

SERMON STUDY SUMMARY

Romans Part 16: A New Me – No Condemnation In Christ

INTRODUCTION

We have a battle raging within us. Our spirit and God's Spirit want God's will; our inherited sinful nature and Satan want the opposite. Before we followed Christ, we broke God's laws and were not bothered because we were dead spiritually and lived in sinful habits. When we accepted Jesus as Lord we became spiritually alive, but Mr. Sin never ceases to tempt us to sin, resulting in a struggle between our spirit and flesh.

The key to living victoriously is the Spirit-filled life. To live in the Spirit means we no longer live under the fear of condemnation. 'No condemnation' means first, that God does not throw us out of His family when we sin. We are already righteous and acceptable to God not on the basis of our religious performance or keeping the law perfectly but because we are in Christ by faith, and He is perfect.

Second, no condemnation means that God is not angry with us when we struggle with sin. He is patient with us, lifting, encouraging and guiding us when we stumble and fall. Our love for Jesus, along with our passion about pleasing and growing closer to Him, will change our lives, attitudes and behaviors, and we'll grow more like Him.

Third, no condemnation means God's wrath ceases to be directed at us. Through Christ's death on the Cross, we were justified and redeemed in God's eyes, and He is now and forever our loving heavenly Father.

However, 'no condemnation' does not give us permission to sin. Sin leads to all kinds of negative consequences in the earthly realm. We obey the law not only because we love Christ and want to please Him and honor him, but also so it will go well with us in this life. Sin hurts us physically and emotionally, ruins our peace and joy, hurts other people around us, and hurts our fellowship with God. When we sin, our usefulness to God is limited, and He will discipline us because of His love.

Pastor Henry recalls a time when he was playing ice hockey in his early teens and was invited to try out for an all-star team. Pastor Henry says, "I'll never forget how the person in charge of the tryouts treated us. He constantly yelled at us, humiliated us and worked us so hard there were times we literally felt like throwing up. After the tryouts I remember a man I'd never met coming into our dressing room. He informed us he would be our new coach. There was great relief that we were free of that other man. Our new coach said, 'I know the tryouts are tough, and the other fellow can be harsh, but you are no longer under his leadership - you are now under my leadership. I'm your coach and I'm not here to discourage you but to develop you and help you be the best player you can be. I'll still call you on things. I'll push you and challenge you. I'll bench you if you're slacking off but I'm doing it because I want to see you and the entire team reach your full potential.'"

Living in the Spirit of Christ is like that. Jesus isn't your judge any more. He's your friend who loves you like a father does. He doesn't condemn you; He wants to empower you to grow in your love and faith in Him and to be all He created you to be.

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What is one activity in life you do not like to do (for example, a chore, work responsibility, etc.)? Why?
2. Today or this past week, how close have you come to illustrating the statement from Romans 7:15, "I do not understand what I do"?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Romans 7:14-25

3. What is the root problem of people which Paul exposes through his own example (vv. 14-24)? In the midst of his frustrating struggle, what is his hope (vv. 24-25)?

Read Romans 8:1-4 and Galatians 5:16-18

4. What does it mean that there is no longer any condemnation for those who are in Christ? What is the role of the Spirit in these verses? What is our role?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. If there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ, what should our attitude toward sin be? In what ways is sin still harmful? What sin might you currently be convicted about, and what would it look like to 'walk by the Spirit' in this area?
6. Pastor Henry shared a story of playing hockey under a harsh tryout coach, and then an encouraging team coach. Do you tend to see God as angry tryout coach, or the team coach? How might your understanding need to change?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

What does it mean for you that you are not under condemnation in Christ? How much have you embraced this for your life and what difference does it make? Read Romans 8:1-4 and insert your name throughout. For example, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for [your name] who is in Christ Jesus..."

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 7:14-25

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

21 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Romans 8:1-4

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. 3 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, 4 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 the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-18

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.