

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Amen and Amen

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 8

Once again, we are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome and to us today about the fundamentals of Christianity.

The Gospel of Grace

And how the just shall live by faith – I mentioned early on that this verse that Paul quotes for us from Habakuk is the theme of the entire letter.

That it is not by our works or self-righteousness that we are made right before God

But by grace through faith

We stand before God only by faith.

This is the biblical truth regarding our justification – but also our sanctification.

He did the work on the cross

He does the work in us and through as we lean on the Holy Spirit.

We become more Christlike.

But here is the thing - we still struggle with sin

We still struggle with our flesh

We still stumble

We still revert back to the flesh – trying to make up for our shortcomings.

And as I mentioned last week – this only leads to disappointment.

We become disappointed with ourselves – because we are relying on our flesh – and the flesh is never satisfied.

And we may even get these thoughts in our heads and come to the conclusion that we must be the stinkiest, rottenness Christian.

Because Christians are not supposed to have these struggles and disappointments.

BU the truth is - We all struggle with this and Paul struggled with it in his walk.

That was Chapter 7 –

This morning – we come to the mountain top.

I told you at the beginning of our study in Romans that this is the deepest theological book in the New Testament –

Over the past 8 months – we have climbed a theological mountain

We have Chapters 1-7 on one side and 9-16 on the other side

And for those of us that have hiked up to the top of the mountain – one of the things we do is breath in the air and bask in the splendor and majesty of it all.

That is what we are going to do over the few weeks and months as we look at ch 8

We are going to pitch our tents on the mountain top and soak in the sights.

Let's pray...

[Rom 8:1 NKJV] 1 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Repeat with all

I came across this poem – it is actually a children's poem

It is called – The Land of Beginning Again

I wish that there were some wonderful place

Called the land of Beginning Again,

Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches

And all of our poor selfish grief

Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door,

And never put on again.

Can you imagine a place like that?

A place where one can start all over again.

A place where one's sins can be forgiven

Where one's guilt can be cleansed

Where one can be reconciled to God

The bible tells us that such a place exists – but it is not necessarily a place as much as it is a Person.

It is the person of Jesus Christ

That is what the bible declares – that Jesus gives us the opportunity to start all over again.

It doesn't matter what we have done – how badly we have failed

In Christ, we can have a forgiven life and at the same time live a fulfilled life.

The key – in Christ!!!!

Not in self.

That was the problem that Paul was trying to explain to us last week about his own life.

"The good I will to do, I don't."

"And the evil I will not to do, I do."

Paul had been trying to live a righteous life through the power of his flesh

But he couldn't because the flesh has no strength to live the life of the Spirit

So it is with this backdrop – that Paul is able to write this first verse in chapter 8 with a tremendous sigh of relief

Let's look at our verse again.

[Rom 8:1 NKJV] 1 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

The Greek word that Paul uses here for condemnation is only found two times in the entire New Testament.

The other time is in Romans 5:18

It is a word referring to the punishment that comes as a result of being declared guilty.

There has been a decision that been against you

A judgment that has been made against you

It is a pronouncement of judgment.

It is a feeling that we all face as Christians

We have all felt the weight of condemnation

We have all faced it at one time or another

Sometimes other people try to condemn us and sometimes we bring it upon ourselves

But condemnation is a reality.

It is so much a reality that God reserves the time to remind us and to teach us that

[There is] therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,

None

Zero

No condemnation

Our Lord and Savior wants us to grasp this.

He wants us to have this sense of relief X 10 billion that our sins have been forgiven today.

That our past, present and future sins are not held against us today.

People might be holding our sins against us, but not God.

Our own thoughts might be bringing our old sins against us – but not God.

The consequences of some of our past actions might be bringing our old sin against us – but not God.

Because in Christ Jesus – there is no condemnation.

Jesus brings us the opposite of condemnation – Jesus brings us relief.

Look at the contrast from last week –

Remember – Paul gives us insight of him living in the flesh –

He was trying to be a good Christian – but he was depending on his own strength and his own understanding -

[Rom 7:14-20 NKJV] 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that [it is] good. 17 But now, [it is] no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but [how] to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will [to do], I do not do; but the evil I will not [to do], that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not [to do], it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Living a Christian life in the flesh – as a carnal man / carnal woman (in the flesh) is only going to lead to failure after failure

And those failures are going to lead to two things – guilt and shame.

We are going to come to a point of weariness / tiredness.

A place where we feel so overwhelmed because that guilt and shame as it piles up – turns into condemnation.

But those who are in Jesus – are now under no condemnation.

Turn to Psalm 103 -

[Psa 103:8-12 NKJV] 8 The LORD [is] merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 9 He will not always strive [with us], Nor will He keep [His anger] forever. 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, [So] great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, [So] far has He removed our transgressions from us.

As far as the east is from the west –

If I get in my car after service today and head east – eventually will get to Bisbee and then Douglas, New Mexico, Texas and so forth.

As long as I continue east – I will never come to a point where I am going west this is how far God has removed our sins from us!

Our sins have been removed to an eternal distance by His mercy.

The only time I will come to a point where I am going west – is, if I look backward.

And church – that is the source of condemnation.

Allowing what was in the past to become what is in the present.

Again, the bible says that all of our sins have been forgiven – our past sins, our present sins and even our future sins.

Salvation is a whole package church

He takes all of us – just as we are. By faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul's point is this:

We do not need to fear that God will punish us for sin

We don't have to worry that God is going to smite us

or that we stand in jeopardy of losing our salvation

because Jesus died for us, the judgment that was due to us for our sin was passed to Him.

He bore the full weight of punishment.

Now – a little bit of application for us.

How do we know if we are living in condemnation?

Here are a few signs for us to watch for – these are the most common ones -

- A person who is living in condemnation is a person who always feels guilty.

They always feel guilty – whether or not they have actually done anything wrong.

There is always this heaviness – this burden in their lives.

- Another sign that condemnation has taken root in a person's life is if that person is motivated by guilt.
- Another sign that condemnation has taken root in someone's life is that they begin to think that God is always mad at them. Not only do they feel that God is mad at them, but everyone else is mad at them and then it leads them to be mad at God and everyone else. That is what condemnation does.
- Here is another – the individual always feels like they have never done enough. Remember – the flesh is never satisfied. I have to do more. Which always leads to disappointments.
- Here is another one sign that condemnation has taken root in someone's life. They are always living in the past. And all they do is focus on their failures. They are enslaved by the bad things in their lives – it could have been something that happened 30 years ago – but condemnation makes it appears as if it is happening right now.

Again – there is now – no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus

Once someone has believed in Christ, he/she is in Christ and can never be separated from the love of Christ – by the way – this is going to be a biblical truth that Paul is going to share with us later on in the chapter.

So how do we address our pasts –

Because we all have pasts

We have pasts that taunt us

We have pasts that plague us

Pasts that shoot arrows of condemnation against us

A past that tries to undermine our faith

We all have something in our past that we wish we could just wipe away.

Paul has told us that there is no condemnation – but we still feel our past haunting us.

People still bring up our past.

What do we do?

Turn to Phil 3

Just like us – Paul had a past –

And he addresses here in his letter to the church in Philippi

[Phi 3:12-14 NKJV] 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected;

but I **press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing [I do], **forgetting those things which are behind** and reaching forward to**

those things which are ahead, 14 I **press** toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

What did Paul do?

Forget the past

It was a constant struggle – notice he uses the word forgetting – it is something that he was still actively doing as he wrote the letter.

How do you forget the past?

We forget the past by releasing the past and reaching for the future

There are many believers who are not maturing in Christ because they are still holding on to their past –

The past isn't what is holding them down – they are holding unto the past.

We forget the past and press toward – we run away from our past and press toward Jesus Christ.

Because in Christ, I am a new creation.

In Christ, I am totally different.

In Christ, God has done and is doing wonderful things and my past cannot be held against me.

One of the things that I have found in my life is that the only times I can't forget my past is when I choose to dwell in it –

When I choose to dwell on something that I did to someone or that someone did to me or something I should have done.

We must choose to forget and not dwell in it.

The root of condemnation is looking back.

Turn with me to John 8

[Jhn 8:3-11 NKJV] 3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst,

By the way – we become so self-righteous when other people's sins are revealed to us.

Instead of our hearts breaking for this woman – our hearts become hard.

4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 "Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have [something] of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with [His] finger, as though He did not hear. 7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him

throw a stone at her first." 8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 Then those who heard [it], being convicted by [their] conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest [even] to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

Think about what happened here.

This woman was tricked – yes, she sinned – but the scribes and Pharisees were all in it.

They rescue her from the very trap they set her up for.

Because they want to pull a fast one on Jesus

So this woman stands before Jesus

Her past is haunting her

Her past in condemning her

And there is nothing that she can do – as she is dealing with sin in the past.

And now she finds herself in the presence of Jesus.

By the way – this is the perfect place for her to be.

We want to be in His presence

We want to be found in the place where He can minister to us, where He can forgive us,

We want to be in a place where we don't hear everyone else condemning us or even listening to ourselves condemning ourselves – we want to be in His presence.

And she finds forgiveness in Jesus Christ

Neither do I condemn you!!!

You know what are problem is –

Sometimes we want to argue with God

He says – neither do I condemn you – and we say, no God, you have to condemn me or you have to condemn them.

We argue with a God that says – neither do I condemn you.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,

As we finish up here –

I want to make sure that we understand the difference between condemnation and conviction

Conviction of sin is a good thing

That is a work of the Holy Spirit in us

Conviction will draw us to Jesus Christ

When we come to the place where we need fresh mercy and grace seeking washing and cleansing – that is a good thing.

Condemnation will push us away from God and the things of God

Push us away from fellowship and other believers.

The Holy Spirit will never condemn us but will often convict us.

And when He convicts us – our response should be immediate repentance

By the way –

In the first seven chapters – Paul mentions the Holy Spirit 4 times.

In chapter 8 alone – Paul will reference the Holy Spirit 19 times

The spirit filled life is only possible by the power of the Holy Spirit

We can't live the spirit filled life by going to church

Or by trying to memorize a bunch of bible verses

Or by simply trying to be a good Christian

The only kind of Christian that can live guilt free is the kind that doesn't live by the old ways but instead lives by the Spirit

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus

We read it – we heard it and now we act on it.

He has redeemed us from our past and washed us from our past and forgiven us from our past –

So we stop looking back.

Amen

And that church is verse 1

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.



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Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Jhn 5:24 NKJV] 24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

This verse summarizes all of Ch 8

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'