

Romans Chapter 8

Just wait till you see what's coming in this chapter. What a terrible waste it would be if you missed any of it. So let's not waste any time. We'll begin by looking at the first four verses of chapter eight, Romans 8:1-4:

*1 So now there is **NO CONDEMNATION** for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*

2 For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death.

3 The law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent his own Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

4 He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

The Scripture says that everybody born into the world falls into the same category. We are all born with a sin nature. Remember Romans 3:23 from a few weeks ago?

*23 For **ALL** have sinned; **ALL** fall short of God's glorious standard.*

It's part of **all of us** and there's no getting rid of it on our own. Sin takes peace and joy away from us and in its place we find trouble and pain. Our leader and roll model in that condition is Satan. Ephesians 2:1,2 tells us:

1 Once you were dead, doomed forever because of your many sins.

2 You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.

You can readily see that this sin nature we're all part of by being born, if untreated, is going to cause some real problems as we progress through life. Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:13:

13 But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will go on deceiving others, and they themselves will be deceived.

Job made this situation pretty clear when he said in Job 5:7:

7 People are born for trouble as predictably as sparks fly upward from a fire.

There can be no real peace in such a condition. We must all face the inevitable realities of

disease and death. We struggle to make relationships work. We are simply in bondage to a number of miseries in life because of the overpowering presence of sin and Satan. One of the most haunting verses in the Bible is found in Hebrews 10:26,27:

26 Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received a full knowledge of the truth, there is no other sacrifice that will cover these sins.

27 There will be nothing to look forward to but the terrible expectation of God's judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies.

For those who never come to faith in the saving act of Jesus Christ there is nothing at life's end that awaits them but judgment and wrath. I know that's a hard pill for a lot of people to swallow because by their standards they see themselves as good people, not deserving such an end. In fact most such people absolutely refuse to believe that God could do such a thing. Well, we're not here to argue that point. It is our function here to teach you what the Bible says. It's between you or God whether you want to believe it.

A person who lives life to eat, drink, and have sex with whomever might be available, does so as if he/she were at a banquet and over their head was a sword dangling precariously by a thread that could break at any moment. All the sweet things such a person holds dear can only turn bitter when confronted by the inevitability of a rendezvous with a God of judgment.

The Bible tells us that in Hell there is pain and God is not there. So this is what everybody on the face of the earth for all of history has faced, is facing, or will face, and they have no resource within themselves to change that. There is nothing a person can do on their own, no matter how good they try to be, to earn their way out of this situation.

Now into this darkness comes a bright light, a light of hope, a promise offered to everyone who has this sin nature. That hope is expressed in Romans 8:1:

1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

In the midst of the darkness of sin, in the midst of the inevitability of judgment, that is a very comforting verse. Here we have a promise from God given to each of us individually that fills our heart with hope. Any thinking mind should run eagerly to receive such a provision, should they not? The reality in this verse is that there is no condemnation for those who accept Christ as their Savior. That is really good news because the Bible tells a whole lot about condemnation for the unsaved. Such as in Romans 5:18:

*18 Yes, Adam's one sin brought **condemnation upon everyone**, but Christ's one act of righteousness **makes all people right** in God's sight and gives them life.*

And also 2 Thessalonians 1:5-9:

*5 But God will use this persecution to show his justice. For he will make you worthy of his Kingdom, for which you are suffering,
6 and in his justice he will punish those who persecute you.
7 And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels,
8 in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus.
9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power*

The reality of mankind's situation is that they are under condemnation and according to Romans 3:8 that condemnation is just. And it is right for God to condemn those guilty of sin. Let's go back again to chapter three of Romans and read verses 9-18, Romans 3:9-18:

*9 Well then, are we Jews better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that **all people**, whether Jews or Gentiles, **are under the power of sin**.
10 As the Scriptures say, "No one is good— not even one.
11 No one has real understanding; no one is seeking God.
12 All have turned away from God; all have gone wrong. No one does good, **not even one**."
13 "Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their speech is filled with lies." "The poison of a deadly snake drips from their lips."
14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."
15 "They are quick to commit murder.
16 Wherever they go, destruction and misery follow them.
17 They do not know what true peace is."
18 "They have no fear of God to restrain them."
19 Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses and to bring the entire world into judgment before God.
20 For no one can ever be made right in God's sight by doing what his law commands. For the more we know God's law, the clearer it becomes that we aren't obeying it.*

Not even the Law of God could change this reality. Although the Law of God is holy, just, and good according to Romans 7:12, it could not alter the condemnation of human beings. In other words, God could give the best rules for behavior, the best standards for living, the best principles for righteousness, and with even all that laid down very clearly, it still could not change the fact that humanity was condemned. In fact, all the Law could do was to show humankind how condemned they were and **how just the condemnation** was. Because of their sin nature people could not keep the Law.

Now even though human beings are condemned because of their sin, guess what? **God never wanted that.** Look what John wrote in John 3:16-21:

16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

17 God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it.

*18 “There is **no judgment** awaiting those who trust him. **But those who do not trust him have already been judged for not believing in the only Son of God.***

19 Their judgment is based on this fact: The light from heaven came into the world, but they loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.

20 They hate the light because they want to sin in the darkness. They stay away from the light for fear their sins will be exposed and they will be punished.

21 But those who do what is right come to the light gladly, so everyone can see that they are doing what God wants.”

God sent Jesus into the world **not to condemn it**, but to save it. In Christ, God provided a way of escape. But the escape was not in the teaching of Christ, nor was it in the good life of Christ. Rather, **it was in the death of Christ.**

There is no more condemnation for those who are in Christ!

The Greek word used for “condemnation” in Romans 8:1 refers to the paying of a penalty after a person has been sentenced. It focuses on the punishment, the imprisonment, and the execution rather than the verdict. It is not the kind of condemnation we might see in a court when the judge says you are condemned to a certain sentence. It’s the condemnation in the sense of **actually paying the penalty**. So we’re being told in Romans 8:1 that **there is no penalty to be paid**. There is no execution to take place. There is no prison to be put into because the believer’s penalty has already been paid. The believer is freed from bondage. The believer is freed from any need to pay for anything they’ve done wrong.

This is the heart and soul of the Christian Gospel.

The most wonderful message that the Christian carries is the message to the sinner that they are condemned, but that in Jesus Christ there is not one single bit of condemnation. That’s exactly what we’re told in Hebrews 10:14-18:

14 For by that one offering he perfected forever all those whom he is making holy.

15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. First he says,

16 “This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says

the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts so they will understand them, and I will write them on their minds so they will obey them.”

*17 Then he adds, **“I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.”***

18 Now when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.

You see the work of Christ was so complete that He perfected us forever. He offered one sacrifice for sin forever. When the accomplishment of Christ’s act on the cross becomes the reality in our lives, there will never be any condemnation. Now that doesn’t mean that the believer won’t ever sin again because he/she will sin, but that sin will not bring condemnation, for when we sin God is faithful to forgive us and to keep on cleansing us from all sin according to 1 John 1:9. Then Paul goes on to write in Romans 8:2:

2 For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death.

The reason that there is no longer any condemnation is because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ has set us free from the law of sin and death. We are not under condemnation because we’ve been made free from the Law. The “life-giving Spirit” is of course a reference to the Holy Spirit. So it seems pretty clear that Paul is introducing us here to the **Holy Spirit, the Spirit of life, the life-giver, and the sustainer of life.** When Jesus was speaking with Nicodemus in John 3:5, He said:

5 Jesus replied, “The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.”

It is the Holy Spirit who gives life. It is the Holy Spirit who energizes the new birth, and that is exactly what we have in view here. The Holy Spirit is designated as the “Spirit of life,” because He is the one who brings about conversion. The power the Holy Spirit exercises in a person’s life brings life out of death. The Holy Spirit replaces the law of sin and death with the Spirit of life. The Holy Spirit frees the person from the law of sin and death. We have been set free from the law of sin, free from the law of death because the **Holy Spirit of life in Christ has given you a new life through the Gospel.** Though there will be sin in our lives, that sin will never overcome the life that is there. It will never cause it to die because our new life comes from the Spirit of life and the Spirit remains to do His life giving work.

If anybody tells you, or if any church tells you, that you must do any other kind of works or penance to be forgiven of sin, they are saying that Christ’s death on the cross was not sufficient, that He didn’t do His work right. So don’t pay any attention to such people or such churches. Now on to Romans 8:3:

3 The law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent his own Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin’s

control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

We have no condemnation because we have been freed from it. We've been freed from it because Jesus took our place. What was it the Law could not do? The Law could convict us of sin. The Law could provoke sin. The Law could call us to judgment. But what could the Law not do? It could not break sin's power. But Jesus could keep all of the Law perfectly, and because He did that, God looks at us as if we've also kept the Law perfectly because we are in Jesus as the result of our faith. Then Paul continues in verse 4, Romans 8:4:

4 He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

Now that Christ lives in me, and now that I am in Christ and have His power available to me through the Holy Spirit that dwells in me, it is now possible that the moral standards of God's Law can be fulfilled in me. This goes all the way back to God's basic desire. **God wants to produce His righteous Law in us**, but He cannot do it until we confess our faith in Jesus. We have to have a Savior that gives us His righteousness, pays the penalty for our sin, puts His Spirit in us, and then we have the capacity to fulfill God's Law, to become holy. Verse 4 tells us that the reason Jesus did what He did was so that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us. God wants to reproduce His holy standard in us. We read the following in Titus 2:11-14:

*11 For the grace of God has been revealed, **bringing salvation to all people.***

12 And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with self-control, right conduct, and devotion to God,

13 while we look forward to that wonderful event when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.

*14 **He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing what is right.***

This leads us to a very important theological truth. **Everything that is a fact is also a responsibility.** It is a fact that If I am a Christian I will commune with the living God. It is also a responsibility that I have a prayer life. It is a fact that if I'm a Christian the Spirit of God will teach me. It is also a responsibility that I read the Word of God so that I can learn the truth. It is a fact that if I'm a Christian I walk in the Spirit. It is also a responsibility for me to yield more and more to the Spirit's guidance. It is a fact that if I am a Christian the Spirit will produce fruit through me, yet I am given responsibility to bear much fruit. **As we obey the Holy Spirit we find ourselves fulfilling the Law of God.** As we move now to the next section of Romans 8, verses 5-11, we'll see an emphasis that the Holy Spirit gives us a new nature and that we have a new disposition. Let's first look at Romans 8:5:

5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things,

but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.

Those who have been saved have been given a new nature with a new direction. They are now moving in the direction of the Spirit of God. Romans 8:6:

6 If your sinful nature controls your mind, there is death. But if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace.

A person who does not know Jesus as Savior and is seeking after the pleasures of his/her flesh is living in a state of death. They are dead. This is a spiritual deadness, an estrangement from God. They are totally unable to respond to God as Paul pointed out in Romans 7:5:

*5 When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced sinful deeds, **resulting in death.***

When we say the Spirit of God has changed our nature, that means that He has taken us from being dead to being alive. Alive to what? Alive to God. Alive to spiritual truth. Alive to understand the things that an unsaved person can't understand according to 1 Corinthians 2:14-16:

14 But people who aren't Christians can't understand these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them because only those who have the Spirit can understand what the Spirit means.

15 We who have the Spirit understand these things, but others can't understand us at all.

16 How could they? For, "Who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who can give him counsel?" But we can understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.

The believer can sense God's world, His love, and His power, and we can sense His ways. It also says in Romans 8:6 that **we have peace**. Not only are we aware that God is there but through our relationship with Him we have peace. So the contrast between believer and unbeliever is quite clear. The believer is not in the flesh but in the Spirit, and so seeks the things of the Spirit and walks in the Spirit. Does he/she do that all the time? No, not all the time. But before he/she was saved they never did it. In order to get the best perspective we can of this struggle, let's look at Galatians 5:16-26:

16 So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.

17 The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict.

18 But when you are directed by the Holy Spirit, you are no longer subject to the law.

19 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, your lives will produce these evil results: sexual immorality, impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure,

20 idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group,

21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other kinds of sin. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

22 But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law.

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there.

25 If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

26 Let us not become conceited, or irritate one another, or be jealous of one another.

The believer has been given the Holy Spirit, given new life. We are no longer inclined to satisfy the flesh. But is the flesh still there? Does it still tempt us? You bet it does. When are we going to get rid of it? When we receive new and glorified bodies at our death and are immediately transported to Heaven. But until then we're going to have a battle on our hands. And in the Galatians passage we just read we were told that if we want to win we need to respond to the Holy Spirit and not the flesh. We need to listen to the Holy Spirit and not to Satan.

So a believer really has two parts. He/she has that new creation that is inclined toward the things of the Spirit, but he/she also has to deal with the flesh that remains in his/her physical body. It is critical here to understand that the sin is in the mortal body and not in the new creation, the new soul. When we die and go to be with God and Jesus in Heaven, we will lose the flesh, our physical bodies, and that will free the new creation which is of the Spirit to serve the Spirit, and only the Spirit forever. When you look at the ways God has provided for our eternal peace and joy, serving Him should be something we do from the bottom of our hearts with gladness and gratitude. Next week we'll continue, beginning with Romans 8:7.