

No Charges, No Condemnation

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[0 : 00] My name is Matthew Capone and I'm one of the pastors here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church and it's my joy to bring God's word to you this morning.

Called Romans because it is written to the churches in the city of Rome and the letter is about the gospel. It's about the good news of Jesus' life and death and resurrection.

We are now getting to the very end of Romans chapter 8. We're going to finish it next Sunday, Lord willing, and I've told you before this is arguably the greatest chapter in all of the Bible.

Well, at least some people make that argument and last week and this week and next week we're in verses 31 through 39 which is in fact the greatest section of the greatest chapter in all of the Bible.

Last week we looked at verse 31. Paul says, what then shall we say to these things? So Paul's saying, hey, what's the point of all of this? And the point of everything he's taught in Romans 8 is this, that in the end we can't not win.

[1 : 27] We can't not win because we know the end of the story. We know how everything ends up. So whatever you face in this world, whether it is the world, the flesh, the devil, slander, disease, sickness, pain, poverty, destruction, war, none of it has the last word. So that's review, that's 31, that's last week. Verses 32 through 39 then proceed to give us the reasons why this is true.

Three reasons. The first one we looked at again last week, verse 32. In other words, God will give you everything necessary for your life as a Christian.

There's nothing that you will lack that you need for life and godliness. You have everything you need to make it to the end. So that's all review, that's last week, that is verses 31, 32.

This week we get to reason number two, why it is that we can't not win. Reason two is that because God has justified us, and because Jesus has died for us, we are free from condemnation and accusation. Because God has justified us, and Jesus has died for us, we are free from condemnation and accusation.

So we're talking about our confidence, we're talking about assurance, which is this word that simply means that we are sure that God has saved us. And so verses 32, excuse me, 33 and 34 tell us how it is that we have that assurance.

[3 : 28] What do we do when we doubt that we really belong to God? With that, I invite you to turn with me to Romans chapter 8, verses 33 and 34.

Or you will find those on page 8 of your worship guide. And as we come to these verses, remember that this is God's word. Jeremiah chapter 23 tells us his word is like a hammer that breaks a rock into pieces, which is a way of saying that there is nothing that is so powerful that God's word is not more powerful still.

So that's why we read now Romans chapter 8, starting at verse 33. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died, more than that, who was raised.

Who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Christ Jesus is the one who died, more than that, who is the one who died. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

[4 : 40] Our Father in heaven, we do praise you and thank you again this week that you speak to us. You speak to us in your word, not in confusing terms and phrases, but you speak to us in ways that we can understand.

We ask that you would do that again this morning, that you would send your Holy Spirit to make your word clear to us, that we would understand it. Father, that you would make it lovely to us, that you'd soften our hearts.

Father, you'd make it beautiful, that we, most of all, we'd see Jesus in his glory, his majesty, his mercy, his grace, and his love. We ask that you would grow our love and affection for Jesus Christ. Christ, you'd increase our reverence and our awe for him, and that we would follow him in obedience because of your word. We ask all of these things in his mighty name. Amen.

When I was in seminary, I rented out the top unit of a two-family house in St. Louis, kind of a townhouse, and the house was owned by a deacon who was at the church that I went to in St. Louis, and in July of 2014, I moved kind of at the very end of May, very beginning of June to St. Louis, he sends me the lease.

[6:03] He says, read through this lease, tell me if you have any questions. So me being me, I read through every sentence of the lease, and me being me, I had one question. I said, everything looks great, except the lease says that I have to have renter's insurance, and the renter's insurance has to be at an amount of \$300,000.

Now, this is 2014, so in 2014, \$300,000 was worth a lot more than it is in 2026, and at the time, \$300,000 exceeded the value of the home I was renting.

It's like, can you explain why the renter's insurance needs to be so high? He said, yeah, the renter's insurance is so high so that I can sue you. Wait, what?

So you can sue me? It's like, yeah, you burn down the house, and you're a seminary student, so you don't have any assets. So you burn down my house, I can't come after you for anything.

I can't get money out of you that you don't have. But if you have the insurance, then I can sue you, and I can get everything that I need. I can sue you, and the insurance will pay.

[7:17] Okay? I have great news for you, by the way. I moved out of that house in 2017. I have still not been sued by that landlord. So I made it out.

He was actually fantastic. He rented that house really at below market rates to seminary students. It's kind of a ministry. And so when I heard that he was selling the house, I thought, man, I just hope he makes a lot of money.

I hope God blesses him for his years. There's, you know, a whole generation of seminary students who made it through with low rent from this guy. I tell you this to make this point.

We live in a world where there is great fear around lawsuits. We live with fear of lawsuits being brought.

There's tremendous energy spent preparing for the consequences of lawsuits. There are lawyers who make their entire living protecting assets. So if someone sues you, they cannot touch your great fortune.

[8:21] That is the scenario that Paul envisions here in verse 33. However, he's not speaking about a rental home. He is speaking about the spiritual realm.

Again, this is verse 33. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? In other words, who's going to bring a lawsuit against God's people?

Who is going to come and accuse them of their sins? Now, he's not saying someone can't do that. He's saying they can't do it and succeed.

In other words, who can successfully bring a charge against God's people? Who can win against God's children in court?

Who can prove them guilty so that they receive punishment? Of course, Paul here is talking about Satan, the great enemy of our souls.

[9:22] Revelation chapter 12 calls Satan the accuser. And Satan comes, Satan is coming, Satan is coming, Satan is coming, hoping he can rattle the confidence that we have in our salvation, and he does that by accusing us.

So Satan comes, he reminds us, he taunts us of our sins, our rebellions, the failures of our life. He tells us, you're not going to make it. Because of what you've done and are doing, you don't really belong to God.

Your sins are too great. They're going to destroy you. And ultimately, Paul here is speaking of the end when Christ returns, and Satan, at that time, brings his charge against us.

By the way, notice how Paul describes Christians at the beginning of verse 33. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

Now we'll have plenty of time to talk about the doctrine of election. When we get to chapter 9 of Romans, I'll simply remind you that the word elect here means chosen.

[10:40] So Paul's saying, who will bring any charge against those God has chosen? Who can bring a case that will not get thrown out?

And the answer is this, no one. If God has chosen you, if you're a Christian, you are safe. If God has chosen you, you are safe from Satan's accusations. Second half, verse 33. It goes on to tell us exactly why we're safe. It is God who justifies. That's the answer. Those God chooses, he also justifies.

Remember the meaning of justification. justification. I've given you this device to remember it. Justification is when God makes it just as if we had never sinned.

[11:54] So that's Jesus taking the punishment for our sins, wiping our slate clean. Now that device is only half true because justification includes something else.

It's not just when Jesus takes our sins. It's also when he gives us his righteousness. God's the judge. That's why Paul can ask this question.

Who can bring any charge against God's elect, his chosen one? God's the judge. Are you going to have the gall, the boldness to show up in God's courtroom and accuse his chosen people?

He's already made up his mind. And he's a just judge. He can justify his people not by cooking the books or by fudging numbers.

No, God justifies his people because of the work of Christ. Now remember I asked you that question last week.

[13:00] So what? Why does any of this matter? It matters because it gets at the security of the Christian believer in his or her experience day by day.

You don't wonder, you don't walk around on Wednesday wondering whether you're really saved.

You are not blown about and filled with anxiety over the memories of your past sins.

When your past comes up in your mind, when Satan arrives to you at Tuesday morning at King Soopers and he accuses you, you know how to answer him.

You can tell him, I have been chosen by God. I'm one of God's elect. He's justified me. So go away.

[14:11] Jesus took my sins and he gave me his righteousness. You can taunt me all day. You can accuse me all day.

You can remind me all day. But I know the truth. Yes, I have failed.

Yes, I still fight against sin. But God has forgiven me. God has justified me.

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. God justifies. So we've established that Satan can't accuse us.

At least not successfully. That's verse 33. But what about God? God doesn't need Satan to accuse us.

[15:15] God knows about our sins. He doesn't need Satan to remind him. Will he condemn us? Will anyone else condemn us? That's the question of verse 34.

Who is to condemn? And Paul proceeds to then give us four reasons that God will not condemn us. We've dealt with Satan. Okay, that's, we're done with that. But what about God? Reason one. First, Christ Jesus is the one who died.

This is saying the same thing that the last half of verse 33 said. God justifies us. Why? Because Jesus takes our sin onto him. And so it doesn't make any sense that God would, on the one hand, send his son to die for your sins, and then, on the other hand, condemn you for your sins.

Those two things can't both be true at the same time, right? It's a contradiction. Jesus Christ is the one who died. It would not make sense even for Jesus to die for you and then stand at a distance.

[16:26] God is not going to send his only son to take the punishment that you deserve, and then, on the other hand, stand at a distance and cross his arms and shake his head at you.

Doesn't make any sense. Of course he won't condemn you. You know that because he died for you.

Christ Jesus is the one who died. So Paul's saying this. If you fear that God is condemning you, remember how silly a thought that is.

God doesn't condemn the same people he died for. It's not the end of the case. Paul goes on to give us a second reason for confidence.

Again, this is verse 34. More than that, who was raised? The resurrection is proof positive that Jesus' death was for our sins.

[17:36] We talked about this before in Romans. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, we would have to conclude he wasn't sinless. If Jesus stayed dead, what that would tell us is, you know

what?

Actually, Jesus had to die for his own sins. The resurrection happens because Jesus died for our sins. So how do we know that Jesus' death, the first reason, is something we can have confidence in?

Well, because of his resurrection, the second reason, the resurrection proves and certifies and verifies that Jesus' death was actually for you and your sins.

The resurrection shows that God's plan of salvation worked. It was effective. How do you know he died for you?

You know he died for you because he rose from the dead. It's so important to Christian belief that Paul, in another letter, 1 Corinthians 15, says this, If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

[18 : 49] Now those two reasons, Jesus' death and his resurrection, are more than enough. Paul could easily stop there.

But Paul has a train and he is going to keep going. He has two more reasons. The third reason, again verse 34, Who is at the right hand of God?

Now why does it matter to us that Jesus is at the right hand of God? It matters for at least two reasons.

First, the right hand is a position of the greatest power and authority. You have any doubt that Jesus can get done what he wants to get done?

Don't. He's at the right hand of God. There's no more powerful place for him to be. Martin Lloyd-Jones, famous for his series in Romans, points us to the book of Hebrews to understand the second reason.

[19 : 55] The book of Hebrews reminds us that Jesus is not just at God's right hand. He is seated at God's right hand. And in Hebrews chapter 1 and Hebrews chapter 10, the author of Hebrews makes this point that Jesus sits down because he's done.

Jesus sits down because he's finished. In other words, if your salvation was not sure and complete, Jesus would still be standing.

But he's not. Jesus is so finished, so done with your salvation, it is so sure and unshakable that he's decided it's time to sit down.

There's nothing else to do. He's just waiting. By the way, this is what Hebrews tells us. Jesus is just sitting around waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool.

Okay, he's done saving you. He's completed that. He's made purification for your sins. Now he's just waiting for the end to come. He's going to prop up his feet on his enemies.

[21 : 08] So, if Jesus' resurrection by itself does not give you confidence that God will not condemn you, remember this.

It is so finished, so complete, so final that Jesus is just sitting. He is done. He is finished. He is at the right hand of God the Father.

Are you worried? Jesus is not. Jesus is not. Jesus is so unfazed and unbothered about the security of your salvation that he sat down.

Paul then goes on to give us a final reason, the very end of verse 34.

Speaking of Jesus, who indeed is interceding for us. In other words, Jesus is continuing to work actively on your behalf.

[22 : 24] Why is it that we end our prayers? Every time we pray, we say, in Jesus' name, amen. We say it in Jesus' name because he is interceding for us.

And to jump back one point, he's interceding for us as he's at the right hand of God the Father, the place of power and authority. So, the most powerful, influential voice is speaking for you.

He is interceding for you, representing you before God. Do you think he's going to condemn you? No.

No. He's praying for you. Very different. Would he condemn you and be your advocate at the same time?

Of course not. Of course not. That's ridiculous. Lloyd-Jones again points us to the book of Hebrews, chapter 4, which says this.

[23 : 33] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need.

Why is it that we draw near and expect mercy and grace? Because he is interceding for us.

Christ Jesus, he's the one who died. Reason one. More than that, he was raised. Reason two. Even more than that, he's at the right hand of God.

Reason three. And he is indeed interceding for us. Reason four. Now, I've told you before, Romans is the fifth gospel.

And whatever Paul teaches, Jesus taught first. Jesus teaches these same things. John chapter 10, he says this.

[24 : 43] What does that sound like?

Sounds like verse 33. Romans is the fifth gospel.

What Paul teaches, Jesus taught first. John chapter 3. What does that sound like?

Sounds a lot like verse 34. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who was raised.

Who is at the right hand of God. Who indeed is interceding for us. Who indeed is interceding for you.

[26 : 22] God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world. The world might be saved through him. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, we do thank you and praise you that we can have great joy and confidence. That we don't fear condemnation or accusation. Because we know that Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who was raised. Who is at the right hand of God. And who is indeed interceding for us. We ask that you would remind us of that. That you would use it to grow our hope and love and trust in you.

And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.