

“Dwells In: You”

Scripture: Romans 8:1-11

Graphic: freedom, dwelling

Key Verses: 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Theme: The threat of sin’s condemnation hangs over our heads everyday. Every time we become aware of our sin, we feel as though we will be condemned for it. Yet Christ came to condemn the sin in us, and save us, the sinner. We must allow Christ to deal with our sin, walk in and set our minds on the Holy Spirit, don’t lose hope for the lost, and live in eternity now.

1) Introduction

- a) Open your Bibles with me to Romans chapter 8.
- b) No fancy introductions or stories today, because the exciting thing about the text today is right in front of us.
- c) So as we open our Bibles to unleash the living Word of God into our lives in a new way today, let’s take time to pray...
- d) Let’s pray...

2) Scripture

a) Read verse 1

- i) (CUE 1 – black) Part of me REALLY wants to just stop right here today and say, “Praise God!” Right? There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!
- ii) What a promise! We’re good! ‘Nuff said!
- iii) But before we all start zipping up our fancy Bible cases...I wouldn’t be doing my job if I left us there...I mean, what is Paul really saying when he writes this verse that we’ve all probably heard a bunch of times before?
- iv) What are the implications of it? How do we apply that promise to our lives?

- v) And besides, I haven't even said any Greek words, yet! ☺
- vi) Let's go a little deeper and see what we find...up for that?
- vii) Might as well just start with some Greek.
- viii) *kata, krima* (ka ta' kri ma) – this is the word for condemnation.
- ix) **(CUE 2)** It's a legal term that Paul uses that means, literally, *the sentence and the execution of the sentence*. It's like, final! Said and done!
- x) The news this week has been **BOILING OVER** with the trial of Casey Anthony. She was charged with killing her innocent little daughter Caylee in 2008. I'm going to comment on the trial or the verdict. But we've heard lots of legal terms like verdict, conviction, and acquittal...but I don't remember hearing the word condemnation. Maybe from some folks **OUTSIDE** the courtroom, but not **IN** the courtroom.
- xi) Condemnation is not a word we usually use in our legal system. More often we hear words like guilty and sentencing.
- xii) But for Paul, condemnation is the complete package of being found guilty and paying for price for the crime.
- xiii) And as Paul has built his logical argument from the ground up in Romans, we get to this point in the book and this statement is like the shining jewel in the crown.
- xiv) **(CUE 3)** Now, last week, some of you were left kind of wondering about the sin in your life and what effect that has on your salvation.
- xv) Let me just lay out Paul's argument for a second. Here's what Paul says:
- xvi) First, he says, I **KNOW** that I am serving God with my mind – I am willing to do what is right in God's eyes. Yet, #2, in my weak flesh, I am a sinner – I sin, even though I **KNOW** that it's **NOT** what God wants (is this tracking with you as much as it is with me? This really does sort of define our state of life, right?).
- xvii) Therefore (verse 1), because both of those things are true (because I'm serving God while still a sinner), **THEREFORE**, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ. It's like the trump card.

- xviii) Even though I am a sinner, yet because I have Christ living in me, and I am consciously trying to serve Him, therefore – I am not condemned. I win!
- xix) And for Paul, condemnation is being cutoff from God for eternity in hell. It's the separation that comes from those who do not believe in Christ's salvation.
- xx) He's not saying there are no consequences from our status of being sinner, saved by grace...we know all too well that there are consequences to our actions, thoughts, words, reactions...
- xxi) And this is not a free pass to sin, but it's a way to be freed from wanting to sin because Jesus never leaves us where he finds us.
- xxii) But ultimately, there is no CONDEMNATION for those who remain faithful believers in the salvation offered by Jesus Christ and who are allowing the Holy Spirit to guide them...
- xxiii) Why? Verse 2...

b) Read verse 2

- i) There is no condemnation, because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ has set us free from the law of sin and death.
- ii) (CUE 4) Now, remember, there is only one law. But Paul talks about them as two different laws because in one perspective, the law has been empowered by the Holy Spirit, completed in Christ, and perfected by grace. In the other perspective, the law has been hijacked by sin and leads only to death.
- iii) Those who trust in Christ have been set free from condemnation because of the Law that is completed in, fulfilled through, and superseded by Christ.
- iv) (CUE 5) Paul goes on in verses 3-4 to explain this even further...

c) Read verses 3-4

- i) God did it! That's what Paul is saying!

- ii) You know, the Law of Moses that God gave to the people of Israel gets a bad rap! The Law was good...it was sin that corrupted it. It was weakened by the flesh...by sin. And so it became ineffective to do that which God knew it could do without sin.
- iii) And so God DID what the law COULDN'T do...and that's: condemn sin forever. God pronounced the sentence on sin AND CARRIED IT OUT. Remember that this legal term kata'krima is about the sentence and the execution of the sentence. It's final!
- iv) J. Vernon McGee explains it like this...now, Rev. Dr. McGee is really old school, and so he uses an analogy of a woman putting a roast in the oven for dinner. Who does that anymore?
- v) Anyway...if a woman puts a roast in the oven and then gets a phonecall from a friend, who wants to gossip about someone for a while, the roast is in the oven burning. Eventually, the woman smells the roast and hangs up the phone and rushes to the kitchen to find that the roast is way overdone. **(CUE 6)** In order to get it out of the oven, she grabs a fork and plunges it into the roast. As she tries to pull it out, the fork just comes out...no roast on the fork. So she tries again...again, the roast doesn't stick onto the fork...the roast is overdone. It's not the fork's fault...the fork is fine. The problem is the roast is overdone. So she grabs a big spatula, gets under the roast, and lifts the roast out of the oven.
- vi) **(CUE 7)** The Law that God gave to the people of Israel is the fork...it just can't lift up sinful people. The Holy Spirit of Jesus is the spatula that can lift us from our sin...we get released from condemnation...even though we might feel the effects of the overcooking.
- vii) And He did that – He condemned sin on the cross of Jesus – so that the just requirement of that law – to restore our relationship with God – might be fulfilled in us, who walk according to the Spirit. **Christ dealt with my sin (turn to your neighbor and say that).**
- viii) **(CUE 8)** And even though we are fleshly, with the potential to sin, God's just requirement – that restoration – is fulfilled, NOT is some doctrine of the church that we are made to believe...NOT in some set of do's and don'ts...NOT in our moral victories...but IN US.
- ix) God's ultimate plan for salvation through Jesus Christ is not external to our bodies and minds – somewhere OUT THERE – but is in here (heart)

when we accept Jesus as our personal savior. If you haven't done that, don't wait because He is ready to hand you a relationship with Him.

x) Accept the Holy Spirit into your life...have faith in Jesus Christ...receive things like forgiveness of sin and continued sanctification.

xi) Walk with the Lord...

d) Read verses 5-8

i) Let me give you a little insight into the way my brain works – maybe this is same for all the guys here, I don't know.

ii) When something interests me...I tend to focus on it. And when I'm doing something I really like to do, then I just want to keep doing it...keep thinking about it.

iii) Now, this can be good for me, or it can be bad, depending on what it is that I'm doing...what I'm focusing on.

iv) So I can track with Paul here when he simply says, "If you are walking or living in a certain way, you will be thinking about that."

v) And it comes down to: If you're living according to the flesh, then your mind will be set on the flesh (which Paul says is sin and leads to death).

vi) If you are living a famous lifestyle, then you will be thinking about how to get more fame. If you are living in a wealthy lifestyle, chances are you will be thinking about how to get more money. This is nothing new to us, I hope...we get this! It can be sex, or power, or reputation, or whatever. If THOSE are the things we are gunning for, then THOSE are the things we will be thinking about.

vii) If your mind is on fleshly things – on being a slave to sin, it'll lead to death, because the things of God will be pushed out of your life.

viii) The things of God don't deserve to compete with the things of the flesh in your life. And if they do, then chances are, because the flesh is weak, that the sin will take over. And if the sin takes over, then the things of God become the enemy.

ix) If your life is chasing after sin, then you will automatically be hostile to God. "Well, that's harsh!" "It's just a little sin, right?"

- x) That's garbage! The minute it becomes JUST a little sin is the moment that you are failing to submit to God...Paul even says that those who are not walking in the Spirit, who are not born-again children of God, INDEED cannot please God...cannot submit to God...cannot do what is good and right.
- xi) And I'm thinking, "Yeah, but what about those who are not saved that do really good stuff." It may be helpful...it may even be done with semi-pure motivation to love others...but it's not good in God's economy.
- xii) How much better is it to be living in the Holy Spirit and thinking about the way to life and peace? God wants us to live life – set your mind on – the things of the Spirit.
- xiii) Verse 9...

e) Read verses 9-10

- i) This whole idea of the Spirit dwelling in us is awesome! That the God of the universe not only WANTS to dwell in us, but the fact that when He does, His mind-blowing plan for fulfillment of the Law to restore the relationship with us is complete, is incredible.
- ii) And when we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, then we can walk in the Spirit of life.
- iii) Now, there may be some here today who are asking, "How can I have the Holy Spirit dwelling in me?" The simple answer is to just invite the Holy Spirit to come...repent of your sin, be baptized, and believe in the good news.
- iv) Baptism is a critical symbol of our fleshly bodies dying with Christ, and being raised to life again with Him. Paul says, even though our bodies are dead because of sin, we are filled with life because of the Holy Spirit and the righteousness (or right standing with God).
- v) And not only is this for today, in our current bodies, but this is for eternity...here's the deal...verse 11

f) Read verse 11

- i) There was divine power when Jesus was raised from the dead...after having been beaten, crucified, and buried. There was nothing left to the flesh...it was dead.
- ii) But there was POWER that made the weak flesh come back to life.
- iii) And, listen, the power that brought Jesus back to life - when His Spirit entered into his lifeless body and raised him from the dead – THAT’S the exact same power that is available to us. That’s the very same power that JESUS WANTS us to have IN US so that God can fulfill his plan of restoration. So that God can advance His kingdom. So we can be whole and not slaves to sin. So that we can be free from condemnation forever!
- iv) Holy Spirit Power!
- v) And not just for today, but for eternity...because just as Jesus was raised from the dead, our lifeless, weak, and broken bodies will someday be raised from the dead by the power of that same Spirit. I’m banking on it.
- vi) All that, because of the Spirit that dwells in you and me.

3) Application

- a) Here are five things that Paul is calling us to do in response to this understanding that we are free from condemnation because of Jesus Christ.
- b) Five things that we allow Christ to do through us and in us...
- c) **(CUE 9) #1 – Allow Christ to deal with your sin.** Too many people are holding on to too many sins and too much guilt because they refuse to allow Christ to deal with it. When I try to fix my truck, I usually do a bad job or end up making it worse. That’s why I take it to the experts. The only reason that Christ came to live in flesh like ours was to deal with your sin. He’s the expert...it’s what he was sent to do. Why in the world are you holding onto something that has been rightfully taken away from you by the One who was sent to take it? Allow Christ is deal with your sin.
- d) **(CUE 10) #2 – Walk in the Spirit.** When Christ deals with your sin, start walking in such a way that you and others can see that you are forgiven and set free. Allow Christ, who dwells in you, to clear a path for you. Every day, pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you...protect you...provide for

you...make a way for you to escape temptation...build you up for the journey. This is a long haul...be equipped to walk in the Spirit.

- e) **(CUE 11) #3 – Set your mind on the things of the Spirit.** I can't say this enough, mostly for myself. Stay in the Word. Don't change it. Don't forget about it. Don't set it down and forget it. Don't get to it later or promise to read it. Be always ready to set your minds on the scripture and the things of God. There is no valid excuse for a born-again Christian to not be regularly and intentionally spending time in the Word of God in some way. Even if it's 5 minutes a day...or listening to good Christian music...or praying with others...be in the Word...set your mind on the things of the Spirit.
- f) **(CUE 12) #4 – Don't lose hope for those who are walking in the flesh.** We all know people who we love dearly who have chosen to live in the flesh...to reject the things of God...to put their faith in things other than Christ. It's probably the most painful and frustrating thing in our lives as Christians. The encouragement we get from Paul in this passage is that anyone who invites Christ to live in them, from wherever they are, can also be freed from condemnation because of Jesus. Never give up...never stop praying. Never stop loving people into the kingdom of God. If it's a spouse, share Christ with them in every way you can think. Don't beat them up with the Bible, show them how Christ is working in YOUR life and invite them to be open to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is right now, wherever they are, working on them more than you can. Be there to give yourself for them.
- g) **(CUE 13) Finally...#5 – Live life eternally now.** Christ dwelling in you not only sets your current body on track to be spending eternity with God, but empowers you to live your eternal life TODAY. What a witness we can be for those around us when we start living out our eternity today, and not always looking for the future hope of glory. We have it now...live it.

4) Conclusion

- a) **(CUE 14)** This morning, we will have the honor and pleasure of participating in the baptism of Arianna Seekings. This infant is helpless before the world and before the Lord.
- b) As Kristine and Buck present her to be baptized, we know that Christ has dealt with her sin, even the sin she has yet to commit. We promise to help her walk in and set her mind on the things of the Spirit. We acknowledge

that there must be a time in her life when this baptism becomes fulfilled and she accepts Christ on her own. And we have faith that our eternal God, through the Holy Spirit, is the one ready to receive Arianna this morning as his child.

- c) Because of Christ, we can be restored in our relationship to God, no matter what we've done or said, where we've been, or how much sin we have.
- d) Invite Him into your life again today...he dwells in you...and there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. As we sing this song, I invite you to come to the front and renew and recall your by placing your hand in the water and giving thanks to God for Jesus Christ!
- e) (CUE 15) Let's pray...