and I do that and I don't want to be doing these things but I keep doing it. He can't stop himself from sinning.

It just keeps happening over and over again. For I do not do the good I want but the evil I do not want is what I keep doing.

[12:22] He moans that he does not understand his own actions in verse 15 even. Because that power of sin that power of the flesh has him captive in verse 23.

The war that is going on the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in his members. There's no ability within him to escape this power of law.

In every way he feels condemned. When he looks at himself he's broken the law. He deserves to be punished. And then that great cry comes from him in verse 24.

Ah, wretched man that I am. Wretched man that I am. And I wonder if we've ever said that of ourselves.

When we look in the depths of our heart and we see the desires of our flesh waging war against the life that we want to live.

[13:42] I wonder do we feel like Paul tonight. When we consider the things that we've done the things that we continue to do we look at ourselves and we can be appalled with ourselves.

We can groan when we look at ourselves. Maybe we've said the wrong thing to someone. Maybe we've said something we should never have said. Especially when I consider myself one of the Lord's people.

Why do I keep doing these things that I hate? Maybe the sinfulness of our thoughts are miles away from where they should be.

And we're lusting after the things of the flesh continually. And we question ourselves how on earth can I be a Christian?

Maybe you're saying to yourself how on earth can I sit at the Lord's table when sin is so prevalent within me and my heart? I'm sure as you know there are many days when we say to ourselves as believers what on earth can I do?

[15:08] Paul says I don't understand my own actions. But he realises that sin is present in him.

He confesses his sinfulness they shall resentment towards sin they shall hatred for sin in his life. And that is because the spirit is at work in him.

The war has begun. The flesh and the spirit are fighting against each other. The spirit may be pushing you one way and the flesh pulling you in another direction.

the spirit is pushing you to read your Bible to pray and the flesh is pulling you to pick up your phone or to pick up the paper.

and you groan over that battle. And you hate the time that that sinfulness takes up.

[16:20] You spend time doing things that you shouldn't. You spend time doing things that you wish you wouldn't. And yet we still come back to doing them again and again and again.

it's just as if we are captive to the power of sin. And that is a constant battle for the Christian. A constant battle that we must be prepared to fight for but it's a constant battle that we'll experience while we are in this body of flesh.

And yes we have broken the law and when we come before God's justice we confess that we are due our punishment.

When we look at ourselves probingly we see I'm guilty I'm guilty I'm guilty I'm guilty I'm guilty we see just like Paul in verse 18 where he says that there is nothing good dwelling within me within my flesh but that's often the place where the Lord takes us before we profess our faith and trust and need in the Lord Jesus Christ we see that there is nothing good in us we must turn and put our trust in someone else because I cannot trust myself we have seen her helplessness before God and his justice and we too have cried out like Paul wretched man that I am who will deliver me from this body of death captive to the power of sin justly condemned to death is there any way for us to escape but of course there is there is only one way and the escape is found in Jesus Christ and Paul's groaning is then turned when he looks towards Christ and prays saying with thankfulness thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord he turns to the Lord he turns to the Lord because he has nowhere else to go and that is where we must turn to the Lord Jesus Christ when we have nowhere else to go and we turn towards him the deep hatred against that sin that is in our lives the sin that condemns us the sin that makes us guilty but when we turn to

[19 : 37] Christ we find a hope of escape we find that he is the one who has redeemed us we find that what Paul says here in verse 1 that there is now therefore no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus is true because he has taken away all our guilt all our sin he has paid the price he has set us free from the things that held us captive and though we are rightly accused by the law of being guilty when we think about it Christ sets us free chapter 8 verse 1 brings a massive sigh of relief for the

Christian the verdict of condemnation has been turned around where we were condemned there is now therefore no condemnation what does it mean to have no condemnation what does it mean to say that we are not condemned well in simple terms it means there's no guilt there's no sentence and there's no punishment due to us and though we know the law condemns us we are captive to the power we cannot set ourselves free it is a fundamental point of the reformed faith that it is not of ourselves it is nothing of ourselves it is all of grace it is nothing of our own goodness it is nothing of our own merit we cannot work our own salvation we cannot undo old sins by obeying the law for a time we cannot pay the judgment that is due to us the only reason we can say there is no condemnation is because someone else has acquired that for us

Christ Jesus has acquired that status for us that we are not condemned in the sight of God he has borne all our punishment he has taken all that sin from us but the sin is not just taken away and swept under the carpet the sin is not just waved as God would say well I'll let you off with it this time sin is still the price of sin is still paid for Christ Christ pays for our sins all these sins when you look at yourself when you look at the law when you look at the list Christ paid for everyone they've all been transferred to him they've all been imputed to him he is made guilty so that you are made free and you think well is that fair is it fair that

Jesus gets all of our sin and we get all of our righteousness all of his goodness and in many ways it isn't fair but it is what he did for us because he loves us it is his compassion towards his people because he sees your need he sees how captive you are by sin and he knows that the only way that you will be set free is if he pays the price if he bears the punishment his compassion is in seeing your need your guilt but is accompanied by his great act of redeeming you of setting you free to bear your sin so that we can say there is no more condemnation for those who trust in Jesus Christ the Lord Jesus has set us free from that burden of sin the Lord Jesus satisfies God's justice by dying on the cross and bailing out punishment satisfies the righteous requirement covenant of the law for us we look at the list of sins in our lives and it's not just that they are stroked off and we are therefore not condemned the sins are stroked off but we are given Christ's righteousness in place of the sin that is taken away from us all our guilt is given to Christ all the negative aspects that condemn us

[25 : 51] Christ bears and all the privileges of Christ that he deserves is imputed to us it is given to us given to those who believe in Jesus Christ we receive all the privileges that Christ deserves we receive the privileges to be children of God and fellow heirs with Christ Jesus as he goes on to say in chapter 8 there is now therefore no condemnation because Christ has loved us with an eternal love he has sought to set us free from the captivity of our sins that he would redeem his people that he would proclaim liberty to the captives as Isaiah 61 says

Isaiah 61 says that he would proclaim liberty to the captives opening of the prisons to those who are bound so Jesus has set you free from that enslaving power of sin but he gives you the oil of gladness instead of mourning he gives you a garment of praise instead of a faint spirit and then it says of those that he sets free that they will be called oaks of righteousness righteous in the sight of God righteous because of what Christ has achieved for us and in that confidence we draw near to God not resting in anything of ourselves but resting in the perfect obedience and work of Jesus Christ who has set us free so that we are not condemned Paul in Romans asks lots of questions and he develops this letter asking these questions how do we develop our lives knowing this truth knowing that Christ has set us free from the power of sin that has enslaved us and that there is now therefore no condemnation for those who believe in Jesus Christ what now what now for you what is the next step for you knowing this truth where will this take you I pray that we put our trust in the Lord Jesus and recall and remember to come back to these great promises that we have in scripture remembering the work of

Christ and what he has done for us I pray these thoughts would be blessed to each of us we'll conclude with