

## Romans 8:1-4

“In Christ Jesus”

We come to another one of those areas of scripture this morning that are *explosive* in information and revelation, but unfortunate in the area of how the ch break seems to violate the simple contextual flow. and Though I’m thankful for those who inserted Vs references and ch breaks in the sense that it really organizes our study time, for the life of me I’m unable to reason through as to exactly why they chose certain places to insert the breaks. Because Paul doesn’t really fall into another flow of thought until after vs 4 of ch 8 with respect to what we were studying last time in ch 7.

You recall that Paul was expressing that frustration, the aggravation that comes along with trying to please God in the efforts of my flesh, because the result always ends up as incessant unending failure. What I will to do I don’t do, and what I will *not* to do, that I do. I mean, the “want” to do the right thing is all *over* me, its deep *with in* me, but how to perform what is good I don’t find. This was Paul’s plight, his problem, his predicament, he says there in vs 22 of ch 7.

### Vs22-23

He finally finds himself at the point of utter exhaustion, just worn out, “I can’t do it God, I give up, I’m just a wretched, worn out man, who will deliver me from this body of death?” Translation, “I’m at the end of me, and I realize that the solution to my problem must lie *outside* of me because I’ve come to understand that *in* me, that is in my flesh nothing good dwells.” and We took note of that subtle yet powerfully profound difference in his position in vs 18 versus his position in vs 24. In Vs 18 he was thinking, “How” but by the time he got to vs 24 he realized that it wasn’t about how it was about who, it’s not, “How am I going to work this thing out for myself, how will I deliver myself from this incessant failure?” But rather it was, “*Who* is going to deliver me from this body of death?” Listen, as long as you’re at “How” your doomed to live a life of aggravation, frustration, failure and fatigue, but when you’re finally prepared to focus on, “Who” namely “Him” then you’ll experience a radical spiritual breakthrough.

Paul’s problem found its solution in the person of Jesus Christ and as soon as he turned to Jesus, he began to forget about himself and just thank God. In vs 13-25 of ch 7 you’ll find Paul reference himself some 40 times, throughout the *entirety* of ch 8 you’ll find about 3, all of which don’t really focus on him but are more in the passive sense simply amplifying the greatness of who Christ is, or what God has done and/or will do. However the *Holy Spirit* is mentioned some 19 times in ch 8 which ought to give you a real clue as to the key in living an acceptable life before God in regards to the practical on going, on *growing* sanctified life. (Look at vs 1).Vs1 (Read up to Christ Jesus)

Stop right there, and if that 1<sup>st</sup> ½ of this vs isn't underlined, circled, or highlighted in your bible, make it so. The reason I didn't read the 2<sup>nd</sup> ½ is because I wanted you to feel the full force of what Paul is saying, because there's a radically high probability that what we read in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ½ of this vs Paul never said. "What do you mean?" Well, look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> ½ (read), the oldest manuscripts, and the earliest quotes found of this vs don't include this last ½, it seems to be a copyist error, look down at the 2<sup>nd</sup> ½ of vs 4 (read). Notice it's identical, now Paul did say it there, and that's where it really fits into the flow, but here in vs 1 as I said you won't find it written in the oldest manuscripts, and if you're reading any other bible this morning other than the KJV, or the NKJV it probably doesn't have this last ½ in it anyway.

I believe that this happens to be one instance where the KJ translators got it wrong. Now having said that, it doesn't really violate the text since Paul *did* say it, he just didn't say it at this point. But if you're not careful you'll almost read it like a conditional clause as if to say, "As long as you don't walk according to the flesh, you'll not be condemned if you're in Christ, but if you're in Christ and *you do* walk according to the flesh, you're headed for hell." But if I read it like that it completely undermines everything the bible teaches us about our security in Christ being based 100% upon what He's done, and 0% upon what I do. (So understand that this isn't a clause that's conditional, but rather a simple statement that's descriptive of the believer's life, we'll touch on it briefly in vs 4). It's not saying if you're in Christ you might do this or you might do that, its saying if you're in Christ your life looks this, you live your life according to the Spirit, and not the flesh.

But what I want to focus on for the moment is the glorious declaration that if you're in Christ there is therefore now *no* condemnation to, or upon you. It's like this, the Father will not by any means or in any way condemn Christ, perish the thought right? Well, if you're *in* Christ, then there's no condemnation for you either, you can't drown the hand with out sticking the head under water. The bible teaches us that Christ is the Head, and that we're all individually members of His body, therefore if Christ isn't condemned, neither is His body. So *rest* in this, this morning, *rejoice* in this, this morning, and be confident that if you're in Christ there's no condemnation *imputed to*, or *imparted upon* you.

It's not there is therefore now, "Less" condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, though sometimes we *feel* that way don't we. But in Christ we don't rest on feeling, we rest on fact, we rest in faith, your position in Christ hasn't just *improved* so that you're in *better* standing with God but He's still somewhat disappointed *in* you and frowning *on* you. There's been a total transformation so that there is therefore now *no* condemnation. The bible tells us, "...*if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*" 2 Cor 5:17 Jesus said, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*" John 5:24

But perhaps we'd do well to consider for a moment the standing of those *not* found in Christ Jesus. There *is no* condemnation to those who are in Christ, but conversely there's *nothing but* condemnation to those who are *not* in Christ. In John's Gospel ch 3 after Jesus shared the glorious news that whoever believed in Him would not perish but have everlasting life, how that God didn't send His Son into the World to *condemn* the world, but that through Him the world might be saved, He said this, "*He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*" John 3:18 and There at the end of that same ch we read where J.B. commenting on Christ said these words, "*The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*" John 3:35-36 People protest, "How could a God of love condemn a man to hell?" But that's faulty logic. The fact is that God so *loved* you that He gave His only begotten Son *for* you, but you condemn *yourself* to hell by rejecting the free gift of everlasting life that's there for you in Christ Jesus rather than receiving it. Don't blame God for *your* rejection of His Son.

Check this out, there's even *more* good news for you this morning (if you're a believer) to be found in this vs. Because we've spoken of the ultimate effect of this vs towards you in that in Christ you literally *cannot* be condemned, because when the Father looks at you, He really doesn't see you in all your "wrongness" He sees Jesus in all His *righteousness*, because you're *in* Him.

I'm in Christ, He's in me, I've been "absorbed" so to speak in Him. If you look at the ingredients that are found in a big bowl of vanilla bean ice cream just swimming in caramel sauce, you'll find that it's sinful. But when you look at me, you don't see that the ice cream and caramel sauce because it's *in* me, it's become apart of me. Now that's kinda silly but perhaps that helps us get a bit of a grip on this principle at hand, I'm not pretending to be perfect, I know I'm a sinner, but I'm *in* Christ, the Father doesn't see my sinful ingredients, He's sees His perfectly righteous Son, I'm in Him.

But here's the deal, not only is there no condemnation awaiting me *ultimately*, neither is there any condemnation that is being placed on me *presently*. Did you catch that? Look at vs 1 again, "There is therefore (what) *now* no condemnation." At this time *presently* in your walk with Christ *personally*, and this is huge because how often when we fail, we fall, or we stumble in some way do we feel the heavy hand of condemnation upon us? It happens all the time, with out exception doesn't it? Here comes that little voice that whispers to your heart and in your head, "You're a joke, who are you fooling, apparently only yourself because you're pretending to be a Christian, but is this what a Christian does, why don't you just give up because apparently you aren't good enough for this whole 'Christianity' thing anyway!" and You feel bummed out, beat down, and beaten up, condemnation is at rest upon you. Now listen, when you start feeling unworthy, accused before God, understand this.

#1 Who is the accuser of the brethren? Satan, the bible tells us in Rev 12 that he accuses the brethren before the throne of God day and night. and #2 You were never worthy in the 1<sup>st</sup> place so why does it bum you to be confronted with that reality. If we were worthy to be one of God's own, Jesus wouldn't have come, He is our worthiness, our righteousness. Now in vs 33 of this same ch Paul writes, "*Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.*" Rom 8:33 Well we just learned that Satan will bring a charge before God's elect, but here's the deal, the highest tribunal in all the universe both on earth and in Heaven has declared you justified, who then can declare you guilty?

So what we're seeing here is that if you're in Christ, you're free from sins *guilt*, both ultimately, and presently. If God has declared us free from condemnation, than who am I to allow condemnation to rest upon me and play head/heart games with me? We are to *reject* condemnation, it doesn't exist for you in Christ in any way, shape or form. You've been freed from the guilt of sin as by the blood of Jesus Christ

Now having said that we want to take a minute or 2 here to discuss what this vs *doesn't* say, we've examined fairly thoroughly what it *does* say, but sometimes it helps us be a little more well rounded in our understanding to verbalize, contemplate and meditate on what a vs doesn't say. What it doesn't say is that there is no, nor will there ever be any *temptation* in Christ Jesus. I think the scriptures are clear on the fact that we're all tempted, even Jesus Himself was tempted by Satan at the end of His 40 day fast in the wilderness. We read in Heb 4:15 "*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*" You see the given in that vs is that we *are tempted*, temptation is going to come your way, there's no sin there. It's not sin to be tempted, Jesus was tempted yet with out sin, the sin lies in what you do with that temptation. Do you entertain it, act on it, think through it, or do you bring that thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ? Don't think it somehow strange to be in Christ and yet still struggle over various temptations, its one of the weapons of your enemy's warfare and he plays on the lusts of the flesh to seek to entice you to sin.

I also want you to be aware of the fact that it doesn't say that there is therefore now no adversity in Christ Jesus. No difficulty or hardship, there's no servant above his master.

Your Master Jesus Christ suffered hardship, adversity, and difficulties in this world, He told one of His would be disciples who cried out, "Teacher I'll follow You wherever You go," Jesus said, "*Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.*" Matt 8:20 Translation: "You better count the cost when you contemplate following Me because it isn't an easy life," tough times and difficult days are a guarantee for any disciple of Christ. He told us that in this world we were going to have tribulation, earlier on in Matt's gospel Jesus said there in the sermon on the Mt, "*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*" Matt 7:13-14

Difficulty, adversity, no escape from those things in Christ (at least in this world,) we realize that the present sufferings of this present time aren't worthy to be compared to the glory that's to be revealed in us, but these things are a present reality.

We don't read of no discipline in Christ Jesus, thank God for that because whom the Lord loves He chastens, you step out of line, the Holy Spirit's going to let you know. He's going to bring correction into your life, that you might maintain your course, run the race and finish well.

Finally I'd have you be aware of the fact that along with correction, we don't read of no *conviction* in Christ Jesus, and I bring this up because often times there's confusion between conviction and condemnation because initially they feel incredibly similar, an almost unbearable sorrow begins to overwhelm you because of sin in your life. But that in and of itself isn't a bad thing, what you want to hone in on, and begin to discern is which direction this sorrow is taking you. Because the bible is clear that the Holy Spirit has come to *convict* the world of sin, but Satan wants to *condemn* you in your sin, and there's a difference. There is a worldly sorrow, and there's a godly sorrow, they come from 2 different sources and bear 2 different results.

Paul told the Corinthians, "*For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.*" 2 Cor 7:10 and Of course the classic example of this would be Peter and Judas, both denied the Lord, both sinned as such. and Both wept bitterly over the face of what they'd done, but there was 2 radically opposing results that took place in each of their lives as the result of their sorrow. Peter (who experienced godly sorrow) repented, he was restored, and re-established in ministry. Judas (who experienced worldly sorrow) committed suicide, and in that example you have a literal illustration of godly sorrow leading to repentance, and worldly sorrow leading to death. So the question I need to confront myself with when I'm being overwhelmed with some sort of sorrow over my sin is, "Where is this sorrow leading me?" If it's leading nearer to God, dealing with me in such a way as to repent from my sin, never want anything to do with that sin again because its so destructive to my relationship with God, we call that conviction, its to be readily *received*. It's producing repentance in your life. If the sorrow that I'm sensing is driving me away from God, overwhelming me with a devastatingly crushing sense of unworthiness, producing in me a desire to just give up, "What's the point in me even trying," and all of that, we call that condemnation, its to be readily *rejected*.

You're "In Christ" there is therefore now *no* condemnation. Christ is the safety zone, as long as you abide in Him, you're safe. He's "Home Base" in the "Hide and Seek" of life, as long as you're there, you're safe. He's the "Ark" in which we ride out the storms of life. It's interesting that when God told Noah to cover the Ark in "pitch" there in Gen 6, that that same Word "pitch" is translated as, "atonement" in some 70-80+ places throughout the OT, it's also translated, "pardon" or "forgiveness." So that the Ark becomes the perfect picture of what we're seeing here in Rom 8:1, hey their boat was "*rocked*" went through the storm of world history, but it didn't matter how the storms beat on that thing, or how the winds tossed it to and fro.

God's judgment was being poured out unrelentingly all over it and all around it, but as long as they were "in" the Ark, they remained free from that judgment, free from the condemnation of the storm. As long as you're abiding in Christ, no judgment, no condemnation, be it ultimately, or presently/personally.

Vs2

Vs 1 tells us that we're free from the *guilt* of sin, here vs 2 is telling us that we're free from the *grip* of sin. The Spirit of life has made us free, don't you love that title? "The Spirit of life." He's also referred to in the scriptures as the "Spirit of truth," the "Spirit of holiness," the "Spirit of promise," the "Spirit of Christ," of course the "Spirit of God" or "of the Lord" or "of Jesus" He's called the, "Spirit of adoption," because we're adopted by the Holy Spirit into the family of God. and Of course we're reading here of the Spirit of life. Jesus said, "*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.*" John 6:63 and What is it that the Spirit has done for you? He's freed you from the law of sin and death, you've been emancipated from *sins* power, from sins penalty, and ultimately sins presence, nor does *death* have any lasting power over you. Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*" John 11:25-26

The bible tells us that the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. and Notice again the arena which this freedom is *granted* to you and life is *given* to you. It's "...in Christ Jesus" the bible tells us that God, "...*has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*" Eph 1:3 Every blessing that's given to you, or poured out and lavished upon you by God comes through the Spirit in arena, or the sphere (if you will) of Christ. Outside of Christ God has nothing for you, in Christ every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. and We thank God that the law of the Spirit of the life is stronger than the law of sin and death. It's like the law of gravity, it's an incredibly strong law that applies to all of us with out exception, but when you're in a jet and the laws of aerodynamics mingled the sheer power to be found in those jet engines, well a stronger law applies. So to with these 2 laws, the law of sin and death applies to all with out exception, but when we're *in Christ*, a stronger law applies, the law of the Spirit of life, and it liberates me from the law of sin and death.

Vs3-4

If we were to dance around on semantics here we might say that salvation comes through the Son of God, *sanctification* comes through the Spirit of God. and I love the way that the tables were turned on sin there in vs 3, sins agenda is to condemn you, but Jesus came along and condemned sin.

Now we have to follow the flow here and keep the context, remember all of this is spilling out of Paul's desire to be made righteous in the sight of God, that practical reality of sanctification. and He says here that the law couldn't do that for me, not because of weakness in the law, but because of weakness in my flesh, nothing wrong with the law, there's something wrong with me, its called sin. So the law can't make me righteous, my flesh is too weak, we've all tried to maintain a standard and blow our own standard from time to time, much less are we able to maintain *God's* standard.

So what God did was to send His own Son (notice) in the *likeness* of sinful flesh in order to deal with the sin issue, He condemned sin in the flesh. How, by being in all points tempted as we are yet with out sin, but then taking our sin upon Himself, becoming sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

But I want you to take note of the phrase, "Likeness of sinful flesh" what that means is that He was as 100% human as you are and I am, but He was void of the corruption of the sin nature. He was the spotless Lamb of God who laid down His life to take away the sin of the world.

Vs4

There's that phrase in its proper place. and Again I'd draw your attention to the fact that it's a classification, not a qualification, what classifies, or categorizes the believer is the fact that a believer doesn't walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. It's not that you never stumble, or never fail in your human frailty, but it's that your lifestyle isn't summarized or typified after the flesh, but after the Spirit. That word "Walk" refers to a habitual way or bent of life, we're talking here of established/practiced patterns of life, lifestyle.

So it's not saying that the law is fulfilled in you *as* you walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit as though it's a conditional clause. As a matter of fact look closely, it doesn't say that the law is fulfilled *by* you at all. It says that the law is fulfilled *in* you, this takes us back to the vicarious substitute. Jesus did for you what you could never do for yourself, it's been said accurately that Jesus paid a debt He didn't owe because we had a debt we couldn't pay. Remember Jesus said that He didn't come to destroy the law but to *fulfill* it, and He did so perfectly right down to the penalty of breaking the law even though He never broke it, He still fulfilled it. and As you are in Christ, and Christ is in you, then so to as sure as Christ is *in* you, the law is fulfilled *in* you, God has imputed to You His righteousness, and has forgiven you, has forgiven me, has forgiven us our sinfulness. In Christ Jesus, what a beautiful place to be.

Prayer Points:

God the blessing of being in Christ is impossible to articulate, we thank You for free us from condemnation, not only ultimately, but even now presently. and I pray for anyone who may be wrestling with the weight of condemnation, feeling like they just need to give up. God that You might reveal to them that the condemnation that they're experiencing isn't coming from You, and that they can completely reject it in the name of Jesus Christ in whom there is therefore now *no* condemnation. Thank You for doing for us what we could never do for ourselves, now help us to simply abide in Christ, and enjoy the freedom with which You've made us free from the law of sin and death.

If you're here and you've never given your heart to Jesus, you're under the heavy hand of condemnation upon *your* life, Jesus would spare you that right here, right now today. He didn't come to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved, it's our sin that condemns us, its Christ that frees us from the penalty of sin, from the guilt of sin, and from the grip of sin. Make no mistake, apart from Jesus the wrath of God *abides on* you, but the grace of God is *available* and extended *to you in* Christ, apart from Christ God offers us nothing, in Christ every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, and it begins with forgiveness. Why not let God forgive your sin today? Open your heart, ask Jesus to come in, He'll forgive your sin and give you eternal life.