



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

The Joy of Being in Christ

October 20, 2019

Romans 8:1-4

Clint Pressley

8 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ 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, ⁴ 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.

(Pastor prays)

Romans Chapter 8 is one of those lifetime chapters you would meditate on and memorize. It's packed with theology, security, convictions and joy! This is a great chapter to think on when you are down and to use when you are witnessing. Chapter 8 begins with *no condemnation* and ends with *no separation*. It's packed with grace and filled with the Spirit. In fact, that's one of the major themes of Chapter 8, the Holy Spirit. Everything the law couldn't do in Chapter 7, by faith, the Spirit does in chapter 8.

Did you know that before chapter 8, the Holy Spirit is only mentioned twice in seven chapters? In chapter 1:4, he's called the Spirit of Holiness. And in chapter 5:5 we are told that God's love has been poured out into hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. Those are the only two times the Holy Spirit is mentioned in chapters 1-7. And now, in chapter 8, the Holy Spirit will be mentioned no less than 20 times. And in verses 1-4, Paul introduces us to the Holy Spirit's liberating work in Christ Jesus. Here again is one of the great "in or out" passages. To be a Christian is to be "In Christ," but what does that mean? And if you aren't in, how do you *get* in? Or if you *claim* to be in Christ but your lifestyle and actions say otherwise, could it be that you are not *actually* in? Like Noah in the ark, Genesis 7:16 says that the Lord put Noah in

the ark and closed him up where he was safe from the flood and wrath of God. In the same way, when we are in Christ, we are closed up into Jesus where the anger and wrath of God can never reach us and we are always safe.

There is No Safety Like the Security of Being in Christ

In Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation

If that's true, why do we condemn and criticize and complain? Why would we gossip and think less and assume the worst? Especially when verse 1 is so wonderfully liberating! Verse 1 speaks of those in Christ, to be in union with the savior to be grafted into His love, to be buried with Him in baptism and raised to new life. To love God because of the grace and mercy He gives us at the cross. To see glorifying God with your life and honoring Jesus with your marriage or singleness as the whole purpose.

Verse 1 gives us the great difference between a believer and an unbeliever. An unbeliever has judgment day in the future; a believer is in Christ and that judgment is behind him at the cross and now there is no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Not everyone can say, "There is no condemnation over my life." Can you say that? Not everyone can. Paul isn't a universalist. In Romans 9:3, he will say there are those who are accursed and cut off from Christ. But to have no condemnation is to have grace as an unconditional guarantee in Christ. No condemnation because if we have died with Jesus Christ, we will be raised with Him. The condemnation we deserve because of our sin has been removed at the cross, leading Paul to say in Galatians 3:13, *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.* "No condemnation" is a relief. This is not just the idea of justification, as great as that is. This is mercy and grace. This is *judgment* day becoming *Christmas* day. This is not getting what you *do* deserve and then getting more love than you could *ever* deserve. Verse 1 tells you that even though you are a sinner, in Christ Jesus, God does not condemn you and from that deep well of hope in your soul, you can draw up buckets and buckets of mercy, patience, forgiveness and endurance. Because in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation.

In Christ, we walk by the Spirit

When you read verse 2, don't run by the word "for," "because." Verse 2 is going to tell us why there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. ² *For the law of the Spirit of life has set*

you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. Because in Jesus we have been freed from the power of sin based on the death of Jesus on the cross. Verse 2 doesn't mean that we are *without* sin. It means instead, we are not *controlled* by sin but by the cleansing power and presence of God's Spirit in us. Here in verse 2, Paul gives the Holy Spirit one of the best titles – The Spirit of Life. It's what happens when we get saved. We were *dead* in sin and the Spirit makes us *alive*.

From creation, In Genesis 1:2, the earth was without form and void, and the Spirit of God hovered and brought life out of nothing. That same creative power acted in you who are in Christ to save and secure and sanctify you. You have been given the Spirit of Life so that you can live and endure and get back up again. As Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:7-10, *But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.* ⁸ *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair;* ⁹ *persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;* ¹⁰ *always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.*

The life of Jesus. That's what the Spirit of Life is. So are you walking in the Spirit? Are you putting to death the sinful distractions of this world? Are you fighting your sin and emotions and demons with the Holy Spirit? Are you walking in the Spirit? In Christ there is no condemnation, but In Christ Jesus, we walk by the Spirit.

In Christ Jesus we are loved by God

Verse 3 is packed with theology of the cross telling us that God has done what we or the law couldn't do. ³ *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,* The law couldn't save us. The law tells us what is right; it just can't *make* us right, because we, our flesh, we in our sin made it weak. I'm gonna tie verses 3 and 4 together and give us a theology of the grace of God found at the cross. Verse 3 says God sent us His son and verse 4 says God gave us His spirit.

John Stott, the great Anglican preacher, says that what God did for us in Christ unfolds in five expressions:

He sent His own son. God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, couldn't do. By sending His own son, here is the sacrificial love of God in sending Jesus. Here is John 3:16.

Romans 5:8 says, *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Romans 8:32 says, *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?* Just the phrase, “He sent His son” – think of David weeping for Absalom or Abraham going to sacrifice Isaac. And behold, what manner of love the Father has given unto us.

In the likeness of sinful flesh Verse 3 -*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,* This is very carefully written by Paul. Here is the incarnation. Here is Jesus Christ conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. Here is Jesus taking on man’s flesh without taking on man’s sin. All God so He could live righteously and all man so He could do it in our place. The one forever and only God-man that displays the unfailing love of God in Christ.

For sin Let’s read verse 3 again. *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,* For sin. A better translation is for a “sin offering.”

Here is the doctrine of substitutionary atonement without which you don’t have Christianity. Here is the *why* of the cross. God sent His son Jesus to die on a cross as a sacrificial offering given in the place of sinners. It’s what Paul meant in 2 Corinthians 5:21. *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* And there is the core of Christianity and the hope of the Gospel for any here who are not in Christ.

He condemned sin in the flesh. Look at verse 3 again. *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* He (God) condemned sin in the flesh. Here’s the flashpoint. God has judged (condemned) our sins in the sinless humanity of His son Jesus who bore sin in our place so that the condemnation that we deserve has been fully borne by Jesus on our behalf. And every bit of this has a profound purpose. Your Christianity has a purpose.

Obedience. Let’s read verse 4 but notice the purpose clause “in order that.” It tells the purpose of verses 1-3. ⁴*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 is our redemption and regeneration. That's not something negative but something positive. It blots out our sinful past and offers a great future. It disengages our hearts and minds and hands and feet from unworthy occupations and gives them the dignity of a new service. Obedience has always been necessary. Now obedience is actually possible. Verse 4 is about the position and practice of holiness. The position is the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us because we are in Christ and He fulfilled the law. That is justification. The practice from that is what we are now. We are not walking according to the flesh but according to the Spirit! Holiness is Christ-likeness. Holiness is an internal change that is displayed in external living. And that's what happens when we are in Christ. So are you? Are you living in Christ? Can you tell? Can others tell? Do you hate your sin? Will you do anything to please God?

There is no safety like the security of being in Christ. In Christ Jesus there is no condemnation. In Christ Jesus we walk by the Spirit, and in Christ Jesus we are loved by God.

(Pastor prays)