

Lent Devotional April 3, 2019

SCRIPTURE

Romans 8:1-11

¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³For 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 to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For 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. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law — indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

DEVOTIONAL

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“If only I could go back and change that.” “I’m never going to be good enough.” “What was I thinking?” We’ve all heard those voices before, the whispers that tell us we are no more than our past mistakes. Then Paul’s booming voice shouts out the words, “No condemnation.” What a beautiful promise. But what a difficult idea to hold onto. It is easier to dwell on our mistakes and regrets, to relive the past while wishing we could go back and do things differently. Perhaps we even feel that we must punish ourselves for our sins. But Paul reminds us that Christ did for us what we were unable to do for ourselves and that there is no longer any condemnation for those of us who are in Christ. The punishment is over. And a new life is promised to all of us . . . if we can believe it.

So let’s make a choice right now. Let’s choose to believe that Christ’s work on the cross was actually for us. Let’s choose to stop living for the law that continually condemns us and instead live for the God who loved this world by giving His only Son for us. And let’s choose to lay down the mistakes and regrets that hold us back and move forward in a new life characterized by grace and redemption—and thereby also give others a glimpse of the power of the cross.

PRAYER

Lord God, thank you that through faith in your Son, who died and rose for us, we are no longer condemned. Forgive us when we forget what you have done for us. Remind us that we don’t have to be “good enough” in order to receive your love. And teach us to live for you—no one and nothing else. Amen.