

SINCE CHRIST IS RESURRECTED...
ROMANS 8:33-34

Sometimes, when you are given a good gift, you don't realize just how good that gift is:

- ✓ The first time someone gave us fresh eggs, I thought, "that's nice...I like eggs..." And then I tasted them. Wow...the difference was remarkable!
- ✓ When I transferred seminaries in the middle of my education (in order to get a better education), increasing my financial responsibilities significantly, I had no idea of the benefit I would receive by learning to be dependent on the Lord and the grace of seeing Him provide repeatedly for me/us.
- ✓ When I came to GBC as a pastor I was just thankful that I had been given a position. I had no concept how the Lord could knit together hearts in love for one another. I had no category for staying as pastor in one place as long as I have or how loving that fellowship could be.
- ✓ When I had the opportunity to teach in Russia a few weeks ago, I had no idea the impact or privilege that would be. On the next to last night, during dinner with a group of pastors, one of them told us to thank our wives for allowing us to go to Russia to teach. I then told him that Raye Jeanne strongly urged me to go, saying, "You don't know how long the door of opportunity will remain open." He responded with sober and downcast eyes, "I don't want to talk about that..." because that is a very real possibility for them.
- ✓ When Raye Jeanne walked down the aisle towards me on our wedding day almost 33 years ago, I had shaky knees, a lump in my throat, and tears in my eyes from gratitude. But I had *no idea* the treasure I was receiving that day.

Sometimes, when you are given a good gift, you don't realize just how good that gift is. And nowhere is that more true than of our salvation through Jesus Christ and His resurrection.

To expose the greatness of that gift, I want to continue in our study of Romans 8. As I have noted several times, Romans 8 has been called the greatest chapter in the greatest letter in the greatest book ever written. In a book, the Bible, that stands above all other books, this chapter is particularly beloved and remarkable in its power and truth.

Near the end of this chapter, the apostle Paul explained the golden chain of salvation (vv. 29-30). Having offered the assurance of that truth, Paul then embarks on a series of questions that relate to that salvation:

- ✓ What shall we say to these things? (v. 31a)
- ✓ If God is for us, who is against us? (v. 31b)
- ✓ How will He not freely also give us all things? (v. 32)
- ✓ Who will bring a charge against God's elect? (v. 33)
- ✓ Who is the one who condemns? (v. 34)
- ✓ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? (v. 35)

Two of those questions particularly relate to Christ, His death and resurrection, and the benefit we derive by being saved by the grace of Christ's resurrection power. These two verses remind us of the power of God to save us and the power of the resurrection to secure us.

SINCE CHRIST IS RESURRECTED, THE BELIEVER IS NOT CONDEMNED.

1. Who Can Justly Accuse Us? (v. 33)

2. Who Can Condemn Us? (v. 34)

- ✓ Jesus Christ DIED
- ✓ Jesus Christ was RESURRECTED
- ✓ Jesus Christ is at the Father's RIGHT HAND
- ✓ Jesus Christ is INTERCEDING for us

1. Who Can Justly Accuse Us? (v. 33)

- There are several questions a believer might ask about his salvation:
 - ✓ What should I think about the salvation and sanctification provided by God (v. 31a; 5:1ff)?
 - ✓ Can my salvation be safe with so many people and powers against me (v. 31b; cf. v. 35)?
 - ✓ Will God give us what we need (v. 32)?
- To those questions there is another possible question one might ask about his salvation — perhaps someone will bring a charge against me that cannot be refuted or defeated. Perhaps my sin will overwhelm God's grace. So Paul asks, **Who will bring a charge against God's elect?**
 - ✓ **Who will bring a charge** is a legal question: who can bring an indictment and legal accusation against us? While the term is different, this is what Satan is always doing (Rev. 12:10).
 - ✓ We get an inclination of Paul's answer and thinking when he says, **against God's elect**. These are the ones who have been foreknown, predestined, and called (vv. 29-30). Since God has done that for them, we are to anticipate that there is no charge that will result in a legal sentence against us.
- Paul's answer is very simple: **God is the one who justifies**.
 - ✓ We are not justified on our own. God justifies. God declares righteous. God imputes the righteousness of Christ. God removes the condemnation of sin. We don't do it. God does.
 - ✓ Because God does it, then we are secure in His power and authority.
 - ✓ The accuser does not have to adjudicate *our* sin; he must account for and find some sin that can overwhelm the righteousness of Christ. If we are in Christ, only an accusation that can stand against Christ can overwhelm us. Since God justifies us on the basis of the undefeatable one, we are safe.
 - ✓ Satan's accusations and all other questions are thrown out of court because God justifies. "When God justifies a person, all accusations at once lose their validity." [Hendriksen]

"When God enters into judgment, the outlook for the opposing party is bleak (Rom. 3:4); but if God takes the side of the defendant, no amount of evidence for the prosecution can procure an adverse verdict." [Bruce]

- ✓ Our justification is not yet complete, but that does not mean that we are still open to being accused. If you are in Christ, the righteousness of Christ is fully yours and your sin cannot be held against you.
- ✓ Once God has justified someone, the statute of limitations for bringing accusations is past. You are free from God's wrath, because God has delivered Christ over to His wrath.
- ✓ But if you are not in Christ, if you are not a Christian, then this is not true for you.
 - If you are not a Christian, then God is still against you (v. 31), God has not given His Son for you and has not given you all things (v. 32), and you are still guilty of all charges against you (v. 33).

- There is hope for you, however, if you believe in Christ as your Savior from sin. And you must believe. God commands all men everywhere to believe. And by believe, we mean, to trust that Christ did everything God says in these verses He has done for you (absorbing God's wrath against your sin) and that He died to liberate you from sin so that you can live for Him. Believing in Christ means believing that He is better than anything else in this world and you want Him above everything else in this world so you can live for Him.
- If you are not a Christian, I urge you to begin believing in Him today.
- There is another question we might ask about our salvation...

2. Who Can Condemn Us? (v. 34)

- God's condemnation is very real. God *does* condemn sin and sinners. The whole world is under His examining eyes and condemnation (3:19-20). No one escapes his examining gaze (Heb. 4:13).
 - ✓ The insecure person might ask the question if there is ongoing condemnation from God, even if one is saved. Yes, Paul has said, ***there is therefore now no condemnation*** (8:1), but a weak-hearted person might experience condemnation in his conscience (2:14-15; 1 Jn. 3:20-21) and assume that his salvation is inadequate.
 - ✓ But in these verses, Paul is asserting that what is important is not *our* righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ. It is Christ, and not our heart or our righteousness that matters. Paul would have us recognize that there is no viable condemnation for the believer because of four particular works of Christ —

• Jesus Christ DIED

- ✓ Many people have died. (Everyone has died or will die, apart from Enoch and Elijah.) But of all who have died there is one of whom it can be said, ***He (is the One) who died***, like Paul does here. Paul is pointing to the singular nature of Christ's death. While He is One of many who died, His death is a unique death. No one else died like Him and no one else's death had the effect His death had.
- ✓ His death denotes the complete and just absorption of God's wrath against sin. In His death the provision of atonement is made completely (Jn. 19:30; Heb. 9:14).
- ✓ The concept of Christ's death appears frequently in the NT with the point that not only did Christ died, but that Christ had to die to fulfill the plan of God. And Christ had to die to bring about our salvation (Rom. 5:6, 8, 15; 6:8-9; 1 Cor. 15:3, 22).
- ✓ If there is no death of Christ, there is no salvation. Jesus Christ not only died, but His death is the only means to our freedom from condemnation.
- ✓ You do understand just how counter to the world these statements are, don't you?
- ✓ Friday morning I saw an article on the website [US Catholic](#) entitled, "No one had to die for our sins."

- ✓ The author said this:

“...no one had to die for God to be merciful...”

“Sometimes [in the OT] if somebody committed a sin and wanted to get right with God, they would bring what was called a sin offering. What you were doing was trying in a way to reset your relationship with God once you had broken it. It wasn’t that God needed to be placated this way, but you needed to say you were sorry.

“It’s very similar in its own way to the theology of the sacrament of reconciliation. Telling your sins to the priest, being sorry, and doing a penance doesn’t make God merciful. God is already merciful. Reconciliation is something that we do as human beings to reenact getting back on track in our relationship with God.

“It’s a re-consecration, a rededication, a setting back on the right path in this relationship. It’s a human thing. It is not required to change God’s mind from anger to mercy.”

- ✓ So, God can be merciful and withhold His wrath simply because He wants to and without being just against sin and sinners? God can be merciful without Christ dying?
- ✓ My friends, if God simply overlooks sin then He is not a just God. And if He is not just, then He is not holy. And if He is not holy, He cannot be good. And if He is not good, then He is evil. And we would know He is evil because He sent His Son to die and poured out His wrath against His Son when it was unnecessary (**Gal. 2:21**). If that is true, then *God* has committed the greatest sin ever and is *wholly* evil. And if He is evil, He is not God and cannot be God.
- ✓ Friends, God *must* exercise His wrath against every sin in order to be righteous. His grace is not that He overlooks sin, but that He provided a means for the exercise of His wrath against sin that allowed us to escape His judgment. And that provision was only through the death of His Son (**2 Cor. 5:21**).
- ✓ There is condemnation of sin — there is condemnation of *every sin*. The only way for us to escape that condemnation is for a perfectly righteous sacrifice to stand in our place and absorb God’s wrath for us. And because Christ did just that, Paul can say, ***who is the one who condemns?*** Because Christ died, no one can condemn the one who trusts in Jesus.
- ✓ Yet there is still more that Christ did to alleviate our condemnation...

- Jesus Christ was **RESURRECTED**

- ✓ In His death, Christ absorbed satisfactorily the wrath of God.
- ✓ In His resurrection, Christ demonstrated publicly that God’s wrath was satisfied.
- ✓ We know that God’s wrath was satisfied because it was the Father Himself who resurrected Christ. Some NT passages seem to indicate that Christ rose by His own power (**Mt. 17:9; 27:63; 28:6-7; Jn. 20:9; 2 Cor. 5:15**). Other passages state that the Father and Spirit raised Him (**Mt. 17:23; 20:19; 26:32; Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15; Rom. 4:24-25; 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:4, 12ff**). This passage states that another raised Him, with the implication that the Father did the work. The point is that the entire Godhead was involved in the death and resurrection of Christ. The Father sent and raised; the Son lived and rose by the power of the Spirit, and the Son died and rose on His own authority.

- ✓ Christ's death was necessary, but His resurrection was also necessary. As one theologian noted,

"What is the necessary expression that Christ has paid the penalty of sin fully? He must rise from the dead. If he remains in a grave dead, then the penalty of sin is still being paid, and thus its payment has not been made fully. And what about sin's power? If Christ has 'died for our sin' and sin's greatest power is death, then what is the necessary expression that Christ has conquered the power of sin completely and decisively? He must rise from the dead." [Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus*, 131-2.]

- ✓ Similarly, R. C. Sproul said, "Without the cross there is no redemption. And without the resurrection we would be left with a dead 'Savior' whose ability to save would be highly questionable. The resurrection marks God's stamp of approval upon the sacrifice of Christ." [*The Glory of Christ*, 183.]
- ✓ Jesus' resurrection is critical to us, because our life is linked to His. If He lives, then we live. But it must also be said that *only* if He lives do we live. And since He is alive and we are in Him through salvation, then we are alive. We are alive to Him and we are dead to sin (6:8-11). The only means to be liberated from sin is through Christ's resurrection (6:12-13). If He is not resurrected, then we are still fully in bondage to our sin and under God's condemnation (1 Cor. 15:16-19).
- ✓ But He has been resurrected. And we are free, when we are in Him.
- ✓ There is still a third work of Christ for us that keeps us from condemnation...

- Jesus Christ is at the Father's RIGHT HAND

- ✓ To be **at the right hand of God** means that Jesus is at the place of greatest honor.
 - His ascension is another affirmation of the Father's acceptance of Him
 - He is ascended to the Father having taken up the glory He set aside in the incarnation (Jn. 17:5)
 - He is seated at God's throne, the priestly sacrificial work being completed (Heb. 10:11-14)
 - He is seated in Heaven, in authority over all men and all things (Ps. 110:1)
 - He is in Heaven, receiving glory and worship because of His work from all the inhabitants of Heaven (Eph. 1:19b-21; Rev. 4:11; 5:1-10 [esp. vv. 9-10])
- ✓ Of what benefit is it to you that Christ is at the Father's right hand? It is this:
 - If Christ is glorified and honored as supreme in Heaven, then He cannot be condemned. And if He cannot be condemned and you are in Him then neither can you be condemned. You are as safe as if you were seated at the Father's right hand — and because you are in Christ, you *are* seated in the Heavenly places with Him (Eph. 1:3; Col. 3:1, 3).
 - Because Christ is at the Father's right hand, there is no condemnation for you if you are in Him
- ✓ There is still one more work of Christ that keeps us from condemnation...

- Jesus Christ is INTERCEDING for us

- ✓ In v. 26 we saw that the Spirit intercedes for us, but here we see that Christ also prays for us.
- ✓ Seated at the right hand of God, the Son leans over to the Father and speaks our needs in His ear.

- ✓ He not only prays for us, but He *always* lives and prays for us (Heb. 7:24-25).
- ✓ What does Jesus pray for us?
 - He prays in defense of us from Satan's accusations (Rev. 12:10; 1 Jn. 2:1)
 - He prays for the Spirit to come to us and be with us forever (Jn. 14:16)
 - He prays for our unity to Him and for our sanctification (Jn. 17:20-23)
 - He prays for our glorification (Jn. 17:24)
- ✓ Some have suggested that this is the climactic work of Christ to secure and assure us, since how could the Father deny the intercessory requests of the Son who completely fulfilled the task given to Him by the Father? In fact, this is the basis of Jesus' prayer in John 17:4.
- ✓ If Jesus has prayed something for you, then Jesus, being fully God and knowing fully the will of God, can only pray in accordance with that will. And if He has prayed according to the Father's will, then His prayer will be answered affirmatively and accomplished.
- ✓ When Jesus prays for you, He asks for you exactly what you need, and everything He asks will be accomplished. Friend, that is assurance for you and me. And if that is what we have, there is no condemnation from anyone or anything. Ray Ortlund, Jr. has said it well —

We have not a dead Jesus but a living Jesus, raised from the dead, and not just a living Jesus but a glorified Jesus, at the right hand of God. And we are always on his heart. We have no problem too great, or too small, for him to solve. We have no sin too dirty for him to cleanse. His compassion is always upon us, and he is able to see us all the way through to glory. Your sin cannot keep you from your glory, because your sin is what your interceding Priest removes.

So if the Father has chosen us and justified us and the Son is interceding for us, who is going to win a case against us? Who is going to get around the cross by appealing to a higher court? God is the supreme court of the universe. We cannot be de-justified, so that we find ourselves under condemnation again. Why? Because God the Father and God the Son have done all that God can do to establish us forever with perfect righteousness in his sight.

...What sin does the cross fail to overrule? Our Savior raises his wounded hands over us, and our Judge confirms that Christ's merit has indeed compensated fully for all our guilt forever. The case is closed. And we move on, rejoicing! [Ortlund, *Supernatural Living for Natural People*.]

CONCLUSION: Every year at Easter we have a protracted remembrance of Christ's death and resurrection. Every communion Sunday is a similar focus on His death and resurrection. In fact, every Sunday is a remembrance of resurrection Sunday. And every prayer is an opportunity to reflect on God's provision for us through Christ. Why this preoccupation with Christ? Why are we obsessed with His death and resurrection? Why give so much attention to blood and grave? Why do we wear crosses and put crosses on our church buildings? Because friends, we are people of the cross and empty tomb and without them, there is only condemnation; but with the cross and empty tomb, there is no condemnation.

BENEDICTION: Romans 8:37-39