

# **The Spirit's Ministry of Assurance**

## ***No Reason for Defeat – There is No Condemnation***

Romans Series  
PBC 2026

Text: Romans 8:1-11; Hebrews 10:22

**Romans 8:1–11** *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> **For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.** <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> **in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.** <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. <sup>9</sup> **You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.** <sup>10</sup> **But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.** <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

**Hebrews 10:22** *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from a clear conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

### **Introduction**

Illustration: The story of a ***“Blind Visionary.”*** The history and background of the well-known hymn, ***Blessed Assurance,*** have an important spiritual application we must consider in light of the intent of the text before us.

#### ***Here are some bullet points of information about this hymn:***

- Fanny Crosby was the author of the text (she wrote between 8,000+ hymns and spiritual songs); Phoebe Knapp composed the tune.
- Fanny Crosby was born in a small cottage
- Dad died before she was 1 year old
- When she was 6 weeks old, she got a cold that affected her eyes – the family doctor was away, and a visiting “healer” who was not a doctor

prescribed hot mustard plasters to be placed over her eyes – which destroyed her sight completely.

- Because of this, she never went to school, never learned to read or write, and was never able to learn Braille due to calluses on her fingertips from playing music. But she had a gift for composing poetry and setting it to music, whether composed by herself or by others.
- She was raised by a godly grandmother because her mother worked long hours each day to earn a meager income to support the family.
- Her grandmother read the Bible to her, and somehow Fanny was able to remember what she heard – she could repeat from memory Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Ruth, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and the vast majority of the New Testament.
- As she grew older, music became her life – specifically composing hymn texts and setting them to memorable tunes. Eventually, she composed thousands of hymns, many of which are still sung today. This is the story of one of the most familiar of those hymns – “Blessed Assurance.”
- One day in 1873, a wealthy woman, the wife of the founder of Metropolitan Life Insurance, visited Fanny at her humble home. This woman was an accomplished pianist and, on this occasion, played a melody she had composed. She asked Fanny what words came to mind as she heard the tune. Immediately, Fanny said, *“Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of His Spirit, washed in His blood! This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long; this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.”*
- This simple hymn, composed in a NY apartment, became a global anthem sung by millions of believers worldwide – who wanted to turn their private faith into public proclamation and praise.
- During the famous but bloody Boer War of 1900, British soldiers going to the front lines would greet one another with the phrase *“Four-nine-four, boys, four-nine-four!”* to which the reply would come,

*“Six further on, boys, six further on!”* The explanation for this common greeting was that in the common hymnbook made popular by Moody’s great revivals, to which hundreds of thousands of these men had attended, Hymn number 494 was “God be with you till we meet again.” And six pages further on was number 500 – “Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine!”

***There are three things I want you to take away from this story:***

- a. The text of this hymn is grounded in deep theological truths, all of which are contained in the text before us this morning – the blessing of assurance; union with Christ; future hope; heir of salvation; purchased by God; born of His Spirit; washed in His blood – all of these themes are articulated by Paul in our text.
- b. This hymn reflects and testifies to a believer’s personal experience of the very thing we are after – unshakeable assurance and unmovable confidence that we belong to Jesus!
- c. This experience produces deep joy and lasting satisfaction in a woman whose life was extremely hard and extraordinarily difficult – who summed it all up this way: *“This is my story, this is my song, praising my savior all the day long!”*

The reason I tell you this story this morning is that I believe what Fanny believed, experienced, and celebrated is firmly grounded in this passage, and that her response is exactly what Paul wants ours to be as we grasp what the Spirit inspired Him to write in this text.

We live in a day and age when we want security, assurance, and a sense that we are attached to something of deep significance – and because we can’t find it, or won’t seek it, in the texts Paul wrote for us, we often turn to other sources, such as ancient religious traditions or experiential religious rites and practices.

And even if we don’t turn there – we often wander through our lives holding on to the theological realities expressed propositionally in

sermons that we often never quite taste or experience in our personal lives. And then we meet someone like Fanny Crosby – whose blind eyes seem to see and grasp deep realities that often escape our own.

So, how do we come to the point where we personally experience, deeply taste, and joyfully celebrate the truth we know theologically and propositionally – that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus? How do we close the gap between theology and experience?

How does this assurance become so rock solid and so crystal clear that it produces in us an unshakeable assurance, an unmovable confidence, and a deep experiential joy?

I think it starts here with the first of two stunning statements that Paul makes in this chapter:

1. Because there is no condemnation before God, there is no reason for us to live in spiritual defeat. (8:1-17)
2. Because there is no separation from God, there is no cause for us to live in spiritual discouragement. (8:18-30)

The first of those stunning statements looks back to realities Paul has explained and illustrated in chapters 1-7.

The second of those stunning statements looks forward to realities that Paul will explain and apply in chapters 8-11.

So, this morning – I want us to explore the first of those statements and mine out the rich truth God inspired Paul to place in these verses!

### **I. Stated Authoritatively (8:1)**

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

We have looked at this statement in two previous messages because it is so foundational to our Christian life and our eternal destiny.

**A. *The all-encompassing Scope of this statement***

*There is **therefore** now **no** condemnation*

***God no longer holds certain people under condemnation***

- Of any kind
- For any reason
- Under any circumstance

**B. *The ongoing nature of this marvelous status.***

*There is therefore **now** no condemnation*

- This is not merely a legal declaration, though it is based on one.
- This is not just a positional declaration with no real application in life or experience – this is the ongoing legal standing and personal status of believers.
- This is contrast to their former legal standing (guilty), spiritual status (condemned), and personal experience (in bondage to sin, under the rule of death, and within the domain of the kingdom of darkness). ***All of this has been radically reversed! NOW – in their present experience, there is no condemnation!***

**C. *The relational Context and spiritual Boundary of this statement.***

*for those who are in Christ Jesus*

- This is more than having the right belief about Him – the right creed is not enough to give us the kind of assurance we desperately need.
- This is more than religious conduct before Him – the right conduct is not enough to give us the kind of assurance we need.
- This is deeply relational in context – “in” Christ. This is the kind of language God used to describe the marriage relationship.
- Jesus said that He and the Father would make their abode with certain people – those who obeyed His command (John 14:23).

- And this happened **when** we rendered a certain kind of obedience to a very specific command – the command to believe the gospel (the “obedience of faith” in 1:5, 15:18, and 16:28).

However, I often find myself failing to obey Christ’s commands. And when that happens often enough, or continues long enough, the assurance I desperately need is absent! This is so because the kind of assurance we are talking about is experiential rather than merely propositional or theological. And that is where Paul turns next:

## II. Experienced Subjectively (8:2)

*For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*

What will give me unshakable assurance and unmovable confidence that I have truly been forgiven of my guilt, delivered from the penalty, ransomed from bondage, and rescued from the power of sin over me, so that there is now no condemnation over me?

Paul answers this question by pointing us to a specific experience we share with everyone who has truly been delivered in this way

*NOTE: Paul is not talking about a more advanced state in the Christian life, as though there is the immature, sin-burdened, carnal Christian in chapter 7 and a more mature, sin-conquering, living-in-victory kind of Christian here in chapter 8. **The same person who struggles in chapter 7 is the one whom Paul is assuring in chapter 8!***

And the assurance that Paul gives to a person like that is grounded in theological realities like Justification – but it is actually experienced subjectively and personally in a very specific and common way – **these people will know that they are no longer under condemnation because something undeniable has happened to them:**

**A. They have been delivered from the controlling power of sin and death that once ruled over them in their old life before salvation.**

***B. They have been freed to operate under a completely new controlling (governing) power – the Spirit of Life.***

This new controlling power rules over them, shapes their minds, strengthens their will, enables their understanding, and energizes their conduct – and this new controlling power that rules within them is the Spirit that brings life! (The old power – sin – was “of death” because it resulted in death. This new ruling power, the Spirit, results in life!)

***C. And this radical transformation has come about through a dynamic, personal, experiential relationship with Christ Jesus!***

And to help us ground our experience in the solid bedrock of theological, biblical truth, Paul explains the theological ground on which this subjective experience rests.

**III. Explained Objectively (8:3-4)**

*For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,<sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

***A. Orchestrated by God***

*For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.*

- The Law could not do something God desired and demanded because it was weakened by the flesh – the Law is righteous, but the human lever is broken!
- What was it that the Law was intended to do? Reveal, promote, and produce God’s righteous expectation and moral demands in the human heart.
- The Law successfully revealed and represented those righteous demands and moral expectations to everyone (1:32; 3:19-20).

- But the Law failed miserably to promote and produce them among the human race, and even in believers (7:5; 7:21-24).
- The Law failed not because anything was wrong with it (it was righteous and good -7:12) – rather, it failed because it was weakened by the flesh. In other words, the problem was not with the Law but with me – my flesh!
- However, what Moses could not do, God determined to do!
- God Himself intervened to create a way to remove the devastating condemnation that He Himself had to pronounce on all men because all have sinned and fallen short of His glory!
- And what God did was to condemn the sin that condemns us in the flesh of someone who was not weakened by a sin nature (vs. 3).

### ***B. Accomplished by Christ***

*By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh*

**How, where, and why** did God condemn the sin that condemns us?

1. **How?** By sending His own son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be the offering that propitiated His wrath over sin and expiated the guilt of sin before Him – Christ came to be **the “sin offering.”**
  - **Sent** – the fullness and intentionality of that term – the fulfillment of a promise made to Eve and renewed repeatedly throughout the OT.
  - **Likeness of sinful flesh** – refers to the full humanity of Christ, minus the sinful nature. The emphasis here is on his humanity, not his deity.
  - **For sin** – sacrificial terminology for a very specific sacrifice that atoned for sin, propitiated divine wrath, and expiated guilt (Lev 5:5-7; Isaiah 53:10; Heb 10:18).
2. **Where?** On the cross at the crucifixion of His Messiah. He condemned sin by putting it on the flesh (body) of His sinless Son.

*2 Cor 5.21a – For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

3. **Why?** So that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us.

*2 Cor 5.21a – For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

- The idea is not just righteousness imputed to our account but also a righteousness imparted to us in our new man and in our character. So that what was impossible to do in our old man state (obey from the heart) is not possible in our new man, new creation state!

### ***C. Enabled by the Spirit***

*who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

- **Walk** – our consistent conduct and behavior – not an occasional lapse or out-of-the-ordinary habitual practice of life or conduct.
- A walk not shaped and determined by the controlling power of the flesh that remains in us as an unredeemed remnant of our old man that was crucified with Christ and is now buried and gone.
- But shaped and determined by the Spirit that now dwells in us!

## **IV. Described Contrastingly (8:5-8)**

*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

***Paul classifies every individual into one of two kinds of people, each governed by one of two contrasting mindsets: those who live according to the flesh and those who live according to the Spirit.***

***Note: Paul makes no room for a middle ground in this description.***

### ***A. Two contrasting, easily identifiable mindsets (v. 5)***

- People whose lives are controlled by the flesh consistently and willingly set their minds on what the flesh desires and demands.
- Set their mind = to give themselves fully to the pursuit of something – in this case, to the flesh and its desires. (Gal 5:19-21)
- By contrast, people whose lives are controlled by the Spirit set their minds on fully pursuing the things the Spirit desires and demands.
- (Set their mind = to give themselves fully to the pursuit of someone – in this case, to the Spirit and what He desires. (Gal 5:22-23)

***B. Resulting in two different conditions and consequences (v. 6)***

- A person whose mind is fully set on pursuing the flesh and its desires ends in death and devastation.
- A person whose mind is fully set on pursuing the Spirit and His desires receives life and peace.

***C. Observed in a shocking, undeniable spiritual reality (vs 7-8)***

1. Those who live according to the flesh and are controlled (ruled) by its desires cannot please God.
2. And the reason they cannot please God is that they have given themselves over to something that neither wants to please nor obey God, **nor can it!** In fact, it is thoroughly depraved, morally reprobate, and implacably hostile toward God.
3. And such a person, who is fully controlled by a desire to pursue and fulfill the lusts and desires of the flesh, and whose regular and habitual conduct and practice reflect that this is so, is still under God's righteous wrath and fierce condemnation.

**V. Applied Personally (8:9)**

*You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*

Paul gives rock-solid, crystal-clear assurance of a great reality – you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit!!

BUT YOU – the people who have obeyed the gospel by repenting of their sin, turning to God, and placing their full faith alone in the finished work Christ accomplished on the cross, whom God has justified by His grace through their faith alone in Christ alone – you people are not in the flesh but in the Spirit!

And there are two undeniable pieces of evidence of this reality:

**A. *You have a real, living relationship with God through Christ***

- You are no longer hostile to Him or resistant to His righteous law – you love Him, and you delight in his law in the inner man.

**B. *You walk according to the Spirit because the Spirit dwells in you!***

- 4x in this section, there is language about Spirit dwelling in us (2x in vs. 9; 2x in vs. 11).

Ultimately, this is the greatest evidence that gives us unshakable assurance that we are no longer under condemnation – because people who have the Spirit of God belong to God – and only these people!

However, Paul must counter a very serious reality to defend this glorious assurance, two biblical truths, and their implications.

## **VI. Defended Biblically (8:10-11)**

*But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* <sup>11</sup> *If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

Here is the sobering reality – even though we are in the Spirit, no longer under condemnation, and able to fulfill the righteous demands of the law, ***our bodies are still subject to weakness and death because of sin*** (the ruling power of the old realm in which we still live). We still live and move in the old realm.

Paul reminds us of two powerful theological realities that make all the difference in the world to a struggling Christian:

***A. Reality #1: Promise of Eternal Life through Christ.***

- Because Christ is in us, even though our bodies continue to struggle with sin, the Spirit gives us eternal life because of His righteousness on our behalf.

***B. Reality #2: Provision of Strength for Life through the Spirit.***

- Because the Spirit lives in us, God will enliven (strengthen) our mortal (physical, weak, dying) bodies through the empowering strength of His Spirit!

**Conclusion: Heb 10:22 – How should we respond to all of this?**

1. Let us draw near
2. With a sincere (unadulterated) heart
3. In full assurance of faith – full conviction and certainty – robust, unwavering confidence
4. Having our hearts sprinkled and bodies washed (perfect passive participles – the cause of why we can draw near in this way).

Our hearts have been cleansed from an evil conscience – purification as seen through the lens of the OT ritual purification (inward moral cleansing from the inner defilement of sin) – so live confidently!

Our bodies have been washed with pure water – the outward moral cleansing of our physical bodies of things that are morally and ethically offensive to God – so live obediently!

## LIFE APPLICATION

1. Anchor your assurance in theological truth, not just subjective feeling – remember who said, “There is therefore now no condemnation.” When you fail and fall back into sin, speak the truth to yourself! Remind yourself that while your situation is messy, your standing with God is rock solid!
2. Setting your mind on the controlling power of the Spirit is something you do actively, intentionally, repeatedly, and prayerfully every day – one thought at a time! And when you fail, speak up and call out to the Spirit for grace and help at that very moment for that very struggle.
3. Do not go at this alone – rely daily on the Spirit’s power and help for obedience and not your own raw willpower. When you fail, don’t wallow or dig in deeper – run to Christ and call out to the Spirit! Prayer is the believer’s great declaration of dependence – resort to it regularly. Develop the habit of sending “arrow prayers” up to God through the Spirit throughout the day.
4. When you feel unworthy, draw near to God in humility and thankfulness. We were not saved by our worthiness, and we are not accepted now on that basis. So don’t let unworthiness keep you from God!
5. For unbelievers, worldly success and earthly victories are at best temporary. For believers, failures are never final. God always has the last word – and it is this – NO Condemnation! No Separation!