

34:10

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Christ, Paul, God, Spirit, unbeliever, flesh, believer, life, Romans, condemnation, condemned, sin, dwells, verse, saved, law, live, Holy Spirit, Christ Jesus, righteousness

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## Introduction

The 4th stanza of the glorious hymn, *And Can It Be*, says this:

*No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine; Alive in Him, my living Head, And clothed in righteousness divine, Bold I approach the eternal throne, And claim the crown, through Christ my own. Amazing love! How can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

Where do these words in this glorious hymn come from? They come right from Romans chapter 8. This glorious truth is needed here in Romans chapter 8, because we've just come out of Romans chapter 7, where Paul talks about this conflict that is going on within the believer's life, between the new nature and this body of flesh that we still have that is not glorified, yet. There's that conflict that happens. If you remember back in chapter 7 in verse 15, Paul says, "[For what I am doing, I do not understand for I'm not practicing what I would like to do, but I'm doing the very thing that I hate.](#)" (Rom 7:15)

Paul has this struggle, this, this battle that's going on between his new nature and this body of flesh. And what is Paul's conclusion then in verse 24 of chapter 7? What does he conclude there? "[Wretched man that I am.](#)" (Rom 7:24) And this people, who by nature, like to think that maybe we can try and earn a standing before God, if we come to that same conclusion as Paul, which we should, and say with him, wretched man that I am, then what would we think about ourselves? Well, we would conclude, we're condemned, right? We can't do it, we can't earn a right standing before God, we won't be able to make it to heaven, you and I are condemned.

But that's not the conclusion that Paul comes to. That's not the conclusion that he gives, as he comes to this glorious truth in chapter 8. And as we come now to chapter 8, Paul gives this glorious truth that is not based upon us earning a standing before God. But it's, it's based upon our standing in Christ -- in Christ. And so tonight, we're going to look at verses 1 through 17. And we're going to break this up into two simple points.

- First, point number 1 -- is No Condemnation, No Condemnation, as we look at verses 1-11
- And then the second point, point number 2 is New Obligation, New Obligation in verses 12 through 17.

## 1. No Condemnation

And so let's look at our first point here tonight, no condemnation. Look at what Paul says there in Romans chapter 8 and verse 1. "**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**" (Rom 8:1) Now notice Paul uses this word, therefore, therefore, right at the beginning of that verse. What does Paul use "therefore" there in that verse? Well, this, therefore is most likely not referring back to verse 25 of chapter 7, but it's most likely referring to all of chapter 1 through chapter 7.

As we've been studying chapter 1 through chapter 7, Paul has laid out for us so far, in these first 7 chapters that we have been justified by faith in Christ alone, right? That's the conclusion that we've come to. That's what Paul has taught us. And that's the key there is that it's in Christ alone, we are justified. Our salvation is in Christ alone.

Last Friday, while I was in Kansas, there sitting on this ordination council, ordaining this pastor friend of mine, one of the other guys on the council, he was moderating the whole thing and asking the questions. And one of the questions that was asked to my pastor friend was this. "What is union with Christ and why is it important?" How would you answer that question? He was on the hot seat, so he had to give us an answer. And as he answered the question, he answered it well, but then this guy that was moderating it, he asked a follow up question.

He asked this, is there a prepositional phrase in the New Testament that captures union with Christ? Why did he ask that question? What was he looking for? He was looking for the prepositional phrase, "in Christ." In Christ, that is a key prepositional phrase prepositional phrases are key for us in Scripture, circle them, underline them, highlight them in your Bible, in Christ prepositional phrase.

And that's exactly what Paul says here at the end of verse 1. Notice that that is the key to why believers are not condemned. Paul *doesn't* say there's no condemnation for all people who are born in this world. Paul doesn't say that there's no condemnation for all good people, or for those who do good works. But he says there is no condemnation **for those who are in Christ Jesus**, which means that all who are not in Christ Jesus, all who are not saved are under condemnation.

Do you realize that? The unbelieving world, those who do not believe in Christ, are under condemnation? But for us, as believers, we have this glorious truth applied to our lives, not because of what we have done, but because we are in Christ. It's because what He has done for us.

What does it mean to be in Christ? Well, it means that we have the Spirit of God dwelling inside of us. And because we have the Holy Spirit in us, we are therefore not condemned. Now, Paul is going to go

on in the rest of this chapter, and talk about what it means to live a spirit-filled life. And in the next 27 verses, Paul mentions the Holy Spirit 20 times -- 20 times in these 27 verses, Paul is going to refer to the Holy Spirit. Because now that we have the Spirit living inside of us, we have new life.

The new life is the spirit-filled life, you must realize that. You must realize and recognize that, that before you were saved, listen, you were dead in your trespasses and sins. Did you know that? You were dead, and you did not have the Holy Spirit living inside of you. But at the moment that God saved you, He placed His Spirit inside of you. And He now empowers you to go and live the life that you could not live when you were dead in your trespasses and sins.

Why were you dead in your trespasses and sins? Because you were under the law. You were under the law. And remember, what does the law do? The law condemns and it shows us that we are sinners in need of a Savior. And so, under the law, you were then under condemnation, you realize that? Think back to that time in your life when you were not saved. When you were an unbeliever. When you were not converted, you were not born again. At that time, at that moment, you were under condemnation. You were under the wrath of God, the wrath of God abided upon you, because you were under the law.

But look at what Paul says in verse 2 there. "[For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.](#)" (Rom 8:2) You are now free from that law that condemned you. We as believers, because we are in Christ, we are no longer under the law. But we have been set free and now we have the Spirit of Life dwelling within us. But we might ask, why do we need the Spirit of life? Why do we need the Spirit in our life? Well, Paul answers this in verse 3. Look at what he says there. "[For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,](#)" (Rom 8:3)

Here's what Paul is saying. The law was unable to make us righteous. No one is righteous by upholding the law. No one becomes right before God by upholding the law of God. They can't do it. The law was unable to save us and no one can be saved by upholding the law, because [all of our righteous deeds are like filthy rags](#) before God. Right? Isaiah tells us that [Isaiah 64:6](#).

God's law was meant to show forth what God's standards are. And what are God's standards? Total perfection. Can any of us meet that? Nope, we can't. Every one of us fails. And that's the purpose of the law. The law shows how incapable we are in keeping those perfect standards. We can't do it. It's impossible for us to do it.

But here's the thing, God didn't leave us to try and figure it out on our own, to see how we could somehow be saved. Instead, God did something so that we could be saved. What did He do? He sent Christ. He sent Christ in the likeness of sinful flesh, not that He was sinful. He wasn't. He was completely perfect, but in the likeness of our flesh, which is sinful... He came, and He paid the penalty in His flesh. And now He condemns sin -- no longer us -- do you see that? There's a great exchange that happens there.

And now, through His sacrificial death, He condemns sin, but He doesn't condemn those who are in Christ. Because there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ. This here is the great doctrine

known as "penal substitutionary atonement" penal substitutionary atonement. Christ is the substitute for us. He took sin's punishment upon Himself so that all those who are in Christ are now delivered from sin's punishment. We've been delivered from it. But it doesn't stop there.

John MacArthur says, God does not free men from their sin in order for them to do as they please, but to do as He pleases. Which is what Paul says in verse 4 -- why are we saved? Look what he says in verse 4, "[so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.](#)" (Rom 8:4)

We are saved so that we might walk in the Spirit. That's the Christian life. It is a life of walking. It's a life that we are to walk out each and every day in the Spirit. Notice that word "walk" there. This word refers to a habitual way of life, refers to a lifestyle, that as believers who walk in the Spirit, that is our lifestyle is to live in obedience to God, and His Spirit, as we are filled with the Holy Spirit. That's what God has called us to. He's called us to live a life of holiness, a life of holiness that we couldn't live before.

When we were unbelievers, we couldn't live a life of holiness. When we were in our flesh, as spiritually dead sinners, we could not live holy lives, which is what Paul says in verses 5-8. Look at what he says in verse 5, "[For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.](#)" (Rom 8:5-8)

Notice what Paul is doing here, Paul is comparing the two natures of man here. Not that man now has two natures. We don't have two natures, but he's comparing the two natures, the old nature versus the new nature. As believers, we have a new nature. What do we battle? We don't battle the old nature, we battle the flesh, right? We've talked about this the last couple of weeks. That's the battle that happens -- not with the old nature, the old nature is dead, right? It's gone. It's been done away with.

Now we have a new nature in Christ. But what Paul is doing here is he's comparing that old nature to the new nature. Paul speaking here of the unbeliever versus the believer, before we were saved, we were living according to the flesh. And we had our minds set on the flesh. That's what we desired. That's what we loved. We loved self. Right? We loved me. Life was all about fulfilling me and my desire. Notice Paul says that they set their minds that there is present tense, active verb in the Greek, and it means to habitually practice the things of the flesh. That's what unbelievers do. They habitually practice the things of the flesh to fulfill the desires of their own flesh. That's the life of an unbeliever.

Well, there are sure are degrees of morality in an unbeliever's life. They are still all hostile to God, and unable to please God. Unbelievers cannot please God. But for the believer -- for us -- we have our mind set on the Spirit. And therefore, we have life and peace. We have spiritual life now, and we have peace with God as believers because we are in Christ.

But this is not true of an unbeliever, an unbeliever is spiritually dead, and an unbeliever... listen to this... is an enemy of God. Do you realize that? Unbelievers are enemies of God. Notice what Paul says about unbelievers here in verse 7.

- a. First, he says they're hostile toward God. They're living lives that are hostile towards God.
- b. Second, they do not subject themselves to the law of God. That means they don't desire to live in obedience to the law of God. They have no desire for it. They have no desire to live a holy life for God. Why? Well, because they're not even able to do so. Not able to, they're incapable of doing anything that pleases God. Because everything that they do comes from selfish motives, everything, even the person that gives to the homeless shelter that goes and serves at the homeless shelter, the good works that they do, they do all of that to fulfill their own selfish desires. It makes them feel good. They're not doing it to please the Lord, because they're unable to please the Lord. They do it to satisfy self. Why are they unable to do that? Why are they unable to please God? Because they don't have the Spirit in them to empower them to desire and uphold the law.
- c. And then third, just to make his point very clear, Paul says that unbelievers cannot please God. Impossible. They cannot please God. That is, they have no inherent power or ability within themselves to please God. Not now, not ever, does an unbeliever ever, please God. They can't. It's impossible. They don't have the power or the ability to do it. Why? Because they don't have the Holy Spirit living in them.

But that's not true of believers. Believers, we do have the Holy Spirit living in us, which is what Paul says in verse 9, [\*"However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."\*](#) (Rom 8:9)

Paul, now contrast the unbeliever with the believer. And he says that we are not in the flesh --that is we do not desire fleshly things, but we now desire the things of the Spirit. Because notice, he says that we are in the Spirit, we are in the Spirit, we are those who have spiritual life. And we can be confident in this spiritual life. How? How can we have confidence by the indwelling Spirit of God, because we have the Spirit of God dwelling within us, Paul says, you can have assurance of your salvation, if you have the Spirit of God in you. You can have confidence; you can have assurance.

Notice that word "dwell" there in verse 9. That word dwell has the idea of being in one's own home, a dwelling place, going to dwell in your own home. And what this is saying here is that God makes His home in the life of every believer. Do you see that? Do you realize that? Listen believer, do you realize what you have? You have the God of the universe who dwells inside of you, the Spirit of God who lives inside of you. He has chosen to redeem you to save you, and then to come and live inside of you, and empower you than to live for Him! This is amazing!

But the opposite is also true. If a person does not have the Spirit of Christ indwelling him, then they do not belong to Christ, they don't belong to Christ. Now I want you to notice, you can only be one of two types of people in God's eyes, only one of two, you're either a Spirit filled Christian, or you're not. That's it. You're either indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and God dwells inside of you, or you don't have the Holy Spirit in you, and you're an unbeliever on your way to hell. It's only one of two options.

In the charismatic circles that I used to run in, we would often hear people who would describe another person as a Spirit-filled believer... 'wow, look at that person, while they're so Spirit-filled', as if there is a non Spirit-filled believer. That's not true. There's no such thing as a non Spirit-filled believer. Every believer is filled with the Holy Spirit. Either you are Spirit filled, and you belong to Christ, or you are not, and you do not belong to Christ. It's pretty simple. And if you're a believer, then you have Christ in you. And you have this His Spirit who lives in you because of Christ's righteousness that is imputed to you.

Which is what Paul says in verse 10 there. "If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Rom 8:10) Because of the righteousness of Christ...you are now spiritually alive because of the righteousness of Christ has been credited to your account, imputed to you. And then because you have the righteousness of Christ now, you are now able to produce righteousness in your life. We are now able to do deeds and things that please God, because we have been empowered by His Spirit to go and live for Him. And you have life. You have life now, and you have life forever. That's what we have.

Look what he says in verse 11. "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." (Rom 8:11) Here is your future. Listen, believer, here is your future. No condemnation. That's your future. And your future is life eternal. And as a believer, here is what you are promised...every one of us as believers here tonight, here is what we are promised ...that we will be raised to life again, in this flesh, it will be redeemed, glorified, and we will rule and reign with Christ and live with Him forever!

That's the promise that we have, because we are not condemned in Christ. Do you realize that? That's what we have been given as those who are in Christ.

## **2. The New Obligation**

But until that time comes, we have an obligation, which leads to our second point, The New Obligation. Look at verse 12. "So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. " (Rom 8:12-13)

Now notice in verse 13 there -- "for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die." A better translation there of that -- you must die -- is "you will die." You will die. Paul is making a statement of fact here, and he's saying if you are living according to the flesh, here's the thing -- spiritually and for all of eternity, you will die. You're going to die. Paul saying here that every unbeliever who walks according to the flesh, they will die if they don't repent of their sin and come to faith in Christ Jesus.

But believers don't walk according to the flesh. We as believers, we walk by the Spirit and our life is to be lived constantly putting to death the deeds of the body. Richard Baxter in his book, The Reformed



Pastor, he says this, "Take heed to yourself, lest you live in those sins which you preach against in others, unless you be guilty of that which daily you condemn." He says, "Oh, brethren, it is easier to chide at sin than to overcome it."

What Paul is saying here in this portion of Romans 8, is that since you have the Holy Spirit living inside of you, you now have an obligation to put sin to death and to live in obedience to Christ. That's our obligation -- not to earn us salvation ... that doesn't earn us salvation -- but because we have been given salvation by His Spirit. What does that look like? Well, he says, "You must die," you must put to death the deeds of the body, the flesh no longer masters you, the flesh no longer rules over you, you are now under a new master, and the flesh must not have control over you.

Paul tells us in Ephesians 2 that "[we are saved by grace through faith and not of works.](#)" (Eph 2:8) But Paul doesn't stop there. Listen to what he says in [Ephesians 2:10.](#) "[For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.](#)"

Notice the walk...habitually walking in our lives, fulfilling good works. Now, we're not saved by our good works, but we are saved for good works. You see that? That's the Christian life. We are saved for good works. And that means we must put to death the deeds of the body and produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. That's what we're called to do.

Listen, this passage right here is a self-examination passage. This is a self-examination passage. This is a passage we should go to often to examine ourselves. Because a person who has their mind or their will set on the flesh is not a Christian.

A person who is characterized by fulfilling the deeds of the flesh is not a true Christian. No matter how religious that person is, no matter how many times that person attends church a year, no matter what radio station they listen to, no matter what sermons they listen to online, no matter what books they listen to ---if a person is not characterized by fulfilling the works of the Spirit and the fruit of their spirit in their life, they are not a Christian.

### **[So how can you know if you are a Christian?](#)**

That would be the question, right? How can I know if I'm a Christian? Well, Paul tells us in verse 14. Look what he says there, "[for all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.](#)" (Rom 8:14) These are the children of God. What does he tell us about a Christian here?

- a) First, that **a Christian is led by the Spirit of God.** Are you being led by the Spirit of God in your life?
- b) Second, **a Christian doesn't live in fear.** Look at what he says in verse 15, "[For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"](#)" (Rom 8:15) True believers have no fear of death. Do you realize that? If you're a true believer in Christ, you don't fear death. There's no fear of dying, and there's no fear of punishment of sin, because we are in Christ. He took God's wrath upon

Him. And now He gives us righteousness and eternal life with Him. And so we don't fear punishment. We don't fear death. We don't fear the consequences of sin, because we are no longer slaves of sin. We're slaves of who? Of Christ. He is our master.

- c) The third way of knowing that you're a Christian, **is a Christian has a relationship with the Father.** A Christian has a relationship with the Father. We are those who cry out to God and we have an intimate relationship with Him. We are His adopted children, and we cry out Abba! Father! It's as a child is saying, Daddy! We have that kind of intimate relationship with God, our Father.
- d) The 4th way of knowing you're a Christian is that **the Spirit of God testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.** Look at verse 16. "[The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.](#)" (Rom 8:16) How does The Spirit testify with our spirit? Well, a part of this testimony is that we love the things that God loves. And we hate the things that God hates. We're also those who understand God's Word through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. And we are those who are being sanctified by the power of the Spirit in our lives. That's what it means when the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we're children, children of God. And if children look at verse 17, "[and if children](#)" (because we've been adopted by the Father) "[heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, so that we may also be glorified with Him.](#)" (Rom 8:17)
- e) The final way of knowing that we are children of God, that we are a Christian, Paul says, "**If we suffer with Christ.**" If we suffer with Christ, listen, the world hates the things of God. But true Christians are willing to suffer for the sake of Christ. We, as believers, as Christians are willing to lay it all down for Christ.

Just as Jesus said in Mark chapter 8:34, "[If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospels sake, will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?](#)" (Mark 8:34-35)

Well, we are God's children. Listen, we are not under condemnation. There is no condemnation for us, which we should praise God for every single day, you should wake up and say, Thank You, Lord, that I am not under condemnation, not today, and not tomorrow, and not for all of eternity, because I am in Christ, not because of what I've done, but because of what You have done in me, Christ. And then we should live with hearts of thanksgiving, under obligation to live in obedience to Christ, in accordance with the Spirit of God who dwells inside of us. That's our life. That's how we should be living as believers.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for this glorious truth, of not being under condemnation. Lord as we come out of chapter 7 and we see that we are wretched people. Lord, this truth is so glorious, so magnificent, so amazing, that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Thank You for the saving work that You have done in our hearts, that You have called us, that You have redeemed us, that You have put Your Spirit inside of us to dwell in us so that we can live out a life of obedience to You. Help us to do that. As we leave from here tonight, Lord, may we live in complete obedience to You and not fulfill the desires of the flesh, but walk in the Spirit and fulfill what You have called us to do. We're called to



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walk in the Spirit. May we do it all to bring glory and honor to Your name and your name alone. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.