

## **You Are Not Condemned!**

### **Romans 8:1**

#### **Intro**

Mr. Forrest Fenn is a decorated Air Force Pilot turned successful antiques dealer who, in 1988 was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Mr. Fenn upon hearing his diagnosis came up with an idea - his idea was to fill up a chest with gold coins, gold nuggets, gemstones and more and hide this treasure chest in the Rocky Mountains leaving clues behind to lead intrepid treasure hunters to look for the hidden booty

Fenn actually survived the cancer, waited until 2010 when he was 79 and then hid the treasure chest containing an estimated worth of over 1 mill dollars. And he released a mysterious and obscure poem which he claims holds all the clues needed to find the chest. This poem with the allure of hidden treasure sparked a veritable stampede of treasure hunters to descend upon the Rocky Mountains - reported that over 350,000 have joined the search. In fact, 4 people have died in the pursuit of this hidden treasure.

It would seem for many that there is an almost irresistible allure when it comes to buried treasure, hidden gold, untold riches for the taking for those clever enough to find it.

As we step into the next couple months exploring Romans chapter 8, we may do so with the promise that are treasures here for us to discover, spiritual riches that are ours for the taking. Unlike Mr. Finn - God has not hidden them - he has put them right in front of us and invites us to take them as ours. He has not obscured them in enigmatic poetry - he speaks plainly to us. As we survey Romans 8

Oh look:

- There is the golden chain of our salvation
- And there are precious jewels of comfort in our suffering
- Look over here, the priceless treasure of God himself by his Spirit come to dwell within us
- And oh look, the matchless riches of the unbreakable, immovable, unshakable, love of Christ

**“So, hear me all and listen good, Your effort will be worth the cold. If you are brave and in the wood I give you title to the gold”**

Hear me all and listen good - your effort to understand and apply Romans 8 will be worth it for here, the gold is displayed and the invitation is to enjoy the priceless wealth of God's grace.

Considered by many to perhaps be the most precious chapter in all of Scripture - every verse in Scripture is inspired, vital, authoritative and needed but safely we may say that God has used certain texts to strengthen and comfort his church in outstanding ways throughout the history of his church - this is one of those texts

At the outset of the next number of weeks that we will slowly work our way through this chapter. I want to read the whole of chapter 8. At times it is our privilege to read together longer sections of God's Word:

## **STAND if willing / able - I will Read Whole Chapter**

2 ways to read Scripture - 1 is to read larger sections to understand the scope and sweep of the biblical narrative another way is to stare deeply into a verse and draw out the riches it contains

Journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step - v. 1 - There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Break down that precious truth in 3 points placing emphasis on 3 elements contained therein - 1. **NOW** no condemnation in Christ 2. Now **NO** condemnation in Christ 3. Now no condemnation **IN CHRIST**

### **I. Now No Condemnation in Christ**

- A. There is "therefore" now - directing our attention to what has preceded - what exactly does this verse proceed from - in one sense it proceeds from the whole substance of his argument in chapters 1-7
  - 1. Chapter 7 - "who will save me from this body of death (condemnation) - thanks be to God through Jesus Christ!"
- B. But more specifically, Paul connects chapter 8:1 to chapter 5:12-21 (go back and listen) where we read

**Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. (Romans 5:18)**

- C. Paul picks up this idea of condemnation in 8:1 and points implicitly again to the reality of the existence of condemnation for sinners like you and me
  - 1. In chapter 5 - we are born in Adam - born in sin and death - born under the condemnation of sin and death - condemned by God and under the wrath of God not just because we commit sinful acts (we all do) but because we are born in sin and therefore condemned for sin before a just and Holy God
- D. But NOW, NOW something different has happened - NOW condemnation has been removed - NOW there is no condemnation - what has happened NOW? NOW there is no condemnation because NOW is the new age - the era following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
  - 1. For in his coming he came to the condemned in order to save the condemned and remove condemnation - he died for sinners and for sin and rose from the dead providing righteousness to cover over sin and remove condemnation
    - a) His cross was the inauguration of a new epoch of salvation history - for NOW - in this age - NOW provision has been made for the condemned - Salvation has been wrought for those condemned and doomed to die

**[16] "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. [17] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. [18] Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (John 3:16-18)**

- E. NOW is this glorious era of saving grace for the condemned - the epoch in time / space history in which Christ is working his grace on behalf of the condemned - Son has been given - removing the condemnation of sinners
  - 1. For those who believe - there is NOW no condemnation from God - not THERE WILL BE NO CONDEMNATION (that's true) - My Christian friend - we live in the eternal NOWness of no condemnation - tomorrow you may say NOW - 20 years you may say NOW - when we've been in glory 10,000 years bright shining as the sun we will declare NOW! NOW! NOW there is no condemnation
- F. Application
  - 1. The good news of the Gospel is that NOW there is no condemnation - we need not and should not wring our hands hoping that at the end of it all we will be assigned to the "good Christian" crowd and enter into glory - NO IT IS NOW! NOW AND FOREVER NOW
    - a) We use ESV - many good translations - KJV adds "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" - you should know that this is almost certainly an error by a well-meaning scribe - since 1611 we have found more and better manuscripts of the NT in Greek and this truly appears to be a mistake
      - (1) In one sense it's no biggie because if you look down at v. 4 - you'll see this truth "who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" - in another very important sense it is a problem for it adds a condition - if you walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit than you won't be condemned" - but the Gospel is not conditional in that way - walking according to the Spirit is the happy privilege of the one who is NOW not condemned

## II. Now No Condemnation in Christ

A. NOW condemnation is removed but note not - some condemnation, most condemnation, condemnation only for sins we committed in the past - NO condemnation for those in Christ **Paul is saying that a Christian is a person who has been taken entirely outside the realm of any possible or conceivable condemnation. The Christian has finished with the realm of condemnation; he has been taken right out of it; he has nothing more to do with it. (Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, p. 271)**

- a) Entirely outside the realm of any possible or conceivable condemnation
- 2. Surely most if not all of us DO NOT THINK THIS WAY - such is the staggering nature of Grace
  - a) Think about this - REALLY? No condemnation even though I still sin? None? Yes beloved - Here from the mouth of God NO - NONE - NO condemnation - not conditional on our goodness
    - (1) I looked up the Greek word translated here NO - guess what it means? NO
      - (a) We don't fall in and out of grace - condemnation done away with as a possibility for those who have trusted Christ

## B. Application

- 1. Let's play this out
  - a) You know what sins continue to bedevil you - you are aware of those besetting sins which war against your soul, the various ways in which you stumble (we all do)
    - (1) The battle for sexual purity in relationship - the struggles with pornography
    - (2) The fight to control your anger - impatience in the way you treat others - parents, spouse, kids

- (3) The existence of selfish ambition - the ways you seek to promote yourself and elevate your status in the eyes of others
- (4) Covetousness - how your heart wanders from contentment in God to things
- b) If you are a Christian born of God - then you are aware of the accompanying guilt you feel when you come to your senses - the deed has been done and conviction lands on your soul and to some degree discouragement and grief fills your soul - and oh you feel the guilt of that sin - and many of us certainly can be aware of feeling condemned before God - head down before God - turning away in our grief - reluctant to look at him in our guilt
- c) Romans 8:1 flips that paradigm on its head - NO condemnation - you are finished with the realm of condemnation - you have been taken right out of it - you have nothing more to do with condemnation
- (1) What that means is that you may feel condemned but you will never be condemned

**Illustration:** When the Law brings awareness of sin and lifts its rocks of condemnation against you - you may rightly hear the voice of Christ saying as he did with the adulteress of John 8 - I do not condemn you.

- (a) Conviction is God's gracious activity to wake us up out of sin - condemnation is Satan's evil activity to keep you entrenched in spiritual depression and sin - what's the point - might as well continue in sin

**Never allow yourself to go, even in thought, under condemnation again; that is to sin, because it is failure to believe the Word of God. Answer the accuser, the devil, with Romans 8. Tell him that you know what you have done, that you have grieved your Lord and disappointed him; but that you also know that it has nothing to do with the Law, and that therefore there is 'no condemnation'. You are like a child who has sinned against his parents, and you know what to do, and to whom to go. But is has nothing to do with the Law. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. (Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, p. 279)**

- 2. Hmm, so it doesn't matter what I do? Of course, it does but all we do is under the banner of "NO condemnation in Christ Jesus"
- a) Go to your Father - he will correct but never condemn and receive fresh grace as you become aware again of his strengthening love

### **III. Now No Condemnation in Christ**

- A. The unshakable assurance that there is NOW, NO condemnation is that this promise - this reality is for those IN CHRIST JESUS
  - 1. By faith in Christ - we are brought into union with Christ - and we must ask "WILL CHRIST JESUS EVER BE CONDEMNED? NO? THAN WE WILL NEVER BE FOR WE ARE IN HIM!"
    - a) Oh, he was condemned - once at the cross - but it was once for all - the righteous for the unrighteous to bring us to God
    - b) Does he stand perfect and righteous before God? Than so shall we IN HIM

- B. Condemnation cannot touch us because we are in Christ Jesus

**Illustration:** in the center of a concrete bunker the missile cannot reach you - in the center of Christ Jesus condemnation can never reach you!

- C. In Christ we are brought out of the realm of sin and condemnation and given a new identity - we are IN Christ Jesus - the verdict of no condemnation is not only negative in terms of condemnation removed but also positive in the reality in which we stand
  - 1. As he is the Son - in him we are also sons and daughters of God
  - 2. As he is righteous - so are accounted as righteous and justified
  - 3. As he is loved supremely by the Father - in him we are loved by God in the same way (John 17)
  - 4. As he has been raised from the dead and glorified - so shall we!
- D. CALL TO UNBELIEVERS - put your faith in Christ - come with empty hands and receive grace - condemnation removed - sheltered in the grace of God in Christ
- E. What is your identity?
  - 1. I'm a parent, a spouse, a friend
  - 2. I'm a failure, I'm weak, prone to wander
    - a) I am in Christ - free from condemnation - secure in God's love!
  - 3. In increasingly hostile to the Gospel we need the security of no condemnation - v. 33 - who shall bring a charge against God's elect.
    - a) In a world that loves to condemn - oh you hateful Christian with your Bible and your Christian morals - God does not condemn - matters most.

### Close

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" - oh what a treasure that is ours! Functions today, tomorrow, next year - for our rest, joy, security, and for our faithfulness - for this declaration of no condemnation does not liberate the Christian from a desire to be faithful to God but rather energizes our lives of faithfulness - we don't hear it as an excuse for sin but rather the banner over our lives that assures us our efforts are not in vain

**Two great armies clash on the battlefield of life —the people of God and the sins that would defeat them. God's people do not fight as well as they should. Sometimes they even yield to their enemy. But even as the battle rages, well before the promised victory, the Commander of God's army orders a banner to be raised right in the middle of his troops for all to see. The banner reads, 'No condemnation now for those in Christ Jesus!' And that declaration has a remarkable effect upon the people of God. They do not use that assurance as an excuse to defect to the other side. They rejoice in the certainty of their final triumph and are energized to fight on. (Ray Ortlund Jr., *Supernatural Living for Natural People*, p. 13)**

Let 8:1 have a remarkable effect upon your life and be energized by God's grace

1 verse - priceless treasure here - just getting started - may God grant that we would fill our arms with the treasures of Romans 8 over these next weeks - that we would heed the call to come, take and buy without money that which is life and hope and joy and strength by God's grace and for God's glory

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