

No Condemnation

Romans 8:1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

This is both the start of our text for today, and the main point of this sermon. My task today is to encourage us to rejoice and live in the light of this wonderful truth of what we have in Jesus.

To reinforce it perhaps we should put up signs like this around the Church with another sign saying "Days since last condemnation, 2000 years."

As Paul will 4 times in 4 verse underline this wonderful truth we should do whatever we can to ensure we fully grasp this wonderful truth.



V1 NO CONDEMNATION

It often seems that people think that condemnation must be a very common word in the Bible because they seem to think that it is what God wants to do, condemn people, and the Church just rubs it in.

Condemnation is actually a fairly rare word. For instance, it is only used in 3 verses in Romans. But it is a very powerful word. The idea of condemnation, of being condemned, speaks of the punishment of the accused, the destruction of a decrepit building. It is not a word that we would like to be applied to us, and thanks be to God it doesn't have to be.

Now we need to note what is not said here. Many people seem to think there is no condemnation because God has now decided that it doesn't matter how people live. As if Jesus came along and said "You're all OK, just be yourself." That is to believe there is no condemnation because condemnation is an outdated concept, or never really existed

That is not at all what Paul says. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." There is condemnation but not now in Christ Jesus.

Paul is continuing his big idea of moving from Team Adam to Team Jesus, from Sin City to Grace United. Paul has argued that we all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, that which we are made for. He has pictures this as being part of Team Adam, and back in Chapter 5 Paul has said that this team is condemned. The sign should look like this.

But if you change to team Jesus then there will be no condemnation. So how do change team, Paul has been saying that it is by faith in Jesus. In Romans 10 Paul puts it most clearly: "if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

To believe in Jesus as risen Lord is to move from condemnation.

It is only in Jesus that there is no condemnation, this is why we at St. David's seek to proclaim Jesus as Lord, not to condemn people but so that people can move out of condemnation.

That is why it is at the heart of our baptism service to confess faith in Jesus. It symbolises and states that want to be on team Jesus.



Friends have you done this, which team are you on? Please come to Team Jesus and know that in him there is no condemnation.

In all that we move on to look do not lose sight of this big picture.

V2 A NEW LAW

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Paul has been interacting with the Jewish idea that the way out of condemnation, out of Team Adam is to join Team Moses, that is to follow the law.

Paul has shown in the chapter 7 that this can't work.

Firstly that humanity is given a law there is something in us that wants to break it. John Chapman, the well known Australian Evangelist, used to talk of standing on a railway platform with sign clearly stating, not spitting. He hadn't been thinking about spitting till he saw the sign but not the hack was rising at the back of his throat.

We only want to gambol on the lawn when there is a sign saying "Stay off the grass!" It is like there is a force using the law to make us do the wrong thing.

Paul gives that power the name Sin, with a capital S. Sin turns a good law into something that shows that we really are on Team Adam.

Even if we try really hard we fail. I used to try to write songs, I wasn't very good at it. But a couple of lines I remember went because its still true.

I decide to change Get up early have a pray read a verse.

But I'm still the same, go to bed late, forget to pray feeling worse.

My aim to do the right things only ultimately condemns me because I can't live up to it. Even those who have God's Law, the only thing the Law can do is condemn. There is only condemnation on Team Adam.

So Paul draws a line for those who want to follow the Jewish law that law leads to Sin which leads to death, not because there is something wrong with the Law but because there is something wrong with us on Team Adam, it really is Sin City. If we try to avoid condemnation by being good or religious, it simply won't work.

But when we transfer to Team Jesus everything changes.

No longer law > sin > death, ...

rather Jesus > Spirit > life

So there is no condemnation as law, sin and death have been done away with. No wonder Paul can talk about being set free. That which can condemn us, the law has been replaced by Jesus, the Spirit and life.

Which leads us to v3 and what God has done in Jesus.

V3 WHAT GOD HAS DONE

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,

To use our ongoing analogy Jesus comes on to Team Adam, comes as a human. He then defeats the real opposition which is working against the team, which is Sin. The illustration starts to become a little stretched when we see that the way he does this is through his death and resurrection, doesn't really happen in football.

But perhaps that's the point, because it is so unique.

Sin which seems to have triumphed in his death is by his resurrection is defeated and Jesus starts his new team and call people to join him. Where Adam failed, where Israel failed Jesus had come and dealt with the problem

There may be more we wish to know but at times it is enough to believe it. Sin is not just sidelined but is defeated so there is now no condemnation for those who are in Jesus, he's condemned it for us. He did it all for us it really is Grace United.

I don't know what you think the problem with the world is.

Many think it is lack of education but our knowledge seems not just to reveal how bad we are but it makes us worse. (The internet anyone!) For others the issue is poverty, but prosperity leads to abuse of the environment and each other.

God says the problem is Sin and he has dealt with it through sending his Son, a phrase that says a lot about what Paul believes about Jesus. So join team Jesus, come to the life side, where that which condemns has already been condemned.

V4FF A NEW MINDSET

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

Here we see that no condemnation doesn't matter what we do rather we are free to live the way that the God's law pointed to, to use a phrase that will be used a bit later in the Chapter we will live as God's children.

It really is great to be on team Jesus.

We do this because we no longer work according to the flesh but according to the Spirit, and idea we are going to have to flesh out.

For Paul 'the flesh' is a multifaceted idea but I want to try to make it simply, it is anything to do with being on team Adam, that is Paul's idea. The flesh is how you play the game on team Adam. The Spirit is how you play on Team Jesus which we see in v 9 is the Spirit of God and also the Spirit of Christ. To have another level of complication to have the Spirit is to have Christ in you which is equated to being in Christ. Such is the way of trinitarian thinking, and also shows as Paul points out that if you believe in Christ you have the Spirit. It is impossible to be an unspiritual Christian.

But this also gives us a huge clue as to what it means to walk according to the Spirit. It means living in a way dominated by Jesus, his teaching, his practice, his sacrifice, his resurrection and wonderfully his presence with us as his people. Jesus plays alongside us. To walk by the flesh is to walk alone without God, to walk with the Spirit is to walk with Jesus.

It will not always be easy to play the game this way. Paul is well aware of the struggles of the living the Christian life. The fact that he has to tell his readers that they are to be controlled by the Spirit not the flesh is a powerful indication of that. But what he wants his reader to grasp is they can now serve God, even please God (by implication in v8) without fear. When we fail, when we feel worse the Spirit reminds us as we do week by week in service that there is no condemnation.

Do you think enough about this, do you think about walking according to the Spirit, as one of Jesus team. We have to set our minds on the things of the Spirit.

In all the moral struggles of life, in our experience of knowing what to do and struggling to do we have the promised Spirit. The does not condemn us but rather points us back to what God has done and points forward to what he will do for us. A future which we who are Christ can face with no fear of condemnation.

As we read in v 11 "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you." To set our mind on the Spirit then is as v 6 says life and peace.

CONCLUSION: NO CONDEMNATION

I pray that we haven't lost the big idea, but rather we have underlined it and emphasised it. There is now no condemnation because

1. We are in Christ.
2. Jesus, the Spirit and life have replaced law sin and death
3. Jesus condemned sin for us
4. So we can live a life free from fear full of hope as the Spirit points us to Jesus.

This is true for all who will say I want to be on team Jesus, sorry for the way I have played and turn my back team Adam or more traditionally I turn to Christ, I repent of my sins and I renounce evil.

There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.

This is a wonderful, comforting, life changing and well worth sharing.