

No Condemnation (Romans 8:1)

Most of us would agree—that the book of Romans is in many ways unique—for example—it's the only NT letter where the author intentionally systematizes the major tenets of Biblical revelation—[1] for the first 31/2 chapters he describes the depravity of man (1:18-3:20), [2] from 3:21 through chapter 7—he describes the provision of God in Christ, and [3] in chapter 8—he describes some of the blessings given to those who are in Christ—these could be summarized as—no condemnation (v1) and no separation (v39)—both are in Christ and by the Spirit...

Thus—chapter 8 begins with a "therefore"—suggesting that he's continuing or summarizing the great themes that have preceded—therefore—in light of all that has gone before—there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus....

I. The Text Explained

II. The Text Applied

I. The Text Explained

1. Here I want to briefly explain—in positive terms—the reality—that—"there is therefore now no condemnation..."
2. [1] No condemnation is a PRESENT reality—"There is therefore NOW no condemnation"—it's a present fact...
3. Now—condemnation consists of the pronouncement of God upon the sinner and punishment of God experienced by the sinner...
4. That is—there is both a present and future aspect to condemnation—a sentence pronounced and experienced...
5. Jn.3:18—"he who does not believe is condemned already"—that is—presently under the sentence of condemnation...
6. Matt.23:23—"serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell"—that is—future condemnation...
7. Thus—condemnation—is both a present and future reality—a present sentence—and—a future damnation...
8. Let me illustrate—think of a murderer—the judge sentences him to death—he pronounces condemnation upon him...
9. He then goes to prison to await the execution of condemnation—he is condemned—and awaiting condemnation...
10. This is true of men by nature—we are all under a sentence of condemnation—awaiting actual condemnation...
11. Thus—for those who are in Christ—there is neither any sentence against them—nor punishment awaiting them...
12. [2] No condemnation is a COMPLETE reality—"There is therefore now NO condemnation"—literally—"not one condemnation..."
13. For example—if we were to liken condemnation to a cup of wrath—there is no wrath—not a single drop left...
14. The reason is simple—condemnation is the result of sin—and because we have no sin—there is no condemnation...
15. Jer.50:20—"in those days and in that time, says the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but there shall be none..."
16. There shall be so sin—because it was taken away in the person of Christ—who made atonement for His people...
17. In justification—every sin is forgiven, Col.2:13—"He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses..."
18. Thus—there is not one condemnation—because there is not one sin—every sin—has been forgiven in Christ...

19. [3] No condemnation is a RESTRICTIVE reality—"There is therefore now no condemnation FOR THOSE who are in Christ Jesus..."
20. This is to say—the fact that there is now no condemnation—is only true for those—who are in Christ Jesus...
21. Now—I think most of you know—that this phrase "in Christ" is an important one and refers to union with Christ...
22. The Scriptures make a distinction between a federal and saving union with Christ—the one ensures the other...
23. [a] Federal union—from eternity the Father chose a people in Christ—"He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph.1:4)...
24. This means—from eternity the Father gave us to Christ as a covenant people and He gave us Christ as a covenant Head...
25. Thus—when His eternally begotten Son came to earth—He lived, died, and rose again, in our place, and on our behalf...
26. There is a very real sense in which the elect were in union with Christ—as He lived, died, and rose from the dead...
27. [b] Saving union—this refers to that union with Christ in time, wherein He's in us by His Spirit and we are in Him by faith...
28. It's here that we actually experience the salvation that He promised from eternity and secured in His historical work...
29. Thus—as true as this aspect of our union is—there remains condemnation until we are in Christ BY FAITH...
30. For example—think back to Noah and his family—it wasn't until they believed God and got into the ark were they safe...
31. So too—it's not until we believe the gospel and get into Christ by faith, that there is—no longer any condemnation...
32. Now—let me remind you—these two aspects of our union with Christ are very closely related or connected...
33. When Christ was dying on the cross, He was paying our sin debt—He was being punished for us in our place...
34. But—the benefit of that payment isn't applied to our souls until we believe—until we get in Christ BY FAITH...
35. Thus—we simply have to keep in mind this distinction—Christ purchased our redemption and then applies it...
36. This concept that I'm talking about—is often referred to as "substitutionary atonement"—Christ dying for us...
37. Rom.8:3—"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh..."
38. Because we could never satisfy the law, God sent His Son in fallen, yet sinless humanity—"on account of sin..."
39. That is—for the purpose of dealing with sin—"He condemned sin in the flesh"—in the human nature of Christ...
40. If Christ is to be condemned or punished in our place—then of necessity He needs to have a human nature...
41. Thus—we learn WHY there is no condemnation for those in Christ—because Christ was condemned for them...
42. Christ endured our condemnation, and when we are in Him by faith, the benefit of that salvation is applied...

II. The Text Applied

A. By way of examination

1. MLJ—"This is one of the great statements of the Scripture, one of the most important for Christian experience and for the health and well-being of the Christian believer..."
2. Here—I want to briefly answer the question—how might we know whether or not we are savingly in Christ...
3. Yet—before I do—let me briefly remind you of the purposes of examination—[a] to expose, and [b] to confirm...
4. That is—self examination is intended both to expose the hypocrite and give assurance to the true Christian...
5. I think its' value to remember that latter of these, that results in the failure of many Christians to examine themselves...
6. Self-examination—is NOT an end in itself—but it's a means to an end—to determine our present spiritual state...
7. Thus—I want to suggest two universal marks or evidences of being in Christ—poverty of spirit, and new creation...
8. [1] Those in Christ have no hope but Christ—that is—they trust in Christ and put NO confidence in the flesh...
9. Those in Christ—know that condemnation was and is real—thus they consciously and increasingly trust Christ...
10. For example—think of those eight people—who found refuge in the ark and were saved from the universal flood...
11. They believed two things—[a] that judgment (condemnation) was coming, and [b] there was safety in the ark...
12. Thus—when the rain started falling—they entrusted themselves to nothing at all—except the ark God provided...
13. Gen.7:7—"so Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood..."
14. They put no confidence in any other means of salvation—not their wisdom, works, possessions, or abilities...
15. Thus—there they sat within the ark—the rains falling 40 days—carrying them upon the waters for nearly a year...
16. Yet—here is my point—as they entered that ark—they did so out of a true sense that judgment was upon them...
17. Furthermore—they knew that nothing could save them from that judgments—except the provision of God...
18. Thus—while they sat in that ark—they did so trusting in nothing else but that ark to save them from wrath...
19. The same is true of those in Christ—they know they deserve condemnation—and thus they have fled to Christ...
20. And now—as they remain in Christ—they increasingly know—they have no hope of salvation—but Christ...
21. [2] Those in Christ are made new creations—every person in union with Christ—is indwelt by His Holy Spirit...
22. 2Cor.5:17—"therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new..."
23. Every person in Christ—is a new creation—he has been born again—he has received a new heart or nature...
24. Old things have passed away—old loves, old perspectives, old priorities, old ways—have all passed away...
25. All things have become new—new loves and new hates—with a new heart—all things have become new....
26. Another way of putting this would be—every person in Christ by faith, Christ is in them by His Holy Spirit...
27. Oh brethren—what a glorious salvation we find in Christ—not only salvation from sin's penalty but also power..

28. He doesn't merely forgive us the guilt of sin, but He cleanses us from the filth of sin—we in Him and He in us...
29. In fact—these two phrases, beautifully summarize salvation found in Christ—no condemnation and new creation...
30. Oh dear friends—let us not fool ourselves—if there is no evidence of Christ being in us—we are not in Him...
31. But—if we have been made new creatures—then this is evidence that we are in Christ, and freed from condemnation...

B. By way of clarification

1. Here—I want to further explain this passage—by clarifying it from three possible mistakes or misconceptions...
2. [1] No condemnation does not mean NO CORRECTION—that is—it does not deny the loving correction of God...
3. The reality that God will never condemn us for our sin—does not deny—He will chastise us when we sin...
4. Yet—we must never confuse the two—condemnation is from a just Judge while correction—from a loving Father...
5. Ps.89:30-33—"if his sons forsake my law and do not walk in my judgments, if they break my statutes and do not keep my commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, nor allow my faithfulness to fail..."
6. 1Cor.11:31-32—"for if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world..."
7. Notice—the two differing words—chastened and condemned—the first is from God as our loving Father....
8. Sinning (or erring) Christians are chastened—the world is condemned—and these must never be confused...
9. In the context—they were partaking of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner—for this some were dying...
10. This—was the severe chastisement of the Lord—but notice why—that we may not be condemned with the world...
11. One reason why God was putting these erring Christians to death was—so that—they would not be condemned...
12. That is—that they would not go back into the unbelieving world—and thus—be condemned with the world...
13. Oh—my dear brethren—what a privilege is divine chastisement—for it's the manifestation of paternal love...
14. Now—don't misunderstand—we are not kept from condemnation because of chastisement—but because of Christ...
15. Yet—what Paul means is that—if God did not correct us as Christians—we would run right into hell itself...
16. Thus—while we no longer have any dealings with God as a righteous Judge—we do as a righteous Father...
17. Thus—we must never view any of the dealings of God toward us as—vindictive, punitive, or condemning...
18. [2] No condemnation does not mean NO CONVICTION—that is—when we sin—we ought to feel conviction...
19. This actually relates to the previous clarification—in that—one primary means of God's correction is conviction...
20. Now—the primary difference between conviction and condemnation—is that—it leads us to Christ for cleansing...

21. 1Jn.1:9—"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness..."
22. Thus—when we sin—we feel guilt and our conscience is dirtied—what do we do—we confess or own our sins...
23. We confess that we have sinned against God—yet brethren—this conviction is far from legal condemnation...
24. Conviction is the knowledge of sin—it is God the Holy Spirit—working within our hearts to make sin known...
25. But the goal and purpose of Holy Spirit Christian conviction—is that we would have our conscience cleansed...
26. 2Cor.7:10—"for godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation...but the sorrow of the world produces death..."
27. Thus—whenever we are driven further from Christ, instead of to Christ, this is NOT the work of the Holy Spirit...
28. [3] No condemnation does not mean NO CONDEMNATION—that is—while God doesn't condemn—others will...
29. [a] The world condemns—that is—the world of the ungodly—will condemn you for being dogmatic and unloving...
30. In other words—the world condemns us—because we condemn it—that is—by our works and by our words...
31. Heb.11:7—"by faith Noah...prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world..."
32. Thus—while there is no condemnation from Christ—we better expect that there will be condemnation from others...
33. Yet—even then we must endure it patiently—for while man may condemn me—my Father does not and will not...
34. [b] The devil condemns—that is Satan, the accuser of the brethren—who encourages us to condemn ourselves...
35. Yet—what do we say to such Satanic accusations—when the enemy of our souls—would remind us of our sins...
36. Well—I suggest we simply acknowledge them—we agree—if God were mark iniquities which of us could stand...
37. Thus—you see brethren—a Christian isn't one who denies his sins—far from it—he knows them very well...
38. Furthermore—he agrees that he remains even now (as a Christian)—a hell-deserving, wretched, unworthy sinner...
39. Yet—his only hope is this—that Christ died, rose, and presently stands before the Father with his name on His heart...
40. Rom.8:33-35—"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us..."

C. By way of exhortation

1. Here—I want to warn those who are not in Christ—those under condemnation—those awaiting damnation...
2. In short I want to warn of the reality of present and future condemnation—you are and will be—condemned...
3. Perhaps—to be precise—I want to encourage you to saved and thus spared—from the condemnation of God...
4. [1] Believe God—that is—believe that God wants to save you—to rescue or deliver you from condemnation...
5. Jn.3:17—"for God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved..."

6. But you object—if God has an elect people—how do I know there is salvation offered or provided for me...
7. Oh my friend—you fail to remember—our Savior has commissioned us to preach His gospel to every creature...
8. What is the gospel—but what God has done in Christ—the good news—that God accepts sinners in Christ...
9. This message is to be preached to every creature—that means every person—that means every person present...
10. Perhaps put a bit more theological—there exists within the gospel message, a warrant for every sinner to believe...
11. When God says—"whosoever believes on Christ will be saved"—that's all the warrant any poor sinner needs...
12. [2] Condemn yourself—by this I mean—agree with God against yourself—that you in fact deserve condemnation...
13. This is really what repentance entails—at its very heart—repentance is a sinner siding with God against himself...
14. Lk.23:40-41—"Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds..."
15. Notice—he admittedly that they were justly condemned—they were guilty of breaking the laws of the land...
16. So too—you and I have broken the law of God—we are guilty—we are justly condemned—we deserve death...
17. [3] Flee to Christ for refuge—that is—you must believe in Christ, Jn.3:18—"he who believes in Him is not condemned..."
18. You must get into the Ark by faith—you must turn from yourself, and find safety in the person of Jesus Christ...