

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Romans: God's Power for Salvation

TITLE: Living an Uncondemnable Life

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:1-8

DATE: February 11, 2018

PASTOR: Charlie Boyd

The book of Romans is a masterfully written exposition of the gospel of God. Without a doubt, it is the foundation of authentic Christianity and the most articulate, systematic understanding of our faith found in the Bible. Countless lives have been changed by the truth found in this ancient letter, and it continues to change lives today. Interestingly enough, Romans was written to Christians. So, while the good news found in Romans can certainly bring people to faith in Jesus, the actual focus is on how the gospel helps Christians think rightly about God, life, faith, and Christian community. If you want to grow to know God more personal and intimate way, this letter is for you!

In Romans 7, Paul showed us that Christians still wrestle with the pull of sin in our mortal bodies. He made it clear, if we try to overcome sin in the flesh by trying harder to obey God's rules, we will fail miserably. You cannot live the Christian life by will-power and trying harder. Trying harder—wanting to do good, but coming up short—only brings guilt and shame and self-condemnation. In Romans 8, Paul now tells us how the Gospel of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit enables us to live the kind of life God desires for his people. In vv. 1-4 he tells us that the struggle we have with sin is without condemnation. If you belong to Christ, you are not condemned by God when you sin! To “condemn” means: (1) to pronounce an unfavorable or adverse judgment upon; (2) to express strong disapproval; (3) To censure, to sentence to punishment, to condemn to imprisonment, to pronounce guilty, to declare incurable. There is no—not now/not ever—any condemnation like that for those who belong to Christ. If you belong to Christ, you are un-condemn-able! You are un-separate-able. Sin has lost its power to separate you relationally from God. God does not condemn you for your ongoing struggle with sin and if God doesn't condemn you, you have no right to condemn yourself. But we tend to think that we move in and out of condemnation as we move in and out of sin. No! God is not angry with you for wanting to do right, but coming up short. The Gospel declares you to be un-condemn-able.

How is it possible that God declares us uncondemnable? (vv.2-4) Because of what Jesus did for us on the Cross, we are not condemned, but sin is condemned. You are no longer condemned when you sin and you are no longer a prisoner to sin. So, when you sin: Deny none of it. Confess all of it. And, rest in God's promise—“Because of Jesus, you are uncondemnable!”

What does God want for us now that we can rest in his promise that we are uncondemnable? By the power of the Spirit, we are now able to fulfill the “righteous requirement of the law.” We are now able to live the loving kind of life God desires for his people. As Jesus lives his life through us we are able to fulfill God's law without trying hard to obey from God's law.

So, how do uncondemnable people live out the righteous requirement of God's law without trying harder to obey God's law? (8:5-8). Uncondemnable people learn to “mind” the things of the Spirit—they learn to set their minds of the Spirit rather than setting their minds on the flesh.

We will spend more time next week on vv.5-8, but for now take note of this: Your life is shaped by what preoccupies your mind. Whatever controls your mind shapes your life. To “mind” the Spirit—to set your mind on the things of the Spirit—is to be preoccupied with the things that preoccupy the Spirit. *What are those things?* The rest of chapter 8 tells us. Specifically, the Spirit shows that we are no longer slaves to sin, but we are children of God. We are adopted, loved, and welcomed as children of God. We are to drill into our minds and hearts God's love and adoption of us. To “mind” the things of the Spirit is to

never forget our new identity in Christ or the fact that we are loved—we are uncondemnable and un-separate-able because of the Gospel of Jesus and the indwelling power of the Spirit. Let your mind be preoccupied with that for now.

For Discussion —

When you listen to Bible teaching, you should be listening with an ear to learn, but also an ear to share with others what you are learning. Keep that in mind as you discuss today's message. How do you need to internalize this message so you could share this Good News with people who need to hear it?

1. v.1 What does the phrase 'no condemnation' mean? Paraphrase it several ways.
2. When do you feel most "condemned? What causes you to feel this way? How can you help yourself remember "there is no—*not now/not ever any*—condemnation for you when you sin? What gets in the way of accepting that the Gospel declares you uncondemnable when you sin? How does the illustration with a father and child learning to walk help you think rightly about how your Heavenly Father deals with you when you fall short?
3. vv.1-3. How does the Gospel of Jesus and the power of the Spirit speak to our status of "no condemnation" and the fact that we have been set free from the bondage of sin (no condemnation, no bondage)?
4. In v.4, we are told that the Spirit leads us to fulfill the "righteous requirement" of the law. What does that mean? How does Romans 13:8-10 help us think rightly about the law? ... How does this square with the concept that we are no longer under the law?
5. vv.5-6. What does Paul say is the connection between "minding" and "living?" What do you think it means to 'set your mind' on the Spirit in light of the rest of Romans 8?
6. v.6 Discuss down some practical ways in which 'minding the Spirit' leads to peace, but to forget the things of the Spirit leads to death?
7. vv.7-8 Paul says "the mind set on the flesh is death"—"it cannot please God." How might remembering this truth help you refocus your attention when you feel the gravitational pull of sin away toward sin and away from the Spirit?
8. Can you think of ways in which you have experienced, or are experiencing, the "death-like life" of forgetting the things of the Spirit? And, the "life and peace" of being preoccupied with the things of the Spirit?