

Romans 8:1-4

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God sent His son, Jesus, as a sacrifice to free us from sin and the condemnation of the law. Christ died and resurrected to restore our relationship with God and to save us from eternal condemnation. Now, saved from Hell, we can also be delivered from the earthly consequences of sin, if we walk by the power of the Spirit. We do not have to suffer from sin. Although we are not under the law, we fulfill the requirement of the law when we walk by faith in the power of the Spirit.

All believers are delivered from *condemnation* in heaven before God just by believing in Christ (John 3:14-15). But earthly condemnation through the power of sin in a fallen world can still be experienced by believers living in a fallen flesh—if we do not walk in the resurrection power we have been gifted (Galatians 6:8).

Paul has just finished discussing his own struggles with his fallen flesh, the sin nature that still remains within him. He has confessed to the conflict his flesh creates with his new nature in Christ. In Galatians he highlights this battle as the Spirit versus the flesh (Galatians 5:17).

Now he states emphatically that the deliverance from that fallen flesh is through the power of the resurrected Christ. "Who will deliver us from this body of death?" asked Paul in Romans 7:24. The answer is: Jesus. The resurrection power of Jesus is within us, and when we choose to walk in it, we can escape the power of sin, with its negative consequences.

When believers walk in the Spirit, they channel the resurrection power of Jesus, and the result is to escape from the earthly condemnation that resides in the fallen world: *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus* (v 1). This likely has a double-meaning. First, when we have believed in Jesus, we are forever made righteous in God's sight, once and for all (Colossians 2:14). We cannot be condemned in God's sight, because we are in Christ (2 Timothy 2:13).

This securing in Christ is unconditional—it depends only upon having received the grace of God through Jesus.

But having *no condemnation* seems to have a second, conditional application that refers to the consequences of our actions while living here on earth. When we choose to walk in the resurrection power of Jesus, we also escape the negative consequences of sin. We escape being condemned to the adverse results of sin by escaping sin's clutches, and walking in righteousness.

That does not mean we do not still encounter sin and temptation, because we are still in the world. But it does mean that we can escape the negative consequences we will experience any time we succumb to sin. And we can do that through walking by faith in the power of the Spirit moment by moment: *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law*

of sin and death (v 2). We do not have to walk in sin. We now have the power to escape sin. *Christ Jesus* has set us *free from the law of sin and death*.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word often translated *law* is “torah” and it means “teaching” or “instruction.” Through the power of Jesus, we can have our minds renewed, and no longer choose perspectives shaped by the teaching of the world, which is ruled by the *law of sin and death*. In fact, in Romans 12, Paul will exhort us to take action to have our minds renewed, which will lead to being transformed, and no longer being conformed to the world, but to Christ (Romans 12:1-2). This is possible because the power of Jesus has set us *free from* the power of *sin and death*.

The consequence of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Death is separation. Sin separates us from God’s (good) design for us. Through walking in the resurrection power of Jesus, we can escape these negative consequences. We can experience restoration of God’s (good) design for us, which includes being whole within ourselves (living what is true) as well as being connected to others through love and service.

In Romans 7:25, Paul sets up Chapter 8 by summarizing Chapter 7: “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.” Paul expresses the pain of continuing to have a sinful nature, even after believing in Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection, being delivered from eternal condemnation, and walking with the Spirit.

The path to deliverance from the pain caused by the sin nature is living the resurrection power of Jesus each day, and Paul thanks God for Christ’s sacrifice and the power it provides to live a new life: *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* (v 3). Believing on Jesus initially delivers us from the eternal consequence of sin (John 3:14-15). This is unconditional. But we must walk in faith daily in the resurrection power of the Spirit to experience daily deliverance from our sin nature.

There is still a choice in a Christian’s daily life, to serve God or to serve our old sinful desires (Romans 6:11–12), and it is Christ who has given us the power to overcome the flesh. Now, in Chapter 8, Paul discusses the impact of our new life as children of God, and advocates a perspective we should choose that makes the daily obedience of faith the only sensible path for daily living.

There are only three things we control as humans: who we trust, the perspective we adopt, and the actions we take. In Romans 6–8, Paul explains a true (and therefore immensely powerful) perspective of ourselves, our relationship with Christ, and the path that leads to our greatest fulfillment. Adopting this perspective leads to fully trusting God, walking by faith, and taking actions that lead to the fullest experience of life.

Though we still live in a body that is full of death and sinful desire (the flesh), we are no longer condemned in God’s sight thanks to Christ’s life, death, burial, and resurrection. While Paul

expresses frustration toward the inner battle all Christians face in whom to serve daily—sin or God—he gives thanks to God whose grace is eternally more powerful than sin.

Paul is culminating his argument here. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why? Because Jesus Christ removed the eternal consequences of sin. Past, present, future. It's all gone. There is no more eternal condemnation.

The perspective he will now persuade us to adopt is that since we are not condemned, we ought not be motivated by fear of condemnation under the law. And we can walk apart from the world's teaching of sin, that leads to the consequence of death. We can do this because the power of Jesus has set us free from sin, and we now have the power to choose to walk in the Spirit.

It is important to remember Paul is writing to the Roman Christians, whose faith was being talked about throughout the world (Romans 1:8). They were already living obedient lives to God (Romans 6:17–18). Competing Jewish “authorities” were slandering Paul's teaching (Romans 3:8) and were trying to impose the Old Testament law on the Roman Christians, so Paul has continuously stressed that it is not through following the religious rules of law but by faith in Jesus that we are made righteous in the presence of God (Romans 4:9–15).

A way to gain power over other people is to threaten condemnation if they don't “follow my rules.” It is likely the competing Jewish “authorities” were condemning the believers in Rome for not “following the rules” as a coercive means to recruit them as followers. Paul wants the Roman believers to follow Jesus and live in grace, not follow these “authorities.” It is likely that this letter to the Roman believers is meant to support Aquila and Priscilla, who were fellow Jews who preached the gospel with Paul in Greece, and are now returned to Rome where they have started a church in their home (Romans 16:3-5; Acts 18:2, 18, 26).

Paul emphasizes that they have been delivered from condemnation in God's sight by Jesus; therefore they should not worry about condemnation pronounced upon them by mere humans. They should however strive to avoid the condemnation of choosing to walk in the world's ways (of sin and death) because we have been set free to walk in the power of the Spirit, which leads to the fruit of life.

Here in Chapter 8, Paul loops back to this distinction between law and spirit, expressing how there is no condemnation for believers in Christ, that the law of the Old Testament could not save humankind from their sin, but only caused sin to increase (due to our fleshly weakness, our inability to obey it).

It is through a new “law” from the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ that sets us free from sin and death. This was done by God Himself, who sent His own Son to save us; this is the story of the Gospel in verse 3, that the Son of God came to earth in a fleshly body to defeat the sinful flesh by His death. We who believe in His death and resurrection are freely given eternal life, now no longer condemned in God's sight—this is a gift we are given freely and unconditionally. Further, we are now empowered to live in freedom from our sin nature in our daily lives. We have this power, but it is up to us to choose to use it. The requirement of the Old Testament law was fulfilled because of what Jesus did, and as a result we are justified in the presence of God

unconditionally. However, it is up to us whether to walk in the flesh or the Spirit. As Paul says in Galatians:

“For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”
(Galatians 6:8)

We will “reap” (experience the consequences) what we “sow” (of the actions we choose).

If we walk in the Spirit, putting sin nature to death daily, we cause the law to *be fulfilled*. In Chapter 2, Paul skewered the competing Jewish “authorities” for being hypocrites who break the law. Now, in an ironic twist, Paul demonstrates that while competing Jewish “authorities” claim to be defenders of the law, the actual reality is that the requirement of the Law has been met in Jesus, and the way to actually *fulfill* the Law is not to try to obey their religious rules, but to walk in obedience to the Spirit.

Paul exhorts believers to live the resurrected life each day. Not because they *have to* in order to “go to heaven,” but because it leads to experiencing the fullness of life and the fulfillment of the law. The very law the slanderers say Paul is breaking, that is the law that can only be fulfilled by recognizing “I can’t keep the law” and instead walking by faith in the power of the resurrected Spirit of Jesus, *so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit* (v 4).

This is the second “faith” of living daily in the theme verse of Romans 1:16–17, “from faith to faith.” The first faith saves us from separation from God, and gives us new life, being born again (John 3:14-15). The second faith is the faith to walk each day following God’s Spirit. The faith required is the faith to believe that God’s ways are for our best, and that whatever reward we gain from God is better than any reward we can gain from the world and its ways (Hebrews 11:6).

If we are keeping the law (our own deeds) to justify ourselves in God’s sight, we will always feel condemned, because we cannot live up to the law; we will always fail at some point (Romans 3:23). But if we have faith to believe that Jesus delivered us from sin and death, we can walk in freedom from the law. This allows us to live to the Spirit, and walk in obedience to God rather than under the condemnation of men or the institutions of men.

It is the Holy Spirit who lives in Christians. The Holy Spirit is a central figure in Chapter 8, as Paul doubles down on explaining the freedom and new life we have now that we possess the power to walk in the Spirit and not walk in the flesh. We finally have the power to obey God, in His grace, rather than be trapped in our selfish desires which will always cause us to experience the consequence of sin, which is death (separation).

Biblical Text

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 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, 4 so that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.