

### 3. Mission Accomplished – the Gospel

16 "For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. - John 3:16 NLT

So, God's purpose from the beginning was to dwell with man, to give us life and more. He walked with us in Eden. But we rebelled against Him, and sin separated us and condemned us to death. Then God gave Moses the law that showed us how to live so that God could dwell with man. (This time in a temple.) But our flesh warred against God's law and rather than bring life, it condemned us to death again. But God did not give up his purpose. He sent Jesus as humanity's representative to live without sin yet carry the weight of sin to the cross where it was crucified. So the law was fulfilled and we are no longer condemned. God dwells in us through His Spirit.

*How would you compare the parts of this summary of the Gospel to John 3:16? Where do you see God's love, where do you see the purpose of Jesus as a gift, how does Jesus' payment for sin get credited to our account?*

#### WRAP-UP

*In this study we have collect the pieces of Paul's puzzle; the law, the flesh, condemnation, we have peaked at the Greek and assembled them into the Gospel message. You may have been surprised, confused or challenged. Hopefully you have gained a deeper, richer understanding of the truth behind Paul's statement that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

#### MEMORY VERSE

*Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus. - Romans 8:1 NASB20*

*Challenge-  
Continue to read and re-read this chapter slowly. Allow God to reveal deep truths and connections between this passage and other scripture He brings to mind.*

## No Condemnation

Romans 8 - Week 2

### INTRODUCTION

The first verse of Romans 8 is a very familiar one. It gives us great comfort, assurance and relief. We are not condemned! But why are we not condemned? We know we have sinned (if we are honest, Romans 5:12) and that we are deserving of the wrath of God. We probably also know Christ died for our sin. But how did Jesus' death give us freedom from our guilt? How can God be both loving and a God of justice if he demands the death (that doesn't sound loving) of one who is innocent (that doesn't sound just)? Paul gives us a dense nugget of truth in verse 1 and unfolds it throughout the remainder of the text. But to begin wrestling with this puzzle we will need to gather all the pieces and find how they fit together to create the beautiful and astounding picture of the gospel contained in these verses.

#### Ice Breaker

*What kind of puzzles do you enjoy solving?*

#### Key Passage

*1 Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God [did:] sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and [as an offering] for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. - Romans 8:1-4 NASB20*

### STUDY QUESTIONS

#### 1. Why were we condemned?

For most of us, reading through the first 4 verses of this chapter leaves us puzzled. The terms seem unfamiliar, and we don't share the context of Paul's original audience. Many who read this letter were Jews and the text was written in Greek, which doesn't easily translate to English. So, we need some background to make sense of it.

The first thing we might notice is that verse 1 begins with "therefore (Gr. ara)" and verse 2 begins with "for (Gr. gar)", verse 3 starts with "for (Gr.

gar)” and verse 4 with “in order that (Gr. ina)”. Paul strongly links his thoughts together with such words, and we don’t want to isolate one verse without realizing how it relates to the rest of the passage. So “therefore” in verse 1 refers us back to the preceding verses in chapter 7.

*14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold into bondage to sin. 15 For I do not understand what I am doing; for I am not practicing what I want [to do,] but I do the very thing I hate. ... 23 but I see a different law in the parts of my body waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, [the law] which is in my body's parts. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*  
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*Romans 7:14-15, 23-25 NASB20*

If you read chapter 7 you find Paul at war within himself- his “flesh” doing what he knows is wrong, and his mind wanting to do what is good, according to what God’s Spiritual Law requires.

*Can you give an example where you have struggled within yourself wanting to do what is spiritual and right, but instead doing what you know is wrong? In verse 24 Paul asks the question, “who will set me free?”. What is the answer to that question in verse 25? In what areas have you seen Jesus set you free from such battles?*

Paul ends chapter 7 referring to the law of God on one side of this war, and the flesh and law of sin on the other. Sadly, we are born in the flesh, descendants of Adam and therefore subject to sin and death. The Law (which the Jews understood as the first 5 books of the Old Testament) explained how we must live in order for God to dwell among us, but because we failed to live in that way, we have separated ourselves from God and His Spirit which gives us life. The purpose of the law was to enable us to live in a way that gives life through the Spirit but our propensity to sin reversed the effect and instead the law condemned us to death and separation from the life-giving Spirit.

## **2. How can the Spirit dwell with us?**

Paul ends verse 25 of chapter 7 saying that his flesh is serving the law of Sin. Paul uses the Greek word *harmartia* for Sin. And this word means more than specific acts that break God’s laws, it denotes the dark power that lies behind all human idolatry, injustice and immorality. It is almost the equivalent of Satan. And Paul’s “flesh” is more than his physical body, it is the aspect of human beings which is physically and morally corruptible. It is the unsaved, pre-baptized state of any human.

*Knowing that Paul’s reference to Sin as harmartia means there is a dark power that underlies our sins may be a new perspective for you. How do you feel about recognizing spiritual forces at work around you? It may make you feel uncomfortable, or skeptical or challenge you. Have you encountered anything you would consider a spiritual evil?*

So how does Paul make the leap to Romans 8:1, that there is no condemnation if his flesh is serving sin? For that answer we must look at verse 2, 3 and 4 to which it is linked.

The answer is primarily about the Law of God. Because God is a God of justice, the requirement of the Law must be met. We were rescued from the Law’s condemnation because God did what the Law alone couldn’t do (v.3). It was intended to bring us life, but instead condemned us to death due to our failing to live by it. It is the nature of the “flesh” to war against God, rebel and break His law. Through Jesus’s death (as the representative of humanity), God fulfilled the death penalty to which we were condemned by the law, and He eliminated sin, thereby allowing God’s Spirit to take residence in us.

*6 He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.*  
- 2 Corinthians 3:6 NLT  
*21 He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*  
- 2 Corinthians 5:21 NASB20  
*2 and He Himself is the propitiation\* for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for [the sins of] the whole world. - 1 John 2:2 NASB20 \**  
*the means of reconciliation with God by atoning for sins; or sin-offering*

We won’t take the time now for deep exploration of the sacrificial system under Jewish Law, but the short version is this: When a Jew sinned, he had to bring a sacrifice (goat, bull, sheep, bird...) to the priest who would kill the sacrifice and sprinkle its blood on the altar to cover their sin. But this was only temporary and when he sinned again, another innocent animal was sacrificed. The purpose of Jesus death was to allow the spirit to do its work and give us life. He didn’t do away with the law, he fulfilled it and thereby broke its power to condemn us.

*8 First, Christ said, "You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings or burnt offerings or other offerings for sin, nor were you pleased with them" (though they are required by the law of Moses). 9 Then he said, "Look, I have come to do your will." He cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect. 10 For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time. - Hebrews 10:8-10 NLT*