

XLIX. Romans in Biblical Perspective  
The Gospel of God  
“No Condemnation Through Emancipation”  
Romans 8:1-4  
Dr. Harry L. Reeder III  
April 30, 2022 • Sunday Morning Sermon

We'll be looking at the first four verses in this study of Romans 8 and as Ralph Edwards would say if you're a Christian, 'this is your life.' This is God's Word that is inerrant and infallible. Romans 8:1-4 says [1] *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.*

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 last week, Cindy and I were looking at a bedroom and we were wondering about furnishing it. She said with the eye that she has, "Honey, we don't have enough room to do that." I said, "Why?" She said, "We wouldn't be able to open the door." I said, "Can you get a double hinge so you can open the door both ways?" She said, "Probably, but we're not." So that kind of settled that one but I want you to see Romans 8:1 as a double hinge versus.

Romans 6, 7, and 8 are your life in Christ. In Romans 6, you're united to Christ. You're in Christ and Christ is in you. You're no longer under the dominion of sin, but you're under the dominion of grace in Christ. Romans 7 we see that God's law in evangelism showed you your sin, the sinfulness of sin and your sinful impotence that you couldn't save yourself and then sent you to Jesus. The last half of Romans 7, we see that the law does the same thing in discipleship that it did in evangelism. It shows you your sin, the sinfulness of sin and even as a convert, even as a Christian, shows you your impotence to deal with sin unless you stay fixed on Jesus. It's Jesus that empowers the new record, the new heart for your new life in Christ. That's the value of the law. The law can't save you, and you can't save yourself with the law, but that doesn't mean it's not valuable. It's valuable because the law points to the Jesus so in conversion sin no longer reigns. The law points to Jesus so that in discipleship you can begin to remove the sin that remains, and that's what its values are.

Romans 8 tells us the life of the believer in the Spirit because of the finished work of Christ and it begins with this unbelievably, wonderful statement of Trinitarian divine assurance. Romans 8:1 says [1] *There is **therefore** now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* It's a double hinge. Why is this word condemnation there? It points back to the first three chapters of the Book of Romans. Romans in the Providence of God because Paul wanted to preach the gospel in Rome, but he couldn't get there. So, he sent this letter as an exposition of the Gospel of God.

Paul starts off Romans by letting the reader know the good news is not good news until you understand the bad news. So, the opening three chapters communicate that every son and daughter of Adam is born condemned, is born sinner. We sin because we're born sinners. When Adam sinned, we said that was original sin. When Adam sinned, that's the origin of sin. Now our actual sin is there out of that original sin because we're born sinners. To what degree are we

sinners? We're under condemnation and God's condemnation is already been revealed as we see in Romans 1:18 which says *[18] For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.* Now, it is not revealed in its eternal implementation for that's hell. It is revealed in its consequential imitation for what a man sows, he reaps (Galatians 6:7). And that God gives us over as societies and nations to the desires of our heart which is an act of God's wrath. It's measured. It's not unmeasured. Eternity is the unmeasured irreversible, comprehensive, unending, unendurable, yet endured damnation of divine wrath. We're born with the ticket there and that's why it ends up, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

What is our sin? We want to de-God God and then throne ourselves as God. It's all about us and that brings the righteous judgment of the Almighty. Romans 4 and 5 tells you that solution. That solution is God's has another Adam. There is a second Adam, His Son Jesus. And just as in Adam, all of his seed die. In Christ, all of His seed shall be made alive and He loses not one of them. It comes to this glorious statement in Romans 5:1 which says *[1] Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Justified means we have been declared innocent, not condemned. Then He begins to tell us our life in Union with Christ in Romans 6 and the right use of the Law in Romans 7.

Then we arrive at Romans 8, that hinge verse where we're under condemnation and now tells us there is a group of people, those who are in Christ and for them there is no condemnation. In fact, there is therefore *now* no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. One of the greatest benefits you can do is walk through Romans 8 and start underlining those Gospel pregnant verses. I am eager to preach the Gospel. I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God or it is the righteousness of God or wages of sin is death but the gift of God is life. Perhaps in your quiet time in the morning take one of those glorious statements, like whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved and every day think of a different implication of that in your life. Just be saturated in this Good News.

It's clear that Romans 8 opens backwards because when you see the 'therefore' you know whatever is in that verse doesn't make any sense unless you understand what came before it. The reason why it is Good News to hear there's no condemnation because we just found out we are under condemnation and have no ability to do anything about it. Now we have a solution that's found in Jesus Christ. To what extent does that solution go? That solution goes to this extent; that there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. What do I have to do to get there? You have to believe in Jesus and by the way, He gives you the faith. Everything that gives you this position of no condemnation is not done by you, not done in you, not done through you, not done with you, but done outside of you and done for you by Christ at Calvary.

There is where it happened and it's infallible. There is therefore now no condemnation that's comprehensive. If we were living back, about a thousand years ago and Bibles were being translated into official languages like Latin, you would find out the way they translated that Greek word that we translate condemnation and they would translated damnation, which is a word you don't hear much anymore - Divine damnation. When you do hear it, you hear it as a blasphemous utterance but it's a word that is powerful. Now there is condemnation, damnation, eternal, irreversible wrath of God upon all who are in their sins and the only solution is Jesus, but it is an assured solution.

I mentioned this in the last study, but when you're writing in Greek, you can't put something in bold font or highlight it with a yellow marker or put some quotation marks around it. When you write a sentence, if there is something you want to emphasize in the Greek

grammar, you take it out of its readable position and you put it in a primary position. In other words, you make it the first word. Also in the Greek, in the original the 'no' is at the very first and the reason it is at the first is for emphasis. Here's what it's saying; There is therefore now no condemnation, none condemnation, not any condemnation, not any single solitary condemnation.

I want to say this reverently, but to get the point across, even if startlingly – if you are in Christ, you are beyond the reach of the wrath of God, beyond the reach of the condemnation of God, are infallibly, irreversibly, and comprehensively have been liberated from the judgment of the Almighty for eternity because God has already condemned your sin and He doesn't engage in double jeopardy. Therefore, since it is paid, there is therefore now no condemnation. This is so important. Please dig down with me a little bit in this study. You are in one of two categories. We're either in sin under its dominion or we are in Christ and under His dominion. We're either in sin and under its curse, guilt, shame and condemnation, or we're in Christ and under His blessing, who removed all, every single guilt, shame and condemnation. We're in one of those places right now, every one of us reading this today. There's no in-between.

Now, here's where it really gets sticky for us, but it also gets so exciting. There is therefore now not any single condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. There's only one problem. Back in Romans 1 through 3 it showed me I was guilty and I was under condemnation. There was something else there. I was not only hopeless, I was helpless. It says there is none who seek God or call upon Him. They all turn aside. In fact, the Bible goes on to describe me when I'm under the dominion of sin, I'm not spiritually indolent, I'm spiritually impotent. The language of the Bible is I am dead in my sins. So, what is the solution to my condemnation and how do I get from condemnation to blessing? I have to be in Christ by faith, having been justified by faith in Christ we have peace with God.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. How? By faith but the problem is I am dead. I am spiritually dead. I'm not spiritually sick. I'm dead. So how can I be in Christ? Let me try to illustrate it. This is not a prophecy so be encouraged. Let's say you're standing here in front of me, and you fall dead. It's not a prophecy. I'm not saying that's going to happen and I know what you died of, but there is a doctor I know who has the pill that will cure you of what you just died of so I say to you 'I have a pill that will cure you of what you just died of, will you please take it?' What will you do? Nothing. Why? You're dead. We're dead in our sins. That's why Jesus said to Nicodemus 'You can't see or enter the Kingdom until you are born again (John 3:3).' It's not if you come to Jesus, you can be born again. Jesus has to come to you and you have to be born again to come to Jesus, why? Because we're dead and you don't have eyes to see or ears to hear.

Here's another way I try to explain this. Perhaps someone goes through a pastor's class to join the church and the pastor hears this wonderful statement 'pastor, I just became a Christian and I don't think I ever heard the Gospel in the church I grew up in but now I've come to Jesus and so glad I've heard the Gospel.' That is a dangerous moment for a preacher. Here's the way I tried to help other preachers get over that moment for while that person is telling you how much they love you because they never heard the Gospel in the church they grew up in until they came here, you have some kids that grew up in your church that's telling the same thing to another pastor. Now, why am I saying that? Now I know you can grow up in a church that doesn't preach the Gospel, but many times they are growing up in a church that preaching the Gospel but they just don't have eyes to see and ears to hear and in God's kind, mercy, He gave it to them under your ministry, not because of your ministry, so praise God.

When we don't know Christ, we can't see it. We can't enter it and it makes no sense to us. One of our catechism questions says; What is effectual calling? It is the work of the Holy Spirit whereby He shows us our miserableness, whereby He shows us our treacherous position under the judgment of God, whereby He shows us our blindness, and then He persuades us, and gives us eyes to see and ears to hear and now we come to Jesus. That's what Romans 8:1 is telling us. In other words, what is the solution to my condemnation? Jesus. What is this solution to my bondage, impotency and depravity in sin? Jesus. How does Jesus solve my condemnation problem? It is at the cross. How does Jesus solve my spiritual blindness, impotency and depravity problem? It is through the Holy Spirit.

Now let's go back to Romans 8. The way to get into Christ Jesus is in Romans 8:2-3 which says [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.* I hope you get a little bit excited when you see that word law for when you see that word law in your Bible, it means one of two things. The word law means governing. The speed limit law supposed to govern your speed. The Constitution is supposed to govern the behavior. Law is a governing implement, a governing instrument.

So, the first is the law as a governing principle or power or secondly, the law as a governing precept. When it talks about law as a governing precept, it would be speaking of something like the Ten Commandments with all the 'you shalls' and 'you shall nots.' But the Bible also talks about the law as a governing principle and here in Romans 8, Paul uses it both ways. Paul uses it first as a governing principle in Romans 8:2 where the law of the Spirit is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit as a governing presence of power and when He shows up He brings life – you can be born again. You can be regenerated. You can be given a new heart for the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the governing principle of sin and death.

Where am I apart from Christ? I am under the governing principle of sin and death. I can only sin for my will is not free. Oh, I freely express my will, but I can't do what I'm not able to do and when I'm under the dominion of sin, I cannot and I will not come to Christ. Why? I'm dead in my sins. Do you remember the game 'Mother, may I'? If you happen to say, 'can I...' then you lose and you are not able to do what you asked. In the second grade when I played that game I wore the dunce cap on numerous occasions because I didn't ask the right way. The game was used to teach you the difference between 'may' and 'can.' May is permission and can is ability. For instance, if you ask the teacher, 'can I go to the bathroom?' She will say "Yes." And you proceed to get up and go but then she says 'Where are you going?' You say "To the bathroom?" She says "I believe you can go to the bathroom on your own but to get out that door to go you have to ask permission – may I go to the bathroom."

When Jesus is saying 'whosoever will...' what is the next word? '...may come.' The door is open and any and all who desire to come have permission. What does Jesus say next? No, man can come unless the Father draws Him (John 6:44). That word draws comes from the word about drawing water up out of a well. I can go to the well because I'm thirsty. I look down the well and see the water. I say 'water, you may come up to me.' What will the water do? Nothing. It's under the governing principle of gravity, but if I drop a bucket and produce another governing principle more powerful and draw it up, then now I have water. So Jesus is saying 'you may come, the door is open.' The redeeming work of Christ cannot be fathomed. You may come, but you can't come and you won't come unless the Father, through Christ, sends the Spirit

and another governing principle overcomes the governing principle of sin and death and that's the Holy Spirit. Then you're born again and come from death and to life.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says [8] *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* I Peter 1:3 says [3] *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* We have eyes to see, ears to hear and feet to follow and then a desire to come where He persuaded us, moved upon our heart, emotions and will and brought us from death into life with a governing principle of the power of the Holy Spirit.

In other words, when we were under condemnation, the answer was Jesus who went to the cross and took away our condemnation by becoming the Scapegoat of God, who took away our sins in expiation, away from us, and becoming the Lamb of God, who in propitiation satisfied the wrath of God so that we are forgiven. Then He clothed us with His righteousness. He was the solution to our condemnation so that we're not only not under condemnation, we are pronounced justification, innocent with our sins eviscerated and His righteousness wrapping us, taking us, and we are accepted in the beloved. That same Jesus is the answer to our depravity, our spiritual death and impotence for from heaven He sends the Holy Spirit who brings us from death unto life. Put no confidence in the flesh that brings sin and death (Philippians 3:3).

The governing principle of the flesh is self-absorption, self-reliance, self-promotion, self-engagement – self. It is de-Godding God to make us God. That brings death in life which is the principle of the flesh. The principle of life is when the Holy Spirit comes – put no confidence in the flesh for it is the Spirit who gives the life, My words are Spirit and life (Philippians 3:3, John 6:63). Our condemnation problem is solved through Jesus, His blood and His righteousness – our only Hope and only dress. It's Jesus who sends the Holy Spirit and that governing principle brings us from death unto life. What this Jesus do to bring all this together. Look at the next verse where Paul goes back to the law as a precept.

Romans 8:3-4 [3] *For God has done what the law (the Ten Commandments), weakened by the flesh (that's us under the principle of sin and death), 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.* The law cannot save us. In fact, if anything, the law of spurs us on to more sin unless the Holy Spirit does a work in our life. Nor can we do it but God does it. How does God get rid of this condemnation? God condemned your sin in Jesus. He condemned sin in the flesh in ordered that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.

How do you know those who don't have condemnation? Here's the evidence. This is not the reason there is no condemnation. The reason there's no condemnation is because Jesus took our sins at the cross and paid for them. He condemned our sin in the flesh when God condemned His Son on the cross. What's the evidence of those who have left the dominion of sin and condemnation and are in Christ Jesus? It's at the end of Romans 8:4 – those who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

I do not want to have to deal with theological errors, but I will deal with them because I know eternity is at stake. This notion that the Holy Spirit is a second blessing and that you can come to Jesus in the carnality of the flesh is a lie borne out of the doctrine of demons. The reason that the presence of the Spirit is the marker of those who are in Christ and not under condemnation is because you can't leave your sin to come to Christ unless the Spirit brings you from death unto life and when He brings you, He doesn't abandon you for you are signed and

sealed to be delivered. You are baptized with that Spirit to be brought to Christ. The marker is the Holy Spirit.

The same God who was the solution to our condemnation and brings us to justification is the same God who is the solution to our salvation by not only bringing us from the penalty of guilt, shame and condemnation of our sin, but now has brought us from the death, power and dominion of sin and to life in Jesus Christ. This is your life. You have a life by the Spirit, in the Spirit, in Christ, in which there is therefore now no condemnation. In our next study we will look at seven blessings of no condemnation in Romans 8 and it's all because of Jesus.

Here it is in the positive. Romans 5:1 says *[1] Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Here it is in the negative. Romans 8:1 which says *[1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* Jesus took away all of the guilt, shame and condemnation and wrath of God for now and for eternity for those that are in Him. How do I get in Him? By faith. How do I have faith to get in Him? By grace, through the work of the Holy Spirit who brings life instead of what I've brought in the flesh, which is death.

If it was left up to me I would want to keep these Christians under control. So, I'll promise you no condemnation if you... but that's not what He does. This is the infallible, comprehensible, eternal assurance of no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So, your Christian life is not lived to help Jesus out saving you. It's lived because He's worthy and because you've been saved by a Triune God – the Father sent the Son, the Son gave Himself and the Son sent the Spirit, who brought you to Jesus and life. And Jesus is going to bring you home beyond the reach of the wrath of God because He's already satisfied it at the cross.

The same God who eradicated condemnation is the same God who liberated you and emancipated you from the death of sin in the flesh. It was through His emancipation that you came to Jesus for no condemnation. How did He do that? I want to show you one more thing and then we'll close. Romans 8:3a says *[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...* When Jesus came into this world, He knew no sin (II Corinthians 5:21). Amen. The Bible is also telling us right now that He did not come into a pristine world with a pristine body. He was found in the appearance of sinful flesh. He had no sin nature and He did not sin, but He was tempted at every point (Hebrews 4:15). See His bursting capillaries in the garden as He anticipates with the human fears of what He is about to do at the cross. See Him at the tomb of Lazarus. Jesus could get a cold. He did not have the pristine body of the first Adam. He did not come into the Garden of Eden. He came with a body that had come through generations of the physical ramification of sin. He came with a body into a world of sin, not a Garden of Eden, into the wilderness of sin, not the Garden of Eden and He was tempted at every point like you. He had a true human brain, true human mind, true human soul, true human body, yet He was without sin. so when Jesus went to the cross, He could bear your sin.

Sometimes we think, 'Well, Jesus went to the cross and there were 13 sins from Harry' as if there is this card exchange thing that's going on. Do you understand that our sin is indelibly penetrated in our being? Maybe the best way to illustrate it is that I love fountain pens, which means I stay in a constant gaze of my wife because fountain pens have to be filled up and I am not the greatest at filling up fountain pens, which means I have shirts that have generous amounts of black ink in them, which I bring to my wife and say "Honey, can you get this ink out?" She says, 'No.' I say, "What next? Can't you get rid of these spots?" She says 'No, throw it away.' But He didn't throw you away.

May I be Shakespearian and try to be reverent? When we see our sin, we would cry out, “Out, damnable spot!” But it won't come out unless Jesus gets it out and every single one of your sins and my sins He gets out. Then the Father pours out the wrath due to my sins of thought, word and deed, every single one of them upon Jesus at the cross and there Jesus was condemned in my place He stood. There He bore all of our sins. I don't have to work hard for the take away for it's given in the text.

Here's the takeaway; what the law could not do and what I could not do in the weakness of the flesh God has done. Can you believe that message has been given to us? Can you believe that has been done for us? It's not whether you're good enough for God has done it. Now will you leave reading this in your sins or in Christ? I plead with you, come to Christ. You know those haunting sins? Peter had them, didn't he? Elijah had them. Every saint had them. Those haunting sins – denying Jesus, faltering, failing, cowardice, etc. People sometimes criticize me for many things, and probably rightly so but one of them is that when I give my testimony some think I don't talk enough about my life apart from Christ so that people can identify with you.

My identity is Jesus and I'm going to tell people I'm a sinner. My guess is they know what that is and I just want to tell them about Jesus. I have haunting sins and heinous sins and they all praise God have been paid for. When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt, I just say to him, “You don't know the half of it.” I don't even know all of my sins. He has paid for your haunting sins, your heinous sins and for your hidden sins. He has paid for our unknown sins – the sins we don't even know about. He paid for the sins I want to forget. He paid for the sins I don't want to know about. Christ knows them all, took them all and paid for them all and the wrath of God that was due for them all what was poured out upon Him. God the Father, in my place put His Son and condemned all of those sins in Christ, and the damnation of those spots were taken out. Then He clothed me with His righteousness.

It was either Dr. Murray or Dr. Ferguson who said this; “We don't know a whole lot about Jesus, but we do know what He wore.” We know what He wore to the cross, don't we? I don't know why the Bible takes time to tell us, but it does that Jesus wore what a seamless garment to fulfill prophecy and cast lots for. I don't want to overly spiritualize and I'm not going to spiritualize. I am just going to contemplate – could that seamless garment tell me, ‘Harry, all of your sins are gone for He took them at the cross. Now you're wrapped in the seamless righteousness of Jesus, who has fulfilled the requirement of the law for you. Now you don't have anything but justification and blessing in My Son.’

It is that, that God has given to us and the grace of God through the Son of God. God Himself has saved His people from the wrath of God, the condemnation of God to the glory of God by the power of the Spirit of God. It's not no condemnation because of the work that's done on us or in us or through us, but the work that was done for us at the cross. Satan, you can accuse, but you don't even have half the idea for we are in Christ by His doing and we are beyond the reach of Divine wrath and condemnation, if we are in Christ by the Spirit. You will see those in Christ not by perfection, but by a heart, to be led by the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. What you know is beyond the reach of Divine judgment, which means we are gripped by the grace of God and Christ, and He will not let us go. Let's pray.

Prayer:

May I ask you simply to consider two things If you're reading this today, apart from Christ, I plead with you to come to Christ, who died once and for all and when He died, He died for all your sins at once. I invite you to Him. If you would like to make this decision or would like to

pray with someone, please call us at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 for there will be people who would love to talk and pray with you. Just to come to Christ. Maybe there is an area of your life you want to talk about a pray about with someone, so please call us. If God has brought you to this today, it's that's the Holy Spirit to bring you persuade you to come to Christ. Today, if you're in Christ, would you please believe Jesus that there's no condemnation. The assurance is because of His work, not our work and now we're ready to work for Him who is worthy. We've been saved by a Triune God, and His grace is glorious. There is your plea at the throne, Jesus, who died for you and who holds you. Your name is in His hands. Just take a few moments of silent prayer. This is so glorious. Please bathe in it. Please be refreshed in it. Father, work in the hearts of Your people, giving them eyes to see and ears to hear for I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.