

**Subject: *Our New Life in Christ***

**Scripture: *Romans 8:1-4***

This is one of the most beloved chapters in the Bible. If you were to choose five chapters of the Bible that contain the richest spiritual truth, this would be one of them. Paul gives a summary of the special blessings we have in Christ. Some blessings are for the present and some are for the future, but all these blessings are *only* for God's people.

### **1. Our pardon from sin**

There is therefore now no condemnation. "Therefore" goes back to the first seven chapters and now Paul gives a summary statement based on what he has said about salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. So far in Romans we have seen that everybody needs to be saved, everybody is saved the same way, everybody receives the same blessings in salvation (we are justified, sanctified, and will be glorified), and everybody has the same struggle with sin. Now when we come to Romans 8 we find the good news that even though we struggle with sin, we cannot lose our salvation. We are eternally secure in Christ.

Paul has mentioned "condemnation" two other times (Rom. 5:16, 18) in reference to the sin of Adam and how that original sin brought the human race into condemnation. It is a courtroom or legal term and pictures God as our judge. The Gospel says that condemnation is something that haunts every person without Christ.

**John 3:18** *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Condemnation is the opposite of justification. It refers to a guilty verdict and the penalty that comes with that verdict. Once we were condemned, but now we are justified.

People may condemn you. Your conscience may condemn you. Satan will condemn you, but God will never condemn you. No sin, past, present, or future is held against us because Jesus paid the penalty and took our place on the cross. No sin can ever reverse God's verdict—no sin of the flesh or spirit, no sin of omission or commission, no sin caused by the wicked world or the weak flesh is ever held against us.

"For" (vs. 2-3) gives us the reason why there is no condemnation for the believer. See Romans 8:31-34. There is a complete pardon and there is no condemnation for three reasons:

- A. Christ came in the flesh and condemned sin in the flesh (His incarnation and death)
- B. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ has made us free from the law of sin and death
- C. Christ died, rose, and now intercedes for us

### **2. Our position in Christ**

There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Every true Christian is in Christ. This speaks of our spiritual position. One of Paul's favorite expressions is "in Christ."

**2 Corinthians 5:17** *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

**1 Corinthians 15:22** *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

Jesus spoke of our position in Him.

**John 15:5** *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

God has given us a clear picture of what it means to be in Christ. It's the story of Noah's ark. There was salvation only inside the ark. Only eight people were saved inside the ark. Every person outside the ark died. To be safe and to live through God's judgment, you had to be in the ark of safety. Now just think of Noah and his family inside the ark. The rains came down and the flood waters came up, and that ark rocked and it's likely that Noah and his family stumbled and fell down inside the ark, but they didn't fall out.

There are only two options: either you are in Christ or outside of Christ. And your spiritual location determines your spiritual destiny. In Christ there is salvation. Outside of Christ there is condemnation.

Be careful about what God says here: *there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*. The promise of no condemnation is not for those who are in church, however good that is. No condemnation is not for those who are in the Bible reading and studying. No condemnation is not for those who are in a Christian family, though that is often a big factor in our salvation. No condemnation is only for those who are in Christ.

### **3. Our path in the Spirit**

Those who are in Christ are described by the way they live: they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The word "walk" refers to the way we live, our lifestyle, our habits and way of thinking. Paul is talking about the daily evidence of being in Christ. Not only are we in Christ, but the Holy Spirit lives in us and guides us. The Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit in us.

This is the first mention of the Holy Spirit since way back in Romans 1:4. The Holy Spirit is mentioned almost 20 times in Romans 8. A good title for this chapter is "Life in the Spirit."

- Vs. 2-4, the Spirit *gives us life*
- Vs. 5-8, the Spirit *directs our minds toward spiritual things*
- Vs. 9, the Spirit *lives inside us*
- Vs. 12-13, the Spirit *gives us power to overcome sin*
- Vs. 14, the Spirit *leads us as God's children*
- Vs. 15, the Spirit *adopts us into God's family*
- Vs. 16, the Spirit *bears witness with our spirit*
- Vs. 17-30, the Spirit *guarantees our ultimate glory in heaven*

And that's just the first part of the chapter!

In 8:2, Paul gives the reason why there is no condemnation for the believer. The law (principle) of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law (principle) of sin and death. One law or principle is greater than the other. It is like a big jumbo jet taking off from the runway. The jet with all the passengers and their luggage, and many gallons of fuel weighs several tons and the law of gravity anchors it to the ground. How can it ever take off and fly?

Another law of aerodynamics comes in and the velocity of the plane and the force of lift are greater than the force of gravity.

The gospel produces life and the Holy Spirit sets us free from the awful power of sin and death. Sin remains in us, but it no longer reigns in us. The power of indwelling sin (Romans 7) is now overcome by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God.

In 8:3-4, Paul tells us that Christ and the Holy Spirit did something for us that God's law could not do. Verse 3 says the law could not save us, and it wasn't a problem with the law, but the problem was the flesh. Romans 7:12 says the law is holy, and just, and good, but we are not holy, just, or good. There is none righteous, no, not one. None of us can keep the law. So God sent Jesus "in the likeness of sinful flesh." He came as a man with all the weakness of man (except sin), and then died as a sacrifice for sin. He was condemned and punished in our place.

God sent Jesus to be our sacrifice and Savior (vs. 4) so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us as we live after the Spirit. In salvation Jesus did something for us, so He could do something to us, so He could do something through us. The Holy Spirit enables us to live by God's law. Verse 4 is not a command; it is a statement of fact.

Think of what it means to have a new life in Christ.

If you *are* a Christian...

- You have a pardon for all your sin – NO CONDEMNATION now or ever
- You have a position in Christ your Savior – IN CHRIST you have a refuge
- You have a path in the Spirit – WALKING AFTER THE SPIRIT and not the flesh

If you *are not* a Christian...

- You are condemned by God because of your sin and you face eternal punishment
- You are outside of Christ with no place to hide from God's judgment
- You are on your own, walking after the flesh, trying to make the most of life without God to guide and help you

**Remember this about new life in Christ...**

- 1) New life in Christ changes your past, present, and future.
- 2) New life in Christ is available, but it is not automatic.

You must repent of your sins and you must believe in Christ and trust Him as Lord and Savior.