***No Condemnation
RO93-01***

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We are studying Romans 8:1-4, as we begin a new chapter. Our subject is "Freedom from Condemnation."

The apostle Paul, from Romans 7:7 onward, has been stressing a basic fact about the Christian life; namely, that the sin nature in the believer causes him to rebel against the divine standard of righteousness, such as is expressed in the Mosaic Law. We are, as Christians, not under the ritualistic obligations of the Mosaic Law, or the lifestyle of the Mosaic Law, but we are under the obligation of the standard of righteousness which is expressed in the Mosaic Law. What the Ten Commandments say, we are still obliged to obey in terms of it being a reflection of the righteousness of God.

That's why all of the principles, for example, of the Ten Commandments are reiterated in the teachings of the New Testament epistles – all except one commandment. One has been totally discarded, and that is worship on Saturday, the holy day, the Sabbath day.

However, the standard of righteousness that is required of a person to enter heaven is very clearly portrayed by the Mosaic Law. It reflects the character of God. So, we've already read in Romans 7:12 that this Law is holy, and its commandments are holy, and just, and good. The divine standard for godly living, however, is resented; resisted; and, reviled by the sin nature in the Christian.

So, God's clearly declared requirements for living become the basis for condemnation for everyone. The Christian, in his mind, approves and accepts God's standard of conduct, Paul has pointed. But his nature opposes that standard. So, the believer actually finds that in spite of himself, he does the evil things that God actually forbids in the Word of God. And he does not do the things that God requires of us as Christians, and which, in fact, we, with our thinking and our minds, want to do.

Paul, therefore, calls out in desperation, at the end of Romans 7:24, for someone to help him in his wretched condition of yielding to the sin nature in spite of his desire to obey God.

**Experiential Sanctification**

Then, coming to Romans 8, Paul proceeds to explain how God has provided the Christian with a sphere of power to enable him to live a holy life. We call this experiential sanctification. Sanctification means godliness (set apartness to God's standard). Experiential means in our experience.

The sphere of divine power that God has created to enable us to do this was actually something that He has prepared previously for His Son, before the incarnation. There was a sphere of divine power created by God the Father to enable his Royal Son, Jesus Christ, to function victoriously in His humanity, while he was in Satan's world. This sphere of power preserved the Lord Jesus Christ from sinning, and enabled Him to produce divine good works all the way to the cross, in spite of the temptations from Satan and from the world. He did not have temptations from the sin nature, which is an added dimension that we have, because He did not have a sin nature. But he had equally powerful temptations from Satan, as you know, and He had equally powerful temptations from the world system that surrounded Him.

So, here was the Son of God, the second person of the eternal trinity, God from eternity past, who was going to take upon Himself human flesh, so that He could become the God-man, so that He could die upon the cross to pay for the sins of the world. In order for Him to live in Satan's world, God the Father prepared a power sphere for Him to function in so that He could maintain his experience sanctification. It was a provision for this member of the royal family of God. And I'm happy to say that the same system of divine power, prepared for the humanity of the Son, is actually available to the whole royal family of God in the church age, which is what we are. We, who are the members of the royal family of God, have access to this divine power system. That's an enormous truth, practically unknown throughout all of the churches of America, and rarely spoken of, and hardly ever alluded to. But that power system is what this chapter of Romans 8 is all about. It is the system that enables a Christian to rise to do the one thing that he's called to do above all else, and that is to glorify God, and to glorify God with holy, godly living, and with divine good production.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in terms of His humanity, was no different than you and I. He had to have a way of doing it. He had to have a capacity provided so that He could do it. He did not function in His deity. The two systems remained separate.

So, this power system releases the love of God in the believer, which brings defeat to Satan and the old sin nature. And that's what the power system does. Experiential sanctification, then, is possible under the love power system of the church. And that's exciting good news.

**Romans 8:1**

So, that's where we're headed, and we begin with verse 1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." The word "therefore" looks like this. It is the Greek word "ara." it is a conjunction, and it is a word which introduces a conclusion based on the contents of what Paul has been teaching from Romans 5:12 all the way down to Romans 7:6. What the apostle Paul has been teaching is how God, as the judge of the universe, has come up with a solution for the sin nature. All of us are born into the human race with a sin nature. And the apostle Paul has been explaining how God, the judge, dealt with that problem. You can't go to heaven with the sin nature problem unsolved.

So, this section has been explaining God's judicial solution for the inherited sin nature. This solution was to remove the believing sinner from his natural position in Adam, and to place him in Christ. "In Adam" is the position of the eternal death in hell, but "in Christ" is the position of eternal life in heaven.

So, the apostle Paul has been clearly explaining, piece-by-piece and step-by-step, how God has done this. And it is in this way that the holy supreme judge of mankind has disposed of the death-dealing effect of the sin nature. Until that effect has been disposed, nobody could go to heaven.

So, the sin nature of man, I'm happy to say, is no longer an issue with God the Father. The judge has closed the case. The sin nature problem has been resolved. Through the death of Christ, the Father has been freed to take a believing sinner out of Adam, and to place him into Christ. So, in this way, the issue has been settled.

**Out of Adam, and In Christ**

The word "therefore" is looking back to that. Since God has now made it possible to transfer us out of Adam into Christ, now something else very wonderful becomes possible: "Therefore, now." The Greek word looks a lot like the English word: "mun." The word indicates a logical sequence. Since something previously has been established as true, a logical conclusion must follow. You and I, by an act of God, the Supreme Judge, are no longer in Adam, but we are now in Christ. Get that. We are talking about two men: Adam; and, Christ. We once were in Adam. God has transferred us into Christ, so that now all of the condition of being doomed to hell has been removed. We are out of Adam. We are in Christ. That's what he's been talking about.

The word "therefore" says, "That being the case, there is now a logical conclusion that is inevitable." Something previously has been established, and it makes something else follow. And then you have the word "no." The Greek word is "ouden." Some of you may remember that this first part of this word is the Greek negative, the strongest word for "no" in the Greek language. Here it is made even stronger in this word to the extent that you really have to translate it (to be accurate) as "never." There is something that is absolutely now never possible. And to make it stronger, here in the Greek language, you have a sentence, and you have the first word, and you have the second word, and you have the third, and you have the fourth word, and you have the fifth word. Well, in English, where the words are is not particularly significant on the importance of the word. But in the Greek language, if you put a word at the first of the sentence, or you put a word at the end of the sentence, that is an added punch. That tells you that those are the important ideas. Guess where "ouden" comes? Yep. Right here, number one, at the beginning of the sentence.

**No Condemnation**

So, here is something tremendously important that God the Holy Spirit is trying to make clear to the human race once and for all – that something is absolutely never again possible for a certain type of human being. God the Holy Spirit is telling us that there is no exception. And what is that? There is no exception to a thing that Paul calls "condemnation." There is never any condemnation. The Greek word, so that will know I'm not making all this up, is: "katakrima." "Katakrima" refers to a sentence of guilt with punishment to follow. In a court of law, a person is first pronounced guilty of a crime, and then he is sentenced to punishment.

So, what you have here is crime and punishment. Katakrima" means that. Condemnation means a lot more in the Greek language than it does in the English word. The context here indicates that there is absolutely never any condemnation on the part of God toward a certain group of people who thus cannot ever again be punished. There are certain human beings that God cannot send to hell. And that's the punishment he is talking about. There is a certain type of person that God Almighty cannot ever send into the lake of fire.

Now, condemnation, of course, is the opposite of justification. So, if you possess justification, you do not possess condemnation. That gives us a clue as to who the non-condemned type are. They're the people who possess justification. Romans 5 says, "And not as the judgment by one man that sins, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation. But the free gift is of many offenses unto justification." Paul is saying here that the opposite of the condemnation that came to the human race by the one act of Adam has been neutralized by the justification that comes to those of us who have been guilty of many offenses, but which we receive as a grace gift from the hand of God, upon our trust in Christ.

**Justification**

So, the opposite of condemnation is justification. So, the apostle Paul, here at the beginning of Romans 8, wants to establish the ground for holy living. He says, "In view of the things that are true about our being removed from Adam and being placed in Christ, as we have previously taught, there is logically a conclusion which we must draw, and that is that there is no condition of a person who is in Christ to be declared guilty, and to be facing a punishment at the hand of God ever again. It is specifically true because "they are in." The Greek word is "en," meaning location, and they are in Christ Jesus. The word "Christ" is "Christos." This is the noun which refers to the Son of God as the anointed one – as Israel's Messiah. The name Jesus is "Iesous." "Iesous" is the noun which is his personal name. It means "Savior." It comes from the Hebrew word "Joshua," which means "Jehovah is salvation."

The order "Christ Jesus" is of some significance in the writings of the apostle Paul. When you have the name of the Son of God put in the order of "Christ Jesus," he is looking at the God-man as the exalted one, who has set aside the visible display of His deity. And that position of the exalted one setting aside this display of deity is what is described for us in Philippians 2:5-6: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man." So, Jesus Christ came. Even though He was God, He put aside the appearance of His deity. He didn't set aside His deity, but the appearance of it. And He took the humble position of a human being.

So, this order stresses that he is the preexistent one who came in the incarnation. And Christ Jesus always proclaims for us the word "grace." When Paul uses "Christ Jesus," if you follow it through the New Testament, he's always using it where he wants to stress the grace of God toward us. And he speaks of him as "Christ Jesus." The one who is the exalted Son of God, set aside the appearance of His deity, and took the humiliating place of being under the restrictions of humanity, and the death that he didn't deserve.

When you have it the other way around, where you have the thing as "Jesus Christ," as in Philippians 2:11, you see that he is looking at the God-man as the despised and rejected one rather than as the one who is preexistent, and who came down and took that humiliating, humble position. Philippians 2:11 says, "That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." It is looking at Him as the one who was despised; rejected; and, set aside. And it stresses the fact that He is the one who is demonstrating the glory of God. So, you have that other order of the name "Jesus Christ," the one who is despised, who was exalted, stressing the glory of God.

So, Paul uses the name "Christ Jesus" in this case because he's indicating that the basis of no condemnation for the believer is the grace factor that characterizes the Lord Jesus Christ, that would cause him to pay for the sins of mankind, and set aside His own divine prerogatives So, the Christian is in this wonderful place of being in Christ Jesus. And 1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us we get into Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

So, Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore no condemnation (logically) – no guilt that is waiting for punishment to those particular people who are in Christ Jesus.

The rest of verse 1 does not belong there. In the Greek Bible, it is not to be found. This is one of the beauties of having a lot of Greek manuscripts to compare. We discover that the best manuscripts do not have the rest of this verse. And suddenly, it's interjected. How did it get in there? Well, some copyist; some monk; or, some character oriented to going to heaven on the basis of his behaving himself; his good deeds; and, his efforts, looked at that verse and said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." And because he was writing it in Greek, he used the word "ouden" for "no," that means never: "There is therefore now never any condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus?" And that monk said, "Oh, if people read that, they could live like the devil and still go to heaven? That can't be right." Then his eye dropped down to verse 4. And he saw the end of that first, and he says, "Aha, that will make it clear."

So, he wrote it, perhaps in the margin the first time, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." So, he could interject that there is no condemnation if you are in Christ, as long as you behave yourself. Now he felt better about it. Probably the second person that came along; copied it; looked at the margin; and said, "Oh, he omitted something, and stuck it in reverse. So, it ended up being in the verse. So, the next people copying it thought it was part of the real text.

Well, it's interpolated, and it is totally false. It reverses everything that the first part of the verse says. This is one of the greatest declarations in the Bible. Consider yourself graced out enormously, if you can believe it and accept it, that there is no condemnation for you once you are in the Son of God, no matter what you do. By the same token, you better believe it – that if you are not in the Son of God, you are under nothing but divine condemnation. You have been declared guilty, and the punishment has already been assessed to be eternally in the lake of fire, and it is only waiting to be executed upon you.

So, how can we say indeed that there is no condemnation once you are in Christ; once you have believed the gospel; and, once you have been united to the Son of God, that never again can you be brought under any kind of punishment from God? Never again can you be threatened with the fires of hell? Well, it's based upon the previous reasoning.

Let's have a quick review. The apostle Paul, in Romans 1:16-17, says, "For I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believes, to the Jew first, and to the gentile. For it is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; for it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" So, salvation is secured through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, so that the absolute righteousness of God can be imputed to the believing sinner. That's why this is true. You believe in Christ as Savior; you accept Him; and, you trust in Him, and God says, "Fine, now I'll give you the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ." Once you possess the righteousness of Jesus Christ, you're out of the realm of any condemnation.

Notice Romans 3:21. All of this is the previous discussion: "But now the righteousness of God, apart from the Law, is manifested; being witnessed by the law and the prophets." The absolute righteousness of God necessary for salvation is secured from God, apart from any human effort to earn it or to deserve it by keeping any system of rules such as the Mosaic Law.

Romans 3:24 says, "Being justified freely," meaning without any reason for Him to justify you, and without any deserving cause in us to be justified: "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." God justifies the believing sinner by grace – a gift on the basis of the death of Christ, in payment for that sinner's evil.

Notice Romans 5:1: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ." Having once been justified, the believing sinner enters into permanent peace with the Holy God, done alone through the Savior.

Notice Romans 5:2: "By whom also, we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Access into the grace gift of salvation has been secured by Jesus Christ. Now we as believers rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and in the hope of being in the presence of God. And remember that this word hope in the Greek Bible does not connote uncertainty, but it connotes a definitive expectation.

Notice Romans 5:3-4: "For when we were without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet perhaps for a good man, some would even dare to die. But God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

**The Roman Catholic Church says, "First we Must Deserve Salvation"**

The Roman Catholic Church, when it finally had to face what the reformers were doing and what the reformers were saying, called a council at the city of Trent. The Council of Trent had to review exactly what the Roman Catholic Church was going to teach concerning how a person was removed from condemnation, and how a person received justification. The reformers said, "A person receives justification by coming as a sinner, and accepting the grace gift of eternal life provided by Jesus Christ without that sinner trying to do anything to deserve it." The Roman Catholic Church finally decided at the council of Trent, that: "No, that was wrong. The way the person receives justification is first by becoming sanctified." The reformers said, "First you are justified – God places you in Christ, you are under no condemnation. Then your sin nature comes under control because the Holy Spirit now indwells you, and you can live a sanctified holy life." The Roman Catholic Church said, "No, first you must become sanctified; first you must act and live right; and, first you must behave yourself. Then God says, "OK, you deserve justification." So, they stated that first we must merit; that is, deserve the merit of Christ. We must merit the merit of Christ. We must deserve His merit before we can have it.

However, that is what Paul has been saying in Romans at all. That's why this was such an explosive book to Martin Luther, who kept thinking to himself, "I've got to deserve the merit of Christ by preparing myself with godly living. I've got to become such a perfect man. Then God will give me His absolute righteousness. He suddenly realized, that in book of Romans, Paul has been saying that all this has been done for you. All you have to do is accept it.

**Justification**

So, justification is God, the judge, declaring that believing sinner to be absolute righteousness while he still sins. What is justification? You should be able to define it. Justification is God declaring that I possess His absolute righteousness, even though I still sin. That is justification. And that is a glorious statement. And that's why Paul can say at the beginning of Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 4:5 puts it this way: "Now to him that works, it is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." It is not something that you have earned, or something that you have worked for. It is not something that you had deserved because you have lived such a good life, and you have become such a nice person. It is because God has taken you, in your sin, and given you this absolute righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21 puts it very clearly: "For He has made Him (God the Father has made God the Son), who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." That's how you become absolute righteousness – by receiving it as a gift.

**Imputation**

So, what God does is transfer the believer's sins to the record of Jesus Christ, and He transfers the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ to the believer. We call that imputation. All the evil, therefore, that was on the books against Jesus Christ, because of our evil imputed to Him, has been paid for on the cross: past; present; and, future. Remember that all of the evil of mankind has been placed on the record of Jesus Christ. Everything on His record against Him now, which was our evil, has been paid for by Him. Nothing has been left unpaid.

So, God the Father could not strike any one of you people who are in Christ with the judgment of eternal death any more than He could strike His Son, in whom we have been placed, with eternal death. Whatever was against the Son from us is paid for. He cannot strike you down any more than He could strike His Son, who has paid for all of the sins that we were guilty of.

**You cannot Lose your Salvation**

So, the born again sinner is never faced with a loss of salvation in spite of his sinning, because it is all based on what Christ did in payment on the cross, not on what the sinner has done. "No condemnation," of course, does not mean that there is nothing deserving of condemnation in us. When it says, "There is no condemnation," it doesn't mean that there's nothing that we do that would be deserving of condemnation. It means that there is nothing for which we can be held guilty, because it's all been paid for, even though indeed there are things that could be worthy of condemnation.

So, those who have been placed in Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, at the point of trusting in Christ as Savior, are forever beyond the reach of condemnation. And the Bible is very, very clear about that. 1 Corinthians 15:22 says, "For in Adam all die (we're born in Adam); even so in Christ shall all be made alive." How could you say it more clearly? If you're in Adam, you're in a place of death. But once you get out of Adam, you're forever secure, and you cannot be returned.

Romans 6:3-5 describe the baptism of the Holy Spirit placing us in Christ: "Don't you know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that, as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." If you have been planted in the likeness of His death (and you have been), then you are certainly going to be in the likeness of His resurrection.

2 Corinthians 5:17 puts it this way: "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things have become new." This verse is sometimes taken to prove that you should not have certain bad habits in your life. You're a Christian. All things have become new, and there are certain things that are considered unbecoming Christian conduct, and they are, and that those would change. But that is not what this is talking about. If you are in Christ, you're a new creation. What old things are passed away? The old death things in Adam. That's what's passed away. Everything has become new, and it can never again return to that lost condition.

Whatever the Philippians jailer was, for example, that Paul spoke to, was in God's sight before he met Paul, the moment he trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, he was beyond condemnation. And the Bible clearly declares that if he would believe, he would be saved, and his house. And that's exactly what Acts 16:27-34 describe – how the man believed, and he was saved, and with this house. The moment he believed he was beyond condemnation.

So, Paul declares that a believer is not subject to divine condemnation in hell, in spite of his imperfect lifestyle. We Christians are in Christ now, while our Lord is in heaven. We will be in Christ when we meet Him in the rapture (in the air). We will be in Christ as we rule with Him during the millennium. And we will be in Christ for all eternity. You are there. You will never be removed. No condemnation is possible because the believer is not depending on his own human good works for justification. That's the whole secret. As long as you're not depending on your good works, then you will not be under condemnation – depending only on the divine good work of Christ on the cross.

The believer is not under any legal system of works – any rituals to earn salvation. He's under God's grace system for free justification. As a matter of fact, if you think you can approach God to be justified by keeping religious rituals, like the Lord's Supper and water baptism, you will go to hell. You can count on it. If you are bringing that as the basis, even if you add your confidence and belief in the death of Christ, I can assure you that you will end up in the lake of fire.

So, there are churches all around the city now that are gathered in worship. They have some of the same songs you've sung. They had the same kind of church service that you have. They have the same song books. They have offerings systems. They have the same church program type of thing. But they have been told that Christ died on the cross, and if they will receive water baptism, they will go to heaven. Those who believe it will end up in the lake of fire. There are others who have been told that Christ has died for them, and it they will take the Lord's Supper, it will help them toward heaven. If they believe it, they will go to the lake of fire. There are others who have been told that Christ has died for them, and if they prove themselves worthy about how they live, they will end up and be exalted into the Father's presence. And if they believe that, they will end up in the lake of fire.

The opposite of this is very grim. On the one side, we rejoice that there is no condemnation for any of us who are in Christ. But for those who are out of Christ, we must weep for them – and those who are blinded to thinking that they are somehow acceptable to God when they are outside of Christ are to be pitied. The believer is not under a works system, because if it's under a works system, you never know if you've done enough, and you don't know when you've reached the point of justification, and if you've done the ones that are acceptable to God.

No amount of good works can cover your moral guilt. You stop at a stoplight 1,000 times, then you drive through it once, and the policeman stops you, and you get a ticket, even though you argue that for 1,000 times you've done it good. It only takes one braking, and you pay the penalty. That's what God says about the standard of the Law. If you break it in one place, you've shattered the whole thing.

Noah and his ark are in the Bible, actually an example of salvation. It's a good illustration. It's a good type, because salvation was where. In the ark, just as we are in Christ. Outside of the ark, there was death, destruction, and terror. Wouldn't it have been pitiful if God had said, "Now, Noah, I want you to build eight platforms out here on the side of the ark with hand-holds. And when we go, we're going to put the animals inside, but I want you and your family to stand on the outside of the ark, and hang on for dear life, because it's going to rain, and it's going to storm, and this water is going to pitch around, and just better hang on, because if you let go, it's going to be good-bye banana time." You'd say, "That's crazy. What kind of security is that? What kind of salvation is that? What kind of comfort would that have been to know? But that isn't the way God works, but that's the way people think He works. They think it's a matter of their getting on, and hanging on for dear life.

God says, "I'm going to put you inside the security of my ark. It's going to be snug in there. It's going to be warm. It's going to be perfect. It's going to be secure. You're going to be able to breathe a sigh of relief. You're going to be able to enjoy yourself. They must have enjoyed life in the ark. For a year, they had to stay in there. I don't know, maybe they had cow-chip throwing contests or something. They came up with something to amuse themselves in the process of all the work they had to do all day long. But it was great to be in the ark, and it was a horrible thought to have been left on the outside. There was no security out there. It was only inside. It's a perfect illustration of what it means to be in Christ, and why we can then say, "No condemnation."

And people come to the Lord in different ways, and still no condemnation. Some people come to accepting Christ as Savior with bubbling, joyous emotion. They're just jumping off the floor. Other people come with humble tears of repentance; and, others come with sober-faced relief. But they're all on the same elevator going to heaven. However they come, that elevator has to take them there. They're not going to get there any other way. The only way they're going to get up there to get off is with the elevator that God has provided through His Son. They get there with a certainty, whatever their emotional response at the moment.

Well, what a contrast all of this is with the human viewpoint systems of salvation, such as in Roman Catholicism and Mormonism – seeking to prove ourselves worthy of entering the Father's presence, when the Bible says, "We are under no condemnation in Christ," so there's no worthiness to be proven. There's no such thing with God of getting into Christ by faith in the Savior; then committing a sin; falling out of Christ; losing your salvation; repenting again; being placed back into Christ until the next time that you fall into sin; and, you fall out of Christ again. You cannot fall out again.

**Eternal Security**

So, if the devil, or his demons, or the human agents that he uses, try to make you doubt the absolute eternal security of your salvation, just quote Romans 8:1. Just be sure you don't quote the last part of the verse in the King James Bible. Just quote Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" – the man of grace in our behalf. He's paid it. We are secure.

Paul is stressing the solid basis of the believer's justification, because that is the ground now of experiential sanctification, which he is going to discuss. Before he tells us how to live in a way that is pleasing to God, he said, "I want you to understand at first you must be justified, and that justification is secure." So, just as he goes into this now, to talk about holy living, he says, "Let's make it clear once more that when I talk about holy living, the things you should do and should not do as a Christian, it has nothing to do with your salvation. I want that really clear." Paul says, "That issue is forever settled."

So, the release of a believer in Christ from the condemnation of God's justice is the basis of the Christian's divine power system for holy godly living. You can't live a godly life until you're in the family of God. Only those who are permanently justified can enjoy the experience of sanctification. So, justification is the basis. It's the starting point for sanctification, because we have been accepted by a holy God. That must precede our growth in the character of Jesus Christ.

You may want to notice that Romans 8 begins with the statement, "No condemnation," and it ends with, "No separation" in the verses 38-39: For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." We are always in Christ. That's the secret. It's interesting that he begins with "no condemnation," and he ends this chapter with "no separation."

There is no system of legal rules or good works which can secure permanent "no separation" – only that which God Himself has provided by placing us in Christ. And there are plenty of religious leaders who have not grasped this – vast denominations.

I talked to one such religious leader this past summer, and he was trying to find out what kind of a church Berean Memorial Church was. One of the things he wanted to know right off the bat was: "Do you believe in once saved, always saved?" He was part of a denomination that did not believe that. And I said, "Yes, I think that's what it means to be in Christ." And I said, "And I think that that's why the Lord used the analogy of new birth, in order to try to make clear that once a person is born again, he can never again be unborn, any more than, in the physical realm,, one can be born physically, and then lose his birth. That was Nicodemus' clear understanding: that if you're born once, you can't reverse it. It was quite obvious that Jesus was using that illustration in order to convey the point that once you have it, whatever else he wanted to say, it also conveyed the point that once you have this salvation, you cannot lose it again."

I was interested to note that he had nothing to say. He wasn't just a preacher. He was a man who was in authority over other preachers in the denomination. He teaches other preachers, and he had nothing to say. What a pitiful sight. It was clear that what he was teaching those men was: "Go to your congregations, and tell them that today Christ has died for you, and you have accepted Him as your Savior, and you have been justified. But if you go out there, and you break the moral code of God, you will lose your justification. You will fall out of Christ. You will be back in the death waters surrounding the ark." And where would he get that from the Word of God? Nowhere. It is ignorance – abysmal, pathetic, tragic ignorance.

Romans 8:1 should not be taken lightly. And I've come down extra hard on it, and stressed it, because it is the dramatic statement that every human being needs to know. You are either in Christ, in the place of security and eternal life, or you're out of Christ, and you're doomed forever. It has nothing to do with how you live. It has only to do with how Jesus Christ lived. He lived the perfect life. He never sinned. He was free of the sin nature because of His virgin birth. He had all of our evil and sins in our human good, all credited to His account. He took it to the cross, and He paid for it all. Trusting Him, God, the judge, removes you from the death place in Adam, and he puts you into the life place in Christ. And when that is true, there is no condemnation. Never, never, never – no matter how abysmally, grossly sinful you may become. Yes, never. No matter if you become a murderer like David, you're still going to heaven. No matter if you become an adulterer like David, you still go to heaven. No matter what you do, you still go to heaven.

God the Father will discipline you if you don't make correction. You may count on that. But your destiny is going to be toward heaven. The grossest sin cannot bring you the punishment of eternal death in the lake of fire. That is really good news.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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