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No Condemnation!

Romans 8.1-4

Series: The Pure Gospel

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The Village Church

July 21, 2024

I. Introduction

- A. My devotional time in the morning is normally centered around Scripture Union's *Encounter with God*
1. That's the devotional Bible study that we are using in Study with the Pastor
 - a. Which I very much encourage you to use and get involved with if you're not already
 - b. I have been using this devotional guide for nearly 40 years
 - c. It was what Billy Graham used for much of his life as well
 - d. And the idea behind *Encounter with God* is that in 5 years time you will study the whole NT twice and the whole OT once
 - e. It will be a balanced diet of the whole counsel of God
 - f. And you will end up truly knowing the Bible
 2. And the reason why we do Study with the Pastor is to help us build community in TVC
 - a. Remember – the mission of TVC is “building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ”
 - b. And a number of years ago – not long after I came – I thought, I'm studying these passages of scripture; why don't I ask everyone else to join me in studying the same passages of scripture together every day
 - c. What a great way to build community – studying the same scriptures every day!
 - d. And so that's why more than 100 of us are studying the scriptures together using *Encounter with God*
 - e. And once a month we get together and discuss what God is showing us in our studies
 - f. So I would encourage you to connect with us in Study with the Pastor
- B. Now it usually takes me 15-30 minutes to do the basic *Encounter with God* study each day
1. But EWG also has a “read through the Bible” program as well
 - a. So that if you follow the plan, you would read through the whole Bible in a year

- b. And I've been following that plan as well for as long as I can remember
 - 2. And this past week I just finished the book of Esther
 - C. Of course, the chief character in the book of Esther is – Esther!
 - 1. But I'm inclined to think that even more central to the book of Esther is her cousin, Mordecai
 - 2. Mordecai has raised Esther, a Jewish orphan – who has grown into a beautiful young woman
 - 3. Esther came to the attention of the Persian King, Ahasuerus, when he sought to replace his disobedient queen and had a beauty pageant of sorts to find the next Queen
 - 4. Esther won the contest, and became Queen, the preeminent consort in the king's harem
 - 5. Mordecai, on the other hand, was a Jew who like to hang around the palace gate
 - a. Primarily interested to see how his adored cousin was faring
 - D. Enter the antagonist of the story – the wicked Haman
 - 1. He is appointed the viceroy to the king and given all kinds of access and influence in the court of Ahasuerus
 - a. Haman receives all the honor and admiration of the public due to his position
 - b. And people routinely acknowledge his position and bow down to him
 - 2. Everyone except Mordecai – the faithful Jew
 - a. Which really bugs Haman since Mordecai is always hanging around the palace gate
 - E. So Haman plots to get rid of Mordecai
 - 1. But not just Mordecai – all of the Jews in Persia
 - 2. He gets Ahasuerus to decree the death of Jews on a date determined by the casting of lots, call Pur (hence the Jewish holiday, Purim)
 - a. And he also builds a massive gallows on which he intends to hang Mordecai
 - F. Meantime, back at the ranch (or back at the palace gate) Mordecai catches wind of a plot by a couple of the king's eunuchs who plan to assassinate him
 - 1. He tells the authorities
 - a. His story checks out
 - b. The perpetrators are arrested and executed
 - 2. And the whole story is recorded in the king's annals
 - G. Then one night, Ahasuerus can't sleep
 - 1. So he figures the best way to go back to sleep is to read the official documents of his governance
 - a. Like reading the minutes of the Board of Elders or the Ministry Council, or the Bylaws document of TVC
 - 2. So he calls on his staff to get him the book of the annals of the king

- a. And as he tries to read himself to sleep he discovers the story of the plot to assassinate him
 - b. And the story of how the Jew, Mordecai, has prevented its execution
- H. The next morning, when Haman comes to the palace with every intention of hanging Mordecai, Ahasuerus asks what should be done for the one the king desires honor
 - 1. Haman thinks that no one would be more honorable than himself
 - a. So he suggests having the man put on the royal robes and crown, be led around publically on the King's royal horse, and have a herald call "See how the King honors a man he wishes to reward!"
 - 2. Well, the King said, "That's a great idea – why don't you do that for Mordecai!"
 - 3. So Haman is humiliated, having to declare the honor of the person he wanted to murder
- I. Long story short – Esther courageously reveals Haman's wicked plot to the King
 - 1. Haman is executed on the very gallows he had constructed for Mordecai
 - 2. The Jews are given the green light to defend themselves and they are saved
- J. Mordecai is then given the King's signet ring, is appointed to be the viceroy of the kingdom
 - 1. And he is exalted to a position of honor
- K. Now I recount that story because it occurs to me that what Mordecai experiences is in some measure an illustration of what the book of Romans is all about
 - 1. How one condemned to die in a judgment of great humiliation
 - 2. Through a great and awful conflict
 - 3. Is instead exalted to a position of great honor and glory
- L. The book of Romans is about the gospel
 - 1. About how humanity, under the wrath of God for unrighteousness
 - a. Nevertheless is saved from sure judgment
 - b. By the propitiation of Jesus Christ
 - c. I.e., the wrath-removing sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf
 - d. And through faith alone in Christ alone are given eternal life
 - 2. And not only that, in our sin, those who believe are exalted to a position of great glory and honor
 - a. Through our union with our Savior, Jesus Christ
- M. We come this morning to the 8th Chapter of Romans
 - 1. Called by some "the greatest chapter in the Bible"
 - 2. Frederic Godet called it the greatest chapter because it begins with "No condemnation" and ends with "No separation"
 - 3. Another commentator added that in between there is also "No defeat"
- N. It is a glorious chapter indeed!
 - 1. Maybe you've been longing to get finished with Romans 6 and 7 so you can get on to Chapter 8
 - a. And that's perfectly understandable

2. But of course, we cannot fully appreciate Romans 8 without understanding Romans 6 and 7
 - a. Not to mention Romans 1-5 which lays the foundation for everything we encounter in Romans 8
- O. Boice reflects on how easy it is for believers to be disappointed with God
 1. How inclined we are to be disaffected with God when He does not act according to our desires or expectations
 2. And he demonstrates how Romans 8 completely destroys any such tendency to be disappointed with God
- P. Boice:
 1. For I found myself reflecting, particularly since I was beginning at the same time to work through this great eighth chapter of Romans, how any Christian could possibly be disappointed with God.
 2. Disappointment with God? When he sent Jesus Christ to die for us so that we might escape his just wrath and condemnation?
 3. Disappointment with God? When he sent his Holy Spirit to free us from our own sinful and debilitating natures and join us to Christ?
 4. Disappointment with God? When he has made us his very own daughters and sons, with all the privileges that come from it?
 5. Disappointment with God? When he has drawn us into a great cosmic drama of redemption, in which even the heavens and earth have a part?
 6. Disappointment with God? When the Spirit intercedes for us, conforming our ignorant and incomplete prayers to the good, pleasing, and acceptable will of God?
 7. Disappointment with God? When he has set in motion an invincible chain of saving actions, beginning with his affectionate choice of us in eternity past, proceeding through his predestination of us to be saved from sin and conformed to the image of his own blessed Son, his effectual calling of us to faith in Jesus as the Savior, and justification, and ending with glorification in which all the blessed purposes of God toward us are fulfilled?
 8. Disappointment with God? When he has fixed such a lasting love upon us that nothing in all creation can separate us from it?
- Q. All of those great truths await us in this glorious chapter

II. **The Heart of the Gospel**

- A. We begin with the first 4 verses of this glorious chapter
- B. **Romans 8:1-4** (ESV) —
 1. 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 2. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.
 3. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.
 4. 4 By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

5. 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us,
 6. who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
- C. The first verse in this passage is one of the greatest summaries of the gospel in this extraordinary book about the gospel
1. **Romans 8:1** (ESV) —
 - a. 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 2. It is, in fact, the very heart of the gospel
- D. There are a number of wonderful summaries of the gospel in the book of Romans
1. **Romans 1:16** (ESV) —
 - a. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 2. **Romans 3:21** (ESV) —
 - a. 21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—
 3. **Romans 5:1** (ESV) —
 - a. 1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
 4. **Romans 5:9** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.
 5. **Romans 5:20–21** (ESV) —
 - a. 20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,
 - b. 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- E. And so now, once again, Paul declares the heart of the gospel
1. **Romans 8:1** (ESV) —
 - a. 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- F. Paul's great treatise on the gospel is more than just a theological tome
1. It is more that a doctrinal exposition
 2. It is ode to glory; it is **festschrift** – which is a German word for a publication honoring a person
 - a. But in this case, it is a festschrift for the God of grace and glory
 3. The Latins would call it an **encomium** – which a formal expression of praise, a eulogy honoring someone
- G. So it is no surprise, that apart from all the detail – which is considerable in this book – Paul never seems to get tired of the gospel
1. He expresses its essence relentlessly, repetitiously
 2. He glories in it
 3. He is exultant in its praise

4. He never gets tired of proclaiming the gospel
- H. Do you get tired of proclaiming the gospel?
 1. I hope not; Paul certainly doesn't
 2. I think we get tired of the gospel when we forget what the gospel does for us
 3. Recall the dinner party the Pharisee had for Jesus, and in comes a disreputable woman, a sinner of some note, probably a known prostitute (Luke 7)
 - a. And she comes in, uninvited, and anoints Jesus' feet with her tears, and then wipes them with her hair
 4. The Pharisee, of course, complains about the shocking, even indecent display of affection
 5. But Jesus intercedes for the woman – for the one who is forgiven little, loves little, but the one who is forgiven much, loves much
 - a. The woman loves much because she's been forgiven much
 - b. And she will never tire of declaring the gospel
 6. It is the self-satisfied, the self-righteous who find the gospel boring
 - a. And who find Paul's repetitious displays of gospel truth off-putting and tiring
 7. Do you find the gospel exhausting or exhilarating?
- I. Just think for a moment about this verse, this heart of the gospel – of its key words, each one chosen purposely
- J. "Therefore"
 1. What is the "therefore" there for?
 - a. Well, it could be the immediate context – Chapter 7
 - b. That would certainly be true, for there are some obvious connections
 - c. But it goes beyond Chapter 7 merely
 2. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"
 - a. The "therefore" takes us all the way back to the entire argument of Romans
 - b. All the way back to our human condition in Chapters 1-3
 - c. All the way back to Chapters 3-4 in which the great doctrine of justification by faith alone is described and illustrated in the lives of Abraham and David
 - d. All the way back to Chapter 6 where we learn of our spiritual union with Christ
 - e. All the way back to Chapter 7 in which we are freed from just penalty of the Law of God
 3. All of that compels Paul to proclaim "Therefore" there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
- K. "Now"
 1. "Now" is a word that expresses time

2. There was a time when we enemies of God, separated from Christ and from the people of God
 - a. Separated by our sin and rebellion
3. But having come to faith in Jesus Christ alone, “Now” we stand in a new relation to God
4. We once were condemned under the bar of perfect justice of Almighty God, the Judge of all the earth
 - a. Destined to come under the eternal death for our sin – seeing that the “wages of sin is death”
5. But “Now” all that is changed
 - a. The grace and favor of God has been poured out upon us
 - b. And we stand in a new relation with God through Jesus Christ by faith in Him

L. **“No”**

1. In our English text the word is a simple negative
 - a. But in the Greek, it is emphatic
 - b. Not just the simple “ou” but “oudeis”
 - c. And it occurs at the beginning of the Greek sentence, adding to its force
2. So literally it could be rendered “no, no one, none, nothing”
3. Barnhouse: Not any therefore now of condemnation.
4. Lloyd-Jones: Not only is the Christian not in a state of condemnation now, he never can be; it is impossible.

M. **“Condemnation”**

1. Not only the courtroom declaration of “guilty”, but the execution of the sentence as well
 - a. No notion of a suspended sentence
2. No – the full ramifications of the Almighty Judge’s justice system bears down upon the guilty

N. But – **Romans 8:1** (ESV) —

1. 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

III. **The Agent of the Gospel**

A. So who does all this?

1. Who is the agent of the Gospel?
2. Well, the obvious answer is, God, of course!
3. But – and this is crucial – what kind of God?
 - a. Well, the God of the Bible, of course
4. But now, most explicitly, it is the Triune God – the Trinity!
5. For this text – these opening verses to this great chapter – is one of the great Trinitarian passages of the whole NT

B. **Romans 8:1–4** (ESV) —

1. 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in **Christ Jesus.**

2. 2 For the law of the **Spirit** of life has set you free in **Christ Jesus** from the law of sin and death.
3. 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 for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,
4. 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the **Spirit**.

C. **The Father**

1. Consider what God the Father has done to secure our salvation!
2. He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin
 - a. “For sin” – God presenting His Son as a **sacrifice of atonement**, our propitiatory sacrifice
 - b. And He did it through the **incarnation** – sending His Son, not as an angel, or some kind of theophany
 - c. But in the likeness of human flesh
 - d. Christ was sent in every way human save he did not sin
 - e. “In the likeness of sinful flesh” – likeness, not in sinful flesh itself
3. So you have God the Father engaging in the incarnation of His Son, and offering Himself as a sacrifice of atonement
 - a. And God did this because the law, weakened by the flesh, could do no such thing
4. And then God “**condemned sin in the flesh**”
 - a. This refers to **justification**
 - b. God justified us because of Christ’s sacrifice
5. So you see, it is an error – a heresy – to have the idea that God the Father is this mean, intractable Judge, but Jesus is the kind and gentle One
 - a. And that Jesus has to pacify His angry Father
6. No!
 - a. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (**John 3.16**)
7. God the Father is the architect, the initiator, the great giver of the gospel, and the great giver of our salvation
8. **Romans 8:32–33** (ESV) —
 - a. 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?
 - b. 33 Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.

D. **The Son**

1. The Son of God incarnate, Jesus Christ, came first of all as the sin offering, **the propitiation for our sins**
 - a. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, **and for sin** (**Romans 8.3**)
 - b. His sacrifice fully satisfied the wrath of God
 - c. His sacrifice redeemed us from the slave market of sin
2. We were set free from the law of sin and death – in Christ Jesus!

3. There is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ
 - a. **Acts 4:12** (ESV) — 12 “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
4. So the Father and the Son are integral to our salvation
- E. **The Holy Spirit**
 1. **Romans 8:2** (ESV) —
 - a. 2 For the law of the **Spirit of life** has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.
 2. The Spirit of life has set you free!
 - a. He has done so by uniting us with Jesus Christ
 - b. “**In Christ Jesus**” is the key phrase
 - c. Without **union with Jesus** we would be left with only our flesh to operate in us, motivating us, energizing us, enabling us
 - d. But the flesh can do nothing to please God!
 - e. There is nothing good in our flesh (**Romans 7.18**)
 - f. So how can the flesh do anything for us?
 3. But the Spirit of life, united us with Christ, activates us, motivates us, enables us – gives us the power – to live victoriously for Christ
 - a. We are set free by the Holy Spirit
 4. And the Spirit enables us to walk in a way that please Christ and pleases God
 - a. As we are filled with – controlled by – the Spirit
 - b. We can fulfill the Law of God in a way that is impossible through our flesh
 5. **Romans 8:4** (ESV) —
 - a. 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us,
 - b. **who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**
- F. So, dear friends – the Trinity saves!
 1. The Triune God who lives is our Savior
 2. The Trinity is not just some obscure doctrine that theologians debate over
 - a. To reject the Trinity is to reject the gospel
 - b. Without the Trinity, there is no gospel; there is no salvation!
 3. The Father saves
 - a. The Son saves
 - b. The Spirit saves
 4. Each member of the Godhead contributing to its accomplishment
- G. Do you worship the Triune God?
 1. Is the Trinity merely an academic concept for you?
 - a. If it is – shame on you!
 2. You would never be a follower of Jesus without the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- H. That’s why our hymnody so wonderfully captures the worship of the Trinity
 1. **Come Thou Almighty King**

- a. Come Thou Almighty King, Help us Thy name to sing
- b. Come, Thou Incarnate Word, Gird on Thy mighty sword
- c. Come, Holy Comforter, Thy sacred witness bear
- 2. **Eternal Father, Strong to Save** (William Whiting)
 - a. Eternal Father, strong to save, Whose arm does bind the restless wave
 - b. O Savior, whose almighty word, The winds and waves submissive heard
 - c. O Holy Spirit, who did brood Upon the waters dark and rude
- 3. **Holy, Holy, Holy** (Reginald Heber)
 - a. Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
 - b. God in three persons, blessed Trinity!
- 4. **How Great is our God** (Chris Tomlin)
 - a. The Godhead, three in one
 - b. Father, Spirit, Son
 - c. The Lion and the Lamb
 - d. Lion and the Lamb

I. Our hymns and spiritual songs express our hearts devotion to God

1. To our Triune God

J. **Romans 8:1-4** (ESV) —

- 1. 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- 2. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.
- 3. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.
- 4. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,
- 5. 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

K. Triune God who lives – may You be praised for the gospel of our salvation!

IV. **The Beneficiaries of the Gospel**

- A. So this wonderful gospel declaration
 - 1. This glorious gospel summary
 - 2. This heart of the gospel
- B. For whom is this gospel assurance given?
 - 1. To whom does this gospel apply?
- C. It does not apply to everyone!
 - 1. Oh, no! It most certainly does not
- D. **It doesn't apply...**
 - 1. **To the self-righteous**
 - a. If you presume that you have qualified yourself to enter into the presence of God on your own merits
 - b. If you suppose that God somehow grades on a curve, and that being above average is good enough

- c. If you pretend that you are not like those tax collectors and sinners (nothing against our IRS agents – tax collectors in those days were the economic exploiters of their day)
 - d. If you have any sense that you are good enough for God
 - e. You are not included
 - f. It was the poor sinner who declared “Have mercy on me, a sinner!” that Jesus declared was justified, not the Pharisee who said, “I thank God I’m not like that other guy, that sinner...”
- 2. **To the idolatrous**
 - a. If you substitute anyone else in the place of God you are not included
 - b. And that’s not only the primitive idolaters who created their idols out of wood and metal
 - c. That’s any kind of substitute, any kind of value that you act as if it takes supremacy to God
 - d. Idols like materialism
 - e. Idols like popularity
 - f. Idols like influence
 - g. Idols like social position or reputation
 - h. Idols like political power
 - i. If you are an idolater, you are not included
- E. No, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8.1)
 - 1. “Those who are **in Christ Jesus**”
 - 2. Those who are in union with Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit, by faith in the Son of God
 - 3. That’s the essence of the gospel
- F. Do you know that you belong to Jesus Christ?
 - 1. That you are in union with Him?
- G. If you’re not sure, don’t allow your soul to rest until you settle the issue with Jesus Christ
 - 1. Whom God the Father, in love, sent to do what you could never do in yourself
 - 2. Jesus Christ, who laid down His life for you, even when you were still a sinner
 - 3. The Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment
 - a. And who, by grace, makes us alive to God in Christ Jesus
 - b. Gives us the new birth in Jesus
 - c. Making us new creatures in Jesus Christ
 - 4. Cast yourselves on the mercy of the Triune God
 - a. So that you too may know that “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”