

Amazing Grace Salvation Project

NO Condemnation Sermon!

What? When? Why?

Find out why God isn't mad at you anymore!

Romans 8:1

Hello! My good friend gave me an anonymous cassette sermon from the seventies, years ago. An edited version of the sermon has been transcribed and is provided below. The message has revolutionized our lives with the Lord's marvelous grace! Every time we listen to this challenging and inspirational message, we are so blessed! We hope you will be too! Contact us if you are interested in other great resources regarding salvation and eternal security!

Disclaimer: I Gary Aronson, am solely responsible for the written and audio portions of the Amazing Grace Salvation Project. All opinions expressed in the project are completely mine and may not represent anyone else's personal doctrinal views--they are totally my own. This includes Chtistos Institute and the anonymous speaker in the sermon.

Audio version of No Condemnation sermon is available through our Website at:
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NO CONDEMNATION SERMON--

I heard this happened in Texas (I wouldn't put it past Texas)--that a brother jumped up in the middle of the service and gave a prophesy that went something like this: "Thus sayeth the all-knowing, omniscient God, as far as I know I have nothing against Thee". I think a lot of us live in our Christian experience with about that much security, with about that much confidence in the way God receives us.

I'm coming this evening to an area of the scripture that is pastoral in a sense, but is of incredible importance--Romans chapter 8. Romans 8 is fraught with so many memories for me

because as a young evangelist, barely surviving from one meeting to another, I was canceled in a week of meetings that were scheduled in one of the largest churches in the area, and was I ever needing that week and was I ever anticipating it. My wife and I were hoping, for one thing, to be in a fairly secure place to stay. In fact, about four weeks before that we had been in a church where they had put us in a nursery to stay (a little couch that made into a bed that when we opened it was filled with cookies and crayons that all the nursery kids had left) and then informed us that we were to take our daily baths in the baptistry. So we became about the most baptized people-- you've heard about the expression our brother shared with you about baptism today, well I don't know anyone that has been baptized as much as I have after that 10 day meeting. So we were really counting on this particular church—maybe they would put us in a motel of all things, we hoped. But, I was canceled by a very fearful flock leader in this great congregation. It wasn't because of some suspicion of moral infidelity. No, I had simply preached in a neighboring church on Romans Chapter 8 on the security of the believer. And what was the accusation that was being made? Was it heresy or some kind of doctrinal unfaithfulness? Not really. It was simply stated I was being accused that I was close to teaching the eternal security of the believer in Jesus Christ. And we all know, God forbid, that Christians should be secure. I mean, that would upset everything. Incidentally, two other brave pastors had heard that particular ministry and went to this particular fearful flock leader and persuaded him that he was mistaken about the message. And so he reinstated our invitation to come. While incidentally, he went elk hunting--so much for fearless flock leaders and flock protection.

I come to this chapter with a great deal of apprehension; and felt somewhat of agony as the Spirit directed attention to this passage this evening. I learned a long time ago to do just exactly as the Spirit directs without questions. I think it would be good if you would now stand and we read together these verses beginning with the first verse through verse 11 of the 8th chapter of the book of Romans.

"There is, therefore, now NO condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could never do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh that the righteous requirement of the law would be

fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For those who live in the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh; but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God nor in deed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

But here is the answer now to all those proceeding verses. I know of no section of the scripture taken more out of context than these verses that proceed this. Saying, that our confidence in Christ is something about how spiritual we are. No. Here’s the answer to what he’s been saying about flesh; now get it straight. You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in you; and if anyone doesn’t have the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. But if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit of Him who dwells in you. And may God bless you with His Word. You may be seated.

The seventh chapter of Romans is a particularly important passage. Martin Lloyd Jones says most of the problems in the Christian life come from a wrong understanding of the seventh chapter of Romans. And I believe that. Most of us don’t like that chapter. Many people try to put it somewhere else. They don’t like it after the sixth chapter, because the sixth chapter speaks about sanctification and most people don’t believe that you would talk after sanctification about what you do in the seventh chapter which is a life that’s not going where it ought to go. The word “I” appears 28 times in the seventh chapter and all of us know that passage, “The good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do. If then I do that which I would not, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.” Now most Christians want to say, very argumentatively, now that’s not a Christian experience. I agree. It’s not a Christian experience, as an adjective, but it’s an experience, all Christians experience.

The key thing about the seventh chapter is that you have to deal with it in two ways. First of all, not as liberalism does, by denying the flesh/spirit struggle, by waiving a magic wand and eliminating the struggle all together, by just saying it doesn’t matter. But you also must reject the unreality of a sinless perfectionism—a legalism which denies that there is a real live tension in the

believer's life between flesh and Spirit. What are we to do? The chapter tells us. We end it by clinging to the victory of a new marriage. The law won't die, but we die to the law and then we are free to be married to another, even to Christ Jesus. And that's not a cop-out from performance, and it's not a justification for our sinfulness, but it's the acknowledgement of a victory. I thank God through Jesus Christ--the wretched body of death, the unrelenting weakness in spiritual things and the will of God, the abhorrent sin and the battle within, willing good, but performing evil. Thank God through Jesus Christ, "through relationship", not law! It is solved.

Then we come to this verse, Romans 8:1, and therefore, now, NO condemnation. Now the "is" is in the translation. It isn't in the original manuscript. No friend, it's not a sentence, it is not as well-planned and as academic as that. It's ejaculatory and spontaneous and exclamatory: "Therefore Now, NO Condemnation," Paul says. And the word NO is in the Greek *ouden*, O-U-D-E-N. It's a very emphatic word; and it's the first word in the language of the original Greek New Testament. Condemnation is in every sense out of the question. *Ouden* is perhaps the strongest word that can be brought to bear in this passage. It's not the ordinary Greek word used for 'no' or not. It's an emphatic form; and it's even more emphatic in that the original language it comes first. That's almost incredible for those who have studied the original language of the scriptures. Jesus Christ is around us and we are in Him according to verses one through four. The Holy Spirit is in us and interceding for us according to verses five through 27. God is for us and is greater than any other power--the word ends with this passage beginning in verse 28. The Trinity is the guarantee of our position and of our hope. Now the Greek language, like the French language, has a special negative. It's not just, "there is not," but it would be read, "there is not one or there is not any." In fact Dr. Barnhouse has suggested, out of this passage, in order to bring the strength of it into translation you should translate it "Not any therefore now of condemnation can be to those who are in Christ Jesus". All of know that when God says something to be true or positive, then it is true. In the book of James Chapter 5 it says that you should let your nay be nay and your yea be yea. That's to us, but we believe that of God. We know that if God says that it's true, it's true; but do you also know that when God says that a thing is negative you can be very very sure that it's negative. Jesus uses this rare Greek double negative on 46 occasions. In our translations you couldn't distinguish it, for example, in Matthew 24, where the passage says, "My Word shall not pass away". That's one of the instances of this double negative. It really ought to be translated,

"No, never, it is impossible for My Word to pass away". Friend, I need you to hear this promise. How vain would any force be to disclaim a declaration of the Lord that's that emphatic. Romans 8:1 is exactly that for us to know, it's a special negative, it's an emphatic denial, it's a moral impossibility. One translator says, the Greek should literally be read, "Not a wit therefore of condemnation can ever be to those in Christ Jesus". J. B. Phillips, catches the spirit of the words in his translation, "No condemnation can now hang over the head of those who are in Christ Jesus." And the beautiful and true New English Bible picks up the drama by emphasizing the finality and here is the way the New English Bible reads, "The conclusion of the matter is this: There is NO condemnation to those who are united with Christ Jesus because in Christ Jesus, the life-giving law of the Spirit sets a man free from the law of sin and death." I like that. The conclusion of the matter is this: That's it, period. Final. "NO Condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus".

I was studying this passage one evening, there were two college students in the living room (while I was working on the sermon) and needless to say they weren't there to talk to me about the Bible. My daughter happened to be home that week-end. Nonetheless, I got so excited in sharing this. I went into the living room, also looking out for things at that point and said what I had just discovered. There's NO possibility of condemnation! One of these young scholars blurted out, "Well, that's incredible! That must mean that condemnation is always of the devil!" And I said, "Right on!" Exactly right. Know your enemy. Any victorious Christian relationship demands it. Always condemnation gives away the source. Always condemnation betrays the author in the Christian experience. God says, "NO! Not a whit of condemnation! It cannot be! It's out of the question!" Therefore, always when condemnation comes into the believer's life, it is always from satan—100% of the time.

Several years ago Hal Lindsay came to speak in our church. We have had relationship over the years. Most of you know him as the author of the "Late Great Planet Earth" and many other best-selling books. I had dinner with him; and as usual Hal and I were arguing about the baptism of the Holy Spirit—not arguing, discussing. Christians don't argue of course (they have intense moments of fellowship). And Hal had told me, he was writing a new book. I think I'm going to call it, "Satan is Alive and Well on the Planet Earth." It's been an absolute revelation to me because he told me about the death of one of the co-writers—one of the editors, and so forth. He told me what had happened in his own experience. Hal said, "I've moved away from my ultra-dispensational

position." When you start studying satan you realize that ultra-dispensationalism, that tries to end any super-natural works of God at the time of the apostles, leaves the Christian in a jam because you've got a supernatural devil who is very active, but God stopped working 2,000 years ago <NO WAY!>. So Hal had abandoned that very quickly. He said, "I have that last chapter in my book, on the baptism of the Spirit, and I want you to read it, so I am going to send a manuscript to you and he did so. I read it. I was very impressed with it; although I disagreed with a lot things. I sent him a four page letter to talk to him about his theology a little bit--also to tell him how I appreciated what God was doing in his life. But I said these words to him, "Hal Lindsay, in the middle of this book is the most important chapter that I've ever read to Christians in my life. It's probably the most significant thing that has been written as far as I'm concerned in conventional contemporary devotional literature. And the tragedy is most Christians will never read it because it's in a big thick book and the subject will scare most Christians away. They'll never get to it. Would you consider taking that chapter out and printing it as a separate little booklet so Christians will have an opportunity to read it? He subsequently did so. It's a little teeny booklet called, "The Guilt Trip." You can get it in any Christian bookstore. It's been reprinted and sold by the hundreds of thousands. It's the center chapter of the book, "Satan's Alive and Well on the Planet Earth". And Hal begins that chapter with these words:

"If you were the captain of an invading army you'd find out the weakest spot in the opponent's defense and you'd go in for the kill. Satan the arch enemy of the saints has a way of wiping Christians out. Over and over again he moves in on their blind side and steers them in the direction he wants. When a person becomes a true believer in Christ and is born in the family of God and out of the family of satan, satan loses. He's done everything he can to keep us blinded to the offer of forgiveness in Christ; but millions throw off his shackles and go from death to life and this absolutely infuriates satan. And each time someone responds to the Gospel it's a slap in his face. Hal continues by quoting CS Lewis. He says, "CS Lewis, in his amusing book the Screw-Tape Letters, satirizes the daily routine in Hell--the foibles and the headaches of hard working demons who are just putting in an honest day's work trying to fowl up Christians. And the most successful tactic the demons have to neutralize their enemies, the Christians, was to get them to dwell on their failures.

For once the Christians began feeling guilty about their performance in the Christian life, they were no longer a threat to satan's program."

I need you to hear that! In all the discussion we have about the next move of God and what God is going to do, you need to understand that! The strategy of the enemy--and hear me. He cannot cause you to backslide. He cannot change God's mind about you. He cannot send you to Hell. In fact, Hell is not open for business yet. And when it is, satan is the first one to be put into it. He's not the manager, he's the victim of Hell. But what you need to hear is what he can do and does do so effectively--neutralize Christians from their personal effectiveness by getting them to dwell upon their failures (their performance).

I don't have a clever outline for you this evening. It's spontaneous, but it's important. Now I know these services run long; and I really wrestle with this. I'd like to give you a nice little 20 minute inspirational devotional and send you home to the showers; but it's been a very serious part of my ministerial choice. I don't come here to entertain you. I come under a direct assignment of God after elders have prayed about our being here. It's the release of a message that God has put on my heart for this moment that has to happen; and that's got to occur. I can't fear the face of man or clock. So I need to share with you this strategy of the enemy versus what God says. It's the strategy of the enemy to eliminate your effectiveness and bring you into a place of condemnation--versus God's Word. I have three simple points tonight. They are taken out of the classic first three questions of elementary journalism. The questions of what, when, and why. And I want us to look at these. We've already begun looking at the first one--the 'what' of the issue. The roman numeral one if you'd like to say it that way.

Point I (What?)

There is NO Condemnation. What? NO Condemnation? What a happy privilege. What a blessed hope. All the dreaded past is blotted out. "Blessed are the people, David said, unto whom the Lord will not impute iniquity." David saw prophetically through the atonement of Jesus Christ. We should live in that freedom, knowing that the iniquity is not imputed unto us. Unfortunately, my experience with Christians has been the opposite. NO, emphatically, none, double emphasis, not a whit, condemnation is out of the question!!

Let me be personal with you. I could illustrate this point a thousand heart breaking times. One spring I was asked to teach in a very fine Christian training school. I'm often speaking around the world in these various training institutions, especially with young people in mind. There was a very fine young man in that school--handsome, athletic, unusually bright and sharp. He'd been a dropout from a very wealthy family. He'd become a hippy and had gotten involved in the drug culture. He had a promising university career before him; but at the bottom of drugs and promiscuity, he came to know Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. It was almost like a 20th century pauline conversion at the point of Damascus steel. He was hurried, by well-meaning friends, off to this intensive discipleship training program. Because of his alertness, he was unusual among his contemporaries, even at this school. He grasped things quickly. But amid all the warm home-made bread truth this young man had received ample daily doses of letter killing neo-legalism. A Christian does this, a Christian must do that, and always is this. When this young man came to consult and pray with me his eyes were ringed and hollow. And he said, "You know pastor, I am responsible for intercession. Nations hang in the balance of my willful choices. I must live above sin and all the necessary commitments I've made to other Christians." Then he sighed very deeply and he said that, "Sometimes I just wish I could stay asleep cause at least when I'm asleep I'm free from all the demands of my Christian life." I could have sobbed uncontrollably just listening to his words! But, it was a testimony I've heard thousands of times. I was so moved. No-one had ever told him Christian life is not more victorious when you are asleep!!

Romans 8:3 says that, "What the law could not do (underline it, make it emphatic) in that it was weak through the flesh..." Do you see that? It's not that the law was weak, it's that the flesh is totally weak at fulfilling the law. So what could not be done by flesh through law, God did. Would you underline that. He didn't talk about it, think about it, or say I think its a good idea. God did what could not be done in any other way! And He sent His own Son in the likeness of that flesh and on account of sin. And by doing that He condemned, or destroyed, sin in the flesh so that the righteous requirement of the law would be fulfilled in us who would walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:4). In other words, who would trust in the work of Christ and not try to be justified by our works. Here is what God is saying. The proof of the Christian experience is never works! It is not how righteous you are. It is not what your life-style is. It is not whether you drink, swear, smoke, spit, chew or go with those who do or abstain from those

things. It is neither in the abstinence or the performance. It is in relationship. Here's the proof Romans 8 says. The Spirit is in you and He is crying Daddy God, Papa God, Father God. Please listen. The thing that makes the difference is not performance. I'm absolutely convinced in many of our churches we have presented another Gospel. We have people clinging to a works oriented, life-style oriented Christianity who have never come to, and understand, the simple basic truth that I have fallen in my total weakness upon the adequacy of the mercy and grace of God and the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. But, when I have done that, He sends the Spirit within me and the Spirit begins to cry through my life Abba Father, Daddy, Papa God, and that which could never come by works or performance or acceptance by any other means comes in relationship. He is mine and I am His. Talk to most people about Christianity. They'll give you all kinds of ideas. Well, Christians speak in tongues. Christians witness or Christians read the Bible or Christians abstain from certain things or Christians look like this or they act like that. Always legalism, whether it takes the form of a ceremony or a concern or a theory, always enslaves the Christian. And what's even worse, it arms Satan with his greatest weapon--a club, by which he drives Christians into feelings of ineffectiveness and inadequacy and keeps them from moving in the authority of Jesus Christ. Hear me! Christ is enough. The blood is enough. Trust is enough. The foundation is enough; and there is not a whit therefore, ever, under any circumstance of condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus! What a wonderful word that is to know. That there can be NO condemnation by the law for we are dead to the law. Colossians 3 and Romans 10:4 says Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to those who believe. That condemnation can not come from the Father. For Romans 8:33 says, "the Father justifies". It is God who justifies. Those are self-canceling words. He who justifies can not condemn. And there can be no condemnation by conscience. For the conscience having been purged by the blood is freed from any such ability of condemnation.

Now you and I need to understand something. We are meant to soar like the eagles. It's a wonderful idea, the word soar. Sold Out And Radical. We are meant to soar like an eagle. In fact for our anniversary a few years ago my wife gave me a beautiful painting. It's actually a print. A signed print. It's an interesting one. It's a great father eagle leaving the nest and flying. And on the nest is the mother eagle and two eaglets. Which of course is representative of the way our family is with two children. I have that painting over my desk. We're meant to soar that way. The eagle face is God's very description of who we are to be. And I need to say to some of you that

isn't mockery with God. That isn't a charade--that kind of grand flight above the clouds victory. That's the destiny of the children of Jehovah God. Believers are meant to fly. Then why are so many with clipped wings? Why is there such earthly occupation. So much groveling rather than graceful flight? Why is there so much lack of the believers' victory--failure to overcome?

The one devastating word, without any fear of compromise, is the word condemnation. You and I need to understand so clearly that when the Word says the conclusion of the matter is there's NO condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, I want you to know how important that word 'NO' is. It's a small word; but can you possibly plummet its depths? There is NO condemnation. It is complete. It is total. It is absolute. If you are truly a believer in Jesus Christ, you are entirely removed from any realm of possible or conceivable condemnation. Now friend, it doesn't say no affliction. It doesn't say no temptation. It certainly doesn't say no conviction. It says, "NO condemnation". That's the "what" of Romans 8:1--NO condemnation to the Christian now. There never can be. If you were to but realize that and begin moving in that understanding, there would be a new authority--the possibility of the enemy's debilitating your experience would be gone. Not only is a Christian not in a state of condemnation now; but a Christian can never be in a state of condemnation. It is impossible. The law can't condemn. God will not condemn. Even conscience can not condemn. We are without condemnation. [What part of the word No do you not understand?]

Now most of you hear something like that, and you say, "No. Let me tell you the way I believe." I think that if a Christian is a man, who if he confesses his sin and asks forgiveness, is forgiven and at that moment he is not under condemnation. But our reasoning continues--if he should sin again he is back once again under condemnation; and then of course if he repents again and confesses he's sinned again and asks for pardon he is cleansed again and therefore not under condemnation. But, if he is to sin again he is again under condemnation. This is our "yoyo" understanding of Christianity. It is down and up. A man is constantly passing from one state to another back and forth--condemned, not condemned, condemned, not condemned. I call this "spiritual daisy petal plucking"! He loves me. He loves me not. He loves me. He loves me not. He loves me. He loves me not. Even our carnal worldly law will not allow a man to be under double jeopardy. [You can't be convicted for the same crime twice.] But we constantly place believers not only under double jeopardy, but multiple jeopardy. No means never! Paul isn't talking about his experience, but his position, his standing, his status--oh believer take off the blinders. Take off

the deception of satan. The Word of God is declaring that when a believer has come into the position or the state of being justified, he can not be condemned. The two are self-canceling. If you are justified you can't be condemned. NO means never. And for the rest of you timid ones, may God bring you that word of confirmation.

The new English Bible brings the accumulating sense of Romans 8. The conclusion of the matter is this--consistently in the Book of Romans we have discussed for us the Holy Spirit's treatise on how the man comes to know God. You need to hear this. Romans 8 is not thrown into the midst of nothing; it's thrown into the midst of seven chapters of verse by verse treatise of the Holy Spirit telling you how you are justified and what it's basis is, and how you are sanctified and what it's basis is, and how you live the Christian life and what it's basis is. Romans 8 comes into the midst of that! It comes into the midst as specific. As one has said, prophylactic teaching--that which guards against infection and Romans 8 is the climax. In Romans 1, 2, and 3 the whole world is shown condemned and lost in sin, including those who thought themselves righteous by Law. In Romans 3, 4, and 5 condemned sinners are shown how to be justified and declared righteous by believing on Jesus Christ as God's total answer. Then in Romans 6 and 7 we have been told practical issues about sanctification in the believer's life. What's the remaining question after you've gone through those seven chapters? You know from your own experience what the question is. Will this divine method of justification and sanctification last? How can it be? There are not any works--there's nothing I have to do. It isn't involving circumcision and eating certain foods. It's not abstaining from certain lifestyles. How can this be? This divine method of justification--will it last? The whole burden of Romans 8 is the answer. If you are in Christ Jesus, you are saved. That is the answer of Romans 8. True justification and sanctification in Christ will last. It is eternal because it is based on God's provision and not my own unsatisfactory performance. God fulfills His own demands. Romans 8 is about security. To put it boldly as one writer does, "it's about preservation." We are preserved in Christ Jesus and that phrase actually appears in the first verse of Jude--preserved in Christ Jesus. Now Romans 8 will go on to speak about the choice of flesh versus Spirit. The flesh is to work after our own righteousness. That's not a Christian. It can't be. John 10:1 is the other side. Jesus spoke about sheep knowing His voice. "My sheep, He said, Hear My voice. I know them. They follow Me. I give them eternal life. They shall never perish. Neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hands." Jesus went on in that passage to say,

"He that enters not by the door of the sheepfold, but climbs up any other way, the same is a thief and a robber." How did you come in sir? By the simple, total debt clearing, clinging to the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ or by some other way? And notice the verb--"climbing up" by some other way. Romans 8 is a chapter about the Holy Spirit. He is mentioned 16 times in this chapter. What a contrast. In Romans 7, the word I is mentioned 28 times. In Romans 8, the Holy Spirit appears 16 times. I doesn't even appear in Romans 8:1-11--me only appears once, myself once. To walk in the Spirit--to be led in the Holy Spirit--is to totally reject doing it our way.

The conclusion, the subject, the "what" of the matter is that what Jesus said in John 5:24, "He that hears my Word, believes on Him that sent Me and shall not come into judgment [or condemnation], but has past from death into [everlasting] life". It's that simple--hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but has past from death unto life!! In fact, when Christ prayed concerning His own, He said as He spoke to the Father, "The Glory which Thou gave to Me, I have given them." (John 17:22) And He spoke in the past tense--I have given them, not I will, but I have. And this whole central section of Romans 8 is permeated with the idea of Christ's prayer in John 17. Paul says in Romans 8:18, "...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the Glory which shall be revealed in us." And down to verse 30 in Chapter 8 Paul says, "...whom He called these He also justified and whom He justified, these He also glorified." And Jesus says, "They shall never perish!" I'll tell you--you would put the fear in Hell tonight if believers would suddenly know their security. Hell has a neat thing going for it. Christians don't go into bars. There are all sorts of off limit places Hell has. The world is really safe. I'll tell you what is going to happen in this new move of God. God is doing a thing among Christians that helps them to understand that Jesus did not take them out of the world. He gave them authority in the world. And all the off-limits are going to be lifted and suddenly Christians are going to move into the world. What a panic Hell is going to be in when Christians in security move into their domain with the joy and victory and positive security in Jesus Christ. It is not only the "what" that we look at, but the "when".

Point II (When?)

When is there NO condemnation? When can this possibility so rich, this freedom so sought after, this absence so wonderful, when can it be possible? Most people will tell you, when you die.

The when is NOW. There is therefore NOW no condemnation. This great blessing is to be enjoyed in this present life. We are to walk through this world of sin and sadness with the assurance in our heart that we are forgiven. that our sins have already been judged--all of them--past, present, and future--and that the night of guilt has passed away and the day of peace has dawned in our soul. The Greek word, Nune (now), here--very interesting, present imperative in whatever context it's used--at the present time, forthwith. I need you to hear this. It's impossible for God Himself to find a flaw in the righteous position of any believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now I know you don't believe that. I mean, I can tell by the look on your face. I'm about to take some of your insecurity away. Linus, one of the Charlie Brown cartoon characters by Charles Schultz, had a security blanket. Most Christians have insecurity blankets. It is impossible for God Himself to find a flaw in the righteous position of any believer in Jesus Christ! Let me say it this way. This is an illustration I once heard and I love it.

If a stumbling drunkard went into a rescue mission one hour ago and he was made alive in Jesus Christ there is no condemnation for him, in this moment, even though his headache could continue for an hour. Do you understand, my friend, that when you become a believer you are buried in Christ Jesus? Paul's favorite word is "In Christ". In Christ! If I am in Christ--if I am His body, Him being the head--if I am buried, Paul says, "Baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ", then when God looks at me, He sees Jesus. At this very moment there can be NO condemnation because the finished work of Christ is total. Do you believe in the finished work of Christ? I sometimes hear us in our theology and teaching acting as though God is yet going to do something about sin. Oh God, I did it again. Please, if you can forgive me some way, search through heaven and find some mercy somehow--buried behind a tree or something, but find enough for just one more time--I promise I'll never do it again! What an insult to God! I want you to know that when Jesus Christ died on the cross it was total and God judged all the sin of the world. Hebrews says, "Once and for all! At the end of the earth He hath put away sin by the offering of Himself." Put it away!

I wonder what the world would do if Christians would finally get this straight. That God is not mad at the world anymore. I'd like to get a banner and put over every main street of every town. Hey friend, God isn't mad at you anymore! That's exactly what the Word says. He has committed unto us the ministry of condemnation? No! He has committed unto us the ministry of

"reconciliation" and Paul goes on to say, *God is reconciled to the world*. Nothing else is required--no works, no perfection. Paul says, "Now ask the world to be reconciled to God." In this chapter, he says it this way--how emphatic is this? In the later part of the eighth chapter of Romans he says in a sense of tongue and cheek and yet in another sense it's a broken heart. Paul says, "If God spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, how shall He not in Christ freely give us all things?" What more do you want? What more do you want? Paul is saying at the end of the eighth chapter of Romans, if God did not spare His Son, Jesus, but sent Him to the cross--if God is willing to do that, there can't be anything else in your life or my life or our existence that's beyond Him. He's done the ultimate. He's gone as far as anyone could possibly ask. He has put away sin through the offering of the blood of His only Son, Jesus Christ. When are we "above" condemnation? Now, if we are in Christ Jesus--immediate, present tense. Justification is connected to no condemnation. In fact, technically, you can study this in the original language. I don't need to make a big deal about this, but the eighth chapter really follows theology of the fifth chapter. Paul introduces the Holy Spirit. He says, "...therefore, being justified by faith.." so-forth and so-on and then ends when the Holy Spirit is poured out in our life and then we go into the truth of the eighth chapter. You have in Romans chapter six and seven an emphasis dealing with the established facts of our position in Jesus Christ. Justification is the act whereby which God declares an ungodly man to be perfect while he is still ungodly. Again, I don't think we understand this; but I need to say it to you. I need you to hear me. Just listen and go home and think about it. I need you to understand the truth of His Word. God describes the kind of faith that will justify you. Did you know that? It's not faith that moves mountains. It's not faith that claims things. He says that in order to be justified you must have the faith and belief in Him who justifies the ungodly. And the word ungodly is the strongest word in the original language--that's Romans 4:5 if you need the location of it. Ungodly means the most reprobate, the most obscene. You see it's the character of God that's involved. Paul makes it clear in the third chapter--he says, listen, "How can a righteous God be just and the justifier of them that believe?"

That's the question isn't it? How can He be righteous and yet justify the ungodly? The answer is, He has provided an offering that is sufficient--and a life (His Son's life) that has fulfilled the law. Thereby He can be both righteous and the justifier of the ungodly. And what faith does he require in you? The faith in a God who can justify the ungodly. You see, some of you

walk the streets of our cities and you don't believe that. That's why you are filled with hopelessness and despair. Your eyes are on the lifestyles. Your eyes are on the great issues that various churches and denominations have made. You know how most evangelicals, see people? They see people the way the blind man did that had been touched once. They see men walking like trees. Most evangelicals love souls, but they hate people. We're looking to chalk up more names on our spiritual gun holsters. But we are not really concerned about people. I watch evangelicals come into the city by the score--riding their spiritual white horses with their megaphones and tracts. They are going to tell everybody how to get their life right. And I never see compassion in their eyes and I never hear mercy in their voice. And they leave our city worse for their having been there. Do you believe in a God who justifies the ungodly? Do you believe in a God who can look at an ungodly world and say, "I'm not mad at you because in my Son there was a sufficient price paid?" Now all you need to do is to be reconciled to Me. Get in relationship with Me. I'll take care of the issues in your life. I'll take care of the bondages in your life. I'll take care of the lack of freedom in your life. I'll take care of the things that are like shackles on you. But all I ask for you is to accept what I have provided for you--to get in relationship with Me. In the power of relationship the life of Christ Jesus will set you free from the law of sin and the law of death.

Now, immediately, this instant. Are you living in freedom from condemnation? I mean, every moment of your Christian experience, knowing that if condemnation comes it has a source which is Hell--that you are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, not depending on your works or your righteousness or your activity, but based on who He is so totally. And I know if some of you grasp this, you'd swing like a pendulum. That's what preachers are scared to death of. That's why preachers like legalistic churches--pay your tithes or you go to Hell! That helps offerings, but it's terrible theology. We like to keep people insecure so they'll do the right things, we think. It's true. Most legalistic Christians who came to understand it would be like a pendulum swing. Some of them would go whoopee! But what you need to do is just stand back. It's like the whoopee of the kid who gets freedom for the first time. It will come back. He'll learn that that kind of misuse of freedom has a price within himself. But you don't change the fact to justify the end that you're looking for. The fact is, he is justified. There is NO condemnation. It is not on works, and that's now, even in his rebellion. If he's a believer, its now!!

Point III (Why?)

There is a "why" and I close. It's the why that makes it most understandable. The "what" is NO, not a whit, impossible, never can be, under NO condition is the believer in condemnation. The "when" is now, immediately--receive it, live in it, walk in it, breath it, take it's authority in it's standing. But the "why" is because we're in Christ Jesus. He is the refuge of our soul. God is our strength and our refuge. If you are in Christ you are as secure as Noah was in the ark. I get uptight with the evangelical church sometimes. To be in Christ is to be cleansed from "all" sin. To be in Christ is to be wrapped up in the center of the eternal purpose of God. To be in Christ is to be a branch in the true vine, fitted to bare fruit. To be in Christ is to be complete, for Christ has been made of God unto me wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. In Him I am not found in my own righteousness. I am clothed with the beauty of the Lord. If any man is in Christ he is a total new creation. Therefore, there is NO condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. It's impossible. These are the inevitable consequences of being in Christ. If I am in Christ what is His is mine. Because I am in Him, I share in what He has done exactly in the same way I share in what Adam has done. Why do you believe more in sharing in Adam's sin than you do in sharing in Christ's righteousness?!! You all believe a great deal in the Adamic nature. You demonstrate it a lot. But do you understand that if in Adam there is a fall. In Christ there is a total reclamation of all that has been lost--all has been restored. All that has been lost has been restored. Adam committed the first sin. We sinned with him. Condemnation came upon us because of it. But thank God the other is also true, that when Christ died I died. When Christ rose, I rose. When Christ ascended, I with Him ascended and am seated in heavenly places with Him, at this moment. I am in a marriage relationship with Jesus Christ. We are one. We are members of His body. We are flesh of His flesh. We are bones of His bones. Our relationship is fixed for eternity. I am in Christ Jesus and I reckoned myself to be in that position. We must cease to think of ourselves merely as forgiven, merely as believers, merely as holding on to Christ. The truth is that by the Holy Spirit we are in Christ--implanted in Him--planted together in Him; and as such we are to live in both the righteousness and victory and joy of our relationship in Jesus Christ.

Now I need to bring this into some very quick understandings and close. I am a simple believer in the power of the Word of God. I don't use a lot of illustrations generally. I don't particularly try to impress you with intelligence. There is a power to release people in the Word. We are not a word-orientated people in this culture. This is very obvious. But there is a power in the Word. I believe so much in the inevitability of one person. And that one person grasping a truth--and that truth so liberating. Not the words of a clever man, but of God--enlightened of the Holy Spirit it becomes life-changing. Once the Word is proclaimed in power and the Spirit of the Living God is present there is an arena of the miraculous right there. And where ever there is an arena of the miraculous, it is an arena of a battlefield. I'm never never never never frustrated when I'm aware of a spiritual battle when you preach a truth like this. I understand spiritual warfare in this moment. Because there is nowhere you are tackling the enemies greatest and most effective tools to keep the world enslaved and believers confused than in this area.

John Wesley is such an interesting case in point. In a small meeting, a far smaller meeting than this one tonight, a 35 year-old man came into that meeting. A man who had ministered himself for more than 13 years. He came in unwillingly to this particular evening. Let me let him speak for you, because that man was John Wesley. John Wesley writes in his testimony in the evening,

"I went in very unwillingly to a society in Alders Gate Street where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle of Romans. [Can you imagine that? Today if a preacher doesn't stand on his head and spit bee-bees and play violins behind his back you don't keep people's attention. Can you imagine standing up and reading the preface of a commentary by Martin Luther on the Book of Romans? Doesn't sound very exciting, does it? I am still reading from Wesley.] About a quarter before nine while he was describing the change which God works within the heart through faith in Christ I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ--Christ alone for salvation! An assurance was given to me that He had taken away all my sins--even mine! And He had saved me from the law of sin and death!"

John Wesley went from that place a new man. The historian Lecky says that John Wesley single handedly is responsible for saving England from the bloody bath of the French Revolution. Do spiritual things count? Yes. They change history. Do meetings count? Yes. They change individuals. Does the Word count? Yes! Not in those whose minds are so saturated by everything

else they don't hear it; but in the mind of the man indued (empowered) of the Holy Spirit, the Word becomes a dynamic. The key is changed. The shackles are broken and life takes on a different dimension.

Believe me. I have no idea what kind of battles go on in the heavenly here tonight. I have a dear precious saint in my church. She is a very crippled woman. She dedicates days volunteering in the office. She's a neat lady. But, because of her background, which I won't go into, this woman is under condemnation all the time in her life. I've been preaching in Romans now for two years and we are in the 13th chapter at this point. That's a lot better than Martin Lloyd Jones--he preached 14 years in Romans and he ended at the eighth chapter. Dr. Barnhouse never went to a pulpit on a Sunday morning that the text wasn't on Romans. He preached the whole Bible, but it always began in the Book of Romans. This dear woman was there. The Lord wouldn't let me off of Romans 8 for four Sundays. It was just like holding the nose of our congregation to Romans 8. She wrote me a letter and said that,

"At the beginning of your sermon yesterday when you were talking about no means no--it is impossible to be united with Christ and be under condemnation--I had to fight back from screaming out from somewhere within me. That you were spoiling everything for me. It was caught just short of being uttered aloud. I immediately realized it was the enemy and so I wrote it in my notes. And then at another time the voice said, 'These are lies', and I wrote it in my notes. And the battle kept going".

She later goes on to describe the victory the Lord brought her in that process. I have no idea what kind of arena of spiritual battle we've been going through here tonight; but let me just say something to you. Romans 8 declares that there is NO condemnation because Christ died for us. There is no defeat because the Spirit of God indwells us. There's no fear because God has become the Father of us. There is no despair because we know that our sufferings will reap Glory. How could there be despair? There's no calamity because no calamity can overtake us in Christ. We know that all things will be worked by him to our uttermost and ultimate good. There is no adversary, because God is for us and no one can be against us. And there is no separation from Christ ever, because God has set His love upon us in Christ Jesus.

Bruce Larson once said, "The church is geared more to harnessing people for some kind of Christian work than it is to help people find the resources of God to become healthy, whole, and functioning as a part of a new order in God." What an interesting idea! The reality of our engagement this evening is that God, by the Holy Spirit, wants not to harness you for some work. He wants to release in you resources to enable you to be everything and the uttermost that God would have you to be in Christ Jesus.

Would you bow your hearts with me for a moment? And while your heart is bowed with me and your eyes are closed, I want to just tell you a story. In World War II the highest ranking prisoner was General Wainwright. He had fallen in the Philippine Islands with his men. He had been taken captive by the Japanese. He was on that infamous walk at Bataan. Because he was such a high-ranking official, the Japanese prison keepers literally tortured that man with not so much physical abuse, but mental abuse--constantly assaulting his nationality, his country, constantly bringing him evil reports on a daily basis, assaulting him mentally. And as a result of this, General Wainwright became a broken man--mentally, physically, he was a shattered hulk of a human being, almost a skeleton and mentally had lost a great deal of the acumen that he'd been known for, the incredible abilities as a military leader. One day in the little camp where he was a prisoner, a light aircraft (a small plane) that was piloted by a commander in the United States Navy landed. The small aircraft "dropped in" on a little aircraft landing and because the American intelligence had absolute information, this young Navy commander went right up to the door of the little hut where General Wainwright was (this broken man) and he said to General Wainwright, "Sir, the allies have won. The Japanese have been defeated. The total victory of the allies is assured." He gave him a few more minutes of information about what had happened and then he went back to the light aircraft and took off. And when the Japanese prison guards came back, that day, to pick up where they had left off in torturing this man, they didn't know that he had received this information and they began again with their accusations and torment; and this small boney frayed, beaten man stood up to his full height and said, "**NO! I'm in charge here now! You'll take your orders from me!**" They had no idea that he had heard of the allied victory.

That's the kind of thing that happens when the Holy Spirit drops in, even on the lives of men and women who have been living for the Lord for years, but have been victims of the enemy's work. The Spirit "drops in" and brings you that word of liberty and truth and the Word finds a lodging

place in your life; and when the enemy begins the same trip that he's had in your life year after year, month after month, week after week, and he comes in again, you stand up and you say, **"NO! Never again! For there is therefore now NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus! And we are the victors and the conquerors in Him! Amen,**

What? When? Why?

NO Condemnation! Now! In Christ! --- Forever Saved!! Praise the Lord!!

This is the answer to satan's lies!! (Romans 8:1) "No, I'm in charge now!!" (in Jesus mighty name!)

"Thanks be to God for His uspeakable Gift!!" Jesus (2 Corinthians 9:15)