

NOTES FROM PASTOR TIM'S SERMON 19th March 2023 pm

SERIES FROM ROMANS "Life in the Spirit" Part 1

"No condemnation"

Scripture references from the ESV

Romans 8:1-17 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.^[a] ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you^[b] free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,^[c] he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus^[d] from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

¹² So then, brothers,^[e] we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons^[f] of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

The Christian life is a battle against three enemies:

- The world – where we see evil influences
- The Devil – who tempts us
- The flesh – our own sinful desires that wage war against our spirit.

Paul speaks about this battle in **Romans 7:18-19**

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

One of the evidences that you are saved is that you experience this battle between wanting to obey God with your mind and heart, but then find that you desire to do what is wrong. Sin will only cease to trouble us when we come to our resurrection life. In the meantime, how do we successfully fight against sin in our lives so that we grow more like Christ?

The answer will surprise you! Having acknowledged that Christians sin, Paul will go on to tell us that we need to fight sin and slay it (**v12-13** above), but before he does that, he takes us to Christ. He shows us

- How Christ's death has secured no condemnation for us
- That the righteous requirement has been secured for us through Jesus

In fact, he shows us who we are in Christ.

**It is the knowledge of God's grace to us through Christ
that enables us to successfully fight sin in our lives.**

Sin will lose its attractiveness as you spend time alone with Christ, thinking about his love for you, praising him for his grace and contemplating his death. That is true life in the Spirit.

The Spirit of God is given to us to point us to Christ. Jesus tells us that the Spirit will bear witness about him (**John 15:26**). As we live this life in the Spirit, so the Spirit points us to Christ and what he has accomplished for us.

Then we are able to fight sin effectively, because we do this by looking to Jesus in the power of the Spirit of God.

This pattern is seen throughout the New Testament, and the following passage is just one example:

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

We see the command to kill sin and the action of looking to Jesus as the way to carry that out. Alongside other means of grace, the Lord's Table is so important in our fight against sin. As we take the bread and wine, we look to Jesus whose death ensured no condemnation for us. What does no condemnation mean for us?

1. **No condemnation means no condemnation.** We may think that no condemnation only applies when we are getting our lives right. When we sin, we think that we come under God's condemnation again until we repent. That is not the gospel.

- The only qualification necessary is to be **in Christ Jesus** (v1 above).

When we put our faith in Jesus, we are placed in him forever. Once we are in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation – now or ever. God is always for us and never against us. This **does NOT** mean that:

- We will not feel sadness over sin or feel ashamed. In fact, we may feel more sadness and more shame
- We will never be chastened by God
- We will never feel times when God seems to be distant because we have grieved his Spirit

It certainly **does not** mean that we have an excuse to keep on sinning. It **does** mean that, even though we have sinned, we will never experience the death our sin deserves. God still loves us and does not condemn us.

How can a just and holy God allow us to escape the spiritual death our sins deserve?

2. **No condemnation because sin has been condemned in Christ** (vv2-4 above).

The condemnation that our sin justly earned fell on Christ instead of us.

Jesus Christ has been condemned in our place

Because of that we cannot be condemned. If God were to condemn us now, he would be acting unjustly because justice has been satisfied in Christ. Our elder brother, Jesus, has paid the penalty our sin deserves and he has paid it in full.

There is nothing left to pay

God cannot and will not come after us for payment.

There is now no condemnation

That is why when we sin and go to God with confession, John describes God **not** as merciful and gracious to forgive, but instead as **faithful** and **just** to forgive (1 John 1:8-9).

Because our sin has been condemned in Christ's mortal body, then

- When we confess our sin, God **justly** forgives us
- When we confess our sin, God is **faithful** to the covenant promise in Christ to forgive

All our sin, past present and future has been condemned in Christ so that

There is therefore now no condemnation for those (you) who are in Christ Jesus (8:1).

As we meditate on that, as we come to believe it ever more deeply, and as we rejoice in it more and more so sin begins to lose its power over us. It is the work of the Spirit to accomplish this.

We will come to rest in the assurance that there is no condemnation – not now, not ever.