

In Romans 7, Paul writes about the Law God gave Moses, which had become a point of tension in the church in Rome. The Judaizers wanted everyone to follow the Law, and the Gentile believers wanted everyone to be led by the Spirit. In Chapter 8, Paul highlights the freedom that believers have in Christ through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 8 can be summarized in three phrases: no condemnation, no obligation, and no separation. We will begin by looking at the first phrase.

No Condemnation

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” Romans 8:1.

No condemnation and justification mean the same thing. If you have repented of your sins and asked the Lord Jesus to forgive you, your sins are forgiven. We are justified and made to be in right standing with God because of our faith in what Jesus has done on the cross. He died, shed his blood, and rose again so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (see John 3:16).

But what does condemnation mean?

These verses conclude the argument in chapter 7, where Paul addresses the personal problem we all face in dealing with our own sinful nature. Paul cries out in Romans 7:24, *“Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”*

In the Bible, the word *condemnation* is synonymous with *damnation, judgment, punishment, destruction, and verdict*. In its strongest sense, condemnation means “the banishing to hell all those disobedient to the will of God.” Remember, Jesus spoke frequently about hell and the eternal punishment awaiting all who reject him.

The Law of Moses pronounces every person guilty because it shows us what sin is. Before Christ, everyone had to offer animal sacrifices every year, as a reminder that God punishes sin but also offers forgiveness through repentance. However, animal sacrifices were just a temporary method of dealing with man’s sin until Jesus came to deal with sin forever.

Jesus made it clear that without Him no one can enter the kingdom of heaven (see John 14:6). We all know John 3:16, yet two verse later Jesus said, *“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 3:18).

Though the Law condemns all mankind, we as believers in Jesus Christ have this glorious promise, *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death”* (Romans 8:1-2).

But does that mean we can go on sinning without consequence? Not at all, in Romans 6, Paul addresses this very question (see Romans 6:1-3). In both these passages, Paul uses the phrase, “In Christ”. When we believe in the name of Jesus for salvation, we receive the Holy Spirit, and we are in Christ. Those who are in Christ are set free from the condemnation of sin.

In Christ

I doubt we grasp the depth and the breadth of those two words. Paul uses this term about 164 times in all his letters. To be in Christ is the heart of Christianity. Baptism is our public profession of faith in Jesus. It is us publicly declaring that when Christ died, our old man died, we are aligning ourselves with his death. It is total surrender to the new life in Christ.

Paul explains that when you become a Christian, you move into a realm of new life in Christ, and you come under new management. How can we still desire and walk in the ways of our past life? (see Galatians 2:20).

“The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.” Tim Keller

A New Law

“For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death” Romans 8:2.

When we read the word “law”, we are tempted to think of a very thick book of rules and regulations, a judge, and a courthouse. This is not a fun place to be.

But the law of the Spirit of life is a governing principle that God has set in place, much like the law of gravity. When Jesus died on the cross and rose again from the grave, he put in place a new Law, the law called the Gospel. This new law sets us free from the law of sin and death. God still has the old principle/law in place, but by being placed in Christ, we are subject to a new law, the law of peace with God.

In our new position before God, as dead to the Law, we are not expected to obey God in our own strength. God has not enslaved us under a “Christian Law” that we must obey in order to be holy. Rather, He has given us His Holy Spirit, who enables us to fulfill the demands of God’s holiness. And then out of that union with Christ, by the presence of the Holy Spirit, we do things for God, we produce fruit. We give generously, we act in faith, we share the Gospel, we stand against injustice, we care for the poor, we use our time differently, and so

much more.

Paul calls this the law of the Spirit of life; it produces life in us and those around us. What law are you operating in? The law of sin and death, or the law of the Spirit of life? The law of sin and death is a hard taskmaster; you will never satisfy it. But the law of the Spirit of life has no condemnation; we have peace with God.

Do you know this freedom?

Are you in Christ?