

DEVOTIONAL

WHEN IN ROME VIII
NO CONDEMNATION
MAY 22, 2022

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Starter: As we begin studying Romans 8 today, notice that this marvelous chapter begins and ends with declarations of the Christian's absolute security in God: There is no condemnation for those in Christ (8:1), and nothing will ever be able to separate us from His love (8:39). How do these two great truths inform your thinking about your relationship with Christ? Your service for Christ? Your relationships with others?

Key Text: *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you 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, 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."* (Romans 8:1-4)

The Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is referred to as the "Law of Double Jeopardy." It guarantees that once you have been tried for a crime, you cannot be tried for that same crime again. Today's text, Romans 8:1-4, could be called "God's Law of Double Jeopardy." Jesus Christ took our place on the cross and was fully prosecuted for our sins (Is.53:4-6), and once is all that God's law demands. If God were to put our sins on Jesus and then also put them on us, that would be double punishment, or double jeopardy. Now we who have trusted in Christ's sacrifice are exempt from eternal punishment for our sins—not because of a constitutional legal clause, but because of God's righteous justice and amazing grace. We now live a life with no condemnation!

1. God's "not condemned" promise is only for those who are "in Christ."

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (v.1)

The phrase "*in Christ*" (v.1) is one of Paul's favorites—he uses it about 160 times in his letters to remind us that when we place our faith in Christ, God so closely identifies us with His Son that He credits Jesus' attributes and accomplishments to us. Since we are "*in Christ*," God sees Christ instead of our sins and failures. Being "*in Christ*" frees us from condemnation since Christ has already borne our judgment. John 3:18 says, "*Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*"

Imagine you put a piece of torn, tattered, stained paper inside a book; then you close the book. You can't see the torn, tattered, stained paper because it is in the book—all you can see is the book. When you are "*in Christ*," God doesn't see your sins, mistakes, failures, and imperfections; rather, He sees Christ since you are in Him. For God to condemn you, He'd have to condemn Christ since you are now "*in Christ*," and God will never condemn His Son!

Discuss: How can the news that we are not condemned set us free from fearful thoughts and emotions that God will condemn and reject us?

2. The life-giving law of the Spirit of God has set us free from the condemning law of sin and death.

“For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.” (v.2)

Apart from Christ, we were held captive under the “*law of sin and death*” and were helpless to escape on our own. But when we received Christ, the “*law of the Spirit of life*” abolished and replaced the old “*law of sin and death*” and set us free! It is significant to note that the Holy Spirit is mentioned only once in the first seven chapters of Romans, but He is referred to nearly 20 times in chapter 8 alone!

Discuss: Read and discuss 8 of the Holy Spirit’s ministries listed in Romans 8:

- | | | | |
|---------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| (1) 8:2 | (3) 8:11 | (5) 8:14 | (7) 8:22-23 |
| (2) 8:5 | (4) 8:12-13 | (6) 8:16 | (8) 8:26-27 |

3. God sent Jesus in the likeness of a human body so He could condemn all sin through the punishment of Jesus’ body.

“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, 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.” (v.3-4)

The word “flesh” mentioned four times in verses 3-4 refers to our sin nature—our tendency to sin. We cannot keep God’s law perfectly, so God sent Jesus to take on human flesh, with the exception that Jesus had no sin nature in His flesh. Paul clarifies that Jesus lived only in the “*likeness of sinful flesh*” (v.3). Jesus’ flesh was like ours in appearance but not identical to ours in our sin nature. Jesus became fully human, yet He remained fully God. He lived as we live, He suffered as we suffer, He was tempted as we are tempted—but He did it all without sin. Due to the weakness of our sinful flesh, the law could not save us since we couldn’t obey it. So, God judged our sin by punishing Jesus’ sinless body in our place (see Is.53:4-6 and 2 Cor.5:21).

Verse 4 says we now no longer live “*according to the flesh;*” now we live “*according to the Spirit.*” We’re no longer self-driven; now, we yield to the Spirit’s control.

Discuss: What do these verses teach about the sinlessness of Christ (Hebrews 4:15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5)? Why is Jesus’ sinlessness important?

Discuss: According to Galatians 5:17-25, what are some differences between walking according to the Spirit and walking according to the flesh?

For Further Study:

Free online commentary of the Book of Romans at www.enduringword.com

“What Does It Mean to Walk in the Spirit?” article at www.gotquestions.org

“Why It Was Necessary That Jesus Became Flesh” article at www.crosswalk.com