

## EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #28

Romans 8:1-4

**Romans 8 begins with the wonderful news that there is no condemnation before God and ends with the news there is no separation from God.** It is a glorious chapter, one that needs to be carefully studied and fully understood.

Now a major question arises - How is it possible for us, who are “wretched” sinners (7:24) which God’s law clearly reveals us to be, to stand with “no condemnation” before God? If we are sinners who will not choose to do what God wants us to do, and if we are people who sometimes want to do right but cannot do it because no good lieth in us, how is it that we get into a state whereby we believe on Jesus Christ and stand before God with no condemnation? **This chapter answers that question.**

If I were to ask you the question - Who was it that led you to Jesus Christ? - how would you answer? The true, Biblical answer is the Holy Spirit. No sinful, finite human leads another sinful, finite human to Christ. God’s Spirit does (i.e. John 16:7-8; 13-14). God’s Spirit was the determining factor and **Romans 8 is a chapter that magnifies the work of the Holy Spirit**. In this one chapter the Holy Spirit is specifically mentioned some 19 times - verses 8:2, 4, 5 (twice), 6, 9 (three times), 10, 11 (twice), 13, 14, 15, 16, 23, 26 (twice) and 27.

**IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT WE ARE SINFUL AND DEAD ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF GOD AND ACCORDING TO OUR OWN FLESH, IT IS THE GRACIOUS WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT GUARANTEES WE WILL NEVER RECEIVE CONDEMNATION.**

It certainly cannot be our flesh that guarantees no condemnation, for our flesh is prone to sin even when we do not want to. It is the Holy Spirit that guarantees we will never receive the condemnatory wrath of God.

Now the term “condemnation” is a legal term. It carries with it the idea of standing before a judge, receiving a guilty verdict and receiving the penalty for the guilty verdict. This is language that describes a judge handing down a guilty verdict and then pronouncing a judgment of condemnation (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 234-235).

Now the word “no” is a strong negation in Greek. This particular word “οὐδεν” strengthens the negation (G. Abbott-Smith, pp. 327-328). In other words, **there is no possibility of the person “in Christ” receiving condemnation**. No person who is “in Christ” will ever stand before the Judge and be sentenced to condemnation. This is an impossibility. As we shall see, it is not an impossibility because of us, but because of the Holy Spirit.

**Now we may notice that the critical factor for not receiving the wrath of God is being “in Christ Jesus.”** When Jesus Christ was here on earth, He predicted this - “In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me and I in you” (John 14:20). What does it mean that we would be “in Christ” and Christ would be “in us?”

The answer is discovered in the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. At the moment a person believes on Christ, the Holy Spirit “baptizes” that person into Christ; that is, He completely and totally links that believer to everything Christ is and did, including His death, burial and resurrection. This is the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” that puts one “in Christ.” At that same moment, the Holy Spirit comes inside the believer to “indwell” him, thus “sealing” him until the day of redemption.” Therefore, “**you in Me**” refers to the “**baptism**” of the Holy Spirit and “**I in you**” refers to the “**indwelling**” of the Holy Spirit. At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit places one into Christ and one of the wonderful realities of this is that never can that believer face the condemnatory wrath of God.

Now Paul gives two reasons why one “in Christ” cannot ever receive the condemnation of God:

**REASON #1** – Because of the work of God the Spirit. **8:2**

Now the essence of this verse is this - the Spirit of God undid for us what God’s law did to us.

The word “law” actually comes from a verb that means to deal out or distribute something that forces or influences one to action (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 304). The law is a standard that deals out or distributes something to people. **Specifically, what the law ended up dishing out to all of us was the reality that we were sinful, spiritually dead, deserving damnation (8:2b).**

When we believed on Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God dished out within us a whole new life principle. He put us into Christ Jesus, He made us spiritually alive unto God and He set us free from the law and its condemnation.

Now the verb “has set you free” is an aorist tense verb, meaning at one moment in time the Holy Spirit completely freed one from God’s law which declared us, and in fact obligated us, to be sinful in the sight of God and dead in the sight of God, heading toward a deserved condemnation (Smith, p. 144). That moment was the moment we were given life in Christ Jesus and that moment was the moment we believed.

Now I want us to carefully notice what is not said here. God does not say that once we are “in Christ” and once we have been “set free from the law of sin and death” we will not ever sin again. The text does not say we do not have faults, failures, inconsistencies, weaknesses and lapses. What the text says is that we do not have condemnation !

**REASON #2** – Because of the work of God the Son. **8:3-4**

The law of God can do many things:

1. It can show us how holy God is. Romans 7:12
2. It can show us how sinful we are. Romans 3:20
3. It can show us how guilty we are. Romans 3:19
4. It can show us how condemned we are. Romans 4:15

**However, there is one thing the law cannot do - make us righteous in the sight of God (Galatians 2:16).** A sinful human cannot be righteous by keeping the law. This is not because the law is bad; this is because we are sinful. The law is a perfect, holy standard and we cannot keep a perfect standard because we are not perfect. Therefore, none of us can ever be made righteous by keeping the law.

That is exactly what Paul means when he writes in Romans 8:3 that “the Law ... was weak as it was through the flesh.” Sinful man and sinful woman cannot keep the Holy Law of God because he is sinful and fleshly.

**Verse 3** informs us that God sent His own Son to get us out of our dilemma. He left His majestic glory of heaven and came here “in the likeness of sinful flesh.”

This critical statement indicates two very important theological realities:

**(Theological Reality #1)** - Jesus Christ was really human.

**(Theological Reality #2)** - Jesus Christ was totally sinless.

That is precisely what was needed to beat the Law - a sinless Person who could keep it all.

Now we may carefully observe that He came as an offering or sacrifice for sin. Not His sin, but for our sin, which the Law clearly reveals.

Now why would Christ do this? Why was He willing to come here, being made in the likeness of sinful flesh?

The answer is found in **verse 4** - “in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us.” In other words, He did this so that we might have the full righteousness of God in us.

Now we may ask - How does that happen? How do we get this righteousness? The answer is the Holy Spirit. At the moment we believe on Jesus Christ, we are no longer walking “according to the flesh,” but now we walk in God’s sight “according to the Spirit.” The prepositional phrase “according to the flesh” refers to the state of being lost and the prepositional phrase “according to the Spirit” refers to the state of being saved.

When God looks at humans walking through life, He sees two classes of people:

**(Class #1)** - Those in the flesh - who walk in sin, death, and are heading to condemnation.

**(Class #2)** - Those in the Spirit - who walk in righteousness, life, and are heading to glory.

The way one receives the Spirit is by believing on Jesus Christ!

The important question for every human being to ask is - Am I in the flesh or in the Spirit?