

God's Work, Not Ours

Text: Romans 8.2–4

Theme: The assurance of our salvation is because God has done the saving through Christ Jesus and not because of us

Introduction — Romans 8 is the text before us this morning.

- Book of books, chapter of chapters, Romans 8 is powerful
- it speaks of the great work of justification that was secured by Christ
- it tells of the wonder of sanctification that is worked in us by the Holy Spirit
- and it ascribes glory to God for the love poured out upon us that can never be taken away

Perhaps greatest chapter in Bible:

- trinitarian: speaks of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - very focused on working of Spirit
 - Rom. 1–7 = 5x
 - Rom 9–16 = 6x
 - Rom 8 alone = 22x!
- gospel-centered: teaches us about Jesus life, death, and resurrection
 - tells of His incarnation, v. 3
 - proclaims His atonement work on the cross, v. 3
- gives three of greatest doctrines of all Christian faith
 - justification, vv. 1–4
 - sanctification, vv. 5–17
 - glorification, v. 18–30
- presents theological order of salvation
 - Rom 8.29–30
- it is simply full of rich doctrine
 - incarnation
 - adoption
 - future inheritance in heaven
 - resurrection of the body
 - intercession of Holy Spirit & Jesus for believer
- covers the full sweep of God's work and redemptive purposes
 - creation, fall, redemption, consummation
- some of best loved verses in Scripture are found here
 - especially those concerning God's love for us in Jesus Christ

So, spend some time here

- hope to get through 2–4 this morning, but we'll see
- let's begin to unpack this great chapter

Romans 8.1–39

Lord God, you said at creation, "Let light shine out of darkness," and you have, through the Holy Spirit, shone in my heart to give me faith—"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). Today I ask, O Lord, that you would shine down your light from heaven so that I might see the glorious riches of your word. Amen.

Rom 8: begins with “no condemnation for how who are in Christ Jesus”

Rom 8: ends with “no separation for those who are in Christ Jesus”

no condemnation; no separation—all for those in Christ Jesus
you must be IN Christ

Consider that statement once again which we took under consideration last week

- There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
- I believe this is one of the great statements of all the Bible
- I know it is vital to our Christian experience
- and I am convinced this is the good news of the gospel
- if you ever have anyone ask you what is the gospel, just give them Romans 8.1
- these inspired words are at the very heart of the good news of Jesus Christ

And this is the theme of this entire 8th chapter of Romans

- when you are in Christ, you have no condemnation upon you
- you have been justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ
- this is what Paul has already said in this marvelous book
- perhaps I should have begun back at chapter 1, verse 1
- but I knew it might be months before we’d ever get to this chapter
- I’ve wanted us to rejoice in what Jesus has done
- and I long for us to be more confident of that truth in our every day lives

Go back to 5.16 for just a moment with me, would you?

- **(Romans 5:16 ESV) And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.**
- then go done to verse 18
- **(Romans 5:18 ESV) Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.**
- Paul goes to great lengths to make sure we know about justification by faith in Jesus Christ
- and when he gets here to 8.1, he simply repeats the them to make certain we don’t miss it
- he will eventually get to teaching about sanctification, holy living
- but for now, he reiterates his theme yet again: there is therefore now no condemnation
- this was the song of his heart from the very beginning of this letter
- **(Romans 1:16–17 ESV) “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.”**
- Paul is like any great composer writing his magnum opus
- he gives the theme and brings it out again and again through the masterpiece
- I pray you never grow weary of it, of hearing it and singing it
- *Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress*

*Bold shall I stand in Thy great day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved through these I am,
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame*

There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

- it seems I cannot leave these words alone just yet
- look at that tiny little word “no”
- just two letters, but it reminds of our very position as a Christian
- “no” = it is entire, complete, absolute
- there is no conceivable way you can come under God’s condemnation if in Christ
- condemnation is removed, you have nothing to do with it any longer
- but also there is “now no condemnation”
- if you are in Christ Jesus, you can never be in a state of condemnation ever again
- it is simply and factually impossible

Sadly there are churches and preachers who teach otherwise

- oh, they will tell you to trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins
- and so you do, and they will tell you that you are forgiven
- but should you sin again, and especially repeatedly or of some vile sin...
- well, you are right back where you started again: under condemnation
- so, you’d best repent and mean it
- you’d better feel miserable as such a sinner and plead for pardon
- if you do so, you’ll be cleansed again...until the next time
- it’s why you see so many having rededication after rededication
- they never have any assurance because they keep falling out of grace
- land right back in a state of condemnation
- so there they are, miserable, despairing, believing they must be the worst Christian on earth
- God must be so very disappointed at least
- or, worse yet, He must be quite angry and ready to judge me harshly

I once heard a man **harangue** an entire congregation for quite some time

- why surely they must be some of the worst hypocrites around
- it’s a wonder God hasn’t pulled another Sodom & Gomorrah upon them
- their hypocrisy prevents others from coming to church, from coming to Christ
- their reprehensible falsehoods were the cause of our nation’s great moral decay
- abortion would surely come to an end if they would but repent
- but their lives were so spoiled by TV and smartphones and computers and such
- God had only to judge them now
- this preacher’s God seemed exceedingly angry, ready to squash such weak believers
- no grace; only condemnation was held out

I am convinced the man doesn’t believe Romans 8.1

- the Christian is one who can never be condemned
- “no condemnation” the inspired words read
- this is the glorious position of every boy or girl, man or woman in Christ
- Paul is not writing experientially here but positionally
- it is a great certainty because of your position: you are IN Christ
- God cannot condemn His Son, and you are in His Son

Yet I know some of you still wonder

- you arrived here this morning feeling guilty
- you’ve had a bad week, barely living out your faith
- you’ve neglected prayer, perhaps; or, you haven’t opened your Bible even once

- you spoke harshly to your spouse, or refused to listen to her real needs at all
- and the devil has come round to convict you; oh, how he wants you to feel it
- he tries to tell you how awful you are, you most certainly are back under condemnation again

Well, here's how to make that old devil flee from you

- you stand right up to him and say, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"
- answer him with Scripture, he cannot endure it and will flee from you
- throw the truth back at him and he will leave you alone

There it is: no condemnation

- your sins, my sins, past sins, present sins, future sins—dealt with once and for all

*Free from the law, oh, happy condition!
 Jesus has bled, and there is remission;
 Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
 Grace has redeemed us once for all.*

Refrain:

*Once for all, oh, sinner receive it;
 Once for all, oh, child, believe it;
 Cling to the cross, the burden will fall;
 Christ has redeemed us, once for all.*

*Now we are free, there's no condemnation;
 Jesus provides a perfect salvation;
 Come unto me, oh, hear his sweet call;
 Come, and he saves us, once for all.*

There have been in the past, many who would argue against this

- if you tell people that, they will sin and sin as much as they want to!
- if you tell a Christian her past sins, present sins, even her future sins have been put away
- well, that's a blank check telling them they are free to go out and sin

There is a part of me that would argue against this

- Paul does this in Romans 6
- but a part of me would rejoice if they thought I preached a gospel like this
- it means I have got the gospel quite right
- the gospel is not: come to Christ with your hands full of promises to live for Him
- you must promise to be good, a true disciple, denying self, taking up your cross
- that is not the gospel, nor should it be a part of a gospel invitation
- we are justified freely in Christ Jesus alone, no promises of our own can we bring
- grace is not conditioned upon what we'll do with it once we have it
- no, no, no, that would only produce shame and guilt and misery for you all
- therefore since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God thru our Lord Jesus Christ
- there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

God's great work of justifying us by grace through faith is the basis for our assurance

- it is our absolute certainty that we can never again come under condemnation
- and the work God began in us who believe; well, He will bring it to complete fulfillment
- all this because you are “in Christ”
- if you are in Christ you will remain there
- (John 6:37 ESV) All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
- **(John 10:28–29 ESV) “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 the Father’s hand.”**
- this is God’s work, Christ’s doing, not yours
- so, there is no condemnation and no separation

I urge you to take this verse and commit it to your memory

- just thirteen words
- use it every day, at least one time
- remind yourself of it when you have sinned
- come quickly to your Father who will not condemn you or separate His love from you
- confess the sin, and know this
- He is faithful, this God who said He will forgive
- He is faithful, this Promise-Maker & Promise-Keeper, for He will not condemn
- He is just and the justifier in His Son Christ Jesus
- the penalty has been paid, the debt nailed to the cross
- your transgressions removed as far as the east is from the west

Well, here we are and our time is through

- I make no apologies for not getting to verses 2–4
- as Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said about preaching
- *If a man does not forget himself and his little plans and [well-worked out preaching schedules] when he is preaching on a theme like this he should not enter the pulpit*
- I only pray that you have got hold of this idea, this truth
- I pray that it has a hold upon you & that you’ll grow because of it
- some Christians are miserable and depressed because they forget these things
- they allow the devil to depress them and harangue them
- but this verse, I am convinced, is the answer to all your troubles
- this single verse tells us what God has done for us in Christ
- and it’s power should make us bold, confident of our Savior
- and it should make us worship our King!