

INTRODUCTION

Some people like the 23rd Psalm or the third chapter of John or Hebrews 11 – you may have your own personal favorite chapter, but without a doubt, Romans 8 is my favorite chapter in the Bible. I've been looking forward to getting to this point. When I was in college, I memorized Romans 8 in the King James Version, and a lot of what I believe about salvation and about the spirit-filled life comes from this chapter.

Sometimes people wonder what heaven is going to be like. I heard a funny joke the other day about the three blind mice who went to heaven. When they got to heaven, the three blind mice were no longer blind, and so St. Peter said, "I want you to see heaven, so I'm going to give each of you some roller skates!" So the three blind mice took off across heaven to examine it on their roller skates. About a week later, Garfield the cat died and went to heaven and after Garfield the cat had been in heaven for about a week, St. Peter said, "How do you like heaven?" Garfield said, "It is wonderful! But the thing I like the best up here in heaven are those meals on wheels!"

I don't know about cats and mice in heaven, but sometimes Christians spend all of their earthly lives saying, "Oh, I just can't wait to get to heaven!" But you see, the truth about the Good News of Jesus Christ is, you can get a lot of heaven into your life right now while you're still alive! You don't have to go through a cemetery to have the life of heaven in you right now. Like that good old Gospel song says, "Heaven came down and Glory filled my soul." But if you don't ever understand what the spirit-filled life is all about, you'll pretty much live in spiritual defeat and misery and you won't enjoy much heaven.

Now Romans 8 is all about how to live in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. A man by the name of Speener said in Romans 8 we see the brightest truth in the word of God. He said, "If you think of the Bible as a ring and if you think of Romans as being the biggest diamond set in that ring, Romans 8 would have to be the pinnacle and the point of that diamond." You start out with no condemnation in Romans 8—you end up with no separation—and in between you have all things working together for good for them that love the Lord. So I want to talk to you about how as spirit-filled Christians we can make four wonderful affirmations. Keep your Bible open because as we make each four of these statements we will read the four verses.

I. NOT CONDEMNED FOR MY SIN!

First of all, as spirit-filled Christians, you and I can say, "I am not condemned for my sin." Look at Romans 8:1. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Now, when I memorized this verse in the King James Version, there are some extra words there. Without a doubt, those words are not found in the oldest and most reliable Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Actually, those words are better found down in chapter 4, where we read in the end of chapter 4, "...who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the spirit." All verse one says is simply, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Period. What do the words "no condemnation" mean? The phrase no condemnation actually comes from two Greek particles, *kato* (which means down) and *Krino* (which means to judge). Literally, the word condemnation, or *kato krino*, means to judge down. Have you ever seen those movies where the Roman Emperor is sitting on a throne and prisoners are brought before him and he decides whether they are voted down (judged down) or up. You

are guilty or you are innocent. That's the meaning of that word and the Bible says for those of us who are "in Christ," there's absolutely no down judging—no condemnation.

Let me tell you that doesn't mean there won't be judgment for Christians. Don't misunderstand this. There are two future judgments. The judgment seat of Christ—for Christians only—that is not to determine whether you are lost or saved, that's the judgment that Jesus will give every believer as to our faithfulness. That's when rewards will be passed out. That's when we'll receive the crowns that we'll cast at His feet. There is no condemnation, but there is judgment for Christians. But there is another future judgment talked about in Revelation 20. This is the great White Throne Judgment, which is the judgment of condemnation and only lost people will be there. And so, Romans 8:1 doesn't say there won't be any judgment for Christians. What it says is there is no 'condemnation,' no *kato krino* (judging down). Because it says we are "in Christ."

1. "In Christ" I: Am declared righteous (positional)

I want you to think about the phrase "in Christ" for just a moment. It's one of Paul's favorites. He uses that phrase 164 times in all of his writings. To him the essence of the Christian life was to be "in Christ." Here are two things that means: When you are "in Christ," you can say, "I am declared righteous. I am declared righteous by God." The only way you can ever be righteous in the eyes of God is to be "in Jesus Christ," to be in His righteousness. As Paul writes in Philippians 3:9, "...and I want to be found in Christ, in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but that which through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith." Here's what that means. When you and I put our faith in Jesus and turn from our sins and become Christians, God looks at us as "in Christ Jesus." He no longer looks at us as unrighteous sinners; instead He looks at us through the filter of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And although I'm not a perfect person, and although no one is a perfect person, God points his finger at me and at you if you're born again and says, "You are righteous. When I look at you, my child, I see the righteousness of Jesus Christ." So, you'd better stay "in Christ," because you get outside of Christ and there's no righteousness. Stay "in Christ," and that's where you find the righteousness.

It's like Noah and the Ark. Everyone knows the story of Noah and the Ark. Remember, God told Noah to build a big boat and said, "I'm going to send judgment on the earth, and the only way to escape my judgment is to get in the ark." So they brought all the animals into the ark and then the Bible says God welcomed Noah and his family into the ark and He shut the door. Now, that doesn't mean Noah drove 8 pegs into the side of the boat and they had to hang on for dear life during the storm. No, they were safe in the ark and they were not touched by the judgment of God. When you and I become Christians, we are "in Christ," just as these people were "in the ark," and we are saved from the judgment of God. So I call that "positional righteousness." We are in the position of being "in Christ," so we are righteous.

2. "In Christ" I: Desire to do right (practical)

When we are "in Christ" we can also say, "I decide to do right. I decide I'm going to do right." I call that "practical righteousness," because there is a daily living out of good deeds and the

Christian life. But, listen, we don't do that *to* be saved, we do that because we *are* saved and that's what God wants for us. That's why I love Ephesians 2:10 where it says, "...for by grace are you saved through faith not of works, lest any man should boast...for we are God's workmanship." What that means is God is kind of like a heavenly handyman and has a shop and He's working on us; we are God's workmanship, created "in Christ Jesus," to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do. Now, when you are "in Christ," you're safe from the punishment and judgment of God (that's "positional righteousness") and when you're "in Christ" you choose to live a righteous kind of life! Someone has said in a little poem, "I cannot work, my soul to save, that work my Lord has done. But I will work like any slave, for the love of God's dear Son." I'm going to live righteously because I love Jesus—not to be saved, but because I love Jesus.

II. NOT CONSTRAINED TO SIN! (2)

Now here's the first knot the Devil can't untie. I am "not" condemned for my sins. The second knot the Devil can't untie is, I am "not" constrained to sin. I am "not" constrained to sin. There is nothing that can force you to sin any more. We can read about that in Romans 8:2, "Because through Christ Jesus the law of the spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death." There are two statements we need make here.

1. The old law bound me (sin and death)

The old law bound me. Before you came to Christ, there was a law working that had a stranglehold on you and you were enslaved to it—it had you wrapped up and bound. What was the law? Sin and death. For those who might not know what the law of sin and death is—it's real simple: the Bible says, "The soul that sins, it shall die." That's the law of sin and death. Put it another way, look at Romans 6:23, which says, "The wages of sin is death." That's the law of sin and death that had a strangle grip on us before we came to Christ. That's the old law.

2. The new law frees me (Spirit of life)

Verse 2 says, "the new law frees me." It has liberated me; it has set me free. What is this new law? It is the law of the spirit of life. The law of the spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death. Let's think about the word "spirit" for just a moment. The reason chapter 8 is all about the Holy Spirit is this. Paul is going to use the word "spirit" 21 times in this one chapter. In all the other 15 chapters put together, he's only going to use it 13 times, but in this one chapter alone, 21 times! The English word spirit is translated from the Greek word "pneuma." Have you ever heard the phrase, "That is a pneumatic tire?" Or a pneumatic pump? It has something to do with air. Because this Greek word for spirit, "pneuma" is also translated "wind." Remember in John 3, where Jesus talks about being born of the spirit and he says, "The wind blows where it will and nobody knows where it's coming from and where it's going." He's making a play on words there between spirit and wind. The Bible says the same word for "breath," is the same word for "spirit."

For instance, in the Old Testament, when it says, "God breathed into Adam the breath of life," He was giving Adam a spirit, it's the same word in Hebrew. And it's the word for "air." You and

I live in the air but also the air had better live in us. We are "in Christ," but also Christ is in us. There are some beautiful truths you can see there. If you put a boat into the water, there may be wind but it's not until you raise the sails that the wind feels the sails! You may be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but it's not until you yield to the Holy Spirit that the power of the Holy Spirit fills your life and moves you along. You see, there's a new law operating, and it's the law of the spirit. The whole point Paul is trying to make here, between chapter 7 and chapter 8, is this; remember in chapter 7 where he says, "the things I don't want to do I do...those bad things I don't want to do I find myself doing...the good things I want to do I don't do." You see now in chapter 8, he says, "Listen. There is a new law operating." These two are struggling against each other. What he's saying is that progressively you ought to be surrendering more and more to that new law. But he doesn't expect perfection to begin with. Remember I told you it's a process. That's why sometimes we get down on ourselves more than God gets down on us! I really believe that. Because sometimes we expect perfection of ourselves, and God doesn't expect perfection of us! He only expected perfection of one—and that was Jesus—and He got it.

It is a growing experience. Let me illustrate it this way, all of you who are parents or grandparents in this room know the joy of watching a child or grandchild take their first steps. This is generally how it happens: when they get to be about 10 months to close to a year, they are operating under the old law of crawling around on the floor but then decide they want to operate under a new law of walking. So usually, Mom or Dad will get down on their knees and the other parent will hold the child and they'll say, "Come to Daddy! Come to Mama!" And have you ever noticed that when the child takes its first steps it is so excited? They have this big grin on their faces. They look like a little Frankenstein walking because they walk so stiff-legged! I don't know of any child anywhere who could walk immediately. Most children take a couple of steps and then fall. Now when that child falls, do you as a parent or grandparent go over to the child and say, "You sorry loser! You're such a failure! You'll never walk!" No. You don't do that! You pick them up and say, "Let's try it again." To begin with, the child is going to fall more than they walk, but hopefully as they proceed, they'll walk more than they fall. And you know, folks fall at all ages, right? In fact I understand that as you get closer towards the end you even fall more. But you're going to walk more than you're going to fall. The Christian life is a growing experience and you may fall some, to start with, but as you grow spiritually, you're going to walk more than you'll fall!

You see, the Christian life is a series of ever-increasing challenges and demands because walking isn't the only challenge you have in life. I remember a few years after my daughters walked, they were ready to learn how to ride a bicycle. I put them on a bicycle and you know, they didn't ride it the first time—they fell over—but I didn't say, "You old sorry person, you, you'll never ride a bicycle!" No. I picked them up and said, "Let's try it again!" We put the training wheels on for them until they finally learned, and we took the training wheels off. You see people still fall off bicycles, but a good bicycle rider is going to stay up more than they fall! When I say the Christian life is a series of ever-increasing challenges it's like when my youngest daughter, got her driver's permit. One Sunday night after church, I said, "Laura Grace, I want you to drive home." Now she's a very wonderful, safe driver—but when she was just beginning she wasn't very good. In fact, that first night, driving home from here to our house was a pretty dangerous experience. I prayed a lot! I got right with God. We saw parts of the road we'd never seen before. In fact, and this is no lie, when we drove up to our house there was a car that had been following

us for about a half a mile and he just stopped in front of our house after we pulled into the garage. I didn't know who it was, so I walked up to his car and said, "Sir, can I help you?" He said, "Yes, I'm an off-duty police officer and I just wanted to know if somebody was drunk driving that car!"

But today, she is a good driver. When she was just learning, do you think I was angry with her? No. I had patience. And the point I'm trying to make is some Christians live in chapter 7 of Romans and only occasionally visit chapter 8. That may be true of spiritual infants. But as you grow as a Christian, you ought to spend most of your time in Romans 8 and only occasionally slip back into Romans 7. Where do you live most of the time? Do you know what my job as a preacher is? It's to get you from living in chapter 7 in Romans and get you to take a permanent spiritual residence in Romans chapter 8, operating under the law of the spirit of life.

III. NOT CHARGED WITH MY SIN! (3-4)

1. The law required what I couldn't give

Here's the third "knot." Number one, we're *not* condemned for our sin and number two, we are *not* constrained to sin, and number three, we are *not* charged with our sin. When you are arrested, the arresting officer says, "You are under arrest...and here's the charge." Well, I want you to read chapter 8, verse 3: "For what the law was powerless to do, in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He (that is Jesus) condemns sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us." What that means is you and I were facing a capital charge and that charge is sin against the Holy God. And God says, "Here's the law...have you lived up to the law?" And our response is, "No sir, no, your honor, we have not lived up to the law." The law required something you or I couldn't give. The law required something I couldn't give, and that was perfection, and I stand guilty as charged! Now when it's said in verse 3 "...what the law was unable or powerless to do through my sinful flesh," God did it anyway.

2. The Father sent His Son to offer Himself for me

When I was just a teenager and serving a little church down in south Alabama, we had this sweet, dear lady who was just a saint. She told a story one time that I think explains that verse better than anything I ever read in a commentary or learned in seminary. In order to understand this story I want you to know that in the "olden days," women used to cook! There was a time when they used to cook. Well, this lady's sister, Wiggins was her name, was cooking a pork roast one day and she overcooked it because time got away from her and when she pulled it out of the oven she took a fork and put the fork in the roast to pick it up and put it on the plate. But, she said, "I couldn't do it." The problem wasn't with the fork; the problem was with that meat, because it was falling apart, it was so loose. She told us the law was like that fork—a perfectly good fork, but that roast was like our sinful nature. But what the law was unable to do, she said, "I took a spatula and stuck it under the roast and picked it up and put it on the plate." That's a picture of what the law was unable to do because we were sinful flesh and then God came along and the spatula becomes like his act of salvation/incarnation, He sent his son to do what the law couldn't do for us. That's the second statement I want you to notice when it says we are not

charged. The father sent his son to offer Himself for me. The father sent his son to offer Himself as a sin offering. The scenario is this: we stand before God guilty as charged, but the Lord Jesus comes and steps in and He says, "Father, it is correct. He or she is guilty. But I choose to take their punishment. I offer my life for their lives and they become my sin offering."

There is some powerful truth in chapter 8, verse 3, it says, "Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh (that doesn't mean He came in sinful flesh—it was like sinful flesh but He didn't sin)." It doesn't say He came in the "likeness" of flesh, because it was real flesh. What it means is that in every way I have been tempted and every way every person in this room has ever been tempted, Jesus experienced the exact same temptation. But He never gave in to it. He was sinless. He is the only one who ever met the requirement of the law. It was fulfilled in Him. That's why it says in Isaiah, chapter 53:5, "He was pierced for our transgressions." He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment of our peace was upon Him and with his wounds we are healed. What that means is Christ took our sins and took them out of the way. So we are not charged for our sin. Most of you are familiar with the beautiful hymn; "It is Well With My Soul." Many of you know the story behind the hymn; Horatio G. Spafford wrote it as he was sailing over the Atlantic Ocean to be reunited with his wife after his daughters had died at sea. To know that makes the words more meaningful. But to me, the best verse in that whole hymn is the third verse that says this; "My sin. Oh the bliss of this glorious thought. My sin—not in part but the whole—is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Oh my soul." Any born again believer can say, "I am not charged with my sin."

IV. NOT CONTROLLED BY SIN! (4)

Now those are three pretty good "knots." The devil can't untie them. I'm *not* condemned, I'm *not* constrained to sin, I'm *not* charged with my sin, but there's one more, number four. He says, "I am *not* controlled by sin." Look at the last part of chapter 8, verse 4, just the last 2 or 3 lines, where he talks about spiritual Christians; "...who do not live according to the sinful nature, but according to the spirit." What that means is that there is this old nature at work (chapter 7), but also a new nature at work, the Holy Spirit who lives within us. As a spirit-controlled Christian what you must do:

1. A Spirit-filled Christian chooses to say: No to the urges of the sinful nature

Number one, you must say "no" to the urges of the sinful nature. How many times do you have to say that? Every day, every hour, every 30 seconds...I don't know, it just depends. You have to keep on saying "no" I'm not going to give in to this temptation, "no," I'm not going to think that dirty thought, "no," I'm not going to drink, "no," I'm not going to eat that, "no," I'm not going to give in. You have to just keep saying "no, no, no."

2. A Spirit-filled Christian chooses to say: Yes to the impulses of the Holy Spirit

But at the same time, a spirit controlled Christian is one who chooses to say, "Yes!" to the impulses of the Holy Spirit. I choose to say, "Yes," to let the love of Jesus be exhibited in my life. I choose to say, "Yes, Holy Spirit, give me the peace of Jesus." I choose to say "Yes" to the

patience of Jesus—to the goodness of Jesus—to the gentleness of Jesus. I choose to surrender to you, Holy Spirit who lives within me! You and I, as Christians, still have that choice every day.

The problem with some people is they think they can't get over the law of sin and death. Let me demonstrate: There's a physical law I would like to demonstrate. Look at me, I've got a set of keys here and I'm going to let these keys go, and I want everyone to tell me out loud what law we'll see in effect! Right! The law of gravity! Everybody knows about the law of gravity. Ever since the apple fell on Newton's head we have understood there is a law of gravity. Now, since the beginning of man's history people have wanted to do something about that law of gravity!

The question of the ages is, "Can man fly?" You remember in Greek mythology the story of Daedalus and his son, Icarus? Daedalus fashioned feathers into wings held together by wax so they could escape from an island, but Icarus flew too high and close to the sun according to the story and the sun melted the wax and he fell to the earth and died. Since the beginning of time, man has fostered a dream to be able to fly! There's just been one big problem, and that's this thing called gravity. It wasn't really until the 20th century that some people decided there is another law that can override and supercede the law of gravity and that's called the law of aerodynamics. To illustrate how an airplane flies...it's real simple...just take a strip of paper and blow on top of the paper and you'll see the power of gravity overcome when the paper goes up instead of down when I blow on top. There's a law of aerodynamics that says \ "when wind is going faster over the top of a surface than it is below a surface something called 'lift' is created." That's all an airplane wing is; it's flat on the bottom and curved on the top and as it goes through the air, the air going faster over the top than over the bottom produces "lift." Now that law has always been in existence in this universe, but it wasn't until December 17, 1903 that Orville and Wilbur Wright really applied it. They took a little rickety aircraft weighing only 750 pounds total: passenger, engine and the airframe. Orville Wright flew for 12 seconds! They made 3 more flights that day and Wilbur flew 59 seconds—a world record!

Like a lot of you, I have gotten on board a 747 jet that, as it's running down the runway weighs 300 tons. But that jet takes off and flies for 11 hours to the other side of the world. Do you know why? It is only following the law of aerodynamics. There is a law of gravity that can be overcome by the law of aerodynamics. You may say, "so what?"

Illustration: The law of aerodynamics is worthless unless you choose to fly!

Did you know the law of aerodynamics is worthless unless you choose to fly? It doesn't mean one thing to you, unless you decide you're going to the airport and get on an airplane. For you, there is no law of aerodynamics; there is only the law of gravity, because you choose not to fly. Another question of mankind through the ages, along with "can a man fly?" is also the question "Can a man or a woman be holy?" Can a man or a woman live godly? The reason we can't is because of that old law of sin and death—I call it the "gravity of depravity" but there is the law of the spirit of life that can overcome it and yes, my friend, you can soar above the sin and you can live holy and righteously.

Application: A life of holiness is impossible unless you choose to yield to the Holy Spirit.

Here’s the application; a life of holiness is impossible unless you choose to yield to the Holy Spirit.

This message is for Christians, and if I could say a little magic formula or push a little magic button for every Christian do you know what that would be? It would be that you would stop living in Romans 7 and start living in Romans 8—because it would change your marriage, it would change your job, it would change your family, it would change your attitude about life, it would change everything. And it is your choice.

OUTLINE

I. NOT CONDEMNED FOR MY SIN!

"In Christ" I:

1. Am declared righteous (positional)

... and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Philippians 3:9

2. Desire to do right (practical)

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. *Ephesians 2:10*

II. NOT CONSTRAINED TO SIN! (2)

1. The old law bound me (sin and death)

2. The new law frees me (Spirit of life)

III. NOT CHARGED WITH MY SIN! (3-4)

1. The law required what I couldn't give

2. The Father sent His Son to offer Himself for me

IV. NOT CONTROLLED BY SIN! (4)

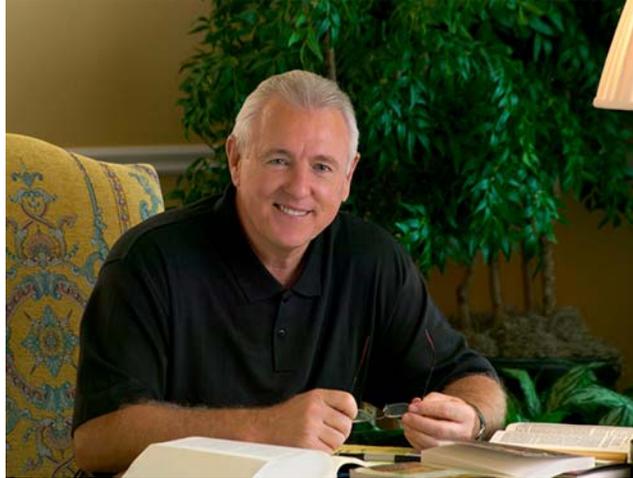
A Spirit-filled Christian chooses to say:

1. No to the urges of the sinful nature

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Illustration: The law of aerodynamics is worthless unless you choose to fly!

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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes