

The Book of Romans

Lesson 9: Life in the Spirit; No Condemnation -- Romans 8:1-39

After the storm of chapter seven, with its cry of the wretched man losing the same battle again and again, chapter eight opens like sunrise. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Read that slowly. No condemnation. Not less condemnation, not condemnation deferred, but none. The verdict that should have crushed us has been lifted entirely off those who are in Christ. If chapter seven left you feeling the weight of your sin and the futility of your own strength, chapter eight is God's answer, and it is the most soaring, hope-filled chapter in the whole letter.

What the law could never do, weakened as it was by our flesh, God did. He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh on the cross, and now sends His Spirit to live inside His people. This is the great theme of the chapter: life in the Spirit. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead now dwells in you, giving life, putting sin to death, leading you, assuring you. We are not orphans left to white-knuckle our way to holiness. We have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, Abba, Father. The God we feared as a judge has become the Father we run to as His children.

Paul is honest that this life still includes suffering. Creation itself groans, he says, and we groan along with it, longing for the redemption of our bodies. But he sets our present sufferings against a glory so great that the two cannot even be compared. And in the waiting, we are not alone: the Spirit helps us in our weakness, even praying through us when we do not know what to ask. Then comes one of the most quoted promises in all of Scripture: we know that for those who love God all things work together for good. Not that all things are good, but that God is weaving even the hard things toward a good and certain end for His people.

The chapter ends with a crescendo that has steadied believers at deathbeds and in prison cells for two thousand years. If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, how will He not also graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? And Paul piles up the enemies, tribulation, danger, death, demons, the present, the future, height, depth, and declares that none of them, nothing in all creation, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Read this chapter and let it lift your eyes. Whatever you are carrying, the love that holds you is stronger.

Group Discussion: Paul declares that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (v. 1). Many believers live under a constant sense of guilt and self-condemnation even after coming to Christ. Why is it so hard to actually believe and live in the truth of no condemnation, and what would change in a person's life if they truly received it?

Personal Reflection: Paul says we have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, Abba, Father (vv. 15-16). Abba is the warm, intimate word a child uses for a beloved father. When you

come to God, do you come as a fearful servant or as a beloved child? What in your past or your heart makes it hard to relate to God as a loving Father, and how might this passage begin to heal that?

Read Romans 8:1–39

Study Questions

1. Paul begins, 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 (vv. 1–2), explaining that God did what the law could not do by sending His own Son to condemn sin in the flesh (vv. 3–4). What does it mean that there is no condemnation for those in Christ, and how did God accomplish through Christ what the law was powerless to do?
2. Paul announces freedom from condemnation for those in Christ (v. 1). Yet many believers still carry a heavy, ongoing sense of guilt and self-condemnation. Do you live as someone under no condemnation, or do you still punish yourself for past sins? What would it look like this week to actually believe and rest in the verdict God has already given?
3. Paul contrasts two ways of living: those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit; the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace (vv. 5–8). What is the difference between these two mindsets, and why does Paul tie the direction of our minds so closely to life or death?
4. Paul says the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace (vv. 6). Be honest about where your mind naturally drifts when it is at rest: to worry, to grievance, to appetite, to self, or to the things of God. What does the habitual direction of your thoughts reveal, and what is one practical way you could set your mind more on the things of the Spirit?
5. Paul says that if the Spirit of God dwells in you, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, and that by the Spirit we put to death the deeds of the body so that we will live (vv. 9–13). What does it mean that the Spirit of God actually dwells in the believer, and how does putting sin to death by the Spirit differ from trying to defeat sin by our own willpower?
6. Paul says all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God, and that we have received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry, Abba, Father, the Spirit bearing witness that we are God's children and heirs (vv. 14–17). Adoption means God has made you His own beloved child and heir. How does living as an adopted child of God, rather than as a servant trying to earn His approval, change the way you pray, obey, and face your failures?
7. Paul says that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, and those He predestined He called, justified, and glorified (vv. 28–30). What comfort does it give to know that God is working all things toward good for His people and conforming them to the image of Christ, and what does this passage teach about God's loving purpose to save and shape a people for Himself?

8. Paul says our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory to be revealed, that creation groans awaiting redemption, and that the Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us when we do not know what to pray (vv. 18–27). When you are suffering or do not even know how to pray, how does it help to know the Spirit Himself is praying through you and that a coming glory outweighs all present pain? Where do you most need that comfort right now?
9. Paul closes with a triumphant assurance: If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son will graciously give us all things, and nothing in all creation, neither tribulation nor death nor things present nor things to come, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (vv. 31–39). What is the unshakable ground of the believer's security in this passage; how should this assurance fill us with confidence and comfort; and how do we hold this glorious promise together with the rest of Scripture, which warns that we must remain in Christ and can forfeit our salvation by abandoning faith, so that we neither despair of God's keeping love nor presume on a security that ignores the call to remain faithful?
10. Look back across this magnificent chapter. Paul has shown you no condemnation, life and freedom in the Spirit, adoption as God's children, the certainty that God works all things for good, the help of the interceding Spirit, and a love from which nothing can separate you. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through these verses. What is the single truth from Romans 8:1–39 that you most need to carry into this coming week?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: John 3:16–17, God sending His Son not to condemn but to save; Galatians 4:4–7, the Spirit of adoption and crying Abba, Father; Galatians 5:16–25, walking by the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit; Hebrews 3:12–14, the warning to hold fast and not fall away; 2 Timothy 1:12, knowing whom we have believed and being kept by Him