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Sermon Notes

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Law Fully Met in Us Through Christ

Romans 8:1-4

I. Full Assurance, Can It Be??

- Written with an invisible pen in indelible ink... your name in the Lamb's Book of Life
- Written with an invisible pen in flaming letters... the Law of God on your hearts

Council of Trent, January 13, 1547: Sixth Session, on Justification, Chapter 9

"No one can know, with a certainty of faith, which cannot be subject to error, that he has obtained the grace of God."

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

B. Greater context: Judgment Day

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.

C. What is "No Condemnation"?

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

1. Notice: NOW

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 103:12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Micah 7:19 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."

3. Forever: permanent decree of God concerning your case

III. Proof #1: Deliverance Through Union with Christ (8:2-4)

A. In Christ Jesus

1. "for those who are in Christ Jesus..."

a. "In Christ Jesus" = spiritual union with Christ

b. central issue of salvation... in Christ = every spiritual blessing; outside of Christ = every spiritual curse

Illus. Noah's Ark: inside the Ark, complete safety and blessing from God; outside the Ark was death at the hands of God

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39 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.

Clear teaching: "No condemnation" promise is only for those who are "in Christ Jesus"

"In Christ Jesus" = spiritual union with Christ through faith

Anyone who is not "IN CHRIST" is still "IN ADAM" and thus still under the Law and thus under condemnation... the law only ever condemns, it never saves

2. Union with Christ taught plainly

a. Romans 5 (Adam/Christ)

Two covenant heads in the human race: the first Adam our physical representative... every single human being born physically IN ADAM... seen to be IN ADAM by God until we are born again

Christ is the "second Adam"... everyone born again through faith in Christ are born INTO CHRIST... we are thus seen by God as IN CHRIST

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

b. Romans 6: baptism

Romans 6:4-5 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. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

B. Reason for No Condemnation: A Whole New Realm of Existence (vs. 2)

vs. 2 [NASB] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death."

1. "For" / "Because" = reason why

- a. freedom from condemnation has a reason
- b. God not merely declares us not guilty by sovereign power

Illus. Difference between Islam and Christianity... reason is atonement!!!

2. Two Realms, Two Laws

- a. first realm (Adam): law, sin, condemnation (death)
- b. second realm (Christ): Spirit, righteousness, justification, life
- c. a Christian: radical transformation

3. “The Law of the Spirit of Life”

- a. law = unbreakable principle

Romans 5:21 just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grace = gospel = salvation = love of God in Christ = law of Spirit of life

Unbreakable principle guaranteeing our salvation

- b. spiritual union with Christ cannot be broken
c. union by the Spirit of Life

1 Corinthians 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

4. “Law of sin and death”

- a. unbreakable (except by grace) principle of law-induced sin, and inevitable condemnation
b. “power of sin is law”

1 Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

- c. law stood against us and opposed us... it condemned us and we could not escape its sentence

5. Set Free: Rescued and Transferred to a Whole New Realm of Existence

Called “law of the Spirit of life”

Process: “set free”... delivered from bondage, from slavery

Romans 6:18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Romans 6:22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

Colossians 1:11-12 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

6. How: by the CROSS... set free from condemnation of the Law

Colossians 2:13-14 *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.*

The cross of Jesus Christ sets us free forever from the condemnation of the Law

C. Justification Here... NOT Sanctification

1. "No condemnation" not based on our daily performance of righteousness
2. Roman Catholic error: our sanctification the GROUND of our justification
 - a. if we've lived a holy life, God will see it and know it
 - b. based on that, He will declare us NOT GUILTY
 - c. this is completely wrong!! It is nothing but bondage and uncertainty all over again

Illus. A whole new bondage: Catholic sacramentalism and legalism... obedience to the rules, regulations, fasts, penances, pilgrimages, prayers, obligations, veneration of the Church was the "law of the Spirit of life"... and it was nothing more than a new bondage

- d. however... sanctification will come in in verse 4

D. Free Indeed

1. Law has no condemning power over you ever again
2. All transgressions covered by the blood of Christ forever
3. We serve God in a whole new way now

Romans 7:6 *But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*

IV. Why Was the Deliverance Necessary? (vs. 3)

A. What the Law Could Not Do

1. Law given first to show God's glory in His sovereign authority over us

2. Law given also to condemn rebellion... sin
3. Law however is severely limited

vs. 3 “For what the law was powerless to do...”

Hebrews is even stronger:

Hebrews 7:18-19 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect)

B. “Weakened by the Flesh”

1. Amply demonstrated by Paul’s struggle in Romans 7
2. Nothing wrong with the law... something wrong with us!!

Illus. Iron shovel with rotten handle

Law works with our flesh... can accomplish no righteousness, can only condemn

C. Law Demands But Cannot Produce Righteousness

Law could never save us... it had power for nothing but to condemn

V. How Was the Deliverance Achieved? (vs. 3)

vs. 3 “For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sin nature God did by sending His Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in sinful man...”

A. God Did It: Our God-Centered Salvation

1. Trinity fully active in our salvation
 - a. God the Father initiates... makes plan, sends Son
 - b. God the Son sent by the Father to carry out the plan
 - c. God the Spirit applies it to each person who believes
2. Salvation is GOD’S WORK!!

Illus. Martin Luther: "If even one thread of the garment of salvation comes from our own efforts, the entire robe unravels." For our salvation to be guaranteed, it must be God's work from top to bottom

3. Boasting is excluded... so is uncertainty
4. God gets the glory, we get the joy

B. How: Sending His Own Son... Our Christ-Centered Salvation

1. Jesus Christ is the center of it all

Lloyd-Jones: "Christianity is all and entirely about the Lord Jesus Christ and about what God has done in Him and through Him."

2. "His own Son": emphasized
 - a. full deity established

"Eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, very God from very God... begotten, not made, being in one substance with the Father"

- b. preciousness and cost emphasized

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- c. so also absolute guarantee

Romans 8:38-39 [nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

C. Total Assurance: God Makes the Plan, God's Son Carries It Out

1. Double assurance:
 - a. plan only as good as the wisdom of the one who made it
 - b. plan only as good as the power of the one who carries it out
 - c. God the Father made the plan... with perfect and eternal wisdom
 - d. God the Son executed the plan... with perfect faithfulness and precision
2. God's eternal plan: to send the Son to save His people

3. Christ's perfect execution of the plan

D. What was the plan?

1. Incarnation

vs. 3 sending His Son in the likeness of sinful man

- a. sending = from heaven to earth
- b. born of a virgin as fully man
- c. thus mystery of Christ: FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN

Illus. Ancient heresies... denying one or the other

Docetism: Christ wasn't truly human, but just "seemed" to be so... this verse key... "only in '**likeness**' of sinful man... at root, Greek philosophy of Plato that taught that physical matter is at best inferior, at worst evil

Bible totally refute that!! Christ had a real body, and walked on tired feet along the dusty roads of Palestine

- He got tired and had to sleep in a boat, or rest by the well in Samaria
- He got hungry after fasting forty days and nights, and was famished
- He thirsted on the cross and cried out "I thirst!!"
- He touched people with His hands, and His feet were anointed with tears and wiped with the hair of a forgiven woman
- He rejoiced, mourned, got angry
- He looked like an ordinary man to His opponents... and thus they totally rejected His claim to deity

2. Sinless life

"in the likeness of sinful flesh..."

- a. Paul careful not to deny humanity, but to deny sinfulness
- b. the very truths taught in Hebrews

Hebrews 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

Hebrews 4:15 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.*

3. Atoning sacrifice

“to be a sin offering” lit. “concerning sin”

- a. Paul still talking about how we are free from condemnation
- b. the crux of the plan of God: Christ’s sinless human body would die in our place
- c. Christ’s dead body is our deliverance

Romans 7:4 *So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ*

Hebrews 10:10 *And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

Hebrews 10:19-20 *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,*

VI. What Does the Deliverance Accomplish in Us? (vs. 3-4)

vs. 4 *in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit*

A. Law’s Requirement for Condemnation Fulfilled

1. Law no longer has a claim on us for condemnation... price paid in full
2. Christ’s body has provided freedom forever from the law’s accusation

B. Law’s Requirements for a Righteous Life Also Fulfilled IN US

Hebrews 8:10, 12 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.... For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

1. Law brings us to Christ in desperation

"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me?" Thanks be to God through Jesus!"

2. Christ brings us back to the Law by the Spirit

"Here is the way... walk in it!!"

What "righteous requirements of the law"?

Love the Lord you God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength

Love you neighbor as yourself

This is what God will work in you for the rest of your life by the Holy Spirit

3. Law-keeping central to sanctification and a perfect proof of justification

1 John 2:3 We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.

1 John 3:24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

1 John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome

Illus. Bunyan's **Pilgrim's Progress**: [As Christian and Faithful come to the gate of the Celestial City] "Now when they were come up to the gate, there was written over it in letters of gold, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city.'"

This is a direct quote of Revelation 22:14 in the KJV

Bottom line... without personal daily holiness, no one will enter heaven; but everyone who is justified also receives the Holy Spirit, whose purpose within us is to meet fully all the perfect and eternal commands of God

Practically... if you are justified, you can never be condemned... Christ's death has forever paid that penalty

BUT salvation also involves sanctification... daily growth in holiness

Step by step, you will grow in obedience to God's commands... not as the basis of your justification, but as the fruit and result of it

C. How? The Spirit-Filled Life: SANCTIFICATION

This is the topic of the next section!!