

CONDEMNED NO MORE!
The Weekend that Changed the World

Easter Sunday
PBC 2026

Texts: Romans 8:1; Galatians 4:4-5

What do you love most about Easter? If we listed all our answers, we might see responses like these: 1) Worshiping God and celebrating the resurrection and the empty tomb; 2) the meaningful reminder to thank Christ for dying on the Cross for me and the opportunity to remember His resurrection from the dead; 3) the hope, joy, and new life that Easter signifies; 4) special time spent with family; 4) the great events and special services during this season that remind us of the joy and happiness this time of year should bring to our lives and families; 5) kids enjoy activities like SpringFest, egg hunts, and baskets filled with candy.

Most of us would not put Romans 8:1 on that list – though we would agree with it the moment we heard it. It isn't that we don't believe it or that we don't rejoice in it – we just don't think about it!

Romans 8:1 is ***“good news” that almost feels more like “positive news,”*** which makes us thankful and appreciative but ***does not overwhelm us with its magnitude.*** In other words, Romans 8:1 does not shake the foundations of our lives or cause us to respond with such joyful celebration that the world stops and wonders what just happened to us!

However, the good news in this verse raises important, though somewhat troubling, questions that we must answer. We need to decide whether Paul (and the God who inspired his writing) is trustworthy. Are we willing to accept the answers he gives, or will we argue against them? ***Put differently: Do we trust God to tell us hard truths that lead to life-changing good news?***

I. WHAT IS CONDEMNATION? A Death Sentence!

- Term only occurs 3x in Paul's letters (8:1, 5:16, 18) – a very strong, very dark, and horrifically severe word.
- The Greek term (Katakrima - κατάκριμα) is only used 3x in the NT – all three times are in Romans (5:16, 18; 8:1). The emphasis of the term is not just on the guilty verdict (judgment) handed down by the judge, but ***on the penalty demanded by that verdict*** and its being carried out or executed on the guilty party.
- ***Condemnation is more than punishment – it is the most extreme penalty for a crime– being put to death by execution.***
- And in Romans, the crime in question that brings about this extreme penalty on a person is sin. Listen to Paul state this clearly – *“For the wages (consequence) of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (6:23).*
- In Romans, Paul tells us two alarming things about this severe penalty (death) for the crime of even a single sin.

1. ***In 5:16*** Paul tells us this condemnation is the result of a single sin – *“And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.”*

One man, Adam, committed one sin at the beginning, and when that sin was judged by God, it brought severe condemnation (the death penalty) on the sinner, Adam. How did that happen?

- A. God put Adam in charge of an amazing kingdom and gave him three instructions: Care for it well; protect it from danger; and enjoy it freely. (Gen 2:15-17)
- B. To help Adam protect the garden from a real and present danger known to God but not yet to Adam, God gave him a weapon – His Word, in the form of a single, solitary command. (Gen 2:17; Rom 7:10-11).

- C. And to protect Adam from the shiny deception of the temptation that was coming, God gave him a gracious warning – *“Adam, if you eat of that tree, you will surely die.”* (Gen 2:16-17)
- It wasn’t the tree itself or the fruit that would kill Adam – it was the disobedience to God in the breaking of the command that would bring about the severe result – his violent death.
 - I imagine this warning coming graciously from God – *“Adam, let me warn you that if you sin and disobey my command, that sin will result in your immediate death”* (Gen 2:17).
 - In other words, God was graciously warning Adam that sin kills those it deceives! (James repeats this warning – James 1:13-15).

But it wasn’t just Adam who faced condemnation that day; the entire human race sinned in him and came under his same condemnation!

2. **In 5:18**, Adam’s single sin brought condemnation on all men – *“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.”*

Which is why **Romans 8:1** is such amazingly good news – *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!”*

But before we get too far ahead of ourselves as we run toward this incredibly good news – we need to ask a second question:

II. WHY DOES GOD CONDEMN PEOPLE?

What Paul seems to be saying is that the entire world was somehow lumped in with Adam and came under his same severe condemnation for a single, solitary sin. (Rom 5:18 – *“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.”*)

Questions: Is this actually true? And if so, *why does God impose such a severe penalty for just one sin?* Is it fair for God to punish people who were not physically present with Adam when he sinned?

A. Is it true?

- Yes. God's holy nature responds in wrath, and His righteous character in fierce anger against sin and those who commit it against Him and others (every time we sin, we sin against God).
- *Romans 1:18 – "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth."*

B. Why does God impose such a severe penalty for one solitary sin?

- The severity of the penalty reflects the seriousness of the infraction. There are different penalties for speeding, theft, murder, and crimes against humanity. The penalties are not the same for these escalating violations.
- ***An Illustration: The Nuremberg War Trials in Germany*** were among the most notorious criminal trials in 20th-century history – 24 of the highest-ranking surviving Nazi political and military leaders were tried for crimes against peace, clear violations of treaties, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.
- An international tribunal composed of 8 judges from four countries (2 from Great Britain, 2 from the USA, 2 from France, and 2 from the Soviet Union) was convened to try these 24 men for the crimes they were accused of and hold them accountable.
- The trial began on November 20, 1945, and concluded on October 1, 1946, when the tribunal sentenced the defendants as follows:
 - 3 were acquitted of the charges.
 - 4 received prison terms ranging from 10-20 years.
 - 3 were sentenced to life in prison without hope of parole.
 - 12 were condemned to death by hanging and their sentences were carried out on the morning of October 16, 1946.

- The world at large was sobered by the magnitude of the crimes against humanity these men orchestrated, led, and participated in, and ***viewed the severity of their sentences as justice that was fair, fitting, and necessary.***
- In fact, if the judges on the tribunal hadn't handed down those sentences, there would have been worldwide outrage. And the tribunal received harsh criticism for being too lenient on those who were sentenced to prison or acquitted.
- ***The Point:*** If crimes against humanity merit and demand such a severe sentence, how much more do crimes against God require an even harsher punishment – eternal condemnation!
- ***And this is exactly the kind of punishment Paul warns will come to those who rebel against God and refuse to repent,*** regardless of who they are or what religious standing they have.

Romans 2:5-11 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ He will render to each one according to his works: ⁷ to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; ⁸ **but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.** ⁹ **There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek,** ¹⁰ but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. ¹¹ **For God shows no partiality.**

C. Is God just to impose this severe penalty on people not physically present when Adam sinned?

Yes, because all of Adam's descendants have knowingly and willingly committed the same types of sins, and even worse! ***Here is how he makes his case:***

- Paul reminds us that everyone sins because everyone dies – *"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned!" (Romans 5:12)*

- Paul explains this is so because all men willfully, intentionally, and knowingly sin against God’s righteous decree – *“They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips,³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.³² **Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”** Romans 1:29-32*
- And Paul clearly explains why people sin so openly and intentionally – sin is deeply embedded in the spiritual DNA of our old nature, so much so that he describes us as **“sons filled with disobedience”** and **“children destined for wrath”** – *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”* (Eph. 2:1-3)
- Finally, Paul explains that this sinfulness, which is deeply woven into the spiritual fabric of our old sinful nature, affects and touches every part of our lives – we are completely depraved from head to toe! (Romans 3:10-18)

III. DOES THIS CONDEMNATION INCLUDE ME?

Yes, because regardless of who I am or my religious background, first and foremost, I am a sinner, and the roots of my sinfulness run deep!

Paul states this plainly by confronting me with Spirit-inspired words that hit hard, **revealing the full extent of my depravity from my mouth to my feet**. And when all is said and done, Paul looks right through all my claims to be spiritual, my religious works, and my outward self-righteous deeds and states, **“There is no fear of God in your eyes!”**

Listen to the weight of these words: *“As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one;¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God.¹² All have turned aside; together they have*

become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”¹³ “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.”¹⁴ “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”¹⁵ “Their feet are swift to shed blood;¹⁶ in their paths are ruin and misery,¹⁷ and the way of peace they have not known.”¹⁸ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (Romans 3:10-18) ***And everyone is like this!***

- A Sinner by ***birth*** under Adam
- A sinner by ***nature*** – I am a son of disobedience and by my nature a child destined for God’s wrath, just like all mankind! And I have confirmed this harsh truth time and again throughout my life.
- A Sinner by ***choice*** to willfully disobey the righteous decree of God

So here is where this leaves you and me this Easter morning –

- All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)
- No one is righteous . . . not even one! (Rom 3:10, 12)
- No one understands – no one seeks after God. (Rom 3:11)
- Everyone has turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one! (Rom 3:12)
- And then Paul starts at the top of our body with our mouth and goes all the way down to our feet and shows us how we have used every part of our body to willingly and willfully commit sins against God that His righteous decree said was worthy of Death! (Rom 3:13-18)

And even a law system as holy and righteous and good as the one God gave to Moses can’t help us – all it can do is expose our sin, pronounce judgment against us, and call for the judge to condemn us to death for our crimes against humanity and even more, for our crime against God!

And just as those 8 tribunals had to pronounce just and right sentences at Nuremberg before the watching world, ***God has to pronounce a just and righteous sentence over us before the watching universe!***

And that sentence was a condemnation to death (Romans 6:23).

IV. IS THERE A SOLUTION? Has anyone escaped God's condemnation?

Yes, there is a solution! That is what Paul is announcing in this text: *"There is now NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!"*

Yes, there are those who have escaped! There is a whole group of people that you read about in Romans who are no longer under that condemnation! And the reason they are no longer under condemnation is that they are no longer associated with Adam but are **now** personally identified with and permanently united to Christ Jesus!

We meet one of them in Romans 4, a man guilty of adultery, murder, deceit, and giving false witness against his neighbor—all of which stemmed from his covetous desire to have that man's wife. That man was King David. His story reminds us that no matter who we are or how high we rise in the kingdom, we must appear before God and give an account for our deeds!

In a remarkable turn of events, David not only received forgiveness but was also declared righteous by God Himself! He expressed this with the words: *"Blessed are those whose lawless sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin!" (4:7-8)*

David did not gain a pardon through royal privilege or obtain it by wealth or future merit – he got it the same way everyone gets it, by grace through sheer mercy!

Nor was this limited to David. Many others like him have also been forgiven. Listen to Paul's words – *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ! 5:1."*

These individuals have been saved from that terrible sentence, and instead of facing God's righteous wrath, they now enjoy peace with Him! They have given a permanent place in His kingdom! They are

granted unrestricted access to His presence and can approach His throne of grace whenever they wish.

In one word – they received MERCY when they deserved judgment!

V. HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? How did mercy triumph over judgment?

The sentence was death; the solution is a substitute!

- God designed a plan to deliver us from condemnation (Gal 4:4-5)
But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.
- Jesus executed that plan by dying in our place (Romans 5:6-10)
*For while we were still weak, **at the right time Christ died for (in place of) the ungodly.**⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—⁸ **but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (on our behalf as our substitute).**⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*

Jesus suffered the unthinkable for the unworthy because we were truly guilty of unforgivable sins! And He took the penalty for those sins in our place to satisfy the justice of God so mercy could triumph over judgment!

VI. WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THESE PEOPLE? What is their lot?

Galatians 4:5–6 *God sent forth his son . . . to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”*

What happens to a condemned person whose sentence is commuted? What is their role in society and their relationship with God after being forgiven? What is their standing in the eyes of the Universe that witnessed all their crimes?

Illustration: There were three people at Nuremberg who were acquitted of their crimes and declared “not guilty” by the tribunal that tried them. However, these men faced public anger, ridicule, disdain, suspicion, and sometimes hostility for most of their remaining lives.

What has been the experience of those who are truly guilty of crimes against God—by birth, by nature, and by choice? How have they been received by God after accumulating a mountain of sins against Him, which led to the brutal crucifixion of His only beloved Son?

In short, these people not only received a full pardon and were declared righteous by God – ***they went from the execution chamber to a royal wedding – their own!***

- A. ***Judicially***, they are declared fully righteous (justified) because God has credited Christ’s righteousness to their account!
- B. ***Positionally***, they have been given permanent citizenship in the kingdom of Grace and granted unrestricted access to the One sitting on the Throne of Grace!
- C. ***Relationally***, they are not just forgiven servants but beloved sons and daughters who have been given the keys to God’s kingdom!

So, how did God give them the keys to the kingdom after all they have done against Him? It is one thing to be forgiven and considered favored servants of a great king like God. It is even more astonishing that they have become sons and daughters of this great King through new birth! But it is an entirely different matter for these new sons and daughters to receive the same inheritance God promised to His Son. ***So, how does God make this happen?***

There is only one way: He gives them to His Son, the Crown Prince of the Universe, in marriage, just as Paul discusses in Romans 7:4!

Conclusion: How do I join them?

The Pathway to Conversion:

- It isn't enough to be impressed
- It isn't enough to be impacted
- You must be truly converted – this word means “to turn”

So how does that happen? It starts with deep conviction over sin that leads you to truly embrace five simple truths about your life:

- I must Admit I really am a sinner
- I must Agree that God is right to condemn me
- I must Abandon my own efforts and my religious works
- I must Accept Christ's offer in the gospel by repenting of my sin and trusting Christ
- I must Ask God to forgive me, save me, and make me His child

And the best part is that this is available to you NOW! (“Now” is the best news in the verse . . . *there is therefore now no condemnation . . .*)

So what about you?

Will this weekend be a time when the story of the resurrection is retold in ways that impress you or even move and impact you deeply, but you walk away without the amazing good news in the story changing your standing before God or affecting how you live your life?

Or will this be the weekend that changes your world because this is the weekend you are converted and truly born again?

Will the events of the weekend that changed the world change you?

Illustration – Don B