

## ROMANS 8 (PART 1)

### No Condemnation

TO THE  
ROMANS

#### *God's Wrath on Unrighteousness*

us, called to be  
the gospel of God,  
beforehand through his  
Scriptures,<sup>3</sup> concerning his  
descended from David<sup>2</sup> according  
fresh<sup>4</sup> and was declared to be the Son of  
power according to the Spirit of holiness

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is  
heaven against all ungodlines  
teousness of men, who by their  
ness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup> For  
known about God is plain to  
God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For  
attributes, namely, his eternal po

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No Condemnation

Last time in Chapter 7 we saw that the Law—Moses’ commandments—had the effect of exposing the exceeding sinfulness of man. The Law highlighted and clarified what sin is, what God considers wrong and right, and ultimately served as our schoolmaster to lead us to God’s grace found in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 7 closed out with Paul crying out, “Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this death?” speaking of the endless battle between the law of sin in his members, and the Law of God, which he genuinely wanted to follow.

As we leave the desperation of Chapter 7, we enter the victory of Chapter 8. We now find the way of escape from the constant, wearying struggle “through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Some have called Romans 8 the greatest chapter in the Bible. It is certainly the summit of the book of Romans, the top peak toward which the first chapters have climbed, and from which the rest of the book flows.

Chapter 8 begins with “no condemnation” and ends with “no separation.”

### **Romans 8:1**

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

The key words here are some of Paul’s favorites—“In Christ Jesus.” It occurs in all of his epistles and points to a new sphere into which the believer has been placed at the moment of conversion.

The concept of being “in Christ” is not an easy one without a picture. So let’s think for a moment of Noah and the ark. When the ark was finished, a perfect and singular way of escape was available to anyone who took it.

The invitation went out from God, “Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation.” We know that this

invitation had been extended to all people Noah's day because Peter informs us that Noah had been "a preacher of righteousness" the entire time he was building the ark!

### 2 Peter 2:4-5

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; <sup>5</sup>if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others;

The Bible reveals that the ark was pitched "within and without with pitch." Interestingly, the Hebrew word for "pitch" (Ko'-fer) is the identical work used elsewhere for "atonement." It's defined as "a redemption-price, ransom, satisfaction."

Here's the picture: Between the saved in the ark and the waters of judgment without was the wood and the pitch. Once Noah and his family were safely in the ark, we read that "the Lord shut him in" (Gen 7:16).

This portrays complete security. God did not say to Noah, "Now Noah, I want you to take 8 long spikes and drive them into the side of the ark so that when the floodwaters rise, you and your family can hang on for dear life. And as long as you hang on, you are saved. But if you let go, sorry Charlie, you're lost."

No! God shut him in. What it meant for Noah to be "in the ark," is exactly what it means for us to be "in Christ." In Him, we have been placed in a sphere where His wrath can never reach us and we are secure. There is therefore no more condemnation for sin!

## And There Need Be No More Control by Sin

**Romans 8:2**

...because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Picture a coin falling to the ground under the power of the law of gravity. Left to itself it will fall. It is powerless of itself to stop the downward pull to the earth. But before it strikes the ground, someone reaches out an arm, holds the coin tightly in his hand, and then lifts it higher and higher in defiance of the law of gravity. The law of the spirit of life in that person's arm overcomes the law of gravity.

This does not mean that gravity has ceased to operate. But it does mean that a higher law has come into play. We sin by nature because we are victims of the fall. It is in the nature of all men to sin. But “in Christ Jesus” a higher law operates, “the law of the Spirit of life.” And this law sets us free from the lesser law of sin and death.

Next, Paul says there should be no more Continuance in Sin. Deliverance from the control of sin is never achieved by our own efforts to keep the Mosaic Law. Chapter 7 makes it all too clear that this is a dead-end road.

**Romans 8:3-4**

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

The law was weak “through the flesh.” Man in the flesh simply could not live up to the demands of God's law. But then Jesus came in the form of flesh, just like ours, except that He never sinned. Nor did He inherit Adam's fallen nature in that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, not man.

Jesus never once yielded to a sinful thought, spoke a wrong word, or committed an improper act. His whole life was a condemnation of “sin in the flesh.” During His life, the Lord Jesus demonstrated the possibility of God’s law being fulfilled in a human life, a life lived in the flesh; that is, in the body.

Through the miracle of Christ’s indwelling the believer, the life that Jesus lived can now be reproduced in us by His Spirit. It is not reproduced *by* us, but *in* us if we “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

## The Holy Spirit Controlling the Believer:

When we scan Chapter 7, we see that it is dominated by the words, “I,” “me,” and “my.” But not so for Chapter 8, which is dominated by the Holy Spirit, Who is mentioned nineteen times. The new Lord (Guide and Ruler) in the believer’s life is the Holy Spirit of God.

- First, the Holy Spirit is to control the *Mind* of the Believer:

### Romans 8:5-7

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. <sup>6</sup>The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; <sup>7</sup>the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.

The phrase “have their minds set” simply refers to what you choose to think about, to set your thoughts on. It’s a choice. We can either “set our minds” on the things of the Spirit—the Lord Jesus, the Word of God, the things of God.

Or, we can choose to think about those things that pertain to the flesh—lustful thoughts, greedy, covetous musings, grudges, gossip, and so forth.

The only way to avoid a carnal mind is to choose to cultivate “the mind of Christ” (Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16).

- Next, the Holy Spirit is to Control the *Motives* of the Believer:

There is a huge difference between being “in the flesh” and “in the Spirit.”

#### Romans 8:8-9

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. <sup>9</sup>You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

To be in the flesh is to be motivated by the desires of the flesh, but to be in the Spirit is to be motivated by the Spirit of God. Surrender to God, His Word, and to the Holy Spirit guarantees that our motives will be pleasing to God.

Paul makes it clear that there are two kinds of people: those that have the Spirit of God (the saved), and those that do not (the lost).

- Next, the Holy Spirit is to control the *Members* of the Believer:

#### Romans 8:10-11

But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

The words “mortal” and “immortal” always refer to the body. It is this “mortal” that shall put on “immortality” at the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:53-54). And the same Spirit, says Paul, that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead is *living in every believer!*

Though these verses primarily refer to the resurrection of our bodies, they imply also that the Holy Spirit can give us victory over the law of our members even now.

#### Romans 8:12-13

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. <sup>13</sup>For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live...

Believers have an obligation. It is spelled out later in Romans 12:

#### Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

The believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16-17), and He desires complete sovereignty over His temple. Once He has control of the believer's body, the Spirit of God can then impart victory over sins which involve use of the body's members.

## Sonship: An Intimate Personal Relationship

Paul next moves to the theme of sonship. He covers the test of sonship, the privilege of sonship, the witness of sonship, and the assurance of sonship.

- **FIRST**, the test of sonship:

#### Romans 8:14

...because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

A day to day response to the leading of the Spirit indicates the One to whom we belong, because we all follow the one to whom we belong.

- **SECOND**, the privilege of sonship:

**Romans 8:15**

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

Because of our adoption into God’s family, we have the privilege of addressing God as “Abba! Father!”

- **THIRD**, the witness of sonship:

**Romans 8:16**

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.

The Bible teaches that at the moment of conversion to Christ, God’s Spirit testifies to our own spirits that we have become a child of God.

- **FOURTH**, the assurance of sonship:

**Romans 8:17**

Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Paul emphasizes here our sharing in “the sufferings of Christ” (see also Phil 1:29; 3:10; Col 1:24). He is not referring to the adversities common to all men, such as illness, bereavement, or the loss of employment during a recession.

Rather, they are the sufferings that come from following Christ, such as rejection, persecution, and martyrdom. Sharing in His sufferings serve to assure us that we are His.

