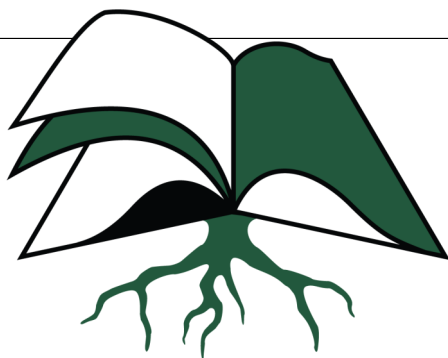


Pennsylvania Bible Teaching Fellowship
(End of) Summer Newsletter



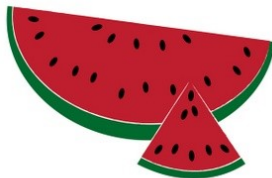
This quarterly newsletter is written to enhearten, encourage and inspire so that the Word of God may continue to grow and increase both in quantity and quality in the hearts of God's beloved.

*...receive with meekness the implanted Word,
which is able to save [deliver] your souls.*

James 1:21b WT



**SUMMER
2019**



NO CONDEMNATION

By Shawn Weir

The eighth chapter of Romans begins with a triumphant proclamation of Christian deliverance and liberty.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus

Glory to God in the highest!
As those who are in Christ Jesus, we have been assured: **No Condemnation**

The key to this verdict is being “in Christ Jesus.” Since God does not condemn Christ Jesus, neither does He condemn those who are in him. They are not condemned, they will not be condemned, and they cannot be condemned.

We are one with Jesus Christ and he is our head (**Colossians 1:18**), therefore we cannot be condemned. In him, we have been made one new person (**Ephesians 2:15**). In a court of law, you can’t acquit a person’s head and condemn their hand. So as joined to him, we hear the verdict of the entire church of his body: **No Condemnation**

Please also note, the result is not “less condemnation.” Our standing before God hasn’t merely *improved* in Jesus Christ., our state has been completely transformed, changed to a permanent status: **No Condemnation**



NO CONDEMNATION

In the King James Version, the rest of this verse seems to put a limiting condition upon this truth with, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” This is not in the original text. There are no conditions to our sentencing of “no condemnation” other than being in Christ Jesus.

The faultless one took our faults upon himself and paid the penalty of our sins for us. In doing so the greatest value exchange of all time occurred. In an act of perfect justice and amazing grace, we were made the righteousness of God in him (2nd **Corinthians 5:21**). In Christ Jesus and only in him, we’ve now met the qualifications for God’s righteousness.

We certainly don’t deserve this verdict of “no condemnation.” On our own we absolutely did deserve condemnation. We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (**Romans 3:23**). Yet, as those who are in Christ Jesus, God does not reward us according to our disobedience. God’s grace rewards us according to the obedience of His Son. Jesus bore the condemnation we deserved, and in him, we are found. As sure as he cannot be condemned, neither can we in him.

These righteousness truths are crucial for every son of God to lay hold of. Our opponent is called “the accuser of the brethren” (**Revelation 12:10**) and he is always slandering. Sometimes the lie comes by a public accusation, other times it may come from within our own heart.



NO CONDEMNATION

1st John 3:20 - 21

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

What assurance and peace this brings, especially at times when we may not *feel* very righteous and perhaps may *feel* very much condemned. In those moments, we can quiet our troubled hearts with the kindness of God's grace. Regardless of the ruling of my emotions, God's Word stands:

No condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus

Here in **verse 20**, the Greek words for “condemn” and “knoweth” are very noteworthy. The word for “knoweth” is *ginōskō* and it means to understand, to perceive, or to have knowledge of. The word for “condemn” is *kataginōskō*. The prefix *kata* means against, so this word translated literally would be “against-knowledge.” It means to find fault with, blame, or condemn because of a knowledge of evidence against the accused.

Consider these definitions in the verse; our own hearts may condemn us because they harbor some knowledge against us, but God has knowledge of all things!



NO CONDEMNATION

At times our hearts may bring up evidence of our sinfulness to try to persuade the court in our mind that we should be condemned, but we at that time can appeal our case to a higher court. God is an infinitely holier and more impartial Judge than the human heart and He never gives a wrong verdict. Your heart may hold some pieces of testimony against you, but God knows all things. There is no hope of hiding anything from Him.

Greater still is His acknowledgment of what his righteous servant did to justify you.

Isaiah 53:12 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Jesus Christ carried our sins on a cross. Whatever evidence there ever was or ever will be against us was nailed to his cross and we bear it no more. It does not hold you, it does not define you, it has no power over you because you are in Christ Jesus. Your heart doesn't have the authority to lay a charge against one that God has justified (**Romans 8:33**). God knows all things and He knows that his Son offered one sacrifice for sins forever (**Hebrews 12:10**). Hold His knowledge for you above any knowledge against you. This is confidence towards God.

The justice of God has justified you in Christ Jesus.



NO CONDEMNATION

There is a great record in the Scriptures of a man who had this kind of confidence towards God in a time that could have been one of his lowest moments of condemnation. That man is Paul and that moment is after a shipwreck onto a foreign island after two weeks of being tossed in the sea in hurricane-like conditions. He has unjustly been a prisoner for some time now and his company has been Roman soldiers, heathen sailors, and other serious criminals. They've just found out that they are about 600 miles off course marooned on an island with no idea how they'll get off. On top of that, it's cold and raining still. It's hard to imagine more physically challenging conditions, but all of this is compounded by what could have been a crushing truth: the only reason Paul is there in the first place is that he disobeyed God.

God had been clear with Paul that he should not have gone to Jerusalem and God revealed what would await him there if he did. Paul went anyway and found himself in chains just as God had said. Now bearing the consequence, Paul finds himself as a prisoner stranded upon a barbarous island carrying a bundle of sticks to a fire for a moment of reprieve to warm and dry himself.

Act 28:3 – 5 ESV

3 When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand.



NO CONDEMNATION

4 When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.”

How much more can a man take? All the weight of what we’ve just considered, and now a deadly snake just bit him. Paul looks down at the viper hanging from his hand and then hears a very timely word of encouragement. “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.”

Consider how Paul’s own heart could hold knowledge against him at this moment. They accused him of murder. Had Paul ever caused the death of anyone before? Yes. What kind of people did he put to death? Christians! Why is he on this island to begin with? He disobeyed God. If his own heart wanted to hold court, as this venom is coursing through his veins, it would seem an open and shut case: Guilty as charged! His heart could repeat in harmony with the islanders, “Justice has not allowed him to live.”

5 He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.

**God’s justice was that Paul would live,
that healed him, that made him righteous
in Christ Jesus.**



NO CONDEMNATION

God's justice sent a righteous servant to bare all of Paul's iniquities and that act of justice made Paul justified. As Paul himself wrote, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus

Sometimes the Christian can be tempted in low moments of life like this to think that some loathing and self-deprecation will be helpful. Often the thought is that this will help purge a sinful heart from ever sinning again. As our own heart begins to hold up evidence of knowledge against us, we might think that we need to repay for our sin.

We may get tricked to think that perhaps some form of self-prescribed flagellation as punishment and as a means of penance will counter the crushing weight of shame for our disobedience. These old lies can take many forms, but it is one of the least Christian things you can do.

Repentance from sin is a glory to God, but a heart wracked with guilt needs to acknowledge that God is satisfied with His offering for sin in Jesus Christ. Beating yourself up will not present an additional sacrifice for your sins, there is no more need for an offering for sin (**Hebrews 10:18**).

Additionally, those penitent works won't stop you from sinning again. God's justice wasn't for you to lay aside sins and weights by looking within, but by looking up unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith (**Hebrews 12:1 - 2**).



NO CONDEMNATION

In the Scriptures, all that we were formerly when we were without Christ is referred to as “our old man.” God’s solution was not to beat up our old man but to kill it. The islanders saw the snake on Paul’s hand and proclaimed him to be a dead man that day, but in his heart, he could know that there already was a day that he died.

Romans 6:6 - 7

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed [justified from] from sin.

The words “crucified with” are the same Greek word used in **Matthew 27:44** regarding the thieves who were on crosses to the left and right of Jesus. Paul used the same word of himself in **Galatians 2:20** when he proclaimed, “I am crucified with Christ.” This is how God wants us to see our old man.

Acknowledging this eternal truth is what gives us the efficacy to no longer serve sin. We are dead to it. There are then only two kinds of people in this world: those who are dead in sin and those who are dead to sin.

We who have been crucified with Christ are justified from sin.



NO CONDEMNATION

Also, Paul's disobedience to go to Jerusalem was after many years of standing faithfully for his Lord. Sometimes individuals will label moments like this as "backsliding" and speak ominously of "losing salvation." A question to be asked, "How many of my sins were in the future when Christ died on the cross?" All of them! We are both now and forever in Christ. We are not condemned, we will not be condemned, and we cannot be condemned. Paul was confident toward God and he held God's knowledge for him above any knowledge against him. He also wrote:

1st Corinthians 4:3 – 5 ESV

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

When you know how you eternally stand before God, man's judgments (including your own) become very small.

4a For I am not aware of anything against myself...

Can we think of any charges that could be brought up against Paul? This is the same man who wrote that he was the "chief of the sinners", but above that Paul knew:

1st Timothy 1:15b

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners



NO CONDEMNATION

Paul was dead to sin, crucified with Christ, and knew that this justified him from all sin. This is how confident the Christian heart can become in the justice of God's grace.

4b but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

Paul looked forward to the coming judgment of the Lord. God knows all things and one day all of those things will be brought into the light. All of our purposes and thoughts will one day be brought out and examined. For the Christian, that time is an opportunity for praise and commendation, because the sentence for our sin was settled nearly two thousand years ago when our Savior proclaimed, "It is finished." In the day when the Lord judges, our hearts will find assurance in the same truth that we can find great confidence in today.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus



UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>Event</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Details</u>
Area Fellowship	<u>October 20th</u>	At Messiah Village in the Community Room. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Weekend in God's Word	<u>November 16th - 17th</u>	At the Radisson in Camp Hill. Our topic will be the epistle of 1st Timothy .
New Year's Eve Fellowship	<u>December 31st</u>	At Messiah Village in the Community Room. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Area Fellowship	<u>January 26th</u>	At Messiah Village in the Community Room. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Area Fellowship	<u>March 29th</u>	At Messiah Village in the Community Room. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Day in God's Word	<u>April 18th</u>	At Messiah Village in the Chapel. Our topic will be the epistle of 2nd Timothy . A <u>Coffee House</u> will be available with live music later in the evening in the Community Room.

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