

## Romans 8:1-4 - Part 2

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Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0:00] Join me in Romans chapter 8. Our text this morning is Romans chapter 8, verses 1 through 4, for the second time.

! Very glad to see all of you here this morning. I hope that you're expectant as I am to see what the Lord will do as we open His Word together. Last week I was very pleased to begin our study of this precious chapter in this most treasured letter in this glorious book that we call the Bible.

We did not manage to make it far into the text as time constrained us, so I'm eager to consider our consideration of these four verses. Before I read the text, allow me to remind you that this letter so far, Paul has given great labor to show us that everyone is guilty before God and rightly deserves His justice and our due condemnation, but that we can be justified or declared righteous by grace alone, through faith alone, in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone.

Because of God's loving kindness, we can escape His judgment through faith, because Christ bore the wrath due us on the cross, and He fulfilled the requirement of the law for us.

By believing in Him, we lose our guilt, we gain His righteousness, and not only are we freed from the eternal verdict of our sin, but we are also set free from its power now.

[1:34] This is the concisest summary I think I can faithfully give you of the first seven chapters of Romans. Let's press on into the second week of our look at the first four verses of chapter 8.

Before I read them, let me remind you, beloved, that this is God's Word to us, written for His glory and our good. And so we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

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.

For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Last week we spent the majority of our time on verse 1. But I would be remiss to not spend a little further time on it this morning before looking at verses 2 through 4.

[2:53] Verse 1 should be emblazoned on our minds. It needs to remain there. Some people float through life unconcerned about how they live and the consequences of their living.

However, if you are anything like me, you may be a person that thinks constantly about how you should or shouldn't orient your life and likely find yourself issuing sentences and handing out verdicts of condemnation against yourself for your failures.

Chapter 8 and verse 1 is salve for our weary souls. This verse reminds us that we are not the eternal judge of the cosmos.

We are not qualified to hold the position. But the one who is says to us, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

It's just incredible. No condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Of course, the clear implication is there is condemnation for those who are not in Christ Jesus.

[4:09] And I spent some time last week talking about that condemnation, that justice that is due you. It's the most important thing about you, whether or not you are in Christ.

The Greek word here rendered, condemnation, relates to the sentencing of a crime, but focuses not on the verdict, but on the penalty that is due the crime.

Its emphasis is not on the declaration of guilt, but on the price that must be paid for the crime of rebellion against God. Paul tells us that for those who are in Christ Jesus, there is no longer any condemnation.

Beloved, in Christ Jesus, no longer condemnation. Because of the completed work of Jesus Christ, the sentence that we fully deserve has been commuted.

We have passed from death to life, from enemies to friends. We were once estranged, but now we belong. Hear me carefully this morning.

[5:18] This declaration of Paul's, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, does not depend on you. It does not serve at the whim of your emotions.

It depends entirely on God, so it is sure. God accomplishes all that he sets out to, and all of his promises are kept.

Our salvation find its confidence in him, not in ourselves. Now, if some of what I just said sounds familiar to you, that's good.

It means that you were paying attention last week. That last paragraph was word for word, what I said last week, as far as I can remember. I think that we all need to hear it again.

I know that I did, and that I do need to hear it, time and time and time again. Again, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[6:25] A wonderful, wonderful truth. Let's take a look at verses 2 through 4, as Paul continues to expand this idea.

I want to ask and answer two questions. I did that super fast last week, about verse 1, and they find the answer here in verses 2 through 4. In these verses, we will see Paul coupling the doctrines of justification and sanctification in a most concise and helpful way.

So the first question is this, how is there, therefore, now no condemnation? We've been saying this. We've been saying this all throughout the letter. I have said it last week. I have said it in the introduction to this morning, because if you are in Christ Jesus, you have been justified.

There's not condemnation for you because you have been declared righteous. Justification is a legal declaration that your sins have been forgiven, expunged.

As far as the East is for the West, God has forgotten them, as if they never existed at all. You've been forgiven of your sin and that you have perfectly kept the law in Christ.

[7:46] His righteousness has been given to you. This is the idea, the doctrine of double imputation. Our sinfulness given to Christ, His righteousness given to us through faith.

The great exchange, Martin Luther called it. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Now, here Paul uses the word law not in reference to natural law or the Mosaic law. And he's going to use it in that way in the following verses.

And sometimes Paul's writing gets a little confusing about which particular use of this word he's employing. Here he's using it as a principle of operation. So you can think of it in these terms.

There's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because for those who are in Christ Jesus, the operating principle of the Spirit of life has set you free from the operating principle of sin and death.

[8:58] What now controls us is entirely different. I love here that the Holy Spirit, which we can have no doubt Paul is referring to by reading the rest of the chapter.

We know it's the Holy Spirit he's talking about. But here he refers to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of life. We should put that in our vernacular and use it more often.

The Spirit of life. Paul ascribes this title to him as he introduces him in direct opposition to the consequence of our sin.

Our activity, apart from Christ, brought death. But now, in Christ, the Spirit of life brings life.

It's a very clever, perhaps inspired, play on words. The emphasis here is on his work in spite of ours.

[10:03] Beloved, God loves us too much to leave us to ourselves. Were it not for his saving grace, we would remain utterly lost.

And he knows this. But because of his saving grace, we have great reason for great confidence in Christ Jesus.

He has saved us if we're in him. Listen to Paul say this elsewhere. This is 2 Corinthians 3, verse 4 and following.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant.

Not of the letter, here he's referring to the law, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

[11:11] And Paul continues into verse 3 with another 4. He says, For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.

Now this time, as I mentioned, Paul does use the word law in reference to natural law, or in reference to the Mosaic law.

He is talking about those things that we can know are right or wrong because our conscience bears witness to it, or because he has directly commanded it. The law can provoke sin in men and condemn them for it, but it cannot deliver them from its consequences.

Why? Because our sinful flesh cannot keep the law. He says it right there. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, our very sin nature, the way in which we are born, unable to keep the law.

The law can't accomplish that purpose because we can't keep it. We have rebelled against it and would continue to do so without God's intervention.

[12:34] And so praise God for this phrase at the beginning of verse 3. For God has done. What a beautiful phrase.

Beloved, we are passive agents in God's saving work. I will never grow tired of telling you this.

This is not always agreed upon in our day. We are passive agents in God's saving work. We cannot save ourselves.

We offer nothing to the equation but our sinfulness. We need to hear it. For many reasons, we need to hear it.

And not because I think that it's important to tell you so, because it's my particular theological bend, it's the camp that I like to hang out in, but because God thinks it's important to tell us so.

[13:35] And he tells us again and again and again. We are taught in the Bible that God's saving work is monergistic. He accomplishes it.

For God has done. What you could not do is the way you could read the beginning of verse 3. You can't do it. God had to do it for you.

And praise be to God. He did. He did. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and 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. There's that great exchange in a single verse. Double imputation. Christ had to come and accomplish what we could not accomplish. accomplish on our own.

God has done this. We need to rest in these truths. We're going to get into it towards the end of chapter 8 and on into chapter 9 and then wrestle with the implications of it in chapter 10 and chapter 11.

[14:45] It is glorious and it is beautiful and it is true. Doctrines always taught to us. High views of these doctrines of grace to give us a pillow to rest our head on.

Not a rock to stumble over or to pick up and throw at somebody else. Right? It's meant for rest. Right? Remember where this started. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why? Because God has done it. Because God has done it. you're going to fail in your life. You're going to sin and you're going to want to condemn yourself. But guess what God says of you.

If you're in Christ there's no condemnation for you. We just sang a song together that speaks to this very truth. And I don't know maybe you're like me sometimes I sing a song and I know the tune and I know the words and I just sing it and I don't think very much about what I'm singing.

I hope that's not true of you. We don't sing a ton of songs here but we sing good true deep songs together. They are carefully selected.

[15:52] They're thoughtfully selected. We sang a song just before the offering called Christ the sure and steady anchor. Just listen to its words. Just in case you weren't listening to it earlier you might grab the hymnal that's with you and turn to hymn 406.

Christ the sure and steady anchor in the fury of the storm when the winds of doubt blow through me and my sails have all been torn and the suffering in the sorrow when my sinking hopes are few. I will hold fast to the anchor it shall never be removed. And you might say but look but look Nathan look there's your work in it you're holding fast to the anchor what are we doing what are we holding on to?

Christ and his completed work. We're just remembering that there's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. He did it. He accomplished it. We're simply holding on to the truth that it's been done.

Verse 2 Christ the sure and steady anchor while the tempest rages on when temptation claims the battle and it seems the night has won deeper still then goes the anchor though I justly stand accused I will hold fast to the anchor it shall never be removed.

[17:22] Christ the sure and steady anchor through the floods of unbelief hopeless somehow oh my soul now lift your eyes to Calvary this my ballast of assurance see his love forever proved I will hold fast to the anchor it shall never be removed.

What Christ has done what he accomplished on Golgotha Christ the sure and steady anchor as we face the waves of death when these trials give way to glory as we draw our final breath we will cross that great horizon clouds behind and life secure and the calm will be the better for the storms that we endure.

Christ the sure of our salvation ever faithful ever true we will hold fast to the anchor it shall never be removed.

God has done it he's accomplished the work if you are in Christ it's because of him he's sure to keep his promises to you and he did it by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh himself not sinful the implication in that phrase there is not that he was in fact sinful like we are sinful not as our sinful flesh but like our sinful flesh and for sin he condemned sin in the flesh he condemned our sin in the flesh of Christ and he condemned it so that there would no longer be condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus how are we in Christ Jesus by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone oh the rest oh the peace oh the joy when we lay down our striving and accept the reality that we cannot save ourselves but have a God who is gracious and merciful slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love that's Psalm 145 and verse 8 to be in Christ

Jesus means that we receive all the benefits that he has purchased and also that he has taken all the curse that we have purchased herein we see the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement and I have said to you and I will continue to say to you you lose this doctrine you lose the gospel Christ took our penalty in our place and therefore made peace with God John Owen in his work the death of death in the death of Christ which you may have heard referenced in verse 3 of that last song that we sang together written by Matt Boswell and Matt Papa the Mats are reading Owen I do believe he said this quote the death and blood shedding of Jesus Christ hath wrought and doth effectually procure for all those that are concerned in it eternal redemption consisting in grace here and glory hereafter if you want the Nathan simple English of that

[20:47] Christ's work accomplished our salvation right so that's justification that we see here in the text but we also see sanctification in the text and a proper view of sanctification is often called progressive sanctification and we always hate to have to modify words like this but there are a lot of erroneous views of sanctification out there but the doctrine of progressive sanctification simply means that once we've been saved we will progress bit by bit towards Christ likeness this doesn't happen with perfection it's an up and a down but we will be moving toward holiness so my second question is why have we been set free in Christ Jesus and it's so that we might be sanctified justification sanctification necessarily leads to sanctification it guarantees it

God has begun this work he started it and he will bring it to completion we must be continually clear on the relationship between the law and the gospel this gets confused often in people's thinking

what is the relationship between the law and the gospel the law helps us to see our sin perhaps helps produce it in us Paul makes the case it condemns us in our sin aiming at Christ taking us to the gospel the gospel sets us free from the condemnation that the law brings and sets us free to obey it so the law doesn't get done away with altogether it now comes as an instructive helper to us it's still good for our living perhaps those who have gone before us can help us at this point we've been reciting together the heidelberg catechism this is a helpful instructional tool it's been around for hundreds of years question 60 asked how are you righteous before god we answered this a couple of weeks ago the heidelberg answer to that question is only by true faith in jesus christ although my conscience accuses me that i've grievously sinned against all god's commandments have never kept any of them and am still inclined to all evil yet god without any merit of my own out of mere grace imputes to me the perfect righteousness and holiness of christ he grants these to me as if i had never had nor committed any sin and as if i myself had accomplished all the obedience which christ has rendered for me if only i accept this gift with a believing heart how are you righteous before god by faith in christ question 61 why do you say that you are righteous only by faith the answer not that i am acceptable to god on account of the worthiness of my faith for only the satisfaction righteousness and holiness of christ is my righteousness before god i can receive this righteousness and make it my own by faith only then you recited three today but why can our good works not be our righteousness before god or at least a part of it answer 62 because the righteousness which can stand before god's judgment must be absolutely perfect and in complete agreement with the law of god whereas even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin one of the references for this answer comes from isaiah chapter 64 and verse 6 which says we have all become like one who is unclean and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment we all fade like a leaf and our iniquities like the wind take us away question 63 but do our good works earn nothing even though god promises to reward them in this life and the next answer 63 this reward is not earned it is a gift of grace question 64 does this teaching not make people careless and wicked no it is impossible that those grafted into

Christ by true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness and you all know how much I love John Bunyan and you may be familiar with the fact that he was imprisoned for being a preacher of the gospel without a license from the government and while he was there he was given occasion to stand in the courtyard and preach and people would gather around the outside of the jail walls simply to hear him and at night time when he was put back into the dungeon there was another group of Christians who were also there for preaching without a license although of a much different theological persuasion and they said Bunyan if you keep telling people of God's love for them they'll live however they want to there's that question does this teaching not make people careless and wicked and he responded no if I teach God's people about God's love for them they'll live however he wants them to you see the distinction right so very careful the scripture texts that are cited for answer 64 are texts like

Matthew 7 in verse 18 Jesus says a healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit and Luke 6 45 the good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks where our affections lie is going to produce the way in which we live so if we belong to God in Christ we're going to find a growing holiness in us now we see in verse 4 that this is happening in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us and this phrase might be fulfilled is one of those places I go you all know I'm not a Greek scholar but I go and use my tools and I look at it it's a single Greek word might be fulfilled and I go oof I don't know if that's the best way to translate this but I also have no idea how I would translate it it's a very interesting word the word means to and I quote to be or become satisfied concerning the requirements or expectations of a contract

[28:18] I don't know how you would make that flow in the middle of that verse but what I can tell you this contextually Paul is communicating that because of Christ's satisfaction of the law the righteous requirement of the law the possibility of our fulfillment of the contract exists and we will see as we continue to study the chapter that God will graciously work in us to bring about its completion we will fulfill the righteous requirement of the law when we are fully and finally sanctified at a point in our history that we call glorification we're going to get there and we're going to wring all of that out I promise and I'll

reference back to verse 4 as we do so so here it is it exists and God is going to make it happen in our lives again if we're justified this necessarily leads to sanctification if you are in

Christ then you walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit and this idea of walking refers to the habitual pattern of our life what will be generally true of us is that we're going to live our lives in the power of the spirit and not in the power of the flesh so if you are in Christ you walk according to the spirit and in the coming weeks we will study what it means to walk according to the spirit this is exactly where Paul is going he's setting up his case for what it looks like to walk according to the spirit but I want to conclude our time today by also setting us up for the coming weeks and issuing to you a warning many in our day make too much of the Holy Spirit and we can err and make too little of him I'm not saying that that's not also possible but we can also err and make too much he is the third person of our triune

God he is to be revered and he is to be relied upon significant way in which God works in our lives he is not to be relegated but neither is he to be elevated to a position that he would not want to hold the Puritans called him the shy spirit and his primary function apart from other working but his primary function is to magnify Christ this is the primary thing that the spirit does in Romans 8 9 Paul calls the spirit the spirit of who Christ right the spirit of Christ working to magnify Christ some months ago many of you probably weren't here we were having the Lord's Supper together and at the conclusion of a song a lady broke out into unintelligible language in the back corner of this room and would not stop and I asked her to stop

I told her it wasn't her turn to speak a couple of times and some guys very kindly escorted her out of the room very kindly spoke to her she was furious we were quenching the spirit she couldn't believe it she left we've never seen her again and some people ask me just honest you know well intended question should you have asked for an interpretation and I said no because I can tell you that was not the spirit of Christ why do I know this because we were in the middle of taking the Lord's supper which is all about the magnification of Christ the spirit of Christ was in this room doing a work in our hearts as we sang true songs as we had the elements as we were thinking together about the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on our behalf the spirit was doing a work in here but not in her and we can just be sure of that why because the spirit magnifies

Christ does not distract the spirit never says hey look at me I'm that poor pitiful part of the trinity that you don't pay much attention to not at all not at all listen to martin lloy jones speak of the spirit he says the spirit does not glorify himself he glorifies the son this is to me one of the most amazing and remarkable things about the biblical doctrine of the holy spirit the holy spirit seems to hide himself and to conceal himself he is always as it were putting the focus on the son and that is why I believe and I believe profoundly that the best test of all as to whether we have received the spirit is to ask ourselves what do we think of and what do we know about the son is the son real to us that is the working of the spirit and let me pause and that's a miraculous thing when people come to faith in Jesus Christ they're going from spiritual death to spiritual life how amazing need we look further for miracles again back to the quotation he is glorified indirectly he is always pointing us to the son and so you see how easily we go astray and become heretical if we concentrate over much and in an unscriptural manner upon the spirit himself yes we must realize that he dwells within us but his work in dwelling within us is to glorify the son and to bring to us that blessed knowledge of the son and of his wondrous love to us it is he who strengthens us with the might in the inner man that we may know this love this love of

[34:26] Christ the way he works the spirit of Christ another Dan Phillips who is a contemporary pastor once said show me a person obsessed with the Holy Spirit and his gifts real or imagined and I will show you a person not filled with the Holy Spirit show me a person focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ never tiring of learning about him thinking about him boasting of him speaking about and for and to him thrilled and entranced with his perfections and beauty finding ways to serve and exalt him tirelessly exploring ways to spend and be spent for him growing in character to be more and more like him and I will show you a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit so the work this morning of the Spirit in our lives those of us who are in Christ Jesus who are filled with the

Spirit because we are in Christ is to help us believe this text to help us to see it and go there is therefore no condemnation for me because I'm in Christ I can hold that I can take that into my week I can have the truth of that inform me because the Spirit of life has set me free for life in Christ Jesus I'm no longer bound to my sin I've been set free to live because God has done God has accomplished what I couldn't accomplish on my own he sent his son to die in my place to take my sin and to give me his perfect life and now I have freedom to run and space to go obey God's good law for me this is the miracle that the Spirit will do this morning in our hearts if we would ask so let me read the text one more time

I just summarized it but let me read it and pray that he would do that work 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 for God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit let's pray together