



ISSUE

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Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF
THE OL-
SEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon

Ryan Ferguson

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McNear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Kevin Wise

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

“No Condemnation”

By Kyle Pope

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:1, NKJV)

Many years ago a young man, in a fit of rage one dark summer night lost control of his temper and killed another man with whom he had been fighting. There was no doubt that he had done it, the entire small town had seen the fight and witnessed the murder. He was quickly arrested, tried, and sentenced to hang as soon as the gallows could be built.

For many sleepless nights and tortured days the young man waited for that day to come. Over and over in his mind he replayed what had happened. How badly he wished that he could go back. How much he wished that he had controlled his temper. And yet, with every blow of the hammer, which he heard outside of his jail cell, as they were constructing the gallows, he realized that he couldn't go back—he was already condemned!

Romans 8:1 is a comment upon a legal condition. It speaks to those who deserve condemnation with no hope but to await the time of punishment. To souls condemned to a tortured eternity in hell, it offers a way in which there can be **“no condemnation.”**

I. The Promise: “No Condemnation” (8:1a)

Our world tries to deny the reality of condemnation. Even in the religious world, more and more try to act as if all roads lead to heaven. Why do people do this? They recognize their guilt, yet it is easier

for them to deny that punishment is coming than it is to repent of the wrong they have done. Sometimes the family or friends of those who have done wrong want to deny the reality of condemnation. They say, "It just couldn't be that my loved one is condemned!"

The fact is that condemnation of the ungodly is a frightening and awesome reality. Matthew 7:13-14 tells us many will go to destruction and only few to eternal life. Mark 16:16 promises salvation to those faithful and obedient but condemnation to those who are unbelieving. 1 Corinthians 11:32 warns Christians to be prepared lest we be **"condemned with the world."** The world is condemned. They are just waiting for the gallows to be built (so to speak.).

But what of the hope of the resurrection? Does this offer hope? The Bible promises, **"there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust"** (Acts 24:15). Yet, this is a promise of universal resurrection, not universal salvation. John 5:28,29 promises a resurrection of life (i.e. eternal life) and a resurrection of condemnation (i.e. eternal condemnation).

No matter how different we all are from one another we will all stand before God one day in judgment. We cannot escape. Yet we can choose now what the nature of that experience will be. We could hear, **"Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord"** (Matt. 25:23). Or we could hear, **"Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"** (Matt. 25:41). Romans 8:1 describes a way in which we can be assured that on that day we may hear the first statement and never the second!

II. The State: "In Christ" (8:1b)

The Bible speaks of many blessings that are found in Christ: No condemnation (Rom. 8:1); becoming a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17); obtaining all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:13) and achieving victory and triumph (2 Cor. 2:14). All of these things are promised to those **"in Christ."**

How does one get into Christ? Being in Christ is a relationship with Christ. It is a relationship in which He acknowledges us as His. We have already seen that He will not acknowledge everyone. Some He will condemn. Whom will he acknowledge?

1. Those who believe in Him. Hebrews 11:6 teaches: **"without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to**



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God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

2. Those who confess Him before man. 1 John 4:15 says: **"Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God."** Yet, abiding in Christ is not confined to thought and word alone. It is also deed and action. The Bible teaches us that Christ will acknowledge . . .

3. Those who turn from sin. Paul taught that the focus of his ministry was to teach people to **"repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance"** (Acts 26:20). Some argue that thought and word are all that being in Christ demands. If so, why would Paul use these words to describe his teaching? So, when does a person actually go from being out of Christ to being in Christ? It happens to . . .

4. Those who are baptized into Christ. In Romans 6:3-4, in the same epistle that promises **"no condemnation,"** Paul speaks of being baptized **"into Christ."** What does that tell us that one was before they were baptized? They were outside of Christ! Galatians 3:26-27 says that in baptism one may **"put on Christ."** If baptism allows us to **"put on Christ"** then before baptism we had not yet put Him on.

Many in the religious world are baptized but they do so under false premises. Here are two questions that must be asked:

1. What was the method of your baptism? The word *baptize* means "to immerse." Anything else is not baptism and thus not what we are commanded to do.

2. What was the purpose of your baptism? Did you think you were already in Christ? Did you do so to join some denomination? That is not Scriptural baptism. The Bible teaches that baptism is for remission of sins.

III. The Condition: "Who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (8:1c)

Some translations do not have this last phrase. The reason for this has to do with manuscript evidence. The

majority of Greek New Testament manuscripts (which have survived) have this phrase. Among the oldest that have been discovered the very oldest (p⁴⁶) is missing several pages which contain this section. Two of the next in age either do not have it in the text but written in the margin (i.e. the Sinai manuscript), or they have a shortened reading—**"who do not walk according to the flesh"** (i.e. the Alexandrian manuscript). The Vatican manuscript does not have this phrase. The questions are should we rely upon the majority of evidence or consider the reading of a few which are older? Have these manuscripts survived because they were known to be flawed or do they more accurately reflect the original reading? Regardless of how we answer these questions, the phrase is undisputed four verses later: **"that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit"** (Rom. 8:4). Christians must walk **"according to the Spirit"** not the flesh.

What is walking according to the flesh? Paul wrote:



For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:5-8).

What do you think about most of the time? What do you spend most of your time doing? Does it always concern material things? Is it ever spiritual things? Sure, we have to work and do other things that concern the flesh but is that our entire focus? What about sins of the flesh? Paul describes **“works of the flesh”** that disqualify one from inheriting the kingdom of heaven (Gal. 5:19-21). Do you *set your mind* on the pursuit of these things?

Paul, through the Holy Spirit tells us that if our focus is fleshly we cannot please God! This is not a question of ability, but accomplishment. God wants us to be concerned with things beyond this life. We must be concerned with spiritual things.

This text also defines walking according to the Spirit. Romans 8:5 says that **“those who live according to the Spirit”** mind, think about, and meditate upon **“the things of the Spirit.”** This isn’t some type of trance or out of body experience. It is pursuing the “fruit of the Spirit” (see Gal. 5:22-25). It is deeds, attitudes, and actions that are born out of a knowledge of God’s word, which is **“the sword of the Spirit”** (Eph. 6:17). Paul teaches us that if we do this we abide in Christ. In such a state in which there is **“no condemnation.”** In this condition, we have hope. If not, we are out of Christ, condemned, and lost. Are you in Christ? Do you enjoy the hope of **“no condemnation”** in Christ? If not, come to Christ for the hope of eternal salvation!