

This is Romans 8:1:4. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus, the law of the spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do, that it was weakened by the sinful nature. God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin and sinful man in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us who did not live according to the sinful nature, but according to the spirit.

I'm going to pray. God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the way that it speaks. Speaks to us even today. God, would you open our hearts and minds as we hear from your word and we hear from Sean?

God, may we hear his words as you intended them to be heard?

We're grateful for this time. Please be with Sean. Give him wisdom, discernment, and encouragement as he brings us your word. Amen.

Everybody. How's everybody doing this morning? Yeah, good. All right. We.

We need a little bit of energy today. You may be able to hear it in my voice. I've had some people ask me, are you coming down with something? And I think it might be called Hoosier Hysteria. Did you see that game last night?

Holy cow. That was incredible. Got to be at it with some friends, and, like, I'm exhausted one, and my voice is super scratchy from yelling for, like, three hours straight. Cheering on the Hoosiers last night. It's pretty awesome.

When my girls were younger, toddler age, you know, two, three years old, I think one morning we were just kind of playing together, and I was sitting there as, you know, just a father watching his daughters play. And they were jumping around and laughing and. And. And giggling. They didn't have a care in the world at this point in their life and in this moment in particular, they didn't care about what was going on in the world.

They didn't care about what anybody thought about them. If they were to come into our living room and watching them dance around and be goofy, they weren't like, oh, I wonder what people are going to think of me if they see me doing this. They were just living in the freedom of being kids, and it was such a beautiful thing to see. And I was just beaming as a father. And in that moment of joy, there was a pain that rushed over me.

And the pain that rushed over me was the realization that this isn't going to be their life. All the Time that there's going to come a day

where they do start to wonder what other people think, where somebody will say something to them that makes them feel insecure. They'll be bound to that thought, that opinion. It'll change the way that they think about themselves. There's going to come a day where they will experience the pain and the brokenness of this world.

And in this moment of joy, I found myself just feeling sad for them that somebody was going to come along and take that from them. And I remember praying, God, may it not be me.

May I speak words of life and identity into them that helps them remember in those moments who they are, that they are loved.

It would probably have memories like that of our own kids, maybe grandkids, nieces, nephews. Just the joy and the freedom of childhood where you're not bound by anything.

And as I was watching them that day, it reminded me of what is to me. It's one of the most painful verses in all of scripture. It's Genesis, chapter three, verse 11, Genesis, chapter one and two. God has created the world. He's created it perfect.

It is good. It is operating the way that God intends it to operate. And he creates Adam and Eve in his image, and he stamps his image on them and he says, here, go. You are free. You are free to enjoy this creation that I have set you in.

And the only kind of boundary that he put in, he said, you can share, you can eat from whatever you want. Just do not eat from this tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And they didn't. And they were perfectly content with that. And they were living in that joy and freedom of being loved by God and being fully known by God and being loved and fully known with one another.

And then Satan comes along and he starts to put doubts into their minds about the goodness of God. And. And he says, well, did God say that you couldn't eat from any tree in the garden? Which is not what God said. And they're like, well, no, he didn't.

He didn't say that. He just said that we couldn't eat from that tree. And. And Satan made them start to think like, oh, I wonder what God is holding out.

And so he tempts them to eat from the fruit of the treasure of the knowledge of good and evil. And as soon as they eat from it, their eyes are open. And we read that they realize that they were naked and they felt shame.

And I don't think that it's just in that moment. All of a sudden, Adam and Eve became super prudish. And they're like, oh, oh no. Like, we

gotta cover up. I think, I think what that's actually trying to communicate is that in that moment they felt exposed, they felt vulnerable.

For their entire existence they knew, never even questioned, that they were fully loved by God, even as being fully known by Him. That they were fully known by one another and they were fully loved by one another. And now for the first time, they were feeling fully known.

But they weren't sure if they were fully loved anymore. And so they covered themselves. They hid.

We read that God came and walked in the garden, came to find them, called for them, Adam, Eve, where are you? And Adam replied back, well, I heard you coming and I'm naked and, and so I hid.

And God says these painful words in verse 11, Genesis, chapter 3. Who told you that you were naked?

Who told you that?

And they experienced something in that moment that they had never experienced before. And, and then Satan continues to do this in our lives today. Ever since then, humanity has struggled to feel exposed and vulnerable. And so we cover up and we hide from each other. We think that we have to project this certain image and so we put on a mask.

We don't trust that if someone fully knows us, then they're going to fully love us. That if we, that if we mess up in one way then, then maybe that's going to change the affections that have, that people have for us. And, and then this is just confirmed over and over in life that, that if we do get something wrong, if we, if we do mess up in some way, then we feel that rejection and it makes us run and it makes us hide and we cover up and we feel guilt and we feel shame. And these things hang around our neck like a millstone.

And then you add the labels that, that other people want to come along in life and, and put on us, that Satan, our accuser, wants to put on us. Labels that we put on ourself. And we, we have a lifetime of labels that we hold in our heart. Things like unlock. We wear this label and we say, I am unlovable, stupid, can't get anything right.

We wear a label that says, you will never be like so and so. And we have this person in our mind that, that somebody just is like, you should be more like them. And, and when we wear this label, we don't just celebrate that, oh, I'm not because I'm an individual. No, we wear this as a weight, saying, I'll never be good enough because I'll Never be like them. It adds failure.

Worthless, screw up.

We collect a lifetime of labels that we put on ourselves, that others put on us, that Satan just wants to Dr. Down our accuser. And every now and then when we go through something or we do something, he likes to rummage around in our heart and be like, okay, let's see, what can we pull out here? Addict, that's all you're ever going to be. How many times have you said, oh, I'm never going to do that again? How many times have you done it again?

All you are is an addiction.

Abandoned. There's a reason why they left. You are abandoned and you are alone.

Weak. Satan just pulls in and he pulls these labels out. Worthless, screw up. And we wear these labels and we think that's who we are in these labels are filled with the weight of guilt and shame and condemnation. And we can all think back to moments that confirm why we should wear these labels.

We can think back to moments when maybe somebody put this label on us for the very first time and we could have been young and we know how to remove it.

Satan loves to keep these labels on the forefront of our mind. And if you have found yourself in that place before, if you find yourself in that place right now, then I am so glad that you are here. Because I think that Romans chapter 8 as a whole has a lot to say about these labels that we want to put on ourself and define who we actually are. But I think that our text today, Romans 8:1 through 4 that Beth read earlier specifically has a whole lot to say to us. Some good news.

And the reason it's good news is because it's not just true, it can be true for you. We heard it read earlier. I want to go back to it. If you have your Bible or Bible app, you can open it up. Romans chapter 8.

Before we get to it, though, Paul uses some, some words and some phrases here that can be a little bit confusing. He, he uses them and he kind of even builds up to these arguments in the first seven chapters. And, and so before we just kind of drop right into them and, and throw them out, I want to make sure that we have an understanding of, of what these terms mean because they're really important to the message that Paul's trying to get across. And, and so as we read this passage, uh, we'll, we'll read a term like the law. And so the law, whenever we see that kind of the, the shorthand of definition of it is the law is God's holy Standard, the law is God giving us, hey, this is how we should live and this is how we should behave.

And, and God's law. And Paul's argument through the first part of Romans is that that God's law is good, but the law is powerless to save. The law cannot save us. We cannot keep enough rules. We cannot do enough right things to save us.

Because all that the law does is show us what God's holy standard is.

And the reason why we can't keep that is because of the second term that Paul uses quite a bit in Roman. And it's the flesh.

The flesh is our human nature. The flesh has been corrupted by sin. It has been enslaved by sin. The flesh are those desires inside of us that are contrary to God. Anytime that we go our own way, anytime we do our own thing, even when we know what the law says, even when we know what the right things is, every time we go in the opposite direction of God, we are living according to our flesh.

It is opposed to God. And because of that, then we are bound by the law of sin and death. And the law of sin and death is this principle that sin always leads to separation. And we know that sin leads to separation from God. But sin leads to separation in our own life and in our own kind of integrity, and it leads to separation in our relationships.

Sin leads to separation. And we do not grow closer to God when we sin. We grow away from each other. We grow away from how he designed us to live. We grow away from people that we are in relationship with.

That is the law of sin and death. We will always move away from how we were intended and created to live when we live opposite of God's ways.

And the final one is the law of the Spirit of life. And this is the principle that the Spirit brings freedom and life in Christ. And so if the law of sin and death leads us away from God, the law of the Spirit of life leads us to it is that as we live and as we walk in the Spirit, we move closer to the way that God created us to be. We move closer to others and we move closer to Him.

I kind of think of these four things as like driving a car and Hang with Me. It's an imperfect illustration, but hopefully it'll help make sense of some of these terms. Every car that you have ever driven or owned has an owner's manual in it. And the owner's manual tells you the way that this car is supposed to function. It tells you the things that you can go in and what you need to do to take care of the car to make sure it stays well maintained.

If you go into the car and you're looking at the entertainment center, you're like, I have no idea what to do here. The owner's manual will give you direction on how to set it all up and how to customize it, everything. That's what the owner's manual does. And that's kind of

like the law. God's law shows us how we are to live.

It shows us how we are to operate. It shows us how we are to maintain our own soul, our relationships with others and with God. But the flesh is kind of like this car that you're driving that has a cracked engine. It's not going to go anywhere. The outside can be in perfect condition.

It can look spotless. The interior, man, you can shine that thing and there's not a single crumb in it anywhere. But if the engine is cracked, you're not going anywhere. Car's broken, and it doesn't matter how good you make it look, it's not going to operate the way that it was designed to operate.

The law of sin and death is basically like saying you can read the owner's manual all that you want. You can know every single thing about how to care for this car, how to set it up, what to do to maintain it. You can know all of these things, but it's not going to fix what's actually broken.

The law of the spirit of life, like somebody coming to you and saying, ah, let me give you a new engine. It's putting a new engine in this car so that it can run and operate the way that it was designed to run and operate. Again, imperfect, but I hope it helps a little bit as we look at our text again.

Romans 8, starting in verse 1. And I want to leave these definitions up here while I read. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit, who gives life, has set you free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us who do not live according to the flesh, but according to to the Spirit.

In our text, Paul says that these things are all in play when it comes to what Christ has done for us and what our relationship with Christ does for us. That Jesus took on flesh. That Jesus lived out God's holy standard, his law, perfectly in the way that we couldn't. That Jesus defeated the law of sin and death by taking our sin on his flesh to the cross. And through the crucifixion and resurrection we have been made righteous and we no longer live according to these.

We live by the law of the Spirit that brings. Brings life.

One commentary put it like this. Jesus not only blotted out sin's guilt, but brought us nigh to God, brought us near to God. He also

vanquished sin as power and set us free from its enslaving dominion.

And so we no longer have to carry the weight of guilt because of Jesus, who has brought us near to God. And we are no longer bound by sin's enslaving dominion over us. Translation There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And when Paul says there is now no condemnation, that means that there once was no condemnation, that there was condemnation, that we used to be condemned, but we aren't now. Why?

Because Jesus condemned sin in his flesh so that we could be made alive and set free. In other words, God did not look at us in our sin and stamp us with guilty. Instead, he took that stamp, he placed it on Jesus. And Jesus nailed our sin sin to the cross so that we can be set free from it, so that we can be made alive. So that we are no longer bound by the labels and by the condemnation and by all of the sin and the shame and the guilt that used to define us.

And yet all too often, we continue to carry these things around.

We put them on ourselves. We allow others to put them on us. Instead of living in freedom, we wallow in condemnation. We allow Satan to keep these labels in front of us, our accuser ever holding up these things, telling us that we will never be enough, that we can never get it right, that nobody, especially God, could ever love us. And the reason why his job is so easy is because we continue to stumble.

Just because we no longer live underneath the law of sin and death doesn't mean that we no longer sin. We continue to walk in this world and we are pressured with temptations and to go our own way and to do our. Our own thing. There. There is that part in us that.

That still has not quite yet been crucified with Christ to where it is he who lives in me and I no longer live. There are those. Those residual things in our life that we just keep going back to that do not look like the Spirit that's inside of us, it looks like the law of sin and death, that that's still just hanging on. And Satan points to those things again as our accuser, and he's like, see, this is who you are. And he uses those moments to condemn us and keep us from living in the fullness of grace.

And he confirms what we think to be true about ourselves. And he makes us forget what God has said to be true about us.

I think where this can get especially tricky is that while Satan is using those moments to condemn us, the Holy Spirit meets us in those moments to convict us. And man, those two things can seem so similar to one another. Condemnation and conviction. We have these two voices that are shouting for our attention that are, that are, that are making us want to believe different things about ourself. And so

Satan, our accuser, is shouting words of condemnation.

Well, the. While the Spirit, who Jesus says is our advocate, that he is sending to us, the Spirit is oftentimes whispering words of conviction. What's the difference? If you've been around for a little bit, you've probably heard me say this. I think the difference between condemnation and conviction is where it makes you want to run, where does it make you want to run?

If you find yourself wanting to run and hide and cover up and put on a mask, if you find yourself running to something to rescue you from what you're feeling, that's only going to make you feel it even more. If you find yourself running and hiding, likely what you're hearing is that voice of condemnation doing what it did to Adam and Eve when they ran and hid from God.

But if it makes you want to run and fall on your knees in front of your loving Heavenly Father, who has arms that are wide open saying, yes, come to me, that is the voice of conviction. It all comes down to where does it make you want to run. The voice of condemnation pushes you away from God, but conviction draws you near to Him. Condemnation feels the like, makes you want to run and hide because you feel exposed and afraid. But conviction draws you out of hiding and into the arms of your loving Heavenly Father.

It's kind of like the difference I was thinking about this week. It's the difference between a heckler and a coach. A heckler is that voice of condemnation that's standing in the crowd going, loser, you bum. You can't do anything right. Get this guy off the field.

Put that person back on the bench. Nobody likes a heckler.

And yet every single one of us have one of them living Rent free in our head, don't we, every single one of us, have a heckler in our head that reminds us of all of the ways that we have screwed up, all of the ways that we have not gotten it right. And that's the voice of condemnation. But the voice of conviction is more like a coach. A coach who, when you come off the field and you didn't have your best play, will put his arm around you and be like, yeah, you kind of blew it, but you're still on the team.

I'm going to put you back in the game. Let's work on this. But we're not going to let this mistake define you.

The reason why I think that we listen to this voice so much more than we listen to this voice is because this one's a whole lot louder in our head, isn't it?

Condemnation pushes you away from God. Conviction draws you near. Condemnation makes you question if God really loves you. Conviction is



God pursuing you with his love, saying, I will never give up on you, drawing you back to him, reminding you that you belong to him.

Paul will continue this message in our text next week. It just kind of continues to build. We're gonna be looking at Romans, chapter 8, verses 5 through 11 next week. I want to go through our memory, verse four next Sunday, because I. Because I think it kind of just emphasizes some of what we are talking about today.

Again, on your way out, you can grab one of these cards. If you're memorizing all of Romans 8, like what we're trying to do, some of us are trying to do will be in verses 5 through 11. But the key verse for next week is Romans, chapter 8, verse 6. Let's put it up here on the screen. This is what Paul says.

The mind governed by the flesh is death. In the mind that is, is. Is. It looks to this, this sinful, fleshly body and just does whatever that body wants to do. Man that leads to death.

But the mind that is governed by the spirit is life. And we're going to talk more about what that means. But right now I just kind of want to help us start to commit this verse to memory, like what we did last week. So read this out with me. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the spirit is life and peace.

All right, let's go ahead and put up the initials over on this side and you can read from here or you can try to start to piece it all together. Let's see if we can do it. The mind is governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the spirit is life and peace. All right, now let's remove the words, see if we can get it just with the initials. Ready?

The mind governed by the. Hold on. Sorry, I just got a little confused. Can we put the words back up? No.

The mind governed.

The mind governed by the flesh.

Thank you. See, you guys are getting this. Let's do it again. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the spirit is life and peace. Amen.

Look at that. You guys are doing it. Give yourselves a hand. You're doing it better than I am. I love that.

But imagine what it would look like, man. Imagine what it would look like in your life to live with that kind of freedom.

Imagine that every time Satan, your accuser, wanted to slap a label on

you, you realize, no, that's not who I am. I'm no longer governed or defined by those things. I am governed and defined by the spirit of life and peace. Imagine living a life that is no longer defined by the labels that you put on yourself, that others put on you.

Accusations from your accuser who rumbles in your heart and says, man, you are a fake and you know it and everyone else around you knows it.

That pulls one out and wants to put this label and says, you are a mess. You never get it right. You always screw it up. Nobody wants to enter into your life because you are way too much for them. Satan wants to pull one out and says, you are too much like that person.

You need to be better than them. You need to separate from that. Pulls it out and says, you know who you are. You are a coward. You are awkward.

You are weird. You are a loser. You are a disappointment. You are a liar. Imagine living with the kind of freedom that is.

Satan wants to pull these things out and slap these labels on our heart. That we believe that Jesus is taking every one of them and saying, no, that is not who you are anymore. You are not a disappointment. You are not a loser. You are not weird.

You are not the label that you want to put on yourself, that others want to put on you. You are more than that. Because you are in Christ and Christ is in you. And because of that, you have a new label that has been given to you by the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And the label is this.

Alive and free. That is who you are.

That is who you are in Christ. You are alive and you are free. You are forgiven and you are accepted and you are redeemed.

You are no longer bound by your failures. You are no longer bound by your mistakes. You are no longer bound by the things that people say about you, the things that they believe about you. That is not who you are. You are alive and you are free because of the blood of Jesus.

We read in John 3:16, and we know these words that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

These words are good and they are true. But I think too often we forget what comes next. Verse 17.

For God did not send his Son into the world, condemn the world, but so often we think that's what it is. No, he gave us the law that condemns us. Jesus comes and says, no, that's not what I'm here for. I

am here to save the world. And he did it through his death on the cross.

And he gives us new life through the power of the resurrection.

This is ours through faith in Jesus. And I'm telling you, if you are carrying today a label that feels like a weight that you are drowning with, if you are carrying words that people have spoken to you in the past that you can't get away from, if you are here today and you are tired of just trying to be good enough and trying to be enough, you are tired of trying to prove that you are not that person that everyone thinks that you are, I want you to know there is freedom in Christ and it is available to you today.

If you're here and you have never said Jesus, I'm tired of trying on my own. I need you to rip all of these up and give me new life. Put a new heart in me. And maybe that is your next step, like what Beth was talking about earlier. And if it is, we're gonna have people around the room with lanyards that would love to pray with you, talk to you, and help you make that decision.

Right now. We're gonna come to communion as we come today. Just whatever label that is that you've been putting on yourself, I just want you to visually visualize bringing that up and laying it down here as you take communion and realizing that it is through what we remember. His death and his resurrection, his body that was given, his blood that was shed, that has torn that label up once and for all time. And now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

Jesus. God, thank you for your word.

Thank you for the new life that we can find. We do not deserve it. We could not earn it, but you have given it to us freely. And for that we are so grateful.

Thank God. When we want to call ourselves certain things and we want to wear the labels that others put on us. Lord, help us remember who we are, that we are alive and free through the blood of Jesus.

And none of that matters. The only thing that matters is you and what you think of us. And you have called us your sons and your daughters. You will never leave us. You will never give up on us.

Thank you.

In Jesus name, amen.