

XLVIII. Romans in Biblical Perspective
The Gospel of God
“No Condemnation – Now”
Romans 8:1
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Let’s look at this glorious, wonderful, Gospel, declarative promise. This is God’s Word that is inerrant and infallible. Romans 8:1 says [1] *There is **therefore** now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

This was a verse for me that was life changing, life transforming, life altering, and life giving so I ask the Lord to please help us as we come to this text of Scripture. Have you ever heard somebody say, ‘Oh my goodness, that’s too good to be true’? Here’s a verse that’s too good only because it’s true. What an amazing passage of Scripture. I want the theme of bringing others to Jesus not to be left behind in our study of Romans. I am praying that Romans, which is an exposition of the Gospel of God, is not only motivating, it is clarifying and it makes our task enviable and doable because of the Gospel message and the truth that there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

In other words, we’re not going out to recruit people to a religious club or to bring them to a new philosophy. We are going out on a specific mission with a specific message called the Gospel of God. It is unique. It is one of a kind. It is life changing. It is eternity altering. There is nothing like this message. To be saved, one must understand it and to lead people to the Savior, one has to say it because one is saved by faith and faith comes from hearing this Gospel.

Secondly, in Romans 8:1 there is an interesting word there that now I ask for your sympathy and your prayers. The interesting word is ‘therefore.’ First of all, this sentence is unbelievably jammed, filled, overflowing with a life changing message that I feel utterly inadequate and burdened to get to you as clearly as I possibly can, but yet realize my absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit to give us eyes to see and ears to hear way beyond the capabilities of this preacher yet God is ordained to do that through preaching but it’s even more than that.

Practically the word ‘therefore’ here means that whatever Romans 8:1 mentions, there are seven chapters of Biblical truth that must be understood in order to understand Romans 8:1. Let me put it this way. Notice the title at the top of this page which has the roman numeral 48, that means there are 47 studies I have already done up to this point that somehow, we have to pull together to understand Romans 8:1. In other words, Romans 8:1 is built on the previous seven chapters and that’s why I’m asking for your prayers so that we don’t get lost in those seven chapters.

Romans 8:1 is a hinge verse. It’s worth the time, angst and everything to ask God to give us the ability to grasp it to some level so that we can know the impact that it is designed to have right within our lives. This glorious statement of Romans 8:1 started all the way back in Romans 1, where Paul introduced his whole subject matter. Paul says in the beginning of Romans that he wants to get to Rome in order to declare for you the Gospel of God. Now, is it the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Yes, but he purposefully wraps the Gospel in a Trinitarian statement. The Gospel is the Gospel of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. You cannot understand the Gospel without knowing the Trinity.

The Trinity not only works as a Trinity in creation, the Trinity works as a Trinity in our redemption. God the Father sends the Son. God the Son sends the Spirit and God the Spirit, sends us to Jesus. Jesus brings us to God the Father. It is a Trinitarian Gospel that we have and therefore Paul wants us to understand that and he wanted to go and preach it to them but he has been prevented in the providence of God so he is writing this letter expounding to you the Gospel of God, which he is eager to preach to them. Even that statement awakes something in our minds. Who is he writing to? In Romans 1, he's writing to the elect of God. The elect of God know Jesus. They are saved. Why does he preach the Gospel to them? Isn't the Gospel the message that leads people to Jesus? Yes, but the Gospel is not the message that simply leads people to Christ, it's also the foundation of the message that enables people to grow in Christ.

Here's our notion. Well, I'll take the Gospel and I'll lead somebody to Jesus and they come to Jesus, praise the Lord. Now we're going to disciple and we're going to get deeper. I know what we're saying, and there's a sense where that's true but here's what I want you to understand. You never, never, never, never go beyond the Gospel in the Christian life. You go deeper, higher, and further, but the Gospel is the foundation of the Christian life. Everything else in God's Word is undergirded by the Gospel or you will get off course. The Gospel is not only the foundation, it's the channel markers. It's the formation of the Christian life. It's what guides the Christian life and it is the motivation. Why do we obey Jesus? Because we love Him. Why do we love Him? Because He first loved us. That's Gospel. He didn't love us because we loved Him. We love Him because He loved us and there was nothing to love in us.

There are things we love to sing and there's a reason we love to sing them, like 'Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.' There is also the hymn 'And Can it Be' that says "Amazing love? How can it be, that Thou my God should die for me?" What fills the authentic believer, is a sense of amazement at their salvation and there are two reasons why it fills us with amazement. Number one is the scope of what God had to do to save us. All of our sins must be atoned for – every sin in thought, word and deed. All the sins of all of His people must be addressed and God's holiness and justice satisfied. How can it be? And secondly, not only the scope of our salvation amazes us, but the efficacy of it. He has made a full atonement. He has seen the travail of His soul, and He's satisfied and not only that, the objects of His salvation. God sent His Son to save sinners – the helpless and the hopeless. God sent His Son to save those whom He didn't need, but He wanted. God sent His Son to save those who needed Him, but didn't want Him.

God didn't send His Son with the message – 'Son there's some people down there We really need if We're going to be successful' or to say "There's these people down there that are really pretty good. They just kind of got off course. Can you go down there, Jesus, and kind of coach them up for Me?" He sent His Son to save ruined sinners, rebels, those who were at enmity with Him, the helpless and that's why Paul takes the time in Romans 1:16 through Romans 3:23 to tell us all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none. Who is good, no, not one. There is none who seek Him. There is none who understands. We are dead in our sins. We're not just sinned misguided. We're not just sinned sick. We're sin dead and the only thing that keeps us from being as evil as we would be is God's common grace that restrains us, but what I need is God's redeeming grace that saves me from my sins.

Here's what I'm trying to say. The reason Romans 8:1 is so important is every son of Adam is born condemned. You were born with a death warrant. All have sinned and the wages of sin is death. God says, I will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. We are all guilty. That's our condition. There's no way you can understand Romans 8:1 with joy until you

understand, not only am I condemned, I have no ability to undo my condemnation. I don't have a solution for all I have is the problem and my solutions are even worse than the problem. My righteousness is like filthy rags.

Let me try to illustrate the way. Every Sunday evening my wife and I have a date night. We go home after the Sunday evening service and watch Perry Mason. I think it started in 1958 and we are now up to season nine. We watch a couple of episodes while we eat popcorn. I'll let you in on something about this show. Perry Mason wins. He is going he's going to have a client that everybody is convinced is condemned, guilty and needs to be convicted, but Perry Mason is going to go to work on this along with his trusty detective, Paul Drake. Then the key to Perry Mason, which is like all great men, is a great woman, Della Street. Some man at the end will stand up and say "Okay I did it, I confess" and they find out that the guy, everyone was convinced was absolutely guilty and condemned, goes free. Perry Mason is going to discover the guy was innocent all along.

When we get to heaven and we stand at the judgment seat and every one of us will – it is appointed unto man once to die, and then the judgment (Hebrews 9:27) – when we stand on the last day at the Divine Court of the Almighty, we can't be found innocent for we're all guilty and no lawyer is going to be able to fool the judge and the jury. I know that happens right here in our court system in America, which I think overall are the best court systems that have ever existed for very smart lawyers can trick a jury and can trick a judge. You will not trick the Judge that Day. The soul that sinneth shall surely die (Ezekiel 18:20). We are all sinners and in our sins we're headed to a Christ-less eternity, to a place called hell and God is justified in the verdict.

Romans 8:1 just dropped the bombshell. There is a group of people on that Day that do not hear 'not guilty or guilty' but they hear 'innocent.' The opposite of condemnation is justification, which is a legal term, meaning innocent. Now, how can I, with everything wrong with me, be right with God on that Day? The negative is no condemnation. All of the condemnation that my sin deserves has been removed and now the One who removed my sin replaces it with His righteousness. So, as I stand in the dock before the Judge and the search light of God's unerring justice and holiness is placed on me, the verdict is 'no condemnation.' Not only no condemnation pardoned, but no condemnation justified. Not condemned but justified. Not guilty but innocent. Not convicted but vindicated. The answer for how this happens is in Romans 4 and 5.

When Adam came into this world and sinned, he plunged himself and all of us into sin and were born sinners because we sinned in Adam, therefore all sinned when Adam sinned. We were all plunged in despair. God shows us the answer is a new Adam and He sends His Son, the second Adam. In the first Adam all of his seed die under the wrath of God. In Christ, all of His seed are alive – no condemnation. Innocent for sins have been removed. We've been plunged now into the blood, and His righteousness has wrapped us and will deliver us safe.

I found a Fitbit because I'm in need of a Fitbit. I'm hoping the Fitbit is going to do something for me. I think you have to do something with the Fitbit. I found one for \$19.99 and it actually works. One of the encouraging things was when I opened the package, it was all bubble wrapped, so it arrived safely. You have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus and I'm not saying this irreverently, but you have been bubble wrapped with the righteousness of Jesus. Hell's gate are shut, no condemnation. Jesus paid it. Heaven's gates are open. We are accepted in the beloved. You've been wrapped with the garments of Jesus, accepted in the beloved One and that's what Romans 4 and 5 tell us.

Then we get to Romans 6, 7, and 8 which takes us on a deep dive. You probably have to be about 60 years old to know who Ralph Edwards is but he had a program that was very popular which is actually being redone by the British. They have a way of taking what we throw aside, make money on it and the program was called This is Your Life. They would zero in on some celebrity where they this person's whole life was displayed through all of these old videos, snapshots, pictures and albums. One of the reasons I'm taking time in Romans 6, 7, and 8 as I try to make it as interesting for you as I possibly can, is because until you go to be with Jesus, this is your life – Romans 6, 7, and 8. You're never going to leave it until He comes for you or you go to be with Him.

Romans 6 shows how you are united to Christ. You are in Christ. Christ is in you. When Jesus died for our sin, we died with Him to sin. When Jesus was raised to unto the glory of God, we were raised unto the newness of life with Him. We are in Christ, Christ is in us. That is the hope of glory. That is something I remember every day. Baptism points me back to my union with Christ. The Lord's Supper points me back to union with Christ. The Gospel is union with Christ. I am in Him. I am in the Beloved. To be a Christian, you don't believe about Jesus, in fact, this is where I really wish there was a way that I could give us all a very quick course on Greek prepositions because there is a Greek preposition that is so hard to grasp because it doesn't mean 'on' or 'about' or even in a sense mean 'in.' It means 'into' for when you come to Christ by faith in Christ, you don't simply believe about Him or on Him but you are believing 'into' Him. You are into Christ and Christ is into you.

In Christ you have a new heart. You have a new record. You're born again. You're justified because of your new record. The righteousness of Christ is yours. You have a new life. You're a new creation, with a new nature. Now you still got two residents in your life. You have the Holy Spirit living within you, and you have the old man, the squatter living in you, trying to take over all the time. So, by the Spirit with the truth of the Gospel, you put the old man to death every single day. You evict him and say 'You do not belong in my life any more. I am Christ's and He is mine.' So, every day I am going to find the closet you're hiding in, the crevice you crept into, the door you're hiding behind and I want to evict you out of my life every single day until I go to be with Jesus. The way to do that is to stay fixed on Jesus and that's why we have Romans 7.

In Romans 7, we see how God has given this wonderful gift called His law and God's law is there to identify our sin, to show us our sinfulness and to point us to Jesus. The law of God cannot save you. The law of God is designed to show you that you're a sinner and you need a Savior because you can't save yourself. The law of God can't save you. The Law of God sends you to Jesus who alone can save you. It shows you your need of a Savior and to come to Christ as your Savior. It shows you your need to put your trust in to Christ as your Savior. The law cannot save you, and you can't save yourself with the law. Its gift is so that you see sin exposed, revealed, the sinfulness of sin and our spiritual impotency. And then it sends us to Jesus. That's the first half of Romans 7.

The second half of Romans 7 says, now that you're a Christian, the law still does the same thing. Not that you have to get saved, but now in your life for Christ, the law shows you how to love God. The law shows this is sin and this is how to love God but it has no power. The law shows you what God requires, but it has no power to accomplish what God requires and that's why it sends you to Jesus, who by the Spirit accomplishes this in your life. O, how I love the law not because it can save me or sanctify me or keep me safe, but because it shows me my sin and points me to Jesus so that if I love Him, I'll keep His commandments. And the reason I

can love Him – Gospel – is because He first loved me and I can love Him now because of how much He has loved me.

Paul now says, ‘let me put the topping on it’ by Romans 8:1 which says ‘There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.’ There are some great words in that verse – words like now, condemnation. What’s the opposite of condemnation? The opposite is justification. If you read this verse in a Greek New Testament it becomes initially insensible to you. Here at Briarwood we believe that God’s Word is inspired, inerrant and infallible and that means we believe in something called verbal plenary inspiration. We believe every word is important and we believe the order of the words are important. I don’t know of another verse in the Bible where this is clearer than right here.

The first word of Romans 8:1 in the Greek New Testament is ‘no.’ It doesn’t make any sense when you try to read it, does it? If I want to emphasize something when I write it, I put it in bold letters or in quotes, right? The way the Greeks make something emphatic is to put it first in the order, even though when you read it, it makes no sense. That’s the purpose, to take it out of its verbal flow and put it in front of you. In other words, if you were to read this the way they’ve written it, for it to be read, here’s the way it would read; There is therefore now no, not any single condemnation. There is no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus.

On Saturdays my sister Vickie and I would wake up and mother would usually be gone. I was not allowed to go out and do anything until we got the list done which was Saturday cleaning. Vickie and I would look at it and we would go to work. We couldn’t leave until we had done it all and we had to do it right. I will say that again – if it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing right. I can hear my mother right now, which meant and now I’m quoting my sister Vickie “Mama is going to be home at 5:00 and you know what’s next – the white glove inspection.” She’s going back and checking the whole list. I can promise you she’ll find something we didn’t do right.

Here’s what Paul is telling us. There’s coming a Judgment Day, an impeccable Judge who cannot be fooled, who will judge every sin and thought, word and deed and in that day, if you are in Christ when you stand before Him and He brings the full glare of holiness upon our sinful lives, the verdict on that Day is going to be innocent, vindicated, no condemnation. The reason why is because that God has sent His Son and in His Son He condemned every sin of all of His people for all of eternity. He won’t find a single blemish. It’s all paid for. There’s not any single condemnation. I will have people that come to me saying, “you need to back off on that a little bit for people are going to get pretty careless about their Christian life.” If you’re living your Christian life thinking it’s your carefulness going to get you by in the Day of Judgment, you’re fooling yourself. Our performance here isn’t going to get us there. It’s what He did that gets us there.

Now, what’s the evidence that He did it? There will be evidence in our life, but the ground of our justification on that Day, is not found in us. It’s not even found in what God is doing in us right now. It’s found in what God did for us, in Christ and in Christ He condemned sin. This Jesus who knew no sin, knew suffering. He knew the depth of hell itself. God’s grace sent His Son then God’s wrath condemned all of our sin as it condemned His Son on the cross in our place. There is not any single condemnation left.

Romans 8:33-34 says [33] *Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.* [34] *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the One who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* This is where

Romans 8:1 lays the predicate for the Christian life and the notion that what I do has anything to do with my justification is, in final analysis, an abomination.

I want to be clear on this. Some of us think that what we do is what creates our justification. It's an act of God's free grace whereby our sin was imputed to Christ for He paid for all of it and His righteousness was imputed to us. Sometimes in pulpits for various reasons, either through ignorance, sloppiness, laziness or manipulation, the Gospel of justification by grace, alone through faith, alone in Christ alone, is not preached as it ought to. Blessed assurance Jesus is mine O what a foretaste of glory Divine, as the hymn says. There is therefore now not any single condemnation. All of our sins, in thought, word and deed – every one of those transgressions have been paid for by Christ and the Father was satisfied. And because He was satisfied, He raised His Son for our justification. If that doesn't move you to holiness, I don't know what will. Certainly not the notion that I have to do something to add to what Jesus did, for it is I want to do something for the Jesus who did it all for me. I love Him, who first loved me, and there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

Here is the takeaway. In the next study, we'll find out about Spirit empowered emancipation in the Christian life, but first, we have to understand the ground of the Christian life which is justification in Christ. No condemnation because of Christ. So here is your takeaway application. Our justification is assured by God Himself, not on the basis of work that we do, nor is it on the basis of the work He continues to do in us, on us and through us. Yes, He is working on us, in us and through us, but that's not contributing to our salvation. I hope and pray you have a quiet time every day. I hope and pray the Lord's Day becomes precious to you. I hope and pray gathered worship becomes meaningful. I hope and pray personal evangelism becomes a way of life. I hope and pray that we hope and pray. I hope and pray that you're on this path of astounding growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

But I want you to understand is if that's true of you, from now until the day you die, this astonishing growth in grace, by God's grace, you will never be more right with God than you are right now. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. We will find out the evidences of what it means to be in Christ Jesus in the next study, but for those who are in Christ, Jesus, there is no condemnation. Our assurance is not based on the work we do for Him. Our assurance is not based on the work He is doing in us, through us and for us. Our assurance is because of the finished work of Christ for us. Our assurance is outside of us. As the hymn says, 'at the Cross, at the Cross, where I first saw the light.' Another hymn says 'No condemnation now I dread. I am His and He is mine' and therefore we are His.

As I close, I can't help but plead with you. Where will you be on the Judgment Day? You'll either be in sin and it's dominion or in Christ, no condemnation. Today is the day of salvation. I'm pleading with you. Don't leave here in the dominion of sin. If you want to talk and pray with someone about this decision to follow Jesus please call us at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 for we'd love to help you with this and the time will be confidential. We will take any amount of time to speak and pray with you. We're not playing games. This is eternity. We're born condemned but today condemnation can be eradicated. Justification can be declared through Jesus, who condemns our sin and therefore we have no condemnation and who gives us His righteousness that we might know Him, follow Him and love Him.

Please don't go here and get better. God did not send His Son to save better people. God sent His Son to save ruined sinners, rebels and those that are lost. Come to Jesus, just as I am without one plea, with Thy blood plunge me in the blood and I am whiter than snow. No condemnation now I dread, come to Christ today, come to Him.

For those of you who are so sensitive sins, don't leave here thinking, 'okay, I'll be insensitive.' No, remain sensitive to you sin, just answer your sensitivities with Jesus. Just flee the hill – Jesus Your redemption is full and free. No condemnation now I dread, full atonement. Can it be that Thou my God didst die for me?

For those who have become insensitive to our sin, do you see what God has done to save you and assure you and what was done by the Father to His Son so that there's no condemnation on you? How will we not hate sin and love Jesus? How will we not flee to Christ and follow Him? Let's pray.

Prayer:

Take a few moments in silent prayer. If today you've come and you're seeking, then God has sought you and God has brought His answer in spite of the inadequacies of this preacher. That answer is simply Jesus, yet profoundly Jesus, please call us to pray with someone. Let us help you get started. Today, our chains can fall off to be free from sin, its guilt, shame and condemnation and set on the pathway of grace to kill sin and obey Jesus more and more until we meet Him. Today, if you're sensitive and burdened by the awareness of your sin, then flee to Jesus for assurance of your salvation in Christ alone, and then follow Jesus and trap holiness out of love to Jesus. Today, if you have gotten used to Jesus and the Gospel, ask God to awaken your heart afresh – full atonement, can it be? Jesus, I love you who first loved me. I ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.