

# FREEDOM IN CHRIST

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Text: ROMANS 8:1-4

□ On January 6, 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt addressed Congress on the state of the war in Europe. Much of what he said that day has been forgotten. But at the close of his address, he said that he looked forward "to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms." He named them: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. These words are still remembered, even though their ideals have not yet been realized everywhere in the world. (Wiersbe, 538)

Just as many people were liberated in World War II by the Allied forces, as Christians, Jesus Christ too has liberated us from the enemy of our souls. Freedom is what Romans 8 is all about. In Christ we have been liberated from sin, Satan, and the condemnation of the law. When Jesus was condemned to death and crucified, it was for us! When He was raised from the dead, He was raised for you and me!

The victory He won over sin, sickness, and death was ours! When the grave lost its victory and death lost its sting--it was for us!

□ Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:55-57, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

As we look at our text we will see that every freedom we have, we have because of Christ. In fact, Jesus is the foundation on which all our freedom stands.

## **I. WE HAVE FREEDOM FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF OUR SIN (v.1).**

"Condemnation" is a legal term, and it expresses the judgment of God.

### **A. We did not begin our lives in this world free of condemnation.**

All humans are born under condemnation because of our inherited sin nature. This "sin nature" is present in us because of Adam. Also we know that no one lives in this world without sinning. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

**B. But notice how God deals with this condemnation -- He gives us a way of escape.**

There is "no condemnation" to those who are "in" Christ Jesus. Understand, it doesn't say we make "no mistakes," we have "no sins," or "no failures." It means we are not under the penalty of God's judgment.

The judgment, which this world order anticipates as occurring at the end of the age, has for the person in Christ already occurred. That judgment has been resolved in the forgiveness of sins; so, there is no condemnation. (Gause, 96)

**C. Our way of escape is through justification.**

"Justification" means that we have been declared innocent. "Not guilty -- let them go free." What would these words mean to you if you were sitting on death row waiting execution? Because of Christ, those words have been spoken on your behalf. If you are in Christ you are FREE! Why condemn yourself when God doesn't?

**II. WE HAVE FREEDOM FROM THE JUDGMENT OF THE LAW (vv.2-3).**

**A. The law of the Spirit of life has canceled out the law of sin and death.**

The "law" spoken of here is not merely referring to the Mosaic Law but also to a standard. The law represents the "standard of God." Because of our human weakness, it was impossible for us to live up to God's standard. The law could not save; it could only condemn.

But we are no longer subject to the old law of sin and death but to a new law -- the "law of the Spirit of life." This is a law of power! It is power to live a Christian life.

## **B. Jesus did what the law could not do.**

What could the law not do? It could not save us. How did He accomplish our salvation? He came in the "likeness" of sinful flesh. Why did He have to do it? Because of our sins. What means or method did He use? He bore our sins on the cross.

The "law of double jeopardy" tells us that a man cannot be tried twice for the same crime. Because Jesus paid the penalty for our sins and because we are in Christ, we cannot be tried twice or condemned.

□ In Who Will Deliver Us?, Paul F.M. Zahl writes:

“A duck hunter was with a friend in the wide-open land of southeastern Georgia. Far away on the horizon he noticed a cloud of smoke. Soon he could hear crackling as the wind shifted. He realized the terrible truth: a brush fire was advancing, so fast they couldn't outrun it.

Rifling through his pockets, he soon found what he was looking for -- a book of matches. He lit a small fire around the two of them. Soon they were standing in a circle of blackened earth, waiting for the fire to come.

They didn't have long to wait. They covered their mouths with handkerchiefs and braced themselves. The fire came near--and swept over them. But they were completely unhurt, untouched. Fire would not pass where fire had already passed.

The law is like a brush fire. I cannot escape it. But if I stand in the burned-over place, not a hair of my head will be singed. Christ's death is the burned-over place. There I huddle, hardly believing yet relieved. The law is powerful, yet powerless: Christ's death has disarmed it.” (Larson, 127)

## **III. WE HAVE FREEDOM TO WALK IN RIGHTEOUSNESS (v.4).**

The purpose of Christ's sacrifice is found in the A part of Verse 4. It says, "That the righteousness requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us."

### **A. Jesus made it possible to live up to God's standards through the power of the Spirit.**

□ Hollis Gause writes, "It is God's will that His law should be fulfilled because it is the revelation of His own holiness...To walk in the Spirit is to walk in a life indwelt by and which dwells in the Spirit of Christ. It is the character of life that obeys the law by inner harmony and not by circumscription."

□ As one translation renders v. 4, "Therefore, we, who do not live by our corrupt nature but by our spiritual nature, are able to meet God's standards."  
(God's Word Series)

### **B. It is possible to fulfill the requirements of God, but only through the Spirit and faith in Christ.**

The righteous demands of God are only met by those "who walk NOT according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

□ As Paul testified in Gal. 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

## **CONCLUSION**

So what we have learned from our text is that if we are in Christ there is no condemnation, no bondage, and the power of sin and death has been broken. Forget the idea that somehow you are to never fail, falter, or make a mistake. Stop trying to live by a set of rules or by other people's expectations. Stop letting the enemy beat you over the head with the past. If you need to repent, repent and go on in God.

□ Richard Hoefler's book Will Daylight Come? includes a homey illustration of how sin enslaves and forgiveness frees. A little boy visiting his grandparents was given his first slingshot. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit his target. As he came back to Grandma's backyard, he spied her pet duck. On an impulse he took aim and let fly. The stone hit, and the duck fell dead.

The boy panicked. Desperately he hid the duck in the woodpile, only to look up and see his sister watching. Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing.

After lunch that day, Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes." But Sally said, "Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen today. Didn't you, Johnny?" And she whispered to him, "Remember the duck!" So Johnny did the dishes. Later Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing. Grandma said, "I'm sorry, but I need Sally to help make supper." Sally smiled and said, "That's all taken care of. Johnny wants to do it." Again she whispered, "Remember the duck." Johnny stayed while Sally went fishing.

After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's, finally he couldn't stand it. He confessed to Grandma that he'd killed the duck. "I know, Johnny," she said, giving him a hug. "I was standing at the window and saw the whole thing. Because I love you, I forgave you. I wondered how long you would let Sally make a slave of you." (Larson, 89)

#### References

- Gause, Hollis R. (1986). *The Preaching of Paul*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway.  
Larson, Craig B. (1994). *Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.  
Wiersbe, Warren W. (1989). *The Bible Exposition Commentary. Vol.1*. Wheaton, ILL: Victor Books.