

## No Condemnation Now I Dread (Part 2): Romans 8:2

**Introduction:** Please open your Bible to Romans 8:1-4.

**Thomas Jacomb** (1622-1687) was a Puritan who lived and preached in the city of London. He was one of many Puritan leaders who was forced out of his church in the Great Ejection of 1662. But even though he was banished from his church he continued to preach in the home of the Countess of Exeter (Elizabeth Cecil). And one of the things he preached on during that time was **Romans 8**.

Here is a portion of what he said about this great chapter...

“Who wouldn’t be willing to take pains in a mine that has such treasures hidden in it? Search all the Scriptures, I will accept none. Turn over the whole Word of God from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. You won’t find any one chapter into which more excellent, sublime, evangelical truths are crowded than this which I am entering upon. The Holy Bible is the Book of books. In some respects this chapter may be styled the chapter of chapters. From first to last it is high gospel. It is all gospel. Its matter being entirely evangelical. It is indeed the epitome, abridgement, storehouse of all the saints’ privileges and duties. You have in this chapter the love of God and of Christ displaying to the utmost shining forth in his greatest splendor.”  
What a great statement!

Banner of Truth published his sermons on **Romans 8** in a book that is **392 pages long**. It is impressive that he could write so much on **Romans 8**. But it is even more impressive to know that that book is on just the first four verses of **Romans 8**.

To write nearly four hundred pages on **Romans 8:1-4** tells us something about the skill of the preacher. But even more importantly it tells us something about the depth and profundity of **Romans 8**. There is nothing else quite like in all of the Bible. It covers the whole Christian life from justification to sanctification to glorification. There is no situation in life that you will ever find yourself in which **Romans 8** is not profoundly applicable.

If you were left on a deserted island and could only have one chapter of the Bible, which chapter would you choose? I would choose **Romans 8** because it is indeed the chapter of chapters.

At this point in our study of **Romans**, we are in the third major section of the book...

**I. The Gospel Introduced (1:1-17).**

**II. The Gospel Explained (1:18-4:25).**

**III. The Gospel Experienced (5:1-8:39).**

In these four chapters Paul teaches us what it looks like to experience the gospel in our life.

I remind you that the **overarching theme** of these four chapters is **assurance**, the eternal security of the justified. And Paul brings that theme into sharp focus in **chapter 8** which is all about...

**A. The Benefits of Justification (5:1-11).**

**B. The Foundation of Justification (5:12-21).**

**C. The Holiness of Justification (6:1-7:25).**

## **D. The Security of Justification (8:1-39).**

Paul begins this extraordinary chapter by teaching that **our justification is secure** because we have been delivered from condemnation...

### **1. Deliverance from condemnation (8:1-4).**

Last time we looked at the first heading...

#### **a) Our deliverance proclaimed (v. 1).**

We used to be condemned in the courtroom of God. We were guilty of breaking the Law of God and deserved to be punished for our sins. But as we sat on death row awaiting our execution, God changed our legal status to no condemnation. By the grace of God, we have been delivered from condemnation because we are in Christ Jesus where there is no condemnation.

The only way to improve **Romans 8** is to read it and study it in light of **Romans 1-7**. This pronouncement of deliverance from condemnation comes on the heels of **Romans 7**. According to **Romans 7**, as a Christian, you and I live in a state of conflict with sin. But according to **Romans 8:1** we are not in a state of condemnation. We are no longer condemned by God in the court of heaven. Because we are in Christ there is no condemnation for us now and forevermore. Once no condemnation, always no condemnation.

If you are in Christ, when you come to die, you can close your eyes with confidence that you are not condemned by God. You are not condemned now in this life. And you will not be condemned in the life to come.

But the question we now ask is this: How can it be that we have been delivered from condemnation? Paul answers that question in **vv. 2-3**.

That brings us to our second heading...

#### **b) Our deliverance procured (vv. 2-4).**

When I began to study this portion of the chapter, I had every intention of covering **vv. 2-4** in one message. But the more I studied the more I realized that was an impossibility. And so with the time that we have this morning we will only be able to cover **v. 2** which is so incredibly rich and glorious.

Now, I want you to notice how **v. 2** begins with the word "for." I also want you to notice how **v. 3** begins with the word "for."

The English word "for" is a translation of the Greek word **γάρ/gar**. Sometimes this word is referred to as **an explanatory gar**. And that is because this little word **introduces an explanation**. It can be translated as "for" or "because." When you see this word in the text, know that the writer is giving an explanation. That is what Paul is doing in **vv. 2** and **3**. In these two verses Paul is explaining **v. 1**.

As I thought this week about Paul's use of the word **γάρ/gar**, I discovered something I didn't realize. In **Romans 8** Paul uses the word **γάρ/gar** **17x**.

This little grammatical fact reminds us of something we must know about the Bible: The Bible is **not a novel**. The Bible does not read like a novel. Yes, the Bible was written to the **common person** and not just to **scholars**, but it requires much mental work in obtaining its meaning. The Bible is a thinking person's book. To put it simply: The Bible is not for the lazy. The Bible will not yield its treasures to the lazy but only to the diligent.

**A.W. Pink**, "The Bible is no lazy man's book! Much of its treasure, like the valuable minerals stored in the bowels of the earth, only yield up themselves to the diligent seeker."

This is especially true, beloved, in **Romans**, which is essentially **one, long, continuous theological argument**. The book of **Romans** is filled with **tedious grammar** and **tightly constructed arguments**. To understand the details and nuances of **Romans** requires a lot of work. This is certainly true in **Romans 8** where Paul uses the word **γῶπ/gar** 17x. In this chapter Paul is giving explanation upon explanation upon explanation of the glories of the gospel. The book of **Romans** as a whole and **chapter 8** in particular demand our very careful thinking. And frankly, many people, even in the church, are just not up for that.

I thank God that in recent years there has been **a revival of expository preaching** throughout America. But with that said, expository preaching is still **a minority approach in our churches**. And one of the reasons why expository preaching **remains largely unpopular** is because it requires work. It requires work **on the part of the preacher**. And it requires work **on the part of the listener**. In our emotive culture people would much prefer to feel rather than to think. And hence the unpopularity of expository preaching verse by verse through books of the Bible.

**John MacArthur**, "The meaning of the Scripture is the Scripture."

In any given text in the Bible, there is **a God-intended meaning**. And the goal of Bible study and preaching is to discover the God-intended meaning of the text. The question is not: What does this passage mean to you or to me? But what does this passage mean? What is the God-intended meaning of the text? And to learn the God-intended meaning of the text requires a lot of work. It requires careful, patient, and precise thinking.

ILLUSTRATION: When Israel was in the wilderness after being delivered from Egypt, God provided water for them to drink from a rock (Exod. 17). But the water didn't just come out of the rock automatically. God told Moses to **strike the rock** and then water would come out for the people to drink.

Dear people, the text of Scripture is like that rock in the wilderness. You have to strike the rock, sometimes over and over and over again, for water to come out. The work of the Bible student is to strike the rock with careful study until the meaning of the text pours out. But to do that requires work. But it is a work that yields unspeakable joy and reward. By God's grace, that is what we do here.

But with that said, **caution is in order**. We must be careful that expository preaching doesn't become **a data dump** where we merely dump a bunch of exegetical data in our teaching. The goal of expository preaching is to explain the text in such a way that it is worshipful. The goal of

preaching is to bring God to the people and the people to God in worship. John Piper calls this *expository exultation*.

**John Piper**, “Preaching is also *exultation*. This means that the preacher does not just *explain* what’s in the Bible, and the people do not simply try to *understand* what he explains. Rather, the preacher and the people *exult* over what is in the Bible as it is being explained and applied. Preaching does not come after worship in the order of the service. Preaching *is* worship. The preacher worships—exults—over the word, trying his best to draw you into a worshipful response by the power of the Holy Spirit. My job is not simply to see truth and show it to you. My job is to see the glory of the truth and to savor it and exult over it as I explain it to you and apply it for you. That’s one of the differences between a sermon and a lecture.”

I could not agree more. We want to know the truth with precision and also savor the truth as an act of worship.

In **v. 2** there is **twofold connection** back to **v. 1**. The **first connection** is a **grammatical connection** found in the word “for.” The **second connection** is a **thematic connection** found in the phrase “in Christ Jesus.” The phrase “in Christ Jesus” is in **v. 1** and in **v. 2**. And so very clearly these two verses are connected. But what is the relationship between these two verses?

In **v. 1** Paul announces that there is no condemnation for us in Christ. Then in **vv. 2** and **3** Paul gives **two reasons** why we are no longer condemned in Christ. The **first reason** is in **v. 2**. And the **second reason** is in **v. 3**.

With the time we have left this morning we will consider the first reason why we are no longer condemned in Christ in **v. 2**. I repeat that **vv. 1** and **2** are **thematically connected** by the phrase “in Christ Jesus.”

By faith we are **united** to the Lord Jesus Christ. Our **new spiritual position** is in Christ. And in Christ we have two things according to **vv. 1-2**. In **v. 1** we have **pardon** from sin. And in **v. 2** we have **power** over sin.

**v. 2** is one of the more well-known verses in this chapter...

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”

Let me make **three observations** on **v. 2**...

1. In **v. 2** we are introduced to the **Holy Spirit** for the first time in this chapter.

As we noted last week, **Romans 8** is the most condensed treatment of the Holy Spirit anywhere in the Bible. If you want to know the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit **Romans 8** is the best chapter in the Bible for that.

2. In **v. 2** Paul teaches that every Christian has the Holy Spirit.

If a person is “in Christ Jesus” he/she has the Holy Spirit. There is no such thing as a Christian who does not have the Holy Spirit (cf. v. 9). As you well know we are living in an age where there is much confusion about the Holy Spirit. And a common false teaching in our day is that a person can receive Jesus without at the same time receiving the Holy Spirit. The idea is that a

person receives Jesus at one point in their life. Then later on they receive the Holy Spirit (i.e. the doctrine of subsequence). But **Romans 8** does not teach that. **Romans 8** teaches that every Christian has the Holy Spirit and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The church is not divided between the **haves** and the **have nots** when it comes to having the Holy Spirit. We all have the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13).

As Paul says elsewhere, no one can **confess Jesus as Lord** apart from the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). Any genuine profession of faith in Jesus is from the Holy Spirit. No one can **savingly believe** in Christ apart from the Holy Spirit. To be a Christian is to be **born again**. And to be born again is to be **born of the Spirit** (John 3:3-8).

With that said, here is in part what I think Paul is saying in **v. 2**: How did you get in Christ? By the power of the Holy Spirit. No one gets in Christ on their own. The only way to get in Christ is by the power of the Holy Spirit. And so to have Christ is to also have the Holy Spirit. The work of Christ and the work of the Spirit are inseparable.

3. In **v. 2** Paul presents a contrast between two different laws. This is what we will focus on in the rest of our time this morning.

The word “law” that Paul uses here is the same word that he used so many times in **chapter 7**. This is the word **νόμος/nomos**. In **chapter 7**, most of the time that Paul used this word he was referring to **the Law of Moses, the Law of God** (7:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16). But in a few places in **chapter 7** Paul used the word **νόμος/nomos** in a different way to refer to **a spiritual power/principle** (7:21, 23, 25).

Paul uses the word “law” both ways in **7:25** (the Law of God and the law of sin). In **chapter 8** Paul does the same thing. He uses the word “Law” to refer to the **Law of God** in **vv. 3, 4, and 7**. But in **v. 2** Paul uses the word “law” in a different way to refer to **a spiritual power/principle**. When used this way a “law” is **a power that exercises control over something**.

For example, there are certain laws in the **natural world** like **the law of gravity**. The law of gravity is **a power that exercises control over our world**.

In the same way, there are **certain laws in the spiritual world that exercise control over people**. Paul presents two of those spiritual laws in **v. 2**.

The **first** is “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” And the **second** is “the law of sin and of death.” Every single person in the world is controlled by one of these two laws.

I would like to look at the **second law** first: “the law of sin and of death.”

Sin and death always go together. They are inseparable. Where there is sin there is also death. Where there is fire there is heat. In the same way, where there is sin there is death.

**Sin** is the act of rebellion against God. And **death** is the consequence of rebellion against God. And what Paul is saying is that sin and death, together, are **a spiritual law in the world**. Sin and

death are a **spiritual power in the world**. And just as everyone is subject to the law of gravity, so too is everyone subject to “the law of sin and of death.”

Of all the religions and philosophies and ideologies in the world, only the Bible can explain why there is such a thing as death. Ask **naturalism** why there is death. Ask **Marxism** why there is death. Ask **New Age philosophy** why there is death. Ask **Buddhism** why there is death. Ask **Hinduism** why there is death. Ask **postmodernism** why there is death. Ask **secularism** why there is death. None of these can give you a definitive answer. But the Bible can.

And the Bible says that **death is the consequence of sin**. Death is the penalty for sin. All people die because all have sinned against God (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Sin and death are a law that rules over our fallen world. In human society we have police officers, lawyers, courthouses, prisons, hospitals, doctors, nurses, and cemeteries all of which testify to the reality of the law of sin and death. Every time someone dies it is a reminder that the Bible is true.

What is more, the law of sin and death is **an inviolable law**. It cannot be **stopped**. It cannot be **reversed**. No doctor. No medicine. No technology. Nothing can reverse the law of sin and death. It's an inviolable law like gravity.

ILLUSTRATION: I grew up watching **Michael Jordan** on tv play basketball. I even had the opportunity once to see him play in person. Even if you don't know much about basketball you probably know that Michael Jordan was known as “Air” Jordan because when he jumped he seemed to hang in the air. From what I read his **vertical jump** is the highest in NBA history (48 inches; Bleacher Report).

But according to the law of gravity, what goes up must come down. Jordan could jump 48 inches and no more because of the law of gravity. He could jump higher than other men but he could only stay in the air for a split second. Why? Because this world is controlled by the inviolable law of gravity.

If I were to drop my Bible it would fall to the ground. If I were to drop my Bible ten times, it would fall to the ground ten times because the law of gravity exercises control over our world. **Throw a rock** into the air as hard as you can and it will come down. **Shoot a gun** into the air and eventually the bullet will fall to the ground because it is subject to the law of gravity.

Dear people, that is how sin and death are. Just like no one can stop gravity, no one can stop sin and death. The natural man cannot stop sinning. And he cannot stop death. The law of sin and death is a spiritual law that governs our world. By nature we are irresistibly pulled in the direction of sin and death.

**But there is another spiritual law at work** in our world. Paul calls it: “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”

The “law of sin and of death” is the law that **governs the non-Christian**. In contrast the “law of the Spirit of life” is the law that **governs the Christian**.

The “law of sin and of death” is what we could call **a natural law** since it governs all people by nature. In contrast the “law of the Spirit of life” is what we could call **a supernatural law** since **it operates against the law of nature.**

Here is what has happened to you as a Christian: “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”

In **v. 1** you have been **delivered from the condemnation** of sin. In **v. 2** you have been **delivered from the power** of sin. In **v. 1** you are no longer condemned because you are in Christ. But how did you get to be in Christ? By the law of the Spirit of life (v. 2).

The Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of life.” The Holy Spirit is the life giver. He is able to give spiritual life to those who are naturally controlled by sin and death (John 6:63).

What do you have in Christ? You have **no condemnation** (v. 1). And you have **spiritual life** (v. 2). You have **pardon** and you have **power**. You are delivered from condemnation in Christ because by the power of the Spirit you are no longer controlled by the power of sin and death. The Spirit of God “has set you free from the law of sin and of death” and has placed you in Christ where there is no condemnation. The Spirit unites us to Jesus Christ.

Listen very carefully, “the law of sin and of death” is so powerful that no man can stop it or reverse it. But “the law of the Spirit of life” is **more powerful** than “the law of sin and of death.” To be a Christian is to be **delivered** from “the law of sin and death” **by a greater law**, “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”

ILLUSTRATION: Think again about **the law of gravity**. The law of gravity governs the world. But it can be defied by another law, **the law of aerodynamics**. For example, **birds can fly** and in so doing they defy the law of gravity.

Another example is **planes and rockets**. In violation of the law of gravity we can build engines that can empower planes to fly in the sky without falling to the ground. Think about Elon Musk who founded SpaceX. They have built rockets that can fly straight up into the sky defying the law of gravity.

And so the law of gravity can be defied and overcome by a superior law, the law of aerodynamics. When a plane takes off from a runway the law of gravity is pulling it down. But the law of aerodynamics is so powerful that the plane can defy gravity and lift off the ground into the air. Whenever a plane takes off it is the battle between two laws in which **the law of aerodynamics sets it free the law of gravity.**

In the same way, by nature we are pulled down into sin and death by a power that is irresistible. But another power, a stronger power, has invaded your life and given you power over sin and death. By the power of the Holy Spirit you are no longer controlled by the power of sin and of death.

The **operative principle** that now controls your life is the law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ

Jesus. Yes, sin is still in you. And yes, there is the ongoing battle with remaining sin that will continue until the day you die. But the Holy Spirit is also in you. And He is more powerful than your sin. And He has set you free from the power of sin and death.

Dear people, salvation is nothing less than a **miracle**. God, by the Holy Spirit, has begun a good work in you by delivering you from the power of sin and death.

A summary of **Romans 8:1-2**:

1. We are no longer condemned by God.
2. We are no longer condemned by God because we are in Christ.
3. We are no longer condemned by God because we are in Christ. And we are in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit who has set us free from the law of sin and of death.

**Conclusion:** John Wesley spent much time and effort trying to work his way into acceptance with God. But after he was truly converted he gave testimony to the work of God in his life. And his testimony sounds very much like **Romans 8:1-2**...

“In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”