***The Kenosis of Jesus Christ
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Please open your Bibles to Romans 8:1-4. This is the eighth segment on "Freedom from Condemnation."

**The Eternal Security of the Believer**

We have already observed that, in Romans 8:1, God the Holy Spirit makes a very dramatic statement to the effect that there is absolutely no possibility of anyone who is in Christ ever experiencing the eternal death of the lake of fire. Most people who go to church do not believe that that is a true statement. They do not believe that, once a person has entered the family of God, there is absolutely no possibility for a reversion to the lake of fire. They do believe that you can again end up going to hell, even though at one point you were on your way to heaven.

However, that's not what the apostle Paul says. As we pointed out, the last part of that verse does not belong in there. It was added because of somebody who couldn't stand the statement of the first part: "That there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." So, some scribe had to add: "provided you behave yourself, and you walk in a proper way." And what he actually did was picked up what was down in verse 4, and he stuck it up into verse 1, in order to make it sound right to his human viewpoint thinking.

**Salvation by Grace is Irreversible**

However, what the apostle Paul says is that is that anyone who is in Christ has been born again spiritually, and baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation. That act is irreversible. Regeneration is entirely the work of God, apart from any contribution by the sinner who receives salvation as a gift from God simply by believing the gospel. The human element is nowhere involved. It is only what God has done that makes it possible for us to go to heaven. Once a believing center is born again, and thus has been placed in Christ, he can never again be unborn spiritually, and so come under divine condemnation again. And that's the point that Paul is making in Romans 8:1.

God the Holy Spirit frees a believer from the condemnation of God's moral standards of absolute righteousness. It is salvation that enables us to meet that standard. The Mosaic Law could explain God's righteousness, and what God required, but the Mosaic Law could not enforce it in a person because of the sin nature which is in man.

Now this does pose a problem, because when you are born again, even though you enter an eternal life that cannot be reversed, you do take into that life with you the sin nature. The Bible is very explicit that that factor cannot be removed until we come into the presence of Jesus Christ. So, the Bible says, "When we see Him, we shall be like Him. And that includes sinless perfection. In the meantime, we are born again and irreversibly headed for heaven. But we have a nature of evil within us.

**The Nature of Jesus Christ**

God's solution for the human dilemma of needing absolute righteousness from heaven, but being unable to earn it, was to send His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty of sin, Now it took a very distinct, unique person to be able to do this. So, we have paused to examine exactly what Jesus Christ really was like – why it was that He could do what no one else could do. And we have seen thus far that the reason He was able to provide salvation is because He is undiminished. Furthermore, we have seen that He was able to provide salvation because He is true with humanity minus a sin nature. We found, furthermore, that He is not a schizophrenic personality, but that He is a single individual (a person) with two natures – a human and a divine nature in one person.

We have further observed that Jesus Christ was impeccable. Impeccable means that He was not capable of doing evil. In His humanity, He was able not to sin because His humanity was joined to His deity, which was not able to sin. So, in Jesus Christ, you have a person who began sinless, and because of His unique two-nature character, He was unable to sin. Thus, we have a salvation which was not only made possible in the first place, but is secured in the second place, because the person who provided it can never again undo it by falling into sin himself.

**The Kenosis of Jesus Christ**

There is a final factor about the nature of Jesus Christ that we should observe, and we will look at that today. We call that the kenosis of Jesus Christ. This is a theological term, and it's a good one for you to be acquainted with. The doctrine of the kenosis receives its name from the Greek noun "kenosis," and you can see how they just simply transliterated Greek letters into English letters. The word "kenosis" means "an emptying." The word comes into theological use from Philippians 2:7, where we have the verb form used: "But made Himself (that is, Jesus Christ) of no reputation." Those words "made Himself of no reputation" is this one Greek word "kenoo," and it means "to empty:" "But made Himself of no reputation;" that is, He emptied Himself. And by that we mean that He divested Himself of His visible glory. So: "He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

So, this is a theological term that we use to describe the fact that Jesus Christ, veiled His visible glory – the visible glory of His deity, when He assumed human form. The kenosis of Jesus Christ was His willing condescension in becoming incarnate, and voluntarily yielding the independent use of His divine attributes as the God-Man. That's what He did. He was God. He took upon Himself humanity. Then He emptied Himself of the evidence of His deity (of His visible glory). Instead, He subjected Himself to the Father's plan for the incarnation, and ultimately His death on the cross. Jesus Christ did not, therefore, use His divine attributes for His own benefit as a human being. He did not come to this earth, and then proceed to use the powers of deity in order to make it as a human being.

That's why we can look at the person of Jesus Christ and say, "Here is somebody who had to grow up as a youngster; had to learn the Word of God; had to learn the principles of Scripture; was indwelt by God the Holy Spirit; and, lived as a human being under the guidance of the Spirit of God, with the guidance of the Word of God." That's very important, because Romans 8 is going to deal with exactly that pattern (that factor). That is what we're studying – how you and I, as human beings, can actually walk in a way that is compatible with God's holiness.

This is what Jesus Christ did. He set aside the divine attributes. He made it simply as a human being with the Word of God, responding to the Spirit of God. During his first coming, He relied on this power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and of the doctrine that He had stored in His human spirit. The Bible speaks of Christ's laying aside, in His incarnation, something that He actually had before the incarnation. And that something is describe for us, for example, in John 17:5: "And now, O Father," Jesus says, "glorified Me with Your Own Self with the glory which I had with You before the world was." As God, He was surrounded with that brilliant light of glory – that glory which indicated His absolute perfection as deity. Now that is what He empty Himself of when he put on humanity. And that's what we mean by the doctrine of the kenosis.

Before the kenosis (before the emptying), Jesus Christ was in the form of God. But afterward, He was made in the likeness of man, and found in the fashion of men. And that's the contrast between before and after the incarnation. This is what is laid out for us in Philippians 2:6: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be held on to." He was in the form of God, but He did think that it was something to be held on to." Instead, verse 8 says, "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In other words, Jesus Christ willingly agree to assume the role of the crucified Savior. Even though He was God, He did not refuse to set aside, for a time, the visible evidence of His deity.

The contrast is between the eternal visible manifestation of Christ's deity, and the veiling of His divine glory while He was incarnate on the earth. It is characteristic of God to be surrounded by a glory light. In 1 Timothy 6:16, we have that indicated, when Paul says, "Who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man has seen nor can see; to Whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen. And here it is – a description of Jesus Christ as God, and the glory light in which He dwells. This is what Jesus Christ emptied Himself of, in the form of veiling (shielding).

In Revelation 21:23, that shielding will be reversed, where we read, concerning the new Jerusalem: "And the city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did light it, and the Lamb is the lamp of it." Jesus Christ is going to be the source of the light in the New Jerusalem. His glory will be the illuminating factor. Because of His constant presence, this is why the Bible says, "There will be no night there."

**Shekinah Glory**

So, this is the glory light that is difficult for us to understand. It's the old Shekinah glory – the glory of God that the Old Testament people were aware of, in connection with their travels through the wilderness, and at the temple. And it is this glory that was characteristic of Jesus Christ while He was in heaven. Now He came on that first Christmas day, and took on a human body, and one of the things He agreed to do was to empty Himself of the external evidence of that glory, and to simply look like an ordinary human being.

Jesus Christ: let's put it this way: Jesus Christ was not united to glorified humanity at the point of the incarnation, only to sinless humanity. He was united not to glorified humanity; that is, the humanity we will have – of sinless perfection. He was simply united to sinless humanity. For that reason, He could suffer pain; temptation; weakness; and, sorrow. He was a bona fide human being. But His glory was hidden.

**The Hypostatic Union**

In the incarnate state, during His first advent, Jesus Christ then was, as we have already learned, both undiminished deity and true humanity in one person. We have called that the hypostatic union. The thing that you must understand about the doctrine of kenosis, or you'll have a false doctrine, is that Jesus Christ did not empty Himself of His deity. He did not empty Himself of any of the attributes of His deity. He just set apart the external visual evidence of that deity.

In Matthew 1:23, in the description of His birth, this child is described as Emanuel which, being interpreted, we read, is: "God with us." So, the virgin would conceive and bring forth a child. His name was going to be Emanuel, which in Hebrew, means "God with us." So, it was very clear that even as a baby in the manger, He was undiminished deity.

Mark 1:1 says, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." He never ceased being the Son of God, and thus He never ceased possessing the deity that was His.

In Romans 1:4, the same point is stressed: "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. So, the doctrine of kenosis does not say that He gave up His deity, nor the attributes of deity. He was undiminished in that respect, but He had set the visible expression aside. So, the kenosis is not the subtraction of deity, but it is the addition of humanity to that deity, and the humble acceptance by God the Son of the limitations that humanity placed upon Him.

Are the evidences that He never gave up His deity, nor the glory of that deity, of course, was in the experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, when, for a moment, He again let His glory shine through. In Matthew 17:2, in that incident, we read, concerning Him: "And was transfixed before them, and His face did shine like the sun, and his raiment was as light as the light." You have to observe the sun on a bright, clear day to appreciate what this says. It is not a good thing to look into the sun. It's damaging to the eyes. But the brilliance of the sun is what the glory of Jesus Christ is like. When you and I come into His presence, there is going to be no more shielding. This is what we will observe. And His glory will be evident.

**Immutability**

So, on the Mount of Transfiguration, here is this human being, for just a moment, Who pulls the veil back, and lets the light shine through, and then He pulls it together again. That is what we mean by the doctrine of kenosis – setting aside (emptying Himself) of that visible evidence. You see, immutability is part of divine essence. So, Jesus Christ, of course, could not cease to be God and still be immutable.

The expression of deity and the independent use of His attributes was not viewed by our Lord as a treasure that He must clutch to if He was to fulfill the Father's plan for salvation. He had to become human to be able to be obedient unto the death of the cross. And He did that as a human being. He could not do that as the sovereign God, because sovereignty doesn't obey anything. It is sovereign.

So, Christ voluntarily took the form of a man in order to redeem and reconcile sinners, and so to propitiate the Father's justice. So, it took a special kind of person, again, in this respect, to be able to meet the need of salvation. While Christ was on equality with God, He did not selflessly choose to hold on to that status of glory.

**God the Holy Spirit**

Now, there are certain things we should observe that are involved in the kenosis. One is that the ministry of Jesus Christ, when He set aside the deity, required someone to sustain Him in his humanity. And that person, of course, was God the Holy Spirit. We have already made an extensive study previously upon the promise that was made in Isaiah 11:2-3, concerning what the Holy Spirit would do for the God-Man when He came – what He would do for Him in His humanity. And this was a tremendous study because it also outlined for us what the Spirit of God does for us in our humanity today.

You remember Isaiah said, "And the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him (the coming Savior); the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and might; the spirit of knowledge; and, the fear of the Lord, and shall make Him a quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. And He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears." So, even before Jesus Christ came, it was clear that He was going to be operating in the capacity of the Spirit of God. And when He emptied Himself of using His divine attributes, the Spirit of God came in to enable His humanity to function in perfection.

Of course, we read, in John 3:34, that with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God was there without measure: "For He whom God has sent speaks the Words of God, for God has given not the Spirit by measure onto Him." There was no restriction of the Spirit of God unto Jesus Christ. For you and me, we have the fullness of the Spirit of God. You don't get part of the Holy Spirit when you are filled with the Spirit upon confession of known sins, you are under the control of the Holy Spirit. Our problem is that we have these lapses when we are out of fellowship, when we are not filled with the Spirit. That was never true of Jesus Christ. That was never any moment of measure relative to the Spirit of God. With you and me, there is. There is a measure of the Spirit. We are controlled; or, we are not controlled. We are under His domination; or, we are not under His domination, because we have a decision-making mechanism in there. Jesus Christ always went with the Spirit of God.

It was the Holy Spirit then who sustained the Lord Jesus in His earthly ministry as a human being who had set aside the capacities of His deity. Matthew 12:18 indicates that, when He said, "Behold My servant (referring to the Son), Whom I have chosen, My Beloved, in Whom My soul as well-pleased. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show justice to the gentiles." It is the person who is under the Spirit of God who understands justice, and who understands all of the principles of God's thinking.

In Luke 4:14, we have the same thing: "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. And there were out the fame of Him through all the region round about. It is what God the Holy Spirit does that brings the impact that brings people to an understanding of spiritual things.

There was a point in time when this One who had emptied Himself of His visible glory did find Himself without the ministry of the Spirit. There was one time when the ministry of God the Holy Spirit was removed from the Son of God. And it was a moment of crucial agony for Him. That happened, of course, upon the cross, when He was bearing our sins. Back in the Old Testament, hundreds and hundreds of years before the event, the psalmist says, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the Words of My roaring?"

These words subsequently were precisely fulfilled in Matthew 27:46. Here you have one of the evidences of the Bible being a Holy Spirit-produced book, because prophecy is always fulfilled in detail: "And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice saying, 'Eli Eli lama sabachthani?' that is to say, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" And what he was doing in that moment, of course, was addressing first the Father, "My God." Then with the second, "My God," He was addressing the Holy Spirit, who had in that moment turned from Him as the sin of the world was poured out upon Him. So, at that moment, the ministry of God the Holy Spirit was discontinued, and now the God-man struggled in the capacity of a godly man who was functioning on the Word of God.

We have already studied how the Scriptures show us what was running through His mind as He was reviewing doctrine and remembering the principles of truth that were sustaining Him at that moment. But this was the high point of agony where the sustaining ministry of the Holy Spirit had turned from Him. For now, He had entered the realm of spiritual death. However, having paid the price, we are told in 1 Peter 3:18, that it was this same God the Holy Spirit that had a part in raising Him back to life from the tomb: "For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit." So, God the Holy Spirit came back to Him.

Now the present ministry of God the Holy Spirit is also related to the Lord Jesus Christ. It's a ministry that we profit by because of Him. In John 16:14, we read, "He shall glorify Me (that is, God the Holy Spirit shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." It is God the Holy Spirit who is teaching us what Christ thinks. It is God the Holy Spirit Who leads you in the direction that the Lord Jesus wants you to move. It is God the Holy Spirit, if you have a communication line open, Who tells you: "This is what you should do in life? This is what you should not do in life." You have a question (a decision to make) relative to any area of life. What does God think about the matter? And it is the communication of God the Holy Spirit that gives you the direction, providing the line of communication is open for you to be able to receive the message. And that's what we are in the process of studying. So, the present ministry of the Spirit of God in the church age is a benefit to us, and it too is related directly to the Lord Jesus.

**The Humiliation of Jesus Christ**

The doctrine of kenosis. Also was an expression of the humiliation of Jesus Christ. This humiliation included veiling His glory that he had as God. He gave up the outward appearance of God. That was a certain, humiliating, humbling factor. The union of eternal God with glorified humanity was also a humiliation that God, the Creator, was becoming united with that which He had created. That was a humbling factor. There was also a humbling in the fact that He did not use His divine attributes independently of the Father's plan. He relied instead upon again the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And as we've already seen, when Satan came to tempt Him in the wilderness, Jesus Christ fell back upon the Word of God as His sustaining guiding factor. He relied upon the ministry of God the Holy Spirit to carry Him through. He didn't fall back upon His own capacities. So, when the devil said, "You're hungry. Turn these stones into bread," and He needed that physical sustenance, He did not do it. His deity was not used in terms of His personal humanity. And then that was a humbling factor.

Of course, the greatest humiliation of all was when He bore our sins upon the cross, and when He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 1 Peter 2:24 puts it this way: "Who, His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins should live up to righteousness, but Whose stripes you were healed." And, of course, that was the ultimate humiliation – to have the sins of the world placed upon Him.

There is a valid difference, then, between possessing divine attributes and using them. The use of Christ divine attributes was limited by His humanity, but this was a willing limitation. He emptied Himself (that's what kenosis means). He took the form of servant. These two terms explain each other. He emptied Himself. How? By taking the form of a servant. That was a humble position. Christ placed Himself in relationship to the Father, then, as a servant. John 4:34; John 5:37; and, John 17:4 all indicate that He took the place of a servant to the Father.

His miracles were performed in the power of the Holy Spirit as a servant for others. They were not performed for Himself. So, on one occasion, he fed 4,000 people. It was His deity that was doing that, but He did it for others. He fed 5,000 on another occasion. It was His deity that did it, but it was for others. He did not function for Himself in that respect.

We read that He possessed limited knowledge. He had to learn the Scriptures, and yet, in His deity, He had omissions.

So, the true doctrine of the kenosis says this: Jesus Christ retained all of the capacities and the qualities of deity, but He veiled the glory of that deity. A false doctrine of the kenosis says that when He became a human being, He lost the capacities of deity. And that's not true. The person that it took to save us had to be able to be divine and human at the same time.

Romans 8:3, where we started: "For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." What the moral code of God, as expressed in such things as the Mosaic Law, could not do because it was weak through the flesh; that is, through the sin nature: "God, sending His Son in the likeness." God, sending His Son, Who is like Himself in His deity: "But sent Him in the likeness of sinful flesh (that is, appearing as a human being – bona fide humanity, but without the sin nature) sent Him for a very specific purpose."

The old sin nature frustrates the obedience to the standards of God's righteousness, such as the moral code of the Ten Commandments: "Therefore, God sent His Son," this verse says, "into the world as a sinless human being to enable Him to override the demands of the sin nature in us." And it says that God sent this God-Man (this unique person): "for sin." The word "for" is this word "peri." It means "concerning." The word "sin" we've had many times: "hamartia." "Hamartia" is the noun for "missing the mark of God's absolute righteousness." Jesus Christ was sent by the Father as the God-Man concerning sin, in terms of being, actually, an offering to propitiate divine justice. This term "for sin," in the Greek Bible, actually means "for an offering." We know that because, when they translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek (that Hebrew-into-Greek translation called the Septuagint), when the words "for sin" appeared in that translation, it translates in the Greek Bible as "for a sin offering."

For example, in Leviticus 4:3, you can check this on your own, as well as in Numbers 8:8 and Psalm 39:6. The Hebrew there says, "For sin. But when they came to translating that in the Septuagint version, they translated it as "for a sin offering."

The reason for translating the Bible into Greek was because the Jews, after they had been dispersed out into the Greek world, had gradually lost command of the Hebrew language. They all spoke Greek. So, they produced the Greek translation. And that Greek translation of the Hebrew is a very important guide to us as to what the Hebrew meant. And the writers understood (the translators understood) what the Hebrew meant when they came to these two words "for sin."

So, what Paul is saying here is that Jesus Christ was sent as a sin offering. In Hebrews 10:6, we have an illustration, where we read, "And burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, You have no pleasure." Now, the Greek there simply has the words "peri hamartia:" "for sin." But the translators very properly put in the word "sacrifice." It's in italics, so you know that it's not in the Greek text, but that is what this expression means. In other words, it's a technical expression.

So, in Romans 8:3, when we read, "for sin," we are actually reading "for a sin offering," which is the same idea that we had in 1 Peter 1:19: "But with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." It's important for us to understand that that's what this passage is telling us, because, as you know, the liberal world completely rejects the idea that Jesus Christ was a sacrifice for someone else's sins. The liberal says, "Sin is a personal matter. You cannot pass off your guilt to someone else. Someone else cannot come along and pay for you. Jesus Christ was simply an example of a good man Who was living a godly life, and we should try to imitate Him." But the Bible says, "No," and here's a clear example that the Scriptures use a technical term indicating that He was sent as someone who had to be sacrificed to pay for sin.

Now, this is an idea that was very clearly established way back in the Old Testament. Turn to Leviticus 4 for a moment, where this whole system of sacrifice is being set up. Leviticus 4 says, "And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, 'Speak unto the children of Israel, saying that the soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord, concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them. If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people, then let him bring for his sin, which he has sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord *for a sin offering*. If you sinned, the people of the Old Testament said that the sin had to be covered by a sacrifice. And offering had to cover that sin. So, this passage goes on to describe, through verse 10, how they're going to take this animal; how they're going to kill it; how they're going to treat it in the sacrifice; and, then how they are going to present it as *the sin offering* covering. That's exactly what Romans 8:3 is talking about.

In Hebrews 9:11, we have this same idea: "But Christ, being come a High Priest of good things to come by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of His building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. And for this cause, He is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they who were called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

So, the writer of Hebrews says, "Just imagine where you could go through a ritual ceremony with an animal representing a sin sacrifice, and God did not strike you dead." You were being saved on credit, so to speak: "How much more do you think is the value of the blood of Christ now (the sinless God-Man Who has all these characteristics that we've studied for a few weeks now)? And He is the One Who has become the Lamb of God." Can you imagine what His death will accomplish? That is what the writer is asking? That is because the people to whom he is writing were such do-dos spiritually, they were going back to trying to put up the sacrifices. They were saying, "We still have to do the sacrifices if God is to forgive us." And his point was that that was the sacrifice of the animals – that was a picture, and it never did the job. The real thing has come. You may add to that at your leisure Hebrews 10:1-14, that describe again the fact that Jesus Christ was an offering for sin.

So, the sinless Son of God humbled Himself to take on a human body. That human body was to be used explicitly as a sin sacrifice for the moral guilt of mankind. So, the apostle Paul says that: "God sent His Son as a sin sacrifice, and in that act, condemned." And the word "condemned" is "katakrino." This word means "to pass sentence upon," and it implies a guilt. It is at the point that Christ died that a sentence was passed. God the Father does the condemning, and what He condemns is sin. Again, this is the word "hamartia," but in the Greek Bible, it has the word "the" in front of it. It is "*the sin*," so it's referring specifically to the sin nature.

What he is leading into here in Romans 8 is saying: "We have salvation. It has been provided by this unique God-Man. Nobody else could have done it. This person has provided us salvation, which is irreversible. You can't ever lose it once you have been born again. You cannot reverse the birth. Once you've been placed in Christ, you cannot be placed out of Him. And now that that is true (that is the foundation base), God, in the same process, broke the back of the old sin nature that resides in each of us. That thing has reigned as an authority in our lives as unbelievers, and God has crushed it. So, the sin nature no longer is in control."

That being the case, he is now going to go on to say, "Now I'm going to show you how it is possible for you to live on something on a higher scale than some barnyard animal – how you can indeed walk as a person who is worthy of the role of being a member of the royal family of God. You are a prince and a princess in the family of God. And that calls for you to live as an aristocrat among the human race. And here is the capacity through the Spirit of God, and through the Word of God, for you to do that."

That's what he is after. He has condemned this sin nature specifically, and he says, "He has condemned it in the flesh." And he uses this Greek word "sarx." The word "sarx," in this case, refers to the human body. The word "flesh" is used in different ways in the New Testament. This time, he's talking about the human body in which the sin nature resides. And as you know, the sin nature resides in the genetic structure of our human body. In the process of human birth, a child does not receive his sin nature from his mother. He receives the sin nature from the contaminated sperm of his father. That's why the Lord Jesus Christ had to be born without a human father, with just a human mother, so that He could receive a body minus a sin nature. It is in the process of the father's conception (his contribution to conception) that the sin nature is transmitted. So, this sin nature is in the flesh, and the Bible exactly describes it in that way.

So, Romans 8:3 tells us something about what the moral code of God could not do – all that teaching that you give people, and all the teaching that you tell people: "This is what is right."

It is like that young man I told you about that called me from across the country a couple of weeks ago, that was in such agony: "I know what to do. I know that this is right. What can I do? Because I don't want to do it." And what he was saying was negative volition: this evil thing – I know that the Word of God condemns it. I know exactly what I should do about it, but I want to do it. And I am so torn. I'm on the verge of suicide in my depression." What was he telling us? Well, he's telling us that once you know the doctrinal principle, there is now the problem of dealing with the personal volition to execute. And it takes both. That's what James means: "Don't just be a hearer of the Word." You've got to learn the doctrine. There is no approach to God except through your mind; through your understanding; and, then through the decision-making process to accept that. And that problem that this young man who called me is struggling with is the sin nature. And he's saying, "How am I going to bring that under control?"

Now the first thing for us to observe is that what Paul says, that in spite of our knowing what to do, that was weak because of the sin nature that was in us. So, God sent His Son, this unique Person, Who was a human being without the sin nature, and sent Him as a sin offering to pay the price of God's justice against sin. And in that act, He condemned (He declared guilty) that sin nature within the human body, and He terminated its dominating position.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ, to sum it up, condemned the sin nature as guilty before God by bearing for us the sin of mankind. He suffered for our evil, and thereby satisfied the justice of God. It was a decisive act. God is satisfied toward sin. It is not entirely wrong to say that sin is no longer an issue. You want to be a little careful of that, but it is true. What is a human being confronted with? It is not that he is an adulterer. It is not that he's a thief. It's not that he's a liar. It's not that he is anything that the Bible condemns. All of that has been covered. All of that has been solved. That is not the issue. It is wrong for preachers and for Christians to be talking to people about cleaning up their lives. The thing they need to talk to them about is how to break the back of the sin nature that controls them. And the only way to do that is by receiving the offering of the death of Christ, which removed the domination of the sin nature. Then the person is in a position to begin to resolve the other issues.

Jesus Christ satisfied God's justice – a decisive act. Sin now is not the issue. The issue is accepting Christ as personal Savior. So, for those who have done that, there can be no condemnation, and there can be no moral guilt, because God the Father has placed it all on His Son. And in Jesus Christ, you and I, wonder of wonders, have obeyed the moral code of God perfectly. I don't care if you take it from the Ten Commandments, or if you take it from the Scriptures of the New Testament; all of the moral basis, and all of the things that God requires, as you stand in God's eyes now, you are perfect. You have done it all. In time, your practice will conform to that position.

This divine provision, however, has terminated the controlling authority of the sin nature, and has replaced it with the authority of God the Holy Spirit. God the Father is the agent who condemned the sin nature in man, and provided the redemption in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul has already stressed that to us. For example, in Romans 4:24-25: "But for us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." He was delivered on account of our offenses, and He was raised on account of the fact that justification had been provided.

In Romans 8:32, the apostle puts it this way: "He that spared not (the Father that spared not His Own Son), but delivered Him up for us all; how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" It is God the Father who has made all this possible. This provision to free us from the condemnation is no afterthought on the part of God. That's one of the marvels that you should stand in all of – the salvation that God has provided. This was not something that God thought of later that He worked out once he saw what Adam did.

In Revelation 13:8, we have this dramatic statement: "And all that dwell upon the earth (meaning unbelievers) shall worship him (that is, the beast – the antichrist), whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world." The payment was in the process. The payment was in the plan before there was any creation, and before anything was set in motion.

So, we have been freed from all moral guilt. God has nothing to hold against you. What He wants now is to enable you to have the capacity to walk up to your position as a child of God. That is what we are going to be learning how to do in greater detail as we go through Romans 8.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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