

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. St. Paul writes to men yet in the flesh. He writes to men like you. The proof of their status, the proof of your status, is that St. Paul writes to men that sin against one another.

He writes to men that covet and lust after the things those around them have. He writes to prideful and jealous men. He writes to men dead in their transgressions. For to be carnally minded is death.

He writes to men who, sinfully discontent with what they have, desire to be famous and wealthy, and are willing to break the Commandments of God to do so. He writes to men who barely have enough to survive, and in their poverty blame God for being unfair.

He writes to men who have eaten to the full, men who eat the leaven of the Pharisees, which is to say those deceived by false doctrine, which is to say men condemned by the Law. For it is not the Law that is weak, the Apostle teaches. The weakness is in the flesh.

So the congregation at Rome was much like our congregation. They, like us, were fallen men and women gathered around God's gifts for the forgiveness of their sins and the strengthening of their faith. And among them, as among all visible Christian congregations, there were those who did not believe, mingled for a time with those given saving faith.

All of them deserved nothing except God's wrath and condemnation. That is what every sinful man deserves. That is what each of us has merited by our transgressions. But those in Rome with faith hoped for deliverance. That is the hope of the Church, the hope founded upon the Gospel Promise.

That is our hope, hope born of the trustworthiness and holiness of the God that keeps His promises. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made you free from the law of sin and death.

It is no small thing that our sins are forgiven in Christ. Indeed, it is everything. For by the Blood of Christ we have peace with God. God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that sin in the flesh be condemned. He Himself, becoming Man, suffered Himself to be condemned. He became sin for you. He assumed a debt that was not His – your debt to God.

God's wrath was visited upon Him. Hell was visited upon Him. He suffered the pangs of hell and death, and then rose again to new life, fulfilling the sign of Jonah. By Him is the righteous requirement of the Law fulfilled, for He fulfilled the Law.

So hear the Apostolic Doctrine. Hear and believe: thanks be to God, by His grace, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. There is no condemnation for you, dear Christian. The wrath of God was spent on His only Son. There is no wrath left - only love - for you who bear His Name.

And that Name, that fearful, powerful majestic Triune Name that is above every Name, the Name of the only True God, the Name of your Savior, that is placed upon you. It is scribed

upon your forehead and your heart. And in you who bear His Name does His Spirit dwell.

That Spirit, the Spirit of love and truth, the Spirit of holiness and purity, leads you to walk not according to the flesh, but according to the very will of God. And by that Spirit, your mind is set on the things of the Spirit, which are Christ and His Mysteries.

And so to be spiritually minded, as the Apostle teaches, is life and peace. For in Christ, of whom the Spirit testifies, there is eternal life and peace with God.

That life and peace bursts forth from the truth that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. There is no condemnation for you. There is no condemnation, but rather forgiveness and eternal blessing, upon you who eat not the leaven of the Pharisees, but the Bread of Life. You eat Christ.

Filled with Christ, filled with His Spirit, you walk according to the Spirit. To walk according to the Spirit is to gather here, to hear the Word of Christ, to eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ, to receive the forgiveness of your sins, and to be one with those who are spiritually minded, here now on earth, and there forever in eternity.

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