

10 Evidences of No Condemnation

by Richard Owen Roberts

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, but many people think they are in Christ Jesus without being born again.

Duration: 1:17:37

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:1-2, Romans 8:28, Romans 8:35-39

Topics: "Condemnation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his experience of preaching the gospel and witnessing the transformation of people's lives. Despite facing opposition and threats, he was called to pastor a church where most members were non-Christians. Through his preaching, he saw tears on the faces of some individuals, indicating their response to the message. He then invited anyone who desired forgiveness of sins to meet him, demonstrating the urgency of salvation. The speaker emphasizes the need for a revival and a reformation in the nation, where the mindset of the Holy Spirit governs people's attitudes and actions.

Transcript

Thank you for the privilege. I don't know anything more wonderful than the Gospel. It doesn't wear out, doesn't grow dull with age.

You never reach that place where you think, well, finally I've arrived. It is truly fresh every day, and increasingly precious as the years roll by. This week, it's on my heart to speak with you out of the Book of Romans, focusing upon Chapter 8. Now, what we are, obviously, is in a significant fashion shaped by our experiences of the past.

God uses the various incidences that occur in our lives to make us what we are. I am, obviously, old. There's no denying it.

My parents were truly converted to Christ when I was a boy of eight. Their lives were radically transformed, and throughout the rest of their lives, they lived to the glory of Christ and set a very profound example for my brother, my sisters, and myself. During the Second World War, one of the great focuses that was made by government was upon every person doing their part to win the war.

And one of the things that many were able to do was to raise victory gardens. As a boy of eight, I had begun working on a chalk farm during the summers, and soon was able to launch into victory gardening myself, and was quite successful at it. Grew so many vegetables that I went up and down the streets of our town, peddling vegetables, and earning what, for a boy at that time, was a goodly sum of money.

At the age of 12, I decided to take some of that hard-earned cash and to go to a summer camp the last week of the summer season. Sunrise Mountain Bible Camp in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York. During the course of that week, there was a strong focus made upon missions, and on the final evening, a call was sent out for all who would volunteer as missionaries.

And being deeply stirred and greatly interested, I stood and offered myself as a missionary. Now, during the course of that week of the camp being in the Adirondacks, there was a great deal of hiking around in the mountains. But a lot of the other kids were not in as good a shape as I was, being a victory gardener.

So, we would go on a hike in the mountains, and after a very short span of time, some of them would be asking for a chance to rest. And I was disgusted with all these kids who had so little vitality. And on one of these occasions, I sat down on a stump by myself, just feeling loathing for these students who could not properly climb a mountain.

But in my own ignorance, I never observed the fact that the stump that I sat upon was covered with poison ivy. By the end of that week at camp, I was in pretty bad shape. It was the last week of summer, and I couldn't go to school.

Couldn't even climb the stairs to my bedroom. My parents fixed a little couch for me in the dining room. And there I was for two weeks, faced with the fact that I had volunteered as a missionary.

And it became very, very clear to me that while it was appropriate to volunteer, that didn't mean that I was called. I wrestled day after day with the issue. And it was constantly every day thinking, God has not called you to be a missionary, but a preacher.

Now, I don't think it was a spirit of rebellion or unwillingness, but I kept saying to the Lord, You've made a mistake. I thought I could be a missionary because being involved in Victory Gardening, I thought, well, I could get some tracks, and I could go out to the mission field, teach people how to garden, and I could put a track in every bushel of beans that we grew, or every basket of strawberries. But the Lord kept saying to me, No, I haven't called you to be a missionary, but a preacher.

And I kept saying, Lord, it's not that I'm not willing. It's just that it's utterly impossible. It could not be.

For an actual fact, in school, if a teacher called upon me, I froze. I couldn't answer a question publicly. So, I was struggling.

But finally, it occurred to me, well, God wants me to be a preacher. He can do whatever's necessary to make me one. And at that time, God put a burden on my heart for revival.

I didn't even know what the word really meant. I just knew something urgently needed was grievously missing. So, the whole of my life has been focused upon the revival of true religion in the church.

The need is great and much greater now than it was in 1943 when I was called and burdened on the subject. But as I've said already, God in the course of our lives lays certain things before us that become

immensely urgent. While I was in college in the Pacific Northwest in the city of Spokane, Washington, the Methodist church was very short of preachers.

And I was asked to become a pastor of a Methodist church and quickly discovered that the people by and large hated me. I was in the city of Spokane one evening, and the pastor of a Presbyterian church in that city introduced me to Dr. Lewis Talbot, who at that time was president of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. And the pastor said to Dr. Talbot, this young man is preaching in a Methodist church and is in deep trouble.

Have you got any advice for him? And Dr. Talbot turned to me, looked me very carefully over, and he said to me, young man, if I were in your shoes, let me tell you what I would do. I would get the volume of the sermons of John Wesley. I would look for a sermon of John Wesley similar to something that I had already preached.

I would memorize that sermon, and I would say to the congregation, I have memorized John Wesley's sermon, and I'm going to give it to you today word for word just as he gave it. So the next Sunday, that's precisely what I did. I had been preaching on You Must Be Born Again, and I found a very powerful sermon of John Wesley on that very subject.

I memorized it. I stood in the pulpit and said to the people, this is John Wesley's sermon. And immediately, things turned around.

And the people said, if that's what John Wesley preached, that's what we hope you'll preach. And I discovered since then that there are an awful lot of people who say they've been born again who don't really have the faintest notion what it is they're claiming. Now, in the Romans 8 chapter, it begins with the glorious statement, there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

And what I have been observing now for a great many years is that the multitude of those who honestly believe they are Christians and that they are in Christ Jesus have never been born of the Spirit of God. In fact, it has become clear to me that there are five basic viewpoints of regeneration. There is the notion of baptismal regeneration.

There are those who believe in educational regeneration. There are those who believe in reformational regeneration. There are those who believe in decisional regeneration.

Then there's a little handful that believe in regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Now, I know all of us naturally believe in the correct view of regeneration, or at least we think we do. But if one has the wrong view of regeneration, what hope is there that they have the right view of Romans chapter 8 verse 1, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus? So, let's take just a moment to clarify and to be absolutely certain that our understanding of regeneration is right.

Obviously, most Roman Catholics believe in baptismal regeneration. As do many Lutherans and Episcopalians and those who belong to the Church of Christ, which is truly a baptismal regeneration movement. But strangely, even some Southern Baptists believe in baptismal regeneration.

Do you? Do you have any hope that having been baptized, that means you're a Christian? Well, I surely hope not, because if you do, you're in great trouble with God. More common among those who call themselves evangelical is confidence in educational regeneration. You get the children biblically literate, and that means then that they're Christians.

They sometimes focus upon train up a child in the way he should go. And when he's old, he will not depart from it. Well, I'm not in any way belittling that excellent text.

But one is not educated into the kingdom of God. I fear that there are some who talk about being born again, who don't even truly understand that there are two kingdoms, the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light, the kingdom of death and the kingdom of life, the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of heaven. And surely, no one enters the kingdom of God as a volunteer.

No one inherits citizenship in the kingdom of God. It cannot be purchased. It cannot be earned.

One is a citizen of the kingdom of God by birth and by no other means. So, educational regeneration simply doesn't work. Then again, there are multitudes who believe in reformatinal regeneration.

They have turned over a new leaf. Maybe some experience brought them to the reality of their own meanness and sinfulness. And they had some kind of an experience and they decided to do better and to live differently.

Well, now, just about all of us could do better and would be wise to live differently. But turning over a new leaf is not regeneration. But of course, the most popular error of our day in the church is decisional regeneration.

That a person becomes a Christian as a result of a decision they make. I am meeting persons who hold to decisional regeneration everywhere I go. Now, that poses some very great problems.

And it is, of course, a critical biblical issue. Some of you will remember the last portion of the second chapter of the Gospel of John. Let me refresh your memory in case you have forgotten.

There are three verses at the end of John 2 that seem to dangle in space. They don't actually fit chapter 2 because there are two major incidences in John chapter 2. There is the first miracle recorded in terms of Christ's ministry, the turning of water into wine at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. And then the second item in the chapter is the first cleansing of the temple.

Now, in the last three verses it says, there were many in Jerusalem that claimed to believe as a result of the miracles that they saw. But on his part, Christ did not commit himself to them because he knew what was in their hearts and because he didn't need anyone to testify concerning him. In short, people making a claim to faith based upon sight are rejected by Christ.

Now, this is tremendously urgent because the third chapter in the portion dealing with Nicodemus has Nicodemus coming to Christ at night, making essentially the same claim that the larger crowd made. Nicodemus said, no man can do these miracles that you do unless God is with you. Now, I ask this simple question.

Was Christ a grossly inconsistent teacher? Would Christ reject the claims of faith of a crowd and then turn around and accept the claims of faith of an individual because he was a prominent teacher in Jerusalem? No. No, of course not. If he rejected the claims of faith on the part of the crowd who were claiming faith as a result of what they saw, then indeed Christ would reject the claims of faith of the individual who said he believed as a result of what he saw.

Now, all of us, I trust, know that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Faith does not come by sight. Now, think of this simple but yet immensely consequential matter.

In John chapter 3, Christ is drawn a parallel between physical birth and spiritual birth. Now, look at me, young fellow. May I ask you a question? At what point did you instruct your parents-to-be that you wanted blue eyes? Now, wait a minute.

You've got blue eyes. Is that not right? Well, how did you get them if you didn't call for them? Can you believe that? How do you make a parallel out of a non-parallel if Christ is comparing physical birth with spiritual birth, and if in physical birth we have no input? We do not determine the size of our stature, the color of our hair, the power of our brains, the compassion that is ours by nature. We have nothing whatsoever to do with our physical birth, except we were recipients of life given to us and brought about by the act of our parents.

You see, what we're dealing with today in the church and why this is an immensely consequential issue is because a very high percentage of everybody who calls themselves a Christian in the American church thinks they became a Christian as a result of something they did. But if we have no input into our physical birth, it is absurd to think that we are the determiners of our spiritual birth. In the year 1957, I was invited by the University Park Congregational Church in Portland, Oregon to become the pastor.

I looked the church over before accepting the invitation, and it looked to me as if there might possibly be one Christian in the congregation. Turned out I was wrong. That person whom I thought might be a Christian proved herself to be otherwise.

But I was wrong in another realm as well. It was an elderly man who happened to be sick at the time that I was looking over the congregation and was not in attendance, but he showed up later after he had somewhat recovered, and he did prove to be a real Christian. So now here's a young fellow called to the pastorate of a congregational church that had never in its history had the gospel carefully preached.

So all of the officers, and all of the leaders, and virtually all of the members were non-Christians. Why they invited me can only be explained in one word. God.

They didn't like me. Some were so mad they threatened to kill me. But in the providence of God, on the fourth Sunday when I was preaching there as the regular pastor, I thought I saw tears on the face of two people.

One of them I was quite sure of. The other one I wasn't quite sure of, but hopeful. And I also thought I saw a tear, a single tear, on the face of a third person.

At the end of the service, I made this statement. I will be here in the sanctuary at three this afternoon. Anyone who can no longer live without the knowledge of sins forgiven is invited to meet me here at three o'clock.

I made that announcement earnestly hoping one would come. Instead, 13 came. So many that I couldn't do what I planned to do.

And so I gave a summary statement of the gospel. And then I said to the people who came, I would like to ask each of you to make an appointment with me for at least a half an hour sometime in the course of this next six days. You could come seeking my help, but I'll tell you something better.

You could come telling me how God had transformed your life. In the course of the next six days, 11 people came telling me that their lives were radically transformed. The other two never, in the course of the rest of the years that I knew them, ever gave any evidence of having been born again.

There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. But we are faced with the immense problem in America of multitudes of people who think that they are in Christ Jesus and that therefore there is no possibility of condemnation when there is no evidence whatsoever of their having been born again. I don't know to what extent any of you have thought about this, but in all the early years of this nation, the evangelical churches had a singular standard for church membership.

It was not always worded exactly this way, but the normal wording was, Membership in this church is severely limited to those persons who can provide credible evidence of regeneration. In this congregational church of which I just spoke, about the sixth or seventh week that I was there as pastor, I had a telephone call that went something like this, Harry Mendenhall here. My wife and I wish to join the church.

And I responded, Harry Mendenhall. I don't believe I know that name. Have we ever met? No.

Have you been attending services? No. Yet you wish to join the church? Yes. I said, do you wish to speak to me face to face about this? Yes, certainly, said I hope you would come to our home.

I said, when? Well, right now if you can. So I got directions and I went to their home. When I was seated in their living room with this man and his wife, I said to them, this church has never paid any careful attention to its own principles.

But in the constitution of the church it says membership in this church is severely limited to those persons who can provide credible evidence of regeneration. Can you? The man looked at me searchingly and he said to me, I am an attorney. I know what the word credible means.

I know what the word evidence means. I thought I knew what the word regeneration means. But I can assure you, I have no idea what those words put together that way mean.

Oh, well, then I said, you see, you're not eligible to join the church. Would you believe it? He got angry. He said, I thought churches were looking for members.

Oh, I said, some are, but I'm not. I'm looking to help people. And it would not be helpful to you to join the church.

Well, all right, you might as well leave. No, I said, wait a minute. You called me and asked me to come.

Wouldn't it be fair to give me an opportunity to ask a question or two before you dismiss me? Well, yes. What did you want to ask? I said, I don't get the impression that you're the kind of a fellow that makes a decision and then forgets about it. Well, no, he said, certainly not.

Well, I said, would you mind telling me why you decided to join the church? Oh, yes, I'll tell you. He said, my wife and I have both been married before and we're divorced. And we're now married.

We have two little girls. For the last couple of weeks, I've been bringing them to your Sunday school. Yesterday, this was a Monday when I was meeting with them.

Yesterday, when I brought the girls into the Sunday school area, the lady in charge was moaning because the piano player had just called in sick. And I said to her, I play the piano a little. Mind you're not things that are used in Sunday school, but if you had a book, maybe I could help you.

Well, she said, of course. Sit right down. The book is open.

And he said, I sat down at the piano and I began to play. Jesus loves me. This I know, for the Bible tells me so.

He said, I suddenly remembered. I had been to Sunday school once as a child. And that's the song they sang.

I came home and said to my wife, I want to join the church. And she said, yes, I want to too. So, he called you.

Now, I said, I understand what's taking place. Would you accept an assignment from me? What is the assignment, he asked. I said, I have a little book in my pocket I would like to ask you to master.

Well, what is the book? Oh, I said, it's an off print of the Gospel of John in the New Testament. And what do you mean by master? I said, to go over it so carefully that everything it says you believe and everything it calls upon you to do, you do. He looked at me and he said, I like the way you do things.

Give me that book. I handed him the book. I stood and said, I expect to hear from you again in the near future.

Within two or three weeks, the phone rang again. Harry Mendenhall here. Can you come immediately? They met me at the door.

Their faces aglow. And they said to me, we are prepared to provide credible evidence of regeneration. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation.

All things are passed away. All things have become new. There is, therefore, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

I wanted to start these messages on the book of Romans by specifically stating that you are only in Christ Jesus if you have been born by the Spirit of God through the Word of God. That's the message our nation desperately needs to hear. Let's turn then to Romans chapter 8 and focus our attention upon this incredibly powerful chapter.

And ask yourself now, with the greatest of care, have I truly been born of the Spirit of God? Do I have citizenship in the kingdom of heaven, not as a result of a decision I've made or as a result of having been educated or having been baptized or having turned over a new leaf, but because the Spirit of God has taken the Word of God and has literally transformed the whole of my life? Romans chapter 8. Now, this chapter provides immediately ten glorious evidences that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Let me lay these ten evidences out as I began the message this morning. Evidence number one, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus proven by the fact that the Spirit of life has already set us free from the law of sin and death.

Now, that verse is wonderful. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the

law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.

And as an offering for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. The first evidence that we are no longer under condemnation is that we make no effort whatsoever to save ourselves by keeping the law. Everywhere I go, I'm talking with people who are trying their best to be good, hoping that somehow if they work at hard enough and long enough, they'll be all right.

But Christ sets us free. He liberates us from all hope of earning salvation. He makes it crystal clear to us, even if from today forward, I could keep perfectly, every item in the law wouldn't do me any good, because I already broken up the law to be forever condemned.

He who has offended in the least point of the law is guilty of all. If at 27 years of age you suddenly become perfect, it won't do you speck of good. Because when you were seven, you sinned badly enough to alienate yourself forever from Christ and his eternal kingdom.

And in fact, you didn't even have to look to what you did at seven. You were born a sinner and under the condemnation of God. So simply ask, have I been totally liberated from all hope of gaining merit with God by good behavior? Now that in no way hints that our behavior should be poor or ungodly.

It simply states good behavior is going to make a bit of difference. We don't accumulate brownie points with God. He isn't keeping a list of our good and our evil and that the final judgment saying, I will determine whether you made it or not on the basis of whether you did more good than evil.

No, those in Christ Jesus have been set free from the law of sin and death. I'm going to hope that all of you have been set free from the law of sin and death. But it would not be right for me to assume that that was true.

I must ask you, can you honestly say I cannot fall under condemnation because God himself has set me free from the law of sin and death? The second evidence of no condemnation found in verses five, six, seven and eight. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus proven by the fact that they do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Their minds have been set on what the Holy Spirit approves.

Let's read those verses again. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. But those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

For the mindset of the flesh is death, but the mindset of the Spirit is life and peace. Because the mindset of the flesh is hostile toward God. For it does not subject itself to the law of God.

It's not even able to do so. And those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Ask yourself with great integrity, do I have the mindset of the flesh or the mindset of the Spirit? Some of you will remember that in the Beatitudes, our Lord made it clear that there is a blessedness upon those persons who are pure in heart.

Have you considered what exactly is meant there? Blessed are the pure in heart. Now, if you're careless, you might think, well, if I reach that point where I no longer have impure thoughts, then I'm blessed. But that passage is not really referring to clean or unclean thoughts.

That passage is speaking about having an undivided heart. Some of you may remember the prayer in the Psalms, Lord, unite my heart to hear Thy name. The average professed Christian is cursed with a divided heart.

He wants very much to be godly, but he also wants to be popular or wealthy or accepted in society or to have a good time. He's in the constant struggle of trying to do two things at once, trying to be two people at one and the same time, trying to satisfy two desires. But this second pronouncement of non-condemnation is upon those persons who are no longer in this constant struggle or tug of war between mindsets of the spirit and the mindset of the flesh.

They have had a transformed mind, and their mindset is truly on the spirit. That which over and over and over rises up and governs their attitudes and their acts is the mindset of the spirit that unceasingly makes it clear to them, I'm not going to waste my life trying to hang on to two different things at once. A number of years ago when I was preaching in the state of Colorado, there was something of a serious move of the Holy Spirit.

And long after the service was over, people were waiting an opportunity to ask for help. And as it was approaching midnight, the pastor came down the aisle. He had been in the back ministering.

I was in the front ministering. He came down and he said, there's a lady in the back that I've been unable to help. Would you be willing to talk with her? And I said, yes.

But as he went to the back to get her, I said, Lord, if the pastor hasn't been able to help her, how could I? If I'm going to help her, it's going to have to be because you enabled me to do so. So as she came walking down the aisle with the pastor, suddenly as I prayed, I knew what to do. When she was seated on the front pew, I said to her, where do you disagree with God? She was trying to start with, but the tears just erupted.

She said, that's an awful thing to say. I don't disagree with God. I love God.

I said, the pastor led me to believe that you desperately wanted help. Oh, I do. Well, then I said, don't lie.

Where do you disagree with God? I don't disagree with God. That's an awful thing to say. I've been the organist in my church for 40 years.

I love God. And I looked at her very kindly and I said to her, it is very late and I am very tired. I would gladly spend the whole night here if I could be of help, but I can't help a dishonest person.

So unless you're willing to be honest, you'll have to excuse me. I'm leaving. Oh no, she said, I have to have help.

Then I said, tell the truth. Where do you disagree with God? Well, it's not really a disagreement with God, but I love the world. When she was coming down the aisle, I thought to myself, she's at least 65.

She's dolled herself up to look 45. She has the appearance of someone who loves the world. And when I asked her, where do you disagree with God? That's what I expected she would say if she was honest.

And then finally she said, I see now, I'm not a Christian. I've always disagreed with God. Those who have the mindset of the flesh can be religious, active in the church, doing all kinds of good works.

But it's those who have the mindset of the Spirit that are without condemnation. So be sure, be absolutely sure that God has blessed you with the mindset of the Spirit. Let me mention the third of these evidences, verses 9 to 11.

There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, proven by the fact that they have the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in them. And they are destined for eternal life, not condemnation. Verse 9, However, you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.

But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him. And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the Spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells.

Now listen, friends. I believe the time has come when we've got to begin listening to sermons with two ears, one ear for ourselves and one ear for others. Suppose as we proceed on this list of 12 evidences of no condemnation, you discover by the grace of God that you've got all of these evidences.

Thank God if that's true. But what about your own children? What about others that you are in contact with? One of the most greatest things that I observe in the course of my labors is those persons who foolishly suppose their own children are Christians when they have no evidence of it. If I may cite another incident.

A while back in the state of Texas, a woman came up to me and she said, would you please pray for my daughter? I said, what is it concerning your daughter you wish me to pray about? Well, she said, my daughter is in prison. I want you to pray that she will be released. And I said to her, and why is she in prison? Well, she was arrested for prostitution and for distributing drugs.

So I said to the lady, no, I will not pray that your daughter be released from prison. If I were to pray for your daughter, it would be to pray that she might be born again. Oh, you don't need to do that.

My daughter's a Christian. She accepted Christ when she was eight years of age. No, I said, if your daughter were a Christian, she would not have been arrested for prostitution and drugs.

No, I'm telling you, she said, my daughter is a Christian. Finally, I had to say, my dear lady, the biggest problem your daughter has is her mother. And often, my dear friends, that's what I've observed.

Parents who seem to know the truth for themselves, but don't know the truth for their own children. Now, I know you fellows don't have children, but by the grace of God, you may. And you've got unsaved friends who think they're Christians because of a decision they made.

I'm urging all of us to be certain not only that we have these evidences ourselves of no condemnation, but that we refuse to fortify anybody else in the life of sin by giving them truth that is no truth at all. So, the question purely and simply, are we entwined by the Holy Spirit? And if we are, then that must appear in the light by a great delight in holiness and a great grief over everything and anything other than true holiness. Let me move to the fourth of these evidences.

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, proven by the fact that they are mortifying the deeds of the body through the Holy Spirit. Verses 12 and 13. So then, brethren, we are under obligation not to the flesh to live according to the flesh, but to the Spirit.

For if you're living according to the flesh, you must die. But if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live. So, let me simply ask, are you daily mortifying the deeds of the body? Day in, day out, refusing to serve the flesh, determined to serve God so that the whole of your being is truly lived to the glory of the God who has made such a glorious provision of salvation through his Son, Jesus Christ.

These days it's very unpopular to talk about holiness. Holiness is treated in many religious circles almost as if there was something odd about it or extreme or repulsive. But everyone who is truly in Christ Jesus is mortifying the deeds of the body, counting the flesh dead.

I love those words that the Apostle used in an earlier passage, that is, reckon yourself to be dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God. I think the great focus needs to be upon alive unto God, each of us living with that confidence that the life of Christ is truly within us. Well, let me mention now the fifth of these evidences, verses 14 to 17.

No condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, proven by the fact that they have the inner witness of the Spirit, that they have been adopted as sons and made joint heirs with Christ Jesus. Surely it is a blessed thing to be able to sense deep within the soul, I belong to God. He is my Father.

Out of the very innermost beings to be able to say, Abba, Father, the Spirit himself bearing witness in our spirit that we are children of God. Now, friends, all around us are people who call themselves Christian, whose only assurance is some proof text that's been drilled into them. And when they have doubts, when they are straying into sin, when they're in a backslidden condition, somebody reminds them of the proof text that makes them think they're a Christian.

But the true evidence of not being under condemnation is that deep inner assurance of the Holy Spirit. God is truly my Father. I am His child.

I belong to Him. Set your heart to help everybody you know come to grips with that glorious truth. Number seven, verses 18 to 25.

There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, proven by the fact that they already have the firstfruits of the Spirit, and that they join the entire natural creation in eagerly awaiting their final redemption. Verse 18, consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

And you have that deep inner eagerness, that longing for that glorious time when Christ appears and when the whole of creation is transformed into the glory of God, when indeed sin is done away with and holiness reigns on every side. Well, you can see quickly that I'm slow of speech and my sermons could stretch on endlessly, and I mustn't abuse your kindness by going on and on. I'm just burdened by the fact that an awful lot of people I meet in the church have been deceived and have been led to believe that they're Christians when there is no evidence of it.

And it's not so much that I'm convinced that most of you aren't deceived as that I'm convinced that most of you are in contact with those who have been deceived. And I'm urging you first to be sure yourself and then to lay such hold of the truth of God that you can powerfully impact the lives of others. I'll just quickly give you the rest of my list without detail.

Number seven, verses 26 and 27. I'll read those verses. In the same way, the Spirit also helps our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

And he who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. Do you have the Holy Spirit profoundly working within you, enabling you to intercede for other people and for the advancement of the kingdom of God? Number eight, verses 28 to 30. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, proven by the fact that they know that all things work together for good and that what God starts, God finishes.

Oh, what an incredibly blessed truth that is. You know, I'm 80, and in the course of 80 years, I've run up against an awful lot of problems inwardly and outwardly. I've had situations a good many times where the flesh was ready to say, I give up.

There's no hope. But every time when the flesh was sagging and the Spirit was weary, the Holy Spirit within was rising up in intercession. Dear friends, let us not lose sight of the fact that every true believer has two intercessors that never give up on them.

Christ Jesus himself is interceding for us, and the Holy Spirit himself is at work interceding within. Let me move then into the next of this wonderful list of evidences of no condemnation. Number nine, there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, proven by the fact that if God is for them, nothing can prevail against them.

Verses 31 to 34. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not also with him freely give us all? Isn't it an incredible blessing to know that when we're in Christ, nothing can prevail against us? That's what I meant in what I said a moment ago. Times when you're discouraged, times when the circumstances of life weigh you down and you wonder, is it worth it? Can I make it? Can I keep on? And lo and behold, a sudden empowerment arises within through the work of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

And you know everything is going to work together for good. I know absolutely that I'm on the winning side. I know that nothing can defeat God.

God doesn't even have to lift a finger on my behalf. All he has to do is to will it. And it's accomplished.

At the same time, what could be worse than facing the reality that if God is against us, what could it possibly matter who is for us? Do you remember the words in Isaiah 63-64 describing Israel? They rebelled. They grieved his Holy Spirit. God turned himself and became their enemy and fought against them.

If God is against us, nothing can help us. If God is for us, nothing can bring us down. Then finally, number 10, the last portion of this incredibly powerful chapter.

There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, proven by the fact that no person, power, or thing is able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Verses 35-39. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword.

Just as it is written, for thy sake we are being put to death all day long. We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered, but in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loves us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor depths, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Here is my summary. This nation desperately needs a revival, but the revival we need must be more than a revival. We are in desperate need of a reformation revival.

Our nation has been blocked lower than at any time in its history by false teaching, by grievous error set forth in the name of truth. We are living at a time when well over 50 percent of those who call themselves born-again Christians are as unregenerate as Satan himself. And every time we add another convert of that type, we worsen the situation.

And we cannot go on much longer in the direction that we've been going. We have got to return to God's book. We have got to once again face the realities that this glorious truth of no condemnation is truly limited to those who are in Christ Jesus.

And we've got to let the Bible itself determine who is in Christ and who is not. And we've got to have such a powerful hold of these truths ourselves so that others know when we speak of these things that we are speaking not merely the words of a man, but speaking for God Himself. I would like, Lord helping me, in the next few days as we're together to open up some other aspects of this wonderful chapter, but I rejoice this morning in the glorious fact that despite everything that is wrong with us, there is still no condemnation because we are in Christ Jesus.

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