

Romans 8:1-2

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[0:00] This morning's Bible study text is Romans chapter 8 verses 1 and 2, so please join us there as we turn our attention to the study of God's word. Before we study this text, I want to remind you of two things.

First, our teaching on Sundays has been working in concord with CFC's Bible reading plan. And we're doing this for two reasons. First, we want you to see the connectivity of the text, right? We are believing that the beauty of the scripture will come alive to you across the year and that you will have a greater grasp of its narrative arc as we do this together.

Secondly, we want you to read your Bible. We want this to promote Bible reading, to want to fill in the gaps in between the teaching you're receiving.

I learned this week that only 3% of professing American Christians have ever read through the entire Bible. And we want to encourage us reading through the Bible as many times as we possibly can.

[1:01] Certainly a wonderful goal is reading through the entirety of it each and every year. And all you have to do to accomplish this is read three chapters a day. That's all it takes to read through the entire Bible in the year.

And this takes no more than 10 to 15 minutes each day. The average college student, which I know fewer and fewer of us are college students, so this stat becomes less relevant.

But the average college student spends two and a half hours a day on social media. I don't know what the average is for each one of us. But if you took two and a half hours a day and applied it to Bible reading, you could read the Bible eight and a half times a year.

The entire Bible eight and a half times in a year. Which just shows that at the very least we could say college students have time to read the Bible. And if we just pared that down in some measure, we certainly could say the same for each of us.

We have the time to read through the scripture and to do so in large amounts. And I would think you will find that your life would be extremely enriched by this practice.

[2:08] So we're hoping to promote that. Second thing I want to remind you of is that the teaching this morning will be brief by design so that you can take time with the discussion questions, whether you're by yourself or meeting together with a group.

So Romans chapter eight, verse one and two. There's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Now, as I was looking to what text to teach on today and pulling from the scripture reading from this past week, I was a bit grieved that we covered all of the book of Romans in this past week's scripture reading.

It was concluded today, which meant I only got to pick one teaching time from all of the book of Romans, which was not a terribly easy thing to do.

But I settled on these two verses because these two verses have most ministered to me from the book of Romans. So I hope that they'll be of good benefit to you as well.

[3:16] And we're just going to simply look at them in the order that they were written. So verse one and then verse two. So we see the very beginning of verse one. Paul writes, there is there for now.

This is a direct reference back to Romans chapter seven, verses 21 through 25, where he wrote, So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

If I delight in the law of God in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So then I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

And then he immediately, remember the chapters are not inspired, says, There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So it's a direct reference back to the end of chapter seven.

[4:23] But also, I believe, indirectly referencing back to the entire letter up to this point. So just a few reminders from Romans chapter one, verse 16 and 17.

Paul said, So he begins really early building this case that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

In chapter two, verses 12 and 13. For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law. And all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.

For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. And then he works out in chapters three, four, and five, that the law is kept by faith in Jesus's perfect law keeping.

So Jesus was perfectly righteous, and therefore by faith in him we have his righteousness. Chapter five and verse one. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[5:46] Right? So because of the faith in Christ, having been justified by him, through him, we have peace with God. And then chapter six and verse six.

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

So having been justified by faith and having peace with God, having the righteousness of Christ, we've been set free from sin. We're no longer enslaved to sin.

It's not a master over us any longer. And yet, Paul tells us at the end of chapter seven that we still struggle with sin. That this is a normal part of the Christian life, that we are still battling against our flesh.

But then he says at the beginning of chapter eight, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Right?

[6:46] Even as we struggle in this state of the what is and what is yet to be. Right? We've been set free from sin, and yet we still sin.

Wretched man that I am. Right? Why do I go on sinning even though I've been set free from sinning? Who will deliver me from this body of death? Right? And he comes along with this beautiful encouragement for us at the beginning of chapter eight.

He says there's no condemnation. And the Greek word here used for no is *oude*. And it's an emphatic negative adjective relating to time.

It carries the idea of a complete end. Right? So there's no condemnation absolutely, you could think in those terms. Not now and not ever.

And the term *katachryma*, *katachryma*, condemnation, is only found in the book of Romans here and in chapter five, verses 16 and 18. And it relates to the sentencing of a crime.

[7:50] But focuses not on the verdict, but on the penalty the verdict demands. Right? So there's no penalty. Right?

Even though we once were sinners. Right? We've been now declared righteous. And the penalty that the verdict demands has been dismissed.

Paul wrote in Romans chapter six, verse 23, for the wages of sin is death. Right? There's the penalty for the verdict. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Now, for those not in Christ, those who have not placed their faith in him, trusted in his righteousness to have peace with God, their condemnation presses down on them.

If we are in Christ, we are free from condemnation. But if you're not in Christ, condemnation presses down on you. I'd like to read to you a fairly long quotation.

[8:50] I'll do my best to read it well. This is an excerpt from Jonathan Edwards' famous speech, speech, sermon. We'll call it a sermon. Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.

He delivered this sermon in 1741. Listen carefully to its words, particularly if you've not trusted in Christ. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God.

There is hell's wide, gaping mouth open. And you have nothing to stand upon, nor anything to take hold of. There is nothing between you and hell but the air. It is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this. You find you are kept out of hell, but you do not see the hand of God in it. But look at other things, at the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation.

But indeed, these things are nothing. If God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

[9:59] Your wickedness makes you, as it were, heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell. And if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf.

And your healthy constitution and your own care and prudence and best contrivance and all your righteousness would have no more influence to hold you up and keep you out of hell than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock.

Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment, for you are a burden to it. The creation groans with you. The creation is made subject to the bondage of your corruption.

The sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan. The earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts, nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon.

The earth does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of your life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. God's creatures are good and were made for men to serve God with, and do not willingly subserve to any other purpose, and grow when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end.

[11:18] And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who hath subjected it in hope. There are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm and big with thunder.

And were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. End quote. But our text today says there is now no condemnation.

No condemnation for who? For those who are in Christ Jesus. All that Edwards rightly says, the condemnation that is true and just for those not in Christ, is not ours because we are in Christ.

John chapter 10, beginning in verse 27, Jesus says, Beloved, this is God's doing, right?

Regardless of how you acted this week, if you are in Christ, God sees Jesus when he sees you, and you are safe, and you are secure in his hand.

[12:47] There is therefore now no condemnation. Right? Udais katakrima. No condemnation. If you are not in Christ, your condemnation is just.

Repent and believe. If you are in Christ, you have been freed from condemnation. Live as a freed person.

We have to preach this to ourselves again and again and again as we find ourselves failing to obey the commands of God to say to ourselves, there is therefore now no condemnation because I am in Christ.

His righteousness is mine. He took the penalty for my sin. There is no condemnation for me. And this does not become a pass for sin, but it ought to move us in worship that we would become more holy by the power that he provides.

Right? That we would want to please him because we have been freed in this way. Verse 2 says, For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

[14:01] In Christ Jesus, we have been delivered from the law of sin and death to the law of the spirit of life. When Paul refers to the law here,

I do not believe he's referring to the Mosaic law or to other divine commandments or requirements, but that he's referring to a principle of operation.

Right? To the thing that drives you. Are we driven by sin, death, or by the spirit of life?

When Jesus explained the way of salvation to Dick and Ebus in John chapter 3, verse 5, he said, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Paul explains in Titus chapter 3, verses 5 and 6, God saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

It is the Holy Spirit who bestows, and energizes spiritual life. Paul clarifies this in the following verses in chapter 8, verse 6, For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace.

[15:23] So the spirit of Christ leads us in the truth, namely by the word of Christ, the Bible. Verse 9 of chapter 8, You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if in fact the spirit of God dwells in you.

Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to him. And verse 10, But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

The Holy Spirit bestows and energizes our spiritual life. And does so because we are in Christ Jesus.

And the Bible speaks both of Christ being in us. See chapters 8, 9, and 10. It's what I just read to you. The spirit, so Christ, is in us and of us being in Christ.

Being in Christ makes us accepted before God. And Christ being in us empowers us for holiness. Both are profound realities for the Christian to understand and hold on to.

[16:37] Don't think of them as the same reality. Think of them as two concurrent realities, right? Christ is in us and we are in Christ. It's important to wrap our mind around the both.

If we were not in Christ and if Christ was not in us, we would be unable to stand before God and we would be unable to live rightly. Because our text says, In Christ Jesus, I want to explore that idea a bit further by reading to you a list that was compiled by Pastor John Piper.

And I posted this in Slack for you because it's a bit and I think you'll want to go back and re-reference it later on. So I'm just going to rattle these off. 13 realities because you are in Christ.

And I'll read the verses that accompany each one of them. I hope this is really good for your soul this morning. Number one, In Christ Jesus, you were given grace before the world was created.

2 Timothy 1.9 says, He gave us grace in Christ Jesus before the ages began. Number two, In Christ Jesus, you were chosen by God before creation.

[17:49] Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 4 says, God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Number three, In Christ Jesus, you are loved by God with an inseparable love.

Romans chapter 8, verse 38 and 39. I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation. And you know I like to insert here, including myself will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Number four, In Christ Jesus, you were redeemed and forgiven for all your sins.

Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 7, In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. Number five, In Christ Jesus, you are justified before God and the righteousness of God in Christ is imputed or given to you.

2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21, For our sake, God made Christ to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[18:56] Number six, In Christ Jesus, you have become a new creation and a son of God. Ladies, you want to be sons for the inheritance that sons receive. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 17, If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. In Galatians chapter 3 and verse 26, In Christ Jesus, you are all sons of God through faith. Number seven, In Christ Jesus, you have been

seated in the heavenly places even while he lived on earth.

Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 6, God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Number eight, In Christ Jesus, all the promises of God are yes for you.

2 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 20, All the promises of God find their yes in Christ. Number nine, In Christ Jesus, you are being sanctified and made holy.

1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 2, To the church of God that is in Corinth to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus. Number ten, In Christ Jesus, everything you really need will be supplied.

[20:11] Philippians chapter 4 and verse 19, My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Number eleven, In Christ Jesus, the peace of God will guard your heart and mind.

Philippians 4 and verse 7, The peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Number twelve, In Christ Jesus, you have eternal life.

Romans 6 and verse 23, For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And number thirteen, And in Christ Jesus you will be raised from the dead at the coming of the Lord.

First Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 22, For as in Adam all died, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. All those united to Adam in the first humanity die.

All those united to Christ in the new humanity rise to live again. If you are in Christ this morning, you have such reason to praise God and to pursue holy living.

[21:23] Right? Our holiness hinges on being found in Christ, being declared holy, and then praising Him rightly for who we are in Him.

It's important for us to recognize that as we are being sanctified, we are merely becoming more who we've been declared to be. God has declared us righteous in Christ.

God has said there is no condemnation. Right? We're bringing our lives into conformity with that reality as we pursue holiness.

Right? We know this will take a lifetime. All of us will join with Paul at the end of chapter 7. We will all feel the anguish of that tearing between us.

Right? Wretched man that I am. I hope at the same time we can all say, but there is no condemnation for me because I am in Christ.

[22:25] And because of that we will be motivated to once again pick ourselves up. Right? To run hard after the way of Jesus. Beloved, you have been set free from the law of sin and death.

You do not have to do it any longer. You have been empowered in Christ to pursue him. I hope you're reminded this morning as you struggle with sin, as you struggle against your flesh, that there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.