

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Fourth Quarter 2017: *Salvation by Faith Alone: The Book of Romans*

#### Lesson 9 “No Condemnation”

#### Read for this week’s study

Romans 8:1–17.

#### Memory Text

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. In Jesus Christ
- III. What the Law Could Not Do
- IV. The Flesh or the Spirit
- V. Christ in You
- VI. The Spirit of Adoption
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Romans 8 is Paul’s answer to Romans 7. In Romans 7 Paul speaks of frustration, failure, and condemnation. In Romans 8 the condemnation is gone, replaced with freedom and victory through Jesus Christ.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. So why does Paul start this section (remember, no chapters in his time!) with: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...”? When you look where he left the argument at the end of chapter 7, it hardly encourages such a shout of triumph. One might expect him to say, “Therefore there is a lot of gloom and doom to be faced.”
3. Is it because the believer’s legal prospects in the judgment have improved in the new era, as the lesson states? “The person is in a terrible state of wretchedness (Romans 7:24). But then the person surrenders to Jesus, and an immediate change is wrought in his or her standing with God. Formerly condemned as a lawbreaker, that person now stands perfect in the sight of God, stands as if he or she had never sinned, because the righteousness of Jesus Christ completely covers that person.” (Sunday’s lesson)

4. If the problem was the [emotional] state, is the solution found in a legal standing? Or is it relief that is needed, from the unrelenting sense of doom and hopelessness that results from the dissonance of Romans 7? Is there another way of looking at it?
5. The command given by God in the Garden of Eden that was 'for life' was misrepresented by the serpent to become a commandment of death (Romans 7:10, 11). Sin's primary *modus operandi* is **deception** which leads to violation of the command (Genesis 3:1, 6). This happened when the law was in the hands of sin, but now in the hands of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the deception has been **unmasked**. Thus what God did in Christ was primarily a **revelation** of God's true character.
6. What did Christ do that the law, by its very nature, could not? (Romans 8:3, 4; Monday's lesson) Jesus needs to deal with sin not only as a violation of the command, but also as deception and misrepresentation of God. The text can be distorted if it is read with a narrow, dogmatic view. By his death and resurrection, Christ unmasked, repudiated, and banished sin into oblivion. And because "the just requirements of the law are fulfilled in us" (notice the passive voice, not by us), we must be 'set right' comprehensively and experientially, not just legally.
7. To accomplish this, Paul urges the Romans to live on the Spirit side and 'set their minds on the things of the Spirit' (8:5). So the opposition is not between the law and the gospel or sin and righteousness, but between the flesh and the Spirit.
8. In 8:9-14 "Paul continues his theme, contrasting the two possibilities that people face in how they live: either according to the Spirit—that is, the Holy Spirit of God, which is promised to us—or according to their sinful and carnal natures. One leads to eternal life, the other to eternal death." (Wednesday lesson)
9. Paul shows how the work of Jesus and the Spirit bring freedom from slavery to sin (7:14); adoption into God's family (Abraham [see Galatians 3:29; 4:5]) and removal of fear (8:15) so we can now cry Abba! Father! That connects the baptismal experience (8:9, 10; 6:1-11) with the everyday believer's experience. The revelation of God in Jesus is now brought home to believers through the agency of the Spirit. The deception of sin (8:15, 16; 7:8, 11) lost its power and we come full circle home to the Father.
10. The lesson does not include 8:18-39, where Paul turns his voice to non-human creation (19-22) which together with believers and the Spirit speak the same language of hope (23-39). Classical Christianity is concerned with individual justification and salvation, some moral lessons and perhaps the fate of Israel and Gentiles (lessons 10 & 11). Paul gives a hint about what glorification 'unveiled for us' (not in us, or to us!) means. It's not that we will shine like human light bulbs, rather, we will participate in the Messiah's glorious restoration of the whole world (creation included!). The blessed hope (the end of the story) is not heaven, but the renewed world.

11. This positive, world-affirming view is so different from the other-worldly escapism that Christians often engaged in throughout the centuries. Paul says that the creation is in birth-pangs (8:22), an upheaval of important transition, yet the picture of birth-pangs is the most vivid image of hope. As a church we are called to share in the pain of the present world and yet live in hope of the new world to come. That is part of our calling and that's how we share in God's rule over the whole world!

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

**Recommended Listening:** The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the book of Romans is available at <http://pkp.cc/MMROMANS66>

Lou: But what about the “satisfying of justice,” and “the demands of the law?”

Graham: Ah, those are the strongest ones. He died to satisfy the demands of the law. Now, what does the law demand? Well, the law seems to demand our love, which can't be demanded anyway. There's no way you can command love. And yet as Paul says, “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Jesus said the same. Moses said the same. So does the law say, “You either love God, and love each other, or you will be executed in the most painful way known to our Heavenly Father?” Some of our good Christian friends live under the awful weight of believing that God has said, “You either love and obey me, or you will be tortured in sulfurous flames for eternity.” That such good folk can still love God is a real tribute to them, not to God. This is an awesome burden to live under. And yet because they love Jesus, they still love and are still faithful. And they will be in the kingdom. And I think Jesus will love to introduce such people to the Father. He'll say, “Would you like to meet the Father?” And they'll say, “Well, if you will go with us.” He says, “There's no need, but I'll go with you.”

And what a marvelous surprise to millions of these people, to meet the Father in the kingdom, and discover that He is just as loving and gracious as the Son.

This is what we want to deal with next week, “There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God.”

But “under the demands of law.” That belongs to a very legal conception of what has gone wrong in the universe, that what has gone wrong is that we have “broken the rules,” and the law demands that God execute us for breaking the rules. And Jesus died so that somehow God could justly forgive us even though we have broken the rules.

I don't think we have been able to make too much sense out of that. But it goes along with the other one, “satisfying justice.” Whose justice? I have friends who say, “If God does not give *Idi Amin* several days in the fire, I will not regard him as a just God.” They have that feeling about the satisfaction of justice. And I think they really mean it, and I would respect them for that. I

would love to relieve them of that burden. If I want to know why Jesus died, I should go right to the cross and watch him die and hear his cry and see how the Father is involved, and then fit that back into Scripture. I don't see him fulfilling the requirements of a legal model.

Lou: It's part of our problem, then, that we are taking models from our legal system here and trying to apply them to God.

Graham: That's a very good point, very much so.

Lou: The "substitutionary," that comes in, say more about that. The "vicarious."

Graham: Ah. He died in our stead. He died as the substitution. In a way, it's very true. I mean, either he dies or we die. However that's where the comparison ends, because if God had let you and me and all other sinners die, all it would have done is prove the truthfulness of his warning, "If you sin, you will die." And God could say to the universe, "Was I right? I said sinners would die, and look, they're dead."

But the universe would not have had answers to questions two and three that I just mentioned. When Jesus died, there was no doubt in the minds of the universe that God was not killing his Son. They were clear about that. And the death of Christ answers all those three questions. So it's not either us or him. His death was infinitely more significant than ours. But had he not died, then what else could God do but leave us to reap the consequences and we all would have died. So, in a sense, yes. He died in our stead, but beyond that there's no comparison.

Lou: But not as a payoff. It's not one or the other.

Graham: It's not his death is equal to all of ours. His death is infinitely more significant than the death of every sinful man or angel who has ever lived. The death of angels and men would not have answered the questions.

Lou: What you're saying then, is that just a simple satisfaction idea doesn't encompass what's involved at all, does it?

Graham: Oh, it makes it much too small. I think it puts God in a very bad light, and it doesn't answer the questions of the great controversy.

Many folk who prefer those understandings of the plan of salvation do not understand there has been a universe-wide great controversy over the character and government of God. And do you remember at our first meeting, I brought along the evidence that even Luther, hero of the Christian world that he is, could not conceive of these larger issues because he couldn't include the book of Revelation. Let alone Hebrews, James and Jude. And this has been the pattern through the years. Not many have seen the sixty-sixth book picture of a universe-wide controversy over the character and government of God. And so they have seen the death of Christ as primarily a plan just to save you and me, for which we are very grateful. It's just that the larger view makes the cross much more significant. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the

audio series, Conversations About God, #8 with Lou Venden, “The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence” recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>*

Lou: There are many who have seen God’s law as a threat to our freedom. And many sincere individuals, Christians who have felt that somehow God’s law was something from which they wanted to be free. For example, I’ve heard the Romans 10:4 text mentioned so often: “Christ is the end of the law.” Doesn’t that mean real freedom from the law? Wouldn’t that be the answer to the problem of the law being a hindrance to our freedom? “Christ is the end of the law.”

Graham: We don’t have to love and behave anymore. We can be disorderly and live in chaos?

Lou: Well, what does that text mean?

Graham: Yes, that’s the thing. The text needs to be analyzed, first for the words and then for the context. First of all, the word “end.” Now, a rare meaning is the purpose of the law, but I doubt that’s the meaning in the context. I think it means termination, all right. Law does not have an article in front of it, meaning any particular law. Although, whether the article is there or not is not totally convincing in the context. You’ve got to read the whole setting. In the setting, Paul all the way through the book of Romans is contrasting the obedience that springs from love and trust, and the obedience that springs from law. And the obedience that springs from law is often the obedience that comes from fear, and that even turns us into rebels as we obey. So he comes to 10:4. It’s interesting—10:4—doesn’t that mean the end of something in radio communications? “Ten-four,” “Christ is the ten-four.” The meaning is “Christ is the termination of law as a way of being saved.”

It’s the end of legalism, is what that means. Phillips has a marvelous rendering of that. “Christ means the end of the struggle for righteousness by works of law, that everyone who has faith in God may be saved.” That’s beautifully done. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #12 with Lou Venden, “God’s Law is No Threat to Our Freedom” recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>*

Lou: You’ve talked of Jesus as our example in this series on Conversations About God. We’ve had several questions come in raising the question about his perhaps having an advantage over us. How could he be regarded as our example if he did have such an advantage? Let me just refer to a couple of these. “When Christ came to the world and took on human flesh, did he

take on sinful flesh in essence or vicariously?" The question of Jesus and his humanity, what was his humanity, I think ties in here in an important way. Would you comment briefly on that one?

Graham: Well, I'll cite Paul for that. He said, "Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh to deal with sin." I think really what's behind this is, can we really look to Jesus as an example of the perfection that we should have?

Lou: Yes, I think that's right.

Graham: But was he exactly like us? There are some interesting differences. He was born of the Holy Spirit. And I might be sixty-five before I'm born of the Holy Spirit. So when I'm reborn, I've got sixty-five years of bad habits to fight with for the rest of my life. Jesus never acquired a bad habit. The only way you can get a bad habit is to do something bad, which he never did. And you say, "Well, then he's not an example for me." How low do we want him to go? Do we want him to wallow in the gutter as a wino, so that he can be an example as to how you can get out of the gutter? I don't want Jesus to be more and more like me. I want to be more and more like him. So he came in human form in the likeness of sinful flesh using no power that is not available to us. And he showed that even little boys can be good. And you can grow up good like that.

And you say, "Well, I had bad habits."

"Look," he says, "I'm your Physician; I understand. I'll be very patient. And I guarantee I'll help you get over all of those things. Just trust me."

So how many things do we want him to do more than he did? He's enough of an example to show how we could have lived. Well, we didn't. What will he do with us now?

He's the Physician, and he knows exactly what it's like to go through what we are going through. And so you can count on him to be patient. You say, "Well, I guess that means the Father isn't just as patient." No, Jesus came to show how patient the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are. I think sometimes we run into problems when we raise the wrong questions about what he came to tell us, what he came to show us. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #14 with Lou Venden, "God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done" recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/14MMCAG>*

## Further Study with Ellen White

When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service and he makes up for the deficiency with his own divine merit; for he is the source of every right impulse. {OW, December 1, 1909 par. 10}

The ten holy precepts spoken by Christ upon Sinai's mount were the revelation of the character of God, and made known to the world the fact that He had jurisdiction over the whole human heritage. That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, "This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan." There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus. It is DO, and Live (Letter 89, 1898). {1BC 1105.2}

When the law was proclaimed from Sinai, God made known to men the holiness of His character, that by contrast they might see the sinfulness of their own. The law was given to convict them of sin, and reveal their need of a Saviour. It would do this as its principles were applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. This work it is still to do. In the life of Christ the principles of the law are made plain; and as the Holy Spirit of God touches the heart, as the light of Christ reveals to men their need of His cleansing blood and His justifying righteousness, the law is still an agent in bringing us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Psalm 19:7. {DA 308.2}

Obedience to the law is essential, not only to our salvation, but to our own happiness and the happiness of all with whom we are connected. {ML 163.5}

We owe to Him all that makes life desirable, and He asks of us the affections of the heart and the obedience of the life. His precepts, if obeyed, will bring happiness into the home life, happiness to every individual. {ML 163.7}

The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ. (RH April 12, 1892). {6BC 1101.1}

It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil and to impress His own character on His church. . . . {ML 46.2}

When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the joy of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The

blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see, creates a new being in the image of God. {ML 46.3}

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. {AG 54.6}

Those who accept Christ as their personal Saviour are not left as orphans, to bear the trials of life alone. He receives them as members of the heavenly family; He bids them call His Father their Father. They are His "little ones," dear to the heart of God, bound to Him by the most tender and abiding ties. He has toward them an exceeding tenderness, as far surpassing what our father or mother has felt toward us in our helplessness as the divine is above the human. {DA 327.2}

God regards us as His children. He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. Parents love their children, but the love of God is larger, broader, deeper, than human love can possibly be. It is immeasurable. Then if earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall our Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? {COL 142.1}