

Romans 8:1-2

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Date: 05 February 2012

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[0:00] If you will, I hope you have your copy of God's Word with you today. If you will turn to Romans chapter 8. And while you're doing that in the hopes that I won't be a distraction to you this morning, I'll tell you why I'm in pain.

My lower back is just killing me and I'm not actually sure the reason. It's actually gotten worse as the day's gone on. I've never been kicked by a horse in the lower back, but I'm pretty confident this is what it would feel like if I were.

So if you see me leaning a little extra heavy on the podium or pacing a bit, that's what's going on. I'm glad to be here. If I grimace, it's because of my back, not because I don't want to be in this place with you.

Romans chapter 8. We'll look this morning at verses 1 and 2. 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. So we're now seven full chapters into the book of Romans, beginning chapter 8.

[1:07] And Paul has continued to develop the theme of the gospel, justification by faith alone. And he's been at times recycling through some of the same truths.

That presents a problem for a preacher as myself. What do I say that's new and fresh? How is it that this is a new thing that we need to hear?

And the reality is we don't really need to hear a new thing. We need to hear the same great old story that is the good news of Jesus Christ.

Somebody much wiser than myself, I believe Clay, shared this with me, so I'll give him credit for it. But compared the gospel to a beautiful gym. I think there's a number of newly engaged people in our congregation.

And probably, I don't know this for sure, but probably got engagement rings with a diamond set in the middle of it. The gospel is a treasure like that, which is beautiful upon looking at it.

[2:12] But to really grasp its beauty, we've got to turn it over and look at it from varying angles. Ladies, I know you have looked at that diamond over and over and over and over again.

The diamond has perfect clarity. You can look at it from one side and you'll know what it looks like on the other side. It looks the same. Gentlemen, if you bought a decent diamond, it looks the exact same from the other side. It was cut the same way and it's clear, just like the rest.

But you don't really appreciate it until you turn it over. The same is true with the gospel. The preaching here to us in the letter of Romans is a turning, looking at varying angles.

The same great truth. Martin Luther, in the 16th century, held a pastorate and preached every week the gospel to his congregation.

And his congregation began to murmur about that. They began to come to him and say, Martin Luther, when are you going to take us deeper? When are you going to teach us new things? Surely we've come to understand the gospel already.

[3:19] And his response was, when you begin to live like you believe what I'm preaching to you, then I'll preach something else. The truth of it is, we all forget, probably on a daily basis, the beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If we would remember what he's done for us, we would live much differently. And I think that Paul had the same thing in mind as he's writing. He's continuing to turn the beauty of the gospel over and angle it differently and hold it up to the light in these varying ways that we might appreciate it more. So we come to the beginning of chapter 8. And he starts off saying, there is therefore now. Now he's directly referencing back to chapter 7.

Verses 23-25, we saw Paul having the common struggle of every Christian, where we're not all as bad as we could be, but certainly none of us are as good as we should be.

And we war against sin in our life, even though we've been delivered from it. He writes, beginning in verse 23, I see in my members another law, waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin.

[4 : 35] 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 directly, he's referencing back to that.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Indirectly, I believe he's referencing back to the entire letter to this point.

Chapter 1, verse 16 and 17. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith.

As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith, and those who live by faith have no condemnation.

Chapter 2, verse 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 in chapters 3 and 4 and 5, we see that none of us can earn our way to heaven, that none of us are righteous on our own, apart from faith in Christ.

[5 : 48] And Christ gives us, imputes to us, his righteousness. Chapter 5, verse 4. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Certainly, he's referencing back to chapter 6, verse 6. 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 no longer would be enslaved to sin.

The condemnation has been lifted. So there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Interestingly, our English word translated, no, is the Greek word, oidaes.

It is an emphatic negative pronoun which relates to time. I'll catch that. It's an emphatic negative pronoun that relates to time.

It carries the idea of the completion of a period of time. So those of us who are in Christ once bore the condemnation of our sin, but that period of time in our life is now over.

[7 : 07] That's not a call to learn and understand the original language. I don't know what is, because the English word we get is no. Much more meaning carried in oidaes.

Condemnation. Katakrama is the Greek word. It's only found in the book of Romans here and in 5, 16, and 18. So it's three places in the New Testament.

And it relates to the sentencing of a crime, but focuses not on the verdict, not that we've been declared guilty, which we have, but on the penalty the verdict demands.

That's the emphasis. It emphasizes the verdict. Excuse me. The penalty that the verdict demands. Chapter 6, verse 23, for the wages of sin is death.

Amen. So now, in Christ, those who have placed their faith in Him, there is no condemnation.

[8 : 09] But before that, if you haven't placed your faith in Christ, or before you have placed your faith in Christ, if you are in Him, there was great condemnation on you.

The guilt of your sin pressed down upon you. Let me read to you an excerpt from a wonderful sermon by Jonathan Edwards called Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.

If you haven't yet read this, I hope that you will. It was delivered in 1741, June or July 8th, I can't remember, in Connecticut. I am told that Jonathan Edwards stood at the back of the sanctuary and read this in a very monotone voice.

I'm going to try to inflect my tone a bit so that you can understand what I'm saying to you. But listen to the weight of the words he uses here. 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.

[9 : 23] You probably are not sensible of this. You find that you are kept out of hell, but 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.

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 caring prudence and best contrivance and all your righteousness would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock.

This is where it gets really good. 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 creature 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.

[10:40] The earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lust. Nor does it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon. The air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of 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 groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end.

And the world would spew you out were it not for the sovereign hand of him who has 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.

Isn't that incredible? the earth rejects us in our sinful state. The earth doesn't want to be a stage for which in which we carry out evil intentions towards God.

Did you catch all that language? The sun does not willingly shine upon us to give us light to sin against our God. The air doesn't willingly sustain our life as long as we serve the enemy.

[11:59] Isn't that phenomenal language? We are a burden to the earth before Christ. And this is the condemnation that laid upon us that we inherited from Adam apart from Christ this is where you are.

I'll add that many of the congregants in Jonathan Edwards church building that day were clutching the pews in front of them and begging him to stop preaching.

They were afraid that the floor was going to open up and that hell was going to swallow them whole. Incredible. Absolutely incredible. But now for those of us who are in Christ Jesus this burden has been lifted.

There is no condemnation for us. Jesus says in John chapter 10 verse 27 through 29 My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

[13:13] You see the connection there now. Those of us who are in Christ are secure in the hand of God. There is no condemnation for us any longer.

Udice katakramah no condemnation for us. We can live guilt free. The sins that you've committed and are maybe in the process of committing now and will commit have already been paid for by Christ.

That wrath that is due to you apart from him because you're in him who bore it for you. We are secure in the hand of God if we're in Christ.

If you're not in Christ if you've not placed your faith in him if you have thought that anything you can do will hold you up from being swallowed into hell you are desperately wrong.

I won't pretend that there's a special time of any service for you to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. You don't have to wait for me to ask you to do that.

[14:28] I don't hold that kind of power. The front of this building is in no way some secret special place for you to consecrate yourself to God. The holy place for that to happen is in your heart.

if you feel the weight of condemnation on you this morning believe in Christ. Do that now where you sit.

You don't have to listen to anything else I say this morning. Place your faith in Christ. Verse 2 For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

The article at the beginning of verse 24 So there's no condemnation for those of us in Christ because if you'll allow me my own interpretation because in Christ Jesus we have been delivered from the law of sin and death we've been set free from that to the law of the spirit of life. Now Paul here is not referring to the Mosaic law or any other divine commandments or requirements he's referring to a principle of operation the thing that drives you where you get your motivation so where do we get that from as Christians the law of the spirit of life which is the Holy Spirit what he's referring to when Jesus explained the way of salvation to Nicodemus in John 3:5 he said truly truly I say to you unless one is born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God God explains in Titus 3:5 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 [16:36] Holy Spirit who bestows and energizes our spiritual life Paul clarifies this in the following verses in chapter 8 so follow with me down in chapter 8 we're going to discuss these in brief in coming weeks we'll discuss living by the Spirit verses 6:9 and 10 see if you can follow me verses 6:9 and 10 for to set the mind on the flesh is death but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace 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 but if Christ is in you although the body is dead because of sin the spirit of life the spirit is the life because of righteousness I'm so sorry I got ahead of myself but if Christ is in you although the body is dead because of sin the spirit is life because of righteousness so we're granted by the law of the spirit of life in

Christ Jesus to not have condemnation that's an interesting phrase in Christ Jesus we see it both in verses 1 and 2 of chapter 8 in Christ Jesus this little phrase has been vexing me all week I get the concept I understand generally but how to explain a mystery as profound as what it means to be in Christ I'm still not sure I could do a fantastic job of it I was trying to come up with all kinds of analogies and things I could bring in to show you I think everything falls short of how really profound this mystery is and I don't know that we're really going to fully understand it until we see him face to face but the point is that we're not simply united with Christ but that we're united in Christ in 1st Corinthians 15:22! Paul gives us a little more explanation he says for as in Adam all die so also in Christ shall all be made alive and in the same epistle chapter 12 verse 27 you are the body of Christ and individually members of it so we're in Christ verses 1 and 2 chapter 8 and Christ is in us verses 9 and 10 we just read that you see in verse 9 in the spirit if in fact the spirit of God dwells in you in verse 10 again but if Christ is in you although the body is dead because of sin the spirit is life because of righteousness so we're in Christ and Christ is in us the best analogy I can think to give you is a biblical analogy And that is!

when Christ died when he bore the wrath of God even though he lived a sinless life he did so for the church and in so doing he imputed to his church he gave to his church his righteousness so what Martin Luther called the great exchange he took on the sin of the church bore the wrath of God for it and gave!

to us his righteousness so we are then clothed in the righteousness of Christ we are wearing a Christ suit so to speak so that when we approach the Father the things we do can be seen as pleasing in his eyes because he sees the righteousness of Christ in us Christ is also in us the spirit dwells within us motivating right living apart from the spirit of God abiding within you everything you do is sin we can categorize the things you do as good things but anything that you do apart from faith full dependency on God is sin and your heart does not incline toward that it actually rejects that kind of notion apart from the spirit of God dwelling within you so if this weren't true that in

[21:13] Christ and Christ in us we would be unable to stand before God and we would be unable to live rightly as I said in the coming weeks we're going to look at what life in the place your faith in him listen to these number one in Christ you were given grace before the world was created 2nd Timothy 1:9 says he gave us grace in Christ Jesus before the ages began number two in Christ you were chosen by God before creation Ephesians 1:4 God chose us in

Christ before the foundation of the world number three in Christ Jesus you are loved by God! Romans 8:38-39 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 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 1:7 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 to you 2 Corinthians 5 21 we have in Galatians 3 26 in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith we're halfway there this phrase is in the New Testament 88 times this isn't that many number seven in Christ Jesus you have been seated in the heavenly places even while he lived on earth Ephesians 2 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 praise God 2 Corinthians 1 number nine in Christ Jesus you are being sanctified and made holy 1 Corinthians 1 2 to the church of God that is in Corinth to those sanctified in Christ Jesus number 10 in Christ Jesus everything you really need will be supplied Philippians 4 19 my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches and glory in Christ Jesus number 11 in Christ Jesus the peace of God will guard your heart and mind Philippians 4 7 the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus and number 12 in Christ Jesus you have eternal life Romans 6 23 for the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord this ought to radically change the way we live the light of this truth should expose all the darkness of our hearts if we believe that there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus our lives will look radically different from the lives of those around us there are so many people who don't believe in God at all and from the exterior if you looked at their life you would say that's a really good person you would even go as far to say that person is better than some of the people I know who say they believe in God and in

Jesus Christ shame on us if we don't live rightly it is a clear evidence that we don't believe this to be true not that you're necessarily not a Christian but the value of the gospel the immense treasure that it is is far from you in those moments take this truth with you this week there is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus I'm sure I've said it enough now that you have it memorized and preach the gospel to yourself when you wake up in the morning and as you head off to class or to work go get the kids up there's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus I am in Christ and Christ is in me what a glorious glorious truth let's pray together