

[Easley:] He’s not yet another sacrifice. He came to do something about sin, so He condemns that sin and finally through this whole process, what the law couldn’t do, God did in His Son so that you’re righteous.

[Gauger:] Imagine yourself in a courtroom, head down, hopeless with guilt; yet suddenly, the judge addresses you with two life-changing words, “no condemnation.” Imagine the relief, imagine your joy. “No condemnation”, that’s the title of today’s message on *PROCLAIM!*, the quarter-hour broadcast with Dr. Michael Easley. Let’s join him in our study, again, looking at Verses 3-4 of Chapter 8.

[Easley:] Now, God is going to take care of the condemnation problem. The law can’t do it, so He’s going to do it for us. Now, what occurs in this next two, verse and a half, Verse 3 and 4, is a theological feast, a buffet table a mile long. He’s going to mention five things just like this that in and of themselves would require five or six sermons each in my opinion. I’m just not quite that smart so we’re going to do it in two minutes. Each of these terms is an enormous statement when he says of what Christ does in these things, what God did. First of all, He sent His own Son. It takes us right back to John 3:16. It takes us right back to *Monogenes*; His only begotten, His one-of-a-kind Son, His unique Son in all the world, His own is the emphasis of Paul here, His own Son He sends.

Now, just listen to a few verses. I won’t read all of these. And hear, the emphasis of God sending His Son, Galatians 4:4, “But when the fullness of time came, when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law.” Luke 20:13, “The owner of the vineyard said what shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Perhaps they will receive him.” John 4:34, Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish his work.” And, on they go. First John 4:14, “We have seen and testified that the Father has sent the son to be the Savior of the world.” I’ve said it many times before, I’ll say it many times again; I would probably die for a lot of people if I could help them live, but I would not give any of my children to die for anyone I know. And, God the Father gives His one and only, His unique, His *Monogenes* Son, He sends Him for this purpose. That’s the first thing Paul says. This is how God dealt with our condemnation.

Secondly, the incarnation. The text says in the likeness of sinful flesh, which is a Pandora’s theological box. Did Jesus Christ have sinful flesh? Did Jesus Christ incarnate sin? Could He have sinned? And, on we can go with that, right? What does the text at least saying? Number of things. He’s fully God, fully man. He became fully man, but He never ceased to be fully God. Philippians 2 we know the *kenosis*. He emptied Himself of some context. He emptied Himself of the glory of the Father. He took on incarnate flesh. He wrapped flesh around glory, but the glory is still in His Son. You’ll never figure it out all your life.

I remember a pastor years ago saying, “Envision a steel beam as big as you can, that is God. Take a wire coat hanger and wrap it around that steel beam, and that’s the incarnation of Christ wrapped around His Father. It’s as good as I can do it.” He’s fully God, fully man. And, in this text, Paul says, “He became in the likeness of sinful flesh.” You know, He suffered, right? He sweat, right? He hungered, right? Do you think He ever had the flu? Think He ever got sick? It would seem natural if he took on the nature of man, right? I mean, He suffered to die. Why wouldn’t He have these other ailments? He’s fully God, fully man.

Thirdly, He dies for sin. Now, some of your Bible say, unfortunately, “He came to be a sin offering.” It’s a very poor rendering of the text. If He came to be a sin offering, He was yet another sin offering. Some of your Bibles have in the margin “concerning sin” or “for sin.” Now, you might say, “Michael, you’re really splitting words this morning.” This is huge stuff. Because if Jesus came just as yet another

sacrifice, what did He accomplish? But if He came concerning sin, He came for sin, what does it mean? He came to do something about it and that is in keeping with the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, He condemns sin in the flesh. A fascinating passage because Jesus Christ becomes incarnate. He becomes flesh in Himself so He can take on that sin and as He dies for it and pays the penalty for it, He condemns sin in the natural flesh of man. He remedies it. You see how thick this stuff gets? That's what He has done to take away your condemnation. John Knox said, "God signed the death warrant of sin."

Fifth, He fulfills the righteous requirements. And, the language here takes us all the way back to Leviticus, Chapter 11, where in the context is the whole reason for these sacrifices is to be holy because the only way you can relate to a Holy God is if you yourself are holy. And so, here is the One and only sacrifice who took away condemnation because His Father sent the One and only One who could accomplish it. He makes Him fully God, fully man in the flesh because that's the only way He can suffer with the condemnation of sin taking it on Himself. He's not yet another sacrifice. He came to do something about sin, so He condemns that sin. And finally, through this whole process, what the law couldn't do, God did in His Son so that you're righteous. That's what Paul is saying. That's what Paul is saying. You could never do it yourself. He had to do it for you. I could never do it myself. He had to do it for me. And, any person who struggles with guilt and regret knows it to be true.

Lastly, we walk not according to the flesh now, but according to the Spirit. And, Paul is going to introduce this subject like anything you've never seen before in the Book of Romans. Up to now we've heard about the Holy Spirit five times depending on your translation of the English Bible. You will hear about Him 21 times in Chapter 8. More than any passage in the entire Bible. Think about 6, 7, and 8 as a unit. We are hopelessly condemned. Chapter 7, we are conflicted with our sin nature. We know it to be wrong, but we still do it. Chapter 8, I'm going to give you the Spirit to solve the problem. Makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? Makes a lot of sense in Paul's argument.

Three lessons as we conclude. Number one, to live under the weight of guilt and regret is to miss what God has done for us. We are no longer condemned. Now, I don't know how to explain this any better than my own experience because I've told you many times I'm a worm theologian. The danger of worm theology is you take your guilt and regrets so much so that you sort of convert it into another way of work salvation because somehow if I'm, you know, carrying this burden in my worm theology around, the danger is that, you know, it becomes sort of this I got to do something with this. That's an extreme.

I remember Dr. Hendricks telling the story about people that just drag through life. They're always, and something is always wrong with their life. They're -- the sky is always falling, it's always raining, it's always gloomy, it's always depressing. And, what's wrong? Oh, I'm not doing very well. Those kind of people. He says I'm convinced they're going to get to Heaven and Jesus is going to say, "I didn't mean for it to be that hard on you." That's the danger of worm theology.

Now, the other excess is a casual approach to sin. Oh, it's taken care of, which leads to my second point; we need a high sensitivity to sin. I think, my own personal heresy is, the closer you walk to Jesus Christ, the more acutely aware you are of your sinfulness because the closer you are to the light of the Word and the light of Jesus Christ and His Spirit dwelling, the closer you are to Him, you're going to see it immediately. It's a perfectly white, clean kitchen floor with a bright white and you see one little tiny bug or speck of dirt. And, the closer you are to the Light the greater your sensitivity. In fact, the danger sign is, if we live in a penitential sin that doesn't bother us.

Thirdly and last, the righteous life is a life of faith. The righteous life is a life of faith and it's characterized by the indwelling Spirit of God; 6, 7, and 8. Seven says you've got this tension of sin and you know it's wrong. Who's going to help me? Chapter 8, he's going to teach us it is understanding we

live a life by faith, not by flesh. Jetko would used to always tell us don't try to make the flesh better. We live a life by faith and that faith is learning to walk with His Spirit, which is more to come.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for Your Word even when it is hard sometimes on our heads it is true. Help us to understand what it means that we are no longer condemned. You do not look down at us and wince. You look down at us through the work of Christ and love. We thank You that You loved us so much that you sent Christ to do all these things for us so that we could be called your sons and daughters. We bless You because You've been so incredibly eternally kind to us in Christ's name. Amen.

[Gauger:] Boy, lots to think about in today's message. But, Michael, I am still pondering this assessment of your friend; don't try to make the flesh better.

[Easley:] Dr. Jetko was a Pastor with me in Northern Virginia and he was a Missionary for many years in Taiwan. And, whenever I was sort of beating myself up, Jon, for some struggle or some problem I had he'd say, "Michael, you can't make the flesh any better." I remember that often. You know, our goal isn't to clean up our act. Our goal is a spiritual life. It's a mental and emotional relationship no doubt. But it is a spiritual life and we're always trying to clean up the outside --

[Gauger:] Yeah.

[Easley:] -- and we're missing the very point, but God. That's what Christ has accomplished for us.

[Gauger:] You know, the very title that you've given to this message, "No Condemnation", is one of terrific news and I think if we can somehow wrap our arms around those just two words we could live differently.

[Easley:] Well, and there are many of us who wrestle with a guilty complex. I would say most people have incredible guilt about something in their childhood, something they did last week. And, to understand what Christ has accomplished, it's not just that we're off the hook, it's that we are no longer condemned. And, your opening about, you know, before the judge, the evidence is sufficient, it's more than sufficient to condemn all of us to hell and to understand that we are free from that condemnation is one of the high watermarks of the Book of Romans.

[Gauger:] Thanks, Michael. Boy, that is an encouraging word, isn't it? And, speaking of encouraging words we want to say thank you to Sandra who writes us from Muncie, Indiana to say, "Michael, I listen to *PROCLAIM!* on my way to work in the morning on WGNR out of Indianapolis. It's only a 7-minute drive so I rarely hear all the broadcast, but I usually hear the end. The messages are great, but I'm always impressed by your questions and answer at the end. How could an unsaved listener not immediately want to join God's family? Thank you for consistently giving such a clear presentation of God's love, grace, and mercy for all of us." Well, that's a great word of encouragement, Sandra, and we thank you. We love welcoming people to the Kingdom of God. By the way, that phone number we often give out, 1-888-NEED-HIM. It's toll-free and someone can help you begin your relationship with Jesus right now.

Friday we're back with a message Michael has titled "Change Your Mindset". Hope to see you then right here on *PROCLAIM!*