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Sermon Notes

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From “No Condemnation” to “No Separation” An Overview of Romans 8

I. “Heaven on Earth”

A. Heaven or hell... what will it be for me?? How can we enjoy any peace without assurance?

B. Thomas Brooks

II. Basic Proposition: No Condemnation by God!! (8:1)

vs. 1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

A. Context: Reverting to Romans 5

1. Romans 6-7 a needed digression

2. “Therefore” not immediately connected to Romans 7:13-25

3. Perhaps goes back to 7:6

7:6 ...we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

4. More likely goes back to Romans 5... Assurance of salvation

Romans 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”

Romans 8 doesn't teach anything new that Paul didn't already establish the groundwork for in Romans 5

B. Greater context: Judgment Day

Daniel 7:9-10 As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was

flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

Matthew 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.

Revelation 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Romans 2:5-6 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ God "will give to each person according to what he has done."

C. "Full Atonement, Can It Be?!!!"

1. Propitiation

Romans 3:23-25 "...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood."

2. Justification by faith

Romans 4:5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

3. Result: total forgiveness

Romans 5:1 "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

Record of all transgressions thrown in the depths of the sea, never to be seen again

Everything you did in violation of the commands of God

Every time you:

- spoke a harsh word tearing someone down
- rolled your eyes at your parents or sassed them
- acted out of laziness and presented a job poorly done

D. What is “Condemnation?”

1. God’s righteous judgment of us as sinners
2. Applied to entire human race in Adam
3. Confirmed with the first transgression of the Law of God
4. Apart from Christ, every single solitary sinner is “condemned already”

John 3:18 Whoever believes in [Christ] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Ephesians 2:3 we were by nature objects of wrath.

Romans 1:18 "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..."

Condemnation is the present state of all sinners apart from Christ... but final condemnation awaits Judgment Day

5. Final condemnation: Eternity under the wrath of God

Revelation 14:10-11 he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. " And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name."

Revelation 20:15 *The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

E. What is “No Condemnation”?

Romans 8:1 *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*

1. Notice: NOW

- a. this clearly implies a massive change of state!!
- b. your status has been forever altered!!
- c. now that what?? ... FAITH IN CHRIST

John 5:24 *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.*

2. “No condemnation”

- a. record of sins completely covered by blood of Christ

Psalm 103:9-11 *he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

Micah 7:18-19 *Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. ¹⁹ You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.*

Jeremiah 31:34 *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

- b. Judgment Day results in your complete acquittal
- c. no accusations will be heard or accepted

Romans 8:33-34 *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

- d. hell is no longer a threat... you need fear its sulfurous heat no more

3. From now on and forever!!!

- a. Romans 7: struggle with sin continues to be a problem
- b. BUT you cannot sin your way out of justification
- c. “No condemnation” is the permanent decree of God concerning your case

III. Manifold Proofs (8:2-34)

A. Proof #1: Union with Christ (8:2-4)

- 1. “for those who are in Christ Jesus...”
- 2. Union with Christ taught plainly
 - a. Romans 5 (Adam/Christ)
 - b. Romans 6: baptism

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

- c. Romans 7: marriage

Romans 7:6 ...we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not the old way of the written code

- 3. Theme developed here again

vs. 2 through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Union with Christ means His righteousness becomes ours, and His mind/heart becomes ours as well, through the Spirit of Life...

Therefore we walk in obedience to the laws of God by the power of the indwelling Spirit

B. Proof #2: Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in us (8:5-13)

1. Here the mind of the flesh is contrasted sharply with the new mind we have in Christ
2. We used to hate God, now we love Him
3. We used to hate God's laws, now we yearn to obey them
4. The Spirit moves us step by step to kill indwelling sin

vs. 9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.

vs. 13 if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live

5. Gradual growth in personal holiness is great proof of our salvation

C. Proof #3: Holy Spirit's testimony of our adoption (8:14-17)

1. The indwelling Spirit also speaks to us that we are children of God

vs. 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

2. This Spirit cries out "Abba, Father" just as Jesus did
3. This Spirit gives direct proof to us experientially that we have received full forgiveness of sins
4. He tells us we are permanent members of the family... sons and daughters can never be evicted

John 8:35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.

D. Proof #4: Groaning, yet hopeful of glory (8:18-25)

1. The struggle we have with the body is intense and discouraging
2. So is the corruption we see in us and around us
3. YET God renews within us an unsinkable hope
4. HOPE OF FUTURE GLORY... a great proof of our salvation

Romans 8:23-25 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

5. Hope of future resurrection keeps building in us
6. Hope is itself a great proof of salvation

Romans 5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Even though our bodies are wasting away outwardly, yet inwardly we are renewed in hope day after day... our hope points ahead to a glorious future when we will have resurrection bodies and live in a perfect world

E. Proof #5: Holy Spirit's intercession with us and for us (8:26-27)

vs. 26-27 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

1. Spirit's help extends to our prayer life
2. We are weak and ignorant
 - a. we don't know what to pray for... what God's will is
 - b. even if we did, we would pray only sporadically and weakly
3. We need constant empowerment and assistance in prayer
4. Intensely personal prayer times, saturated in the Spirit's presence gives great assurance
5. So also assurance that Spirit always intercedes for us according to God's will

F. Proof #6: God's character invested in His eternal plan (8:28-34)

1. Deepest assurance of all... God's eternal plan
2. Before foundation of the world, God planned our salvation
3. God has actually staked His personal reputation on getting every last one of His chosen people to heaven

4. Everyone who begins through justification ends in glorification

vs. 28-30 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

5. God predestined us not merely to start but to finish our Christian journey

- a. from sinner under the wrath of God to son/daughter of God perfect in heaven
- b. those... those...those: no one slips out, no one gets left behind
- c. God's sovereign control over the world and its events guarantees our final salvation
- d. NOT ONE WILL BE LOST!!!

John 6:38-39 *For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.*

6. Doctrine of predestination: clearly taught here

- a. controversial, though needlessly!!
- b. every Bible-believing Christian compelled to accept that this word is Biblical
- c. whatever else it means, it guarantees the salvation of everyone whom God has chosen

7. God has staked His character on our final salvation in a very personal way

vs. 31-34 *What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

- a. God is "for us"... personally invested in our salvation
- b. He has made promises to us by grace which cannot be broken

- c. He even refused to spare His own Son, but crushed Him at the cross for our salvation
- d. if Christ died needlessly then God's character is forever tainted with failure to accomplish His purposes
- e. God's power, His love, His justice, His truthfulness are all at stake in our final salvation

IV. Triumphant Assurance: No Separation from God!! (8:35-39)

vs. 35-39 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?* ³⁶ *As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."* ³⁷ *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.* ³⁸ *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

A. Hymn of praise for this security

B. Context: constant strife and conflict, danger and persecution

1. Why? God's plan involves our death!!

vs. 36 *As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*

- a. God's plan involves pouring us out like a drink offering
 - b. God's plan involves our taking our cross daily and following Christ
 - c. God's plan means we will fall to the ground and die like a kernel of wheat
2. BUT despite surrounding us purposefully with danger, nothing can touch our security
 3. We are "more than conquerors" over all our enemies
 - a. our own sinfulness crushed by the step by step power of the indwelling Spirit
 - b. our world's persecutions only advance the gospel and our own sanctification
 - c. God's love is directed to us in Christ Jesus and keeps us totally safe and secure

V. Applications

A. For the Christian

1. Rejoicing in God's Forgiveness

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

2. Assured by God's Sovereignty

God's eternal plan, worked out before the creation of the world, guarantees the salvation of all God's elect, His chosen people. All who come to Christ for salvation will, in the end, be saved! Not one will be lost. No other grounds for assurance can survive the ups and downs of our daily struggles. But because of God's eternal plan, immeasurable power, unshakable will and unbreakable love, you will conquer all obstacles and arrive safely into His heavenly kingdom.

3. Humbled by God's Grace

The salvation plan is designed to give God all the glory for your salvation, and to give you all the joy! Be humbled... you did not one thing worthy of boasting. Be humbled... the only thing you contribute to your salvation is the sin that made it necessary. All the other works of salvation—repentance, faith, obedience—all of these are part of God's gracious gift to His elect in Christ.

4. Realistic about God's World

Salvation in Christ guarantees some special kinds of sufferings in this world that you would not have to endure if you were not a Christian. Suffering with temptation, and suffering persecution while serving Christ. The world will be a hostile, harsh, alien environment for your faith in Christ. Furthermore, your own body of death will fight you every step of the way. Your body will fall apart even as the physical world around you is subject to futility. But in all these things you will conquer by God's power.

5. Hungry for Christ's Holiness

Every true Christian yearns to be like Christ, that He might be the first-born among many brothers. Therefore we will follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit to put sin to death moment-by-moment. This chapter should make you all the more hungry to be like Christ... your destiny is total conformity to Christ. **BE HUNGRY FOR IT!!!**

6. Reliant on God's Spirit

You can't make one single step of progress in sanctification without the Holy Spirit's leading and power. You can't even pray without the Spirit helping you. But the Spirit has been given for this very purpose... to sanctify you and to empower you to help build Christ's Kingdom through witness.

7. Zealous to Proclaim God's Salvation

When was the last time you spoke to someone you knew was a non-Christian about spiritual matters? Apart from this glorious gospel of salvation in Christ, your neighbor, co-worker, friend, relative has NO HOPE of surviving Judgment Day, for they already stand under condemnation and the wrath of God. **WON'T YOU PLEASE SHARE GOD'S LOVE THIS WEEK?**

B. For the Unbeliever

Please come to Christ today!!

1. Christ's blood is sufficient to cover all your sins
2. Christ's invitation is wide enough to welcome the entire world
3. Christ's power is sufficient to transform any heart from slavery in sin to freedom in holiness
4. Christ's Spirit is ready to enter you today and begin His saving work

“To be in a state of true grace is to be miserable no more; it is to be happy forever. A soul in this state is a soul near and dear to God. It is a soul much beloved, and very highly valued by God. It is a soul housed in God. It is a soul safe in everlasting arms. It is a soul fully and eminently interested in all the highest and noblest privileges. The being in a state of grace makes a man's condition happy, safe and sure; but the seeing and knowing of himself to be in such a state is that which renders his life sweet and comfortable. The being in a state of grace will yield a man a heaven hereafter, but seeing of himself in this state will yield him both a heaven here and a heaven hereafter; it will render him doubly blest, blest in heaven and blest in his own conscience.” Assurance of salvation is an enjoyment of heaven on earth.

Thomas Brooks, Heaven on Earth

“It is the very drift and design of the whole Scripture, to bring souls first to an acquaintance with Christ, and then to an acceptance of Christ, and then to build them up in a sweet

assurance of their actual interest in Christ.” Luther said: “I would not trade one leaf of the Bible for all the riches and treasures of the world.”

Life without assurance:

- What good would it be to know that there is a Promised Land, if I can't have an allotted portion of that land?
- What good would it be to know that there is a remedy for my disease if I cannot receive the treatment?
- What good would it be to know that there are mines of gold, mountains of pearls, heaps of rare treasures, a land flowing with milk and honey if I cannot share in the inheritance?
- What good would it be to smell the rich aroma coming from the lavish banquet if I am not to sit at the feast and partake of its delicacies?

Would it not be a torment not a blessing to know of these things and not share in them???

It is the assurance that I have a place at the table, that I have a share of the inheritance, that I may partake of the remedy, and that I will live forever in the Promised Land that makes these promises from God a blessing and not a torment!!

That is what Romans 8 is all about!