



No Condemnation!

Romans 8:1-4 | Mar 19, 2020

The book of Romans reaches a climactic point with Paul's declaration of "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." It not only sums up the first eight chapters of the book so far, but could easily serve as a banner headline over the entire story of the Bible. From the beginning, God has been working a plan to exalt his Son—in his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension—and to win back our rebellious hearts as a result. Paul declares, *Mission Accomplished!*

No Condemnation — Romans 8:1 means all our sins past, present, and future, have been fully atoned for, and all of Christ's righteousness has been credited to our account. It's like God has handed us a divine credit card, filled with the infinite worth of Christ's life, to cover every need of our lives. We'll never be insecure or bankrupt again. Jesus paid it all!

Spiritual Liberation — Verse 2 declares that the Spirit gave us new birth and united us to Christ. Thus sin no longer reigns and Death no longer threatens. We're not enslaved to religion (legalism is *illegal* in Christ's kingdom); we're not even subjected to ourselves. No, we're truly free! But we're not autonomous: Not the text says *the law* of the Spirit of life set us free from the law of sin and death. That means we're under Christ's rule now, his loving lordship. The Spirit writes the law on our hearts and then lives within us, to both motivate and empower us to go God's way.

Christ's Mission — Verse 3 reminds us that our liberation and justification result from Christ's mission. He came "in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin." That means Jesus was fully human in every way, though sinless. Yet he came "for sin." He came to die; to "become sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21). He didn't stand afar off, trying to fix us from a safe distance. He came right into our sick condition to become contaminated with it on the cross. What a savior!

True Sanctification — Verse 4 makes the astonishing claim that Jesus came on his mission in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us. In other words, the whole goal was to win our loving obedience, from the heart, in the power of the Holy Spirit. God sent his Son to make us holy, and wholly his. In Christ, we're not merely set free from sin, but we're set free to righteousness.

This is not only the goal of Jesus' mission, but of Paul's too. He said in the introduction to the book of Romans: "We have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations" (1:5). Again he says in the concluding doxology that God "is able to strengthen you according to my gospel... to bring about the obedience of faith" (16:25-26).

A great test of our salvation is whether God has so won our hearts that we have a growing delight in obeying him and fulfilling his Word. Far from making us casual about sin or lax in discipleship, true conversion makes us zealous for the gospel—to embrace it, love it, live it, and proclaim it.

It's just like Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery in John 8. After turning away the angry mob with his brilliant, "let him who is without sin cast the first stone." Jesus turns to the woman and says, "Neither do I condemn you, now go and leave your life of sin." It's the same grace that writes, "No Condemnation!" over our lives that also ravishes us, and motivates us to live the gospel from the heart.

Discussion Guide

1. Read Romans 8:1-4.
2. Do you agree that Romans 8:1 is a great headline for the entire Bible? Why or why not?
3. What effect does this declaration that “there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus” have on you? How does it make you feel? How *should* it make a person feel?
4. We likened justification by faith to being given a divine credit card (or debit card) with an infinite store of Christ’s righteousness, more than sufficient for every sin and every need of your life.
 - How do you use that credit card?
 - What keeps a person from abusing that credit card?
5. What do you think it means to be set free from the law of sin and death? If you were explaining this to a new Christian—or maybe to someone who didn’t believe yet—how would explain it?
6. Does this freedom only pay off on Judgement Day, when we escape going to hell? Or is it useful now? Explain.
7. Read Romans 8:3. In these days of the coronavirus, what does it mean to you that Jesus came into the world sinless, yet for the express purpose of getting “infected” with our sin?
8. Romans 8:4 explains that the goal of our salvation is loving, loyal obedience to the Lord Jesus. (Compare Romans 1:5; 16:25-27; and Galatians 5:6.) How much does obedience factor into how you think about the purpose and goal of the Christian life? Why do you think so many Christians are rather slack in pursuing holiness and obedience to Christ?
9. What is one practical application or take-away from this passage for you?
10. Pray for one another, and for God’s healing mercies on our world.