

## *No Condemnation*

(Some thoughts with Dr. Joel Crichlow)

In Romans 8:1 we read: “*So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*” (New Living Translation, NLT – all scripture references are from the NLT).

The use of the clause “now there is no condemnation” indicates that there was a previous state or is a current state of condemnation under which we all fell or fall. That condemnation arises because we are all accountable. We are accountable because we have a creator, God, to whom we all must answer.

The majestic and awesome God of the universe created us and through His actions and messages indicated that He desired a relationship of love with us. In 1 John 4: 8 we read: “*But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*” In Psalms 86: 5 we read: “*O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help*”. And in Genesis 3: 8 we read: “*When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. ...*”. God in His relationship with Adam and Eve was visiting in the garden to converse with Adam and Eve, albeit to have a serious conversation.

Adam and Eve had just disobeyed God, they had sinned, and thus fractured their wonderful relationship with God. They began to suffer the condemnation due to their guilt and to experience a separation from God. We as children of Adam and Eve have inherited that sin nature and the resulting condemnation and separation from God. We read in Psalm 51:5, “*For I was born a sinner— yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.*”

In order for us have a vivid realization of our sinful condition, God gave us the “ten commandments”:

These commandments are recorded in Exodus 20:3-17:

*“You must not have any other god but me.*

*You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. <sup>5</sup> You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods ...*

*You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God ...*

*Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy ...*

*Honor your father and mother ...*

*You must not murder.*

*You must not commit adultery.*

*You must not steal.*

*You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.*

*You must not covet your neighbor’s house. You must not covet your neighbor’s wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.”*

These commandments were given to us by God through Israel's prophet Moses. Subsequently they have sometimes been referred to as the Law of Moses. As we examine them closely we find that we are all guilty. We are all living examples of the scripture: Romans 3:23, *"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."* We are all under condemnation and separated from our creator, God. We have already begun to reap the wages of our sin: Romans 6:23, *"For the wages of sin is death, ..."*. Death – as in separation from God. A separation that unless repaired will continue forever. It is a separation that manifests itself in our wicked deeds, our guilty consciences, our troubled minds, and our restless souls. The scripture says we are dead because of our disobedience and many sins (see Ephesians 2: 1).

But how can that separation be repaired, since we as sinners, in spite of our best efforts, continue to break God's laws? God in His love provided a way. In Romans 8:3 we read: *"The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins."*

*"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3: 16). Jesus, Son of God, took the wages of sin – that death, that separation – on our behalf. *"He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit."* (Romans 8: 4)

When we come to terms with our sinful condition, despise our sin and accept what God in His love has done for us, we can enjoy the glorious freedom that Jesus died to give us. Accepting what Jesus did for us also means receiving the gift of the blessed Holy Spirit (the third member of the triune God – Father, Son, Holy Spirit). We are now blessed with the privilege to follow the Holy Spirit and live every day without condemnation.

But what happens if we still sin? Well that "if" should be a "when". Repenting of our sins and receiving the Holy Spirit does not make us perfect. We are forgiven, and we have the righteousness of Christ. We are now sincerely seeking to please God. We are following the Holy Spirit who will help us in changing the way we think (Romans 12: 2); who will convict us when we sin. And when we are convicted we will confess our sins knowing that God *"is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness."* (1 John 1: 9).

In summary let's meditate on and treasure the following:

Romans 5: 15-17: *"... there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule*

*over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ".*

Romans 8:1-2 (NLT) *"So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death."*

Now that we have accepted God's gift of righteousness, our relationship with God has been restored, the separation has been repaired. There is no condemnation, no longer death but the gift of God of *"eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."* (see Romans 6: 23).