

MORE THAN CONQUERORS

SERMON SERIES



Alfred
Street
BAPTIST CHURCH

I'M FREE

ROMANS 8: 1- 4 (NKJV)
SEPTEMBER 12 - 13, 2020

A SERMON BY
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#IMFREE #MORETHANCONQUERORS

Sunday, September 13, 2020

Preacher: Pastor Howard-John Wesley

Sermon: I'm Free

Scripture: Romans 8:1-4



CURRICULUM GUIDE



Sermon Summary

To begin our new series "More Than Conquerors," we reviewed the theological foundation that shapes the entire letter of Romans. Pastor Wesley reminded us that the road to Romans 8 is laced with four realities:

1. We are all sinners.
2. God is faithful in the face of our sins.
3. Because of God's love, God has provided a way to escape the trap of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 5:8).
4. The Lordship of Jesus is not an issue you can be neutral about. Opening your heart and surrendering your life to Jesus is the best decision you can ever make.

We learn that when Paul writes there is "no condemnation," he is arguing that the law of God has made an accusation that we are sinners, the evidence is our sinful nature, our defense is that we don't have one—so we ought to confess we are sinners and throw ourselves to the mercy of God. God has heard the accusation, seen the evidence, listened to the plea, and the verdict is that we are guilty. Despite this, God looks at us and declares, "no condemnation." We are no longer condemned to the penalty of death because Jesus has paid the price for our sins (John 3:16-17) and we can rejoice that we have been set free.

Key Points:

All of us in Christ Jesus have been set free from:

1. The Penalty of Sin- We have been delivered from eternal death into eternal life.
2. The Power of Sin- To be in Christ Jesus means we live in, under, and according to the power of the Holy Spirit. The greatest gift of the Holy Spirit is the gift of conviction that encourages us to live a new life making better decisions.
3. The Possession of Sin- Once we say yes to Jesus we are no longer owned by sin, but we become a possession of God. We are righteous.

Notes for Facilitators:

Please be mindful that you are not expected to discuss the entirety of this guide during your Village session. E-Village sessions should always be limited to 75 minutes. In this first session of Village, remember to prioritize introductions and review of the Village covenant before moving to the discussion questions.

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. What insight, principle, or observation from this message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain.
2. Pastor Wesley referred to Romans 8 as Advanced Placement (AP) Christianity that can introduce us to rough realities and theologies as we embark on the challenge of a new series. What challenges, from starting a new home project to learning a new skill, have you taken on this year?
3. This sermon reminded us that, “we have never reaped everything we’ve sown.” In a moment of transparency can you share instances of when you didn’t have to pay the price or suffer the consequences of your actions?
4. Romans 5:8 reveals God’s love for us, because “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” How do you show your love for others? What is your love language? (i.e. words of affirmation, acts of kindness, receiving gifts, physical touch, or quality time).



Into The Bible Questions:

1. Acts 9 documents the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus. Paul who is credited with authoring “therefore there is no condemnation” is also someone with a past of threatening and condemning others. Like the writer of this week’s text, how has your story changed? What have you learned from your past that allows you and Paul to speak and act differently now?
2. Romans 8:5 says “those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.” In a time of dueling crises, communal grief, and mass unemployment, what has your mind been set on? What can you do to follow the instruction of Philippians 4:8 that reminds us to think of whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy in the moments when you’re feeling down?

Life Application Questions:

1. Sometimes we struggle to accept the freedom of salvation, not because of our understanding of sin, but because of our own internalized guilt. Can you think of something you still blame yourself for even though it's been forgiven in Jesus? What type of support do you need to help you let go of that weight?
2. The sermon spoke to the reality that there is always someone waiting to condemn us for what we’ve done in our past. Fortunately, God has given us a certificate declaring that we are free. Is there anyone in your life that you’ve condemned, perhaps a friend or family member who you won’t let grow beyond their past? How can you use your salvation as a lens through which to forgive them?
3. In the beginning of this sermon, Pastor Wesley remarked that if you say “yes” to Jesus, there are benefits and blessings. What has come with your “yes” to Jesus? This can include anything from blessings, to burdens, or responsibilities.
4. Pastor Wesley shared a powerful illustration of the Holy Spirit as a spiritual GPS highlighting that:
 - a) When his sons connect their phones to his car bluetooth, the music is so loud that it drowns out his GPS. What is too loud in your life right now? What can you turn down in your life in order to hear more from God?
 - b) When we are not headed in the right direction, the Holy Spirit finds a way to get us to our destination. What has God re-routed in your life to get you to your destination even when you may have not listened the first time?




"Can I Push It?"

1. What can the modern church learn from Romans 8:1 about condemnation. If a more accurate reading of this verse is translated to "no one" can condemn, what could the church be doing to uphold that truth? How have you seen Christians, including yourself, participate in condemnation and what has been the consequence of that? How have you suffered condemnation from other Christians?
2. We were encouraged in this sermon to remember that the Holy Spirit is meeting us at our points of temptation and presenting us with other options. In theory, this would give us all a clear path to righteousness every time, but this may not always be true. What causes us to proceed towards sin despite a feeling of conviction? How have you experienced the Holy Spirit in these moments?

Activity:

1. "Spoiler Alert" - God's Word is full of promises about our future. Pastor Wesley reminded us that if our life was like a movie, the ending would already be spoiled. In breakout groups (or all together), discuss some of your favorite "spoiler alert" scriptures: all of those passages that speak about God's plan for our future and our eternal life. As each Villager narrows down their favorite, come back together and share. Make a list in the chat for the Village to print out and study one each day this week.
2. This week's sermon reminds us that in Jesus we are set free from condemnation, and because of that we are free from the penalty, power and possession of sin. Using the chat feature in Zoom, spend the next 2 minutes sharing with the group the things that you are thankful that God has freed you from.



Spirit Work:

1. One powerful line from this week's sermon is that "The greatest enemy to your new life is not someone else reminding you of what you can't be, it's your own flesh reminding you of what you used to be." What work can you begin on yourself this week to move from guilt to self-forgiveness? Take the first step this week whether that is watching an extra sermon, listening to a mental health podcast, meditating, or spending extra time in prayer. Choose one thing to forgive yourself for and let this be your first step!
2. Because we are free from the power of sin over our lives, we are no longer slaves to anything we have been or done in the past.
 - a) Child of God, what is that one thing that happened in your life that you can't forgive yourself for, find peace about, or accept that Jesus paid for? Write it out.
 - b) Then commit to memory and meditate on 1 John 3:20 (NIV) "If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything."
3. Catch and Release: Throughout this sermon, Pastor Wesley spoke on the damage negative self-talk can do. Take this week to evaluate what you have been telling yourself? Replace some of those statements with something more affirming. For example, if you find yourself saying "I'm so stupid," you can replace that with "I am learning and I am brave for trying" instead. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you catch and release these statements.
4. Pastor Wesley compares the Holy Spirit to a GPS that talks to us and helps us navigate to our destination. Set a "destination" for yourself this week. Maybe it's that you want to be more patient with kids or coworkers, maybe it's that you want to make a big decision. Whatever it is, set a destination, and pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance. Pick someone close to you to report back on your progress to that destination.

Readings for This Week:

Monday, September 14th	Romans 5:1-11
Tuesday, September 15th	John 3:1-21
Wednesday, September 16th	Romans 7:1-13
Thursday, September 17th	Romans 7:14-25
Friday, September 18th	Psalms 51:1-19

Further Study: Learn more about Pneumatology