

## **I KNOW: “I Am Not Condemned” 11.20.11**

**Scripture: Romans 8:1-4 ESV**

**Video: “I Know Promo” [2:33]**

**Intro:** Today we begin the “I Know” sermon series - 4 talks from Romans 8 that can help us. Our Christian faith is not just one of knowledge nor one of emotions. It’s both. If we attempt to run our faith from either one exclusively, we have problems. A “faith” of knowledge only is a dry faith. God touches us at a deep, emotional level. However, there are times when our feelings can mislead us... times when we don’t “feel” God or his forgiveness. Today I want to talk about our “sin” and “condemnation” and how our knowledge can help inform our feelings.

The Problem of Sin is a UNIVERSAL One. Sin is when we do something or don’t do something that misses the mark. When we don’t please God by what we do or fail to do. **The Bible tells us that...**

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23 ESV

Often, we Christians will look at that sentence with a knowing and “past tense” attitude. We “know” that sin keeps us at distance from God, hurts our relationship. We often think of this in terms of past tense for ourselves. “We used to be sinners, but now we are Christians,” as if the two were mutually exclusive. **But the Bible clearly addresses US...**

“If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.” 1 John 1:8 NLT

We can take one of two attitudes about this condition. First, we can be nonchalant about this issue, not be too concerned, and claim God’s grace. This is dangerous, for as we’ll see, God did not send His Son so that we would remain chained in a sinful condition. God wants us to be free from sin. When the religious leaders of Jesus’ day threw the woman guilty of adultery at his feet and dared Jesus to stone her, he forgave her instead. We like that part of the story. However, he also said, “*Go and sin no more!*” If you take your sinful actions or inactions too lightly, you should ask yourself some hard questions about whether you really are a Christ-follower or not. For no true Christian would grieve the heart of His Savior. Sin causes God grief - and should also cause us grief. As a Christian I cannot ignore the truth of 1 John 1:8 above. The fact I’m a sinner doesn’t make me happy. It frustrates me. **Like Paul wrote...**

“I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.” Romans 7:19 NLT

This is the 2nd response to sin... Does this sound familiar to you? Wanting to do what is good, but doing the opposite? Not doing what you know to do. Here’s my question for you... and for me... this evening. What do we do when we discover that we fail as a Christ follower? What do I do when I’m feeling chained to sin, even when the Bible tells me that I’m “free” from sin? How does “knowing” help and inform my “feeling” of condemnation, guilt and separation from God? If this describes you, I have good news for you tonight. **I’d like to talk to you about the 4 Rs of our freedom: the REALITY of freedom, the REASON of freedom, the ROUTE of freedom, and the RESULT of freedom.**

***The 4 Rs of Freedom***

#1 - The REALITY of Freedom: NO CONDEMNATION.  
This is the reality of your condition in Christ. *You are not condemned!*

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation...” Romans 8:1a NIV84

Notice the word “now.” Now - because of Christ, after your salvation, as a Christ-follower, there is NO condemnation. In the original language this “no” is an emphatic “no,” as if it’s capitalized, bold, and underlined! So why then, you may ask, do you FEEL so lousy when you first commit a sin after your forgiveness as a Christian? Because unconfessed sin builds a wall between us and God. The goal would be for us NOT to sin, not to fail, not to miss the mark. God does give us power over sin through His Spirit, but we will sometimes sin anyway. When we do, we need to confess it, pray about it, be honest about it before God. And one more thing, **when we do this we learn what happens...**

My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. 1 John 2:1 NLT

We have a court room scene in mind here. The advocate is the lawyer who represents us before the Almighty and Holy God, whom we’ve offended. And who is that lawyer for our defense? None other than Jesus Himself. And notice we’re told that He is the one who is *truly righteous*. IOW if there was one person who could throw stones, who could be the state’s attorney charging us - it’s Jesus. But He’s the One who’s on our side! That’s what NO CONDEMNATION means!!!

#2 - The REASON of Freedom: JUSTIFICATION.

Sometimes, when we think about this, we get the wrong idea. It’s not that God no longer cares about sin. And it’s not that he just “lets us off.” And it’s not even that God looks at Jesus, His Son as our lawyer, and like an insider judge, just winks our way. All this would make God less than what He is and would lessen the issue of our sinful acts. “Justification” is a forensic, technical, legal term that is the exact opposite of condemnation. It is the judicial act of God to “pardon” us because the claims of sin have been satisfied. **And this NOT because of US but...**

“... for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:1b-2 ESV

It’s as if there are two sets of laws, not opposed to one another, but applied differently. The “law” of sin and death is what we all deserve, and the penalty we would receive if it were only up to what we have done. But because of what Christ has done, there is another law... the law of the Spirit, the law of life, the law that comes as a result of Jesus’ crucifixion. **This is the law that frees me... this is the law I live in IF I am a Christ-follower. Along with Paul we can “know”...**

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20 NIV84

So which life is the one you are living today? The life of you trying to be good, trying to live better, working hard to justify yourself? Or do you give up yourself and live in Christ, in His Spirit, believing in Him [FAITH]?

**Still, this leave the problem of how Holy God could permit this...**

#3 - The ROUTE to Freedom: SUBSTITUTION. It's not that God just looked the other way. And it's not like the price demanded for payment for your sin has not been satisfied. It's been paid. Just not by you! **It's been paid by the One who advocates for you, Jesus!**

“For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.” Romans 8:3 ESV

We sometimes get the wrong idea of God the Father as this terrible, judging God in the Old Testament, and then somehow Jesus softened it up in the NT. Nothing could be further from the truth. God the Father sent the Son! Imagine that! That's how much God loves you! God did for us what our “flesh” our sinful natures could not do for ourselves.

There are 2 things about this that are important to understand: **(1)** Jesus was FULLY human - “in the likeness of man,” just like you and me - fully capable of temptation, meaning able to be enticed to sin... **Notice:**

Jesus was “tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.”  
Hebrews 4:15b NIV84

**(2)** We also see here that though he was FULLY human, he was also FULLY perfect, IOW FULLY without sin! This was the only way that the price could be paid FULLY for you and me - Jesus sacrifice was SUBSTITUTED for the penalty necessary for you and me!

“For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.” 2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT

This is how we are made right... or righteous in God's sight. Not because of what you or I have done, but because of what Jesus has done. God doesn't see us or our sin, instead he sees His perfect son, Who paid the perfect price, Who advocates for us, Who claims we are NOT CONDEMNED! WOW! **So, then, what is our response?**

#4 - The RESULT of Freedom: SANCTIFICATION. Big word, but really means how we live going forward as a Christian. It means our growth in living more like Jesus every day. That we don't keep living like we used to live, doing anything we want according to our own sinful nature, but that we rather follow the Spirit of Christ in us.

“...in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”  
Romans 8:4 ESV

This idea of living the Christian life *as the result* of our salvation rather *than the cause* of our salvation makes all the difference. We live in grateful obedience to God's Spirit because of what He has done. It's like we were in court, and were on our way to the electric chair, and suddenly found that we were pardoned because our lawyer paid the price for us. Wouldn't you be grateful? It would be like the sinful, adulterous woman thrown at Jesus' feet, who thought she was going to be stoned, who instead heard, “Neither do I CONDEMN you... Go and sin no more!”

This is why the early apostles and church fathers... and today your pastor says to conduct yourself accordingly...

“As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.”  
1 Peter 1:15 ESV

“We’re being shown how to turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honoring life.” Titus 2:12 MSG

**Conclusion:** Our lives should be amazingly different after becoming a Christ-follower, as if we were just yesterday sitting in a jail cell awaiting our condemnation, awaiting our execution, and suddenly the door opens and the chains come off. It should be an amazingly FREE life.

**To make sure you really FULLY KNOW... that you get the point of living a NOT CONDEMNED life... take a look at this video.**

**PLAY VIDEO: “The Verdict” by The Skit Guys [6:46]**

**Transition:** What’s your verdict at this evening? I imagine there could be one of three responses: **#1** - You know this, when in doubt, when your feelings of guilt come up, you remember this and as a result worship God, confess your sins, and live on for Him! Keep it up!

**#2** - You know you are a Christian, but you really struggle with your feelings of guilt, of failure, of feeling condemned. You need to pray that God would allow you to KNOW that you are NOT condemned and LIVE a FREE LIFE in the Spirit of God as a result. The most miserable person in the world is the person who is “trying” to be a Christian on his/her own.

**#3** - You know you really aren’t a Christ-follower, but would like to be. Maybe no one has ever really explained it out like today. These 4Rs could be more than theory in your life. You could KNOW the REALITY, the REASON, the ROUTE, and the RESULT of Freedom *personally!* You could pray with me right now and receive the NOT GUILTY verdict we’ve been talking about. You could be FREE!

**Pray Sinner’s Prayer**

In a minute, we’re going to take communion together. If you have prayed that prayer either tonight or some other time, you are welcome to take this communion with us. The bread represents Christ’s body broken for you. The cup represents Christ’s blood shed for you. To prepare our hearts let’s sing together. Then afterward go and get the bread and the cup, take it back to your seat... AND WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS. WE’LL TAKE THE ELEMENTS TOGETHER TONIGHT.

**Sing: “No Condemnation” by Don Moen [3:40]**

**Acoustical Guitar Music: “Brethren, We Have Met To Worship” by Dan Carollo [3:48]**

**Take Communion Elements Together**

**Benediction and Dismissal**

**Play Music: “No Condemnation” by Lisa Bevill**