

Romans 8: 1-11 No Condemnation for those in Christ. 12th July 2026

Prayer: Lord give us ears to hear your message this day. Amen.

I am a new creation, no more in condemnation, here in the grace of God I stand!

Does anyone remember that 90's worship song? It captures Paul's message clearly.

The message in Romans 8, which we will continue next week is such good news. The opening verse is one of the best known and loved scriptures in the bible. We find it in the centre of Paul's letter, and it is central to the gospel message. *There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*, through Jesus' death and resurrection we have been set free from sin and death.

While some of Paul's writings, especially in Romans, may feel a little heavy and wordy, there are some real gems that stand out, and this is one of them.

It is similar to the great message at the beginning of chapter 5... *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.*

Last week we looked at chapter 7 where Paul focused on the law, and our struggles with our human nature, now we turn the corner in chapter 8 and the hope that was announced at the end of chapter 7, (that we could be rescued from our wretched selves through Jesus), is fully explained. There is a new tone in the letter, affirming how we are saved, and who we are as Christians, filled with the Spirit and belonging to Christ.

Paul says we are free – that we are not condemned to a life of sin and death. God is not continually pointing an accusatory or blaming finger at us. He knew we could not live perfect law-abiding lives. The animal sacrifices that had been put in place to atone for our sins, were only temporary. They did not release us from sin for ever and had to be repeated over and over.

So, God sent his son as the one perfect sacrifice – God came to earth himself in the flesh – living a righteous and holy life, flesh not tarred by sin. Sin was then condemned in Jesus. He took our sin once and for all when he hung on the cross to die. He was condemned instead of us.

He set us free from the law. God's law, his good commandments he gave Moses are still there for us to follow and live by, but we are not saved for eternity by following the law – rather we are saved because Jesus died for us and rose again. We are saved by believing in and following him, surrendering our lives to him.

In Matthew 5:11, Jesus said that he did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it, through his perfect holy life and sacrifice.

He also taught his disciples to follow the law, the law he summed up in two commandments. Love God and love others.

He criticised the pharisees who made the law a burden, who judged people, while seeing themselves as holy and righteous. When Jesus healed someone on the Sabbath, they accused him of being of the devil because he broke the Sabbath law. They were so legalistic and lacked compassion. Jesus tells them that Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. (Mark 2:27) The day of rest was designed as a helpful gift for human well-being, rather than a rigid rule.

When a woman is caught in adultery (John 8) the teachers of the law and pharisees bring her to Jesus, to ask what is his response to the law that says she is to be stoned to death. Jesus responds, *'if any of you are without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.'* He points out their hypocrisy and one by one they leave. Jesus, the one left standing, the only without sin, does not condemn her, but releases her from the judgement of death and tells her to go and sin no more.

As I pointed out last week, as Paul says in Romans 6, we are not to go on sinning so that grace may increase, rather we are to live as dead to sin and alive in Christ, becoming more like him. Jesus didn't say to the woman, go and carry on doing what you were doing...no he says go and sin no more.

And now in this chapter 8 Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit, the one who dwells in us and is our helper to live for Christ. The Spirit is mentioned 19 times in the first 27 verses of this chapter! The Spirit is the answer to our human weakness. It is the Spirit who will help us obey the law, to be more loving and forgiving. As we walk with the Spirit, listening to God's voice through the Spirit, allowing the Spirit to lead us and prompt us, we will begin to live transformed lives.

God promised the Spirit to live in us, through the prophets of old. In Ezekiel 36:26 we read; *"I will give you a new heart and put a new Spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and keep my laws."*

And in Jeremiah 31:33-34, *'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts...I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more.'*

As we allow God's Spirit to move in us, we will live as God calls us to live, like Jesus. Paul says in verse 5, that those who live in accordance with the Spirit set their minds on what the Spirit/Jesus/God desires. Verse 6, *The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.*

When Paul speaks about the flesh here, he is not saying that our physical bodies are bad, but rather what our mind focuses on and how we use our bodies can lead to death or life. In his letter to the Corinthians 6: 19, Paul says that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. For God's Spirit dwells in us. What is in our thoughts, what comes out of our mouths, what actions we do with our bodies, will show whether we are listening and responding to the Spirit living in us, or not.

Who do we listen to? The Holy Spirit or the weak flesh? When I wake early in the morning, do I listen to the Spirit who encourages me to get up and pray and have that early swim, or to my body that wants to snuggle down in bed and miss quiet time with the Lord and the best way to start my day? If I don't get up, I might feel frustrated when I can't go back to sleep and then I get up sluggish.

Do I listen to the Spirit prompting me to call someone to check in on them, or do I listen to the voice that says, I'm busy now, I'll do it later, and then maybe forget.

Do I listen to the voice that says 'it's okay to watch that steamy or violent movie' or do I listen to the Spirit who says watching that will not help you grow like Jesus and keep your mind on him. I'm not saying it's necessarily wrong to watch something like Game of Thrones for instance...but just keep a check on your mind and thoughts during and after.

Do I listen to the voice who says, 'it's okay to get angry with that person as they were in the wrong', or listen to God's Spirit who prompts me to walk away when I want to yell at someone and find another way, to love and forgive.

Do we have our minds set on what the Spirit desires, on what God desires?

What pre-occupies our minds?

Are we self-focused or God focused?

You might have heard this before...but what is in the middle of the word 'sin' – 'I'!

One person suggested there are 5 'selves' that get in our way of being God focused.

Self -will, instead of God's will. I want to be in charge, not surrender to God.

Self-glory (I want to get the credit for any good I do, not God)

Self-gratification (I prioritise my pleasures and comforts (like staying snug in bed!) above the will of God)

Self-righteous (I'm a good person, look at how I follow God's commands and come to Church and serve each week – think Pharisee...)

Self-sufficiency (I can do all things in my own strength – I don't need God – or anyone else!)

Can you relate to any of those?

If our mind is set on the Spirit, then we will be focused on loving God and loving others. Putting God and others before 'I'.

We will want to give God the glory for all the goodness in our lives.

We will want to please him, spend time with him. Like the psalmist (42) writes, *As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you...*

We will acknowledge that we need him, rely on him for our strength.

We will know that we are saved not by our own righteousness but by the grace of God.

This one is so important, because we are not perfect and when we make a mistake we can dwell on our sin and shame, rather than remembering that when we repent, God forgives us through Jesus and there is NO CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ!

Paul says if our minds are governed by the Spirit then we will know life and peace.

I am a new creation, no more in condemnation, here in the grace of God I stand.

A lightness in my Spirit, a joy that knows no limits, here in the grace of God I stand.

Don't let the devil or anyone else tell you that you are not good enough/ worthy enough to receive God's grace. No-one can fall too far from God's grace.

And if you wonder if God's Spirit really is in you, then listen to what Paul says in verses 9; you belong to Christ, God's Spirit lives in you.

We receive this blessing when we repent and believe in Jesus. We might experience other times of special anointing or gifting of the Holy Spirit, but when we surrender to God, he fills us with his Spirit to lead and guide us, to transform us. We then need to spend time, cultivating our relationship with the Spirit, listening, having our hearts and minds focused on God, fixing our eyes on things above, as Paul says in Philippians 4 on all those things that are pure, lovely, right, noble, true, and we should desire to be like Jesus.

Paul finishes this section saying that even though our bodies are subject to death, they will have life in the Spirit. As we know our mortal bodies will decay! But God's Spirit continues to live in us, transforming us into Christlikeness as we mature in faith. While our bodies don't work so well as we age, our Spirit can continue to feel very much alive and full of peace and joy – even if we can't jump so high for joy anymore! And because Jesus is living in us, he who raised Christ from the dead, will raise us also. One day our mortal bodies will also be transformed.

I pray that today you take home the wonderful message of the gospel – memorise Romans 8:1. We are not condemned for our sin, praise be to God, for Jesus took on our sin, went to the cross to die for us and released us from sin and death. We are free, and through his resurrection we can know such a life of joy and peace both now and for eternity.

Let's praise God for this amazing gospel truth.

I am a new creation, no more in condemnation, here in the grace of God I stand

My heart is overflowing, my love just keeps on growing, here in the grace of God I stand

And I will praise you God, and I will praise you God and I will sing of all that you have done.

A joy that knows no limits A lightness in my Spirit, here in the grace of God I stand

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