

Romans 8:33-34 | “A Mother’s Justification”

Preached on May 12, 2024 by Pastor Matt Brown

You can turn in your Bibles this morning to Romans 8, verses 33-34. *[pause]*

Today is Mother’s Day, as you all know.

And when it comes to these kinds of holidays, it’s typical that preachers talk about Proverbs 31 and speak about the virtuous wife and mother.

Or they will talk about Timothy’s mother and grandmother, or some other good example of motherhood. *[pauseeee]*

Those are great, and I’ve taught on some of those things on previous Mother’s Days.

But one time, I was researching more on what to preach on for these kinds of holidays, and one guy made an excellent point. *[pause]*

He said something to the effect that mothers and fathers, and really everyone, need the great theological truths of Scripture applied to their lives. *[pause]*

I like that. *[pause]*

We certainly need to preach those great examples of mothers in the Bible, and celebrate the mothers we have.

But mothers also need the central foundational truths of the gospel to affect their hearts time and time again. *[pause]*

So that’s what I’m going to do today.

We are going to look at the magnificent chapter of Romans 8, especially verses 33-34, and see how this wondrous truth impacts mothers (and really, all of us). *[pauseeeee]*

Let’s first recap what is said prior to this chapter in the book of Romans. *[pause]*

Paul has spoken about the gospel, that is, the good news of what Jesus has done for us. *[pause]*

Because of our sin, we were under God’s wrath, no one was exempt. *[pause]*

The Law couldn’t save us, for we couldn’t follow it perfectly.

So God created a way for us to be saved apart from the Law by Jesus living perfectly for us and then dying in our place.

And so it’s only through faith in Jesus that we can be justified and declared righteous in God’s sight. *[pause]*

Christ died in our place, taking the condemnation that we deserved.

And that's why Paul can exclaim in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"! *[pauseeee]*

What a wonderful, glorious truth!

We couldn't save ourselves by obeying the Law perfectly and were condemned for not doing so, but Christ came to die for us and free us from that death sentence.

So that we are forever and always no longer condemned because of Christ taking our place and dealing with our sin problem before God. *[pauseeee]*

So if God is on our side -- just look at all He has done for us in Christ and what He is and will continue to do -- then who can be against us?

He gave His own Son to die for us, so won't He give us all things? *[pauseeee]*

What amazing, eternity-impacting, yet also, day-to-day-affecting truth found here.

And what I want to do is to reflect more on what is found in verses 33-34, which say this.

[READ]

The main point that we see here is that...

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!

Through multiple questions and answers, Paul helps us to see that for those who trust in Jesus, there is truly no condemnation. *[pause]*

He starts out by asking, "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?" *[pause]*

So these verses are given in the context of a courtroom scene.

It's God's divine courtroom, for He is the highest authority that there is. *[pause]*

He is the One who determines and judges who is condemned eternally and who is not.

He is the One who hears out the charges, and can either accept or dismiss the charges. *[pauseeee]*

So what does Paul say about any charges that could be brought against God's elect?

"It is God who justifies." *[pauseeee]*

Consider what this is saying...

Imagine sitting in the courtroom of God, and people are trying to bring charges against you.

That would be scary, wouldn't it? *[pause]*

But what is Paul saying?

No one can make an accusation that sticks against you in the heavenly courtroom! *[pause]*

Not Satan, not someone else, not even you.

No one can bring a charge that is legitimate against you there. *[pause]*

Why? Because God is the one who justifies us! *[pauseeee]*

Every charge that Satan or anyone else tries to bring against you is thrown out or dismissed by God Himself, who justifies us! *[pauseeee]*

Get this: the very Judge is the very one who has acquitted us already in Christ!

And there is no higher authority who can change His verdict, there is no higher court that it will go to. *[pauseeee]*

In our legal system, the verdicts of a court can be appealed, retried, or brought to another higher court.

But if the highest court and the Judge of that highest court has already acquitted us, then that's the verdict and it will always be the verdict.

“It is God who justifies!” *[pauseeee]*

This cannot be changed!

No new nor old charges can be brought up against us, for none of it will stick. *[pauseeee]*

This reminds me of the story found in the book of Zechariah where Joshua the high priest is standing before the angel of the Lord.

And there is Satan to accuse him, but what does the Lord say to Satan?

“The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?”¹ *[pause]*

That's what happens when Satan tries to accuse those who are in Christ, the Lord rebukes him and dismisses the accusations! *[pauseeee]*

Who can bring a charge against God's *elect*? *[pause]*

We are His chosen, who were chosen before the foundation of the world to be His, and He has acquitted us because Christ died for us and in our place.

What relief! What joy! What peace we can have! *[pauseeee]*

¹ Zechariah 3:2.

And that's not it, for Paul goes on to say, "Who is to condemn?" [pause]

Now at first thought, we could say, "Everyone could condemn me, just look at all that I've done against God!"

But that's not true for those who are 'in Christ'. [pause]

Paul says, "Christ Jesus is the one who died." [pauseeee]

Get this in your mind: no one can condemn the person who trusts in Jesus alone because Christ Jesus died for us! [pause]

He took our sin upon Himself and nailed it to the Cross.

He died, taking our guilt and penalty upon Himself, so that we could be free from all of that.

He died for our sins, so that we are no longer condemned. [pauseeeee]

Not only that, for He was raised.

By being raised from the dead, it was like God was approving and vindicating the sacrifice for our sins saying, "It's a done deal. I approve of the act. They are forgiven, free, and not condemned." [pauseeee]

To add to this vindication, Paul includes the fact that Christ is at the right hand of God, interceding for us, too. [pauseeee]

Jesus is there at the right hand of God acting as our advocate and intermediary.

And that means that Christ is right there next to God, and when any charge or condemnation is brought against us, Jesus just says, "I already paid for that sin. I dealt with it through my death." [pause]

As 1 John 2:1 says, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

And as one commentator says, "Christ the sinless, sin-bearing Son of God argues his perfect case on behalf of those who belong to him. It is a case he always wins."² [pauseeee]

This is amazing!

The Judge has justified us, and our Advocate has died and rose again for us, all so that we could be no longer condemned.

And we receive all of this amazingness simply through faith in what Jesus did for us. [pauseeeee]

² Paul Barnett, *Romans: The Revelation of God's Righteousness, Focus on the Bible Commentary* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2003), 201.

If you stood before God, what could you say to clear yourself? *[pause]*

Could you point to your good works? Your effort? Your family background?

No, you can only point to Christ, “the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who...is interceding for [you].” *[pauseeee]*

You see, if God had done nothing, we would be lost and under eternal condemnation with no hope.

But God *did* do something, He “did not spare His own Son but gave him up for us all.” *[pauseee]*

It is His love that motivated all of this eternal goodness towards us.

It was His love that gave us His Son, who would lovingly die for us, so that we wouldn't have to face condemnation.

And it's His love that we will never ever be separated from. *[pauseeee]*

Because of Jesus coming to this earth, dying for our sins, and then rising again -- those who place their faith in Him have been made right with God.

He dealt with our sin, and His righteousness is credited to our account. *[pause]*

So there's no more sin left to pay, it's paid!

There's no more guilt before God, it was taken away by Jesus.

There's no longer a condemnation sentence hanging over your head, for Christ's death took it away forever. *[pauseeee]*

Nothing will make you more accepted, more forgiven, more righteous, or more innocent in God's sight, for it's all already accomplished by Christ. *[pauseeee]*

No wonder no charges can be brought against us!

No wonder no one can condemn us! *[pause]*

When it comes to our eternity and our standing with God -- for those who trust in Jesus -- it's all secure.

You never have to worry about your eternal destination.

You never have to worry about God bringing down the hammer of judgment. *[pause]*

You never have to languish in guilt or shame before God, acting like your eternity or relationship with Him is in the balance.

No, *He* is the one who justifies and has justified us in Christ through faith.

And it is *Christ*, who died for us, rose again, and who intercedes for us at the right hand of God.
[pauseeee]

For the true Christian, the most important, eternal matters have been dealt with in Jesus.

Just think about that, and let it wash over you in relief and joy. [pauseeee]

Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ.

He is for you and will give you all things, just look at how He has already given you His Son.
[pauseeee]

So now what?

That is, how does this affect our daily lives?

How does this apply specifically to mothers on Mother's Day? [pauseeee]

Now if you look at your outline, I've intentionally put there, "What this means for mothers who are 'in Christ'". [pause]

This is important because it means that these things are true *only* if you have trusted in Jesus Christ alone to save you.

For Paul just said that no one can bring a charge against God's *elect*, that is, those who are His, who have turned to Him in faith. [pause]

If you haven't, then sadly and tragically, you are still under condemnation.

And what you need is to repent of your sins and turn in faith to Jesus and what He did on the Cross -- He is willing to save and forgive. [pauseeee]

So once again, what does this great, deep, theological truth mean for mothers in Christ? [pauseeee]

You know, there's something that many, if not all, mothers struggle with -- guilt. [pause]

Have you ever heard of that phrase, "mom guilt"? [pause]

As one website put it: mom guilt is "that pervasive feeling of not doing enough as a parent, not doing things right, or making decisions that may 'mess up' your kids in the long run."³ [pauseeee]

Social media impacts this when moms see the picture perfect images and videos of what other moms are doing for their kids. [pause]

Expectations are lofty, and the trumpet call of the amount of things that you *should* or *should not* be doing is at an all-time high. [pause]

³ <https://www.healthline.com/health/parenting/mom-guilt#definition>.

They say, “Make sure you feed them this, and not that.”

“Don’t do this, but do that.”

“Now you can do this, but not that.”

“How dare you do that and not this?!” *[pauseee]*

Because of this, many mothers feel this heavy, heavy burden of guilt and shame for how they feel they don’t measure up.

They feel condemned for the parenting decisions they make. *[pause]*

Really, we *all* can feel guilt and shame for things that we feel like we aren’t doing or for things that we have done. *[pauseeee]*

So what’s the solution to this sometimes debilitating guilt and shame? *[pause]*

The *Cleveland Clinic* claims that some of the ways that you can conquer it are through self-care and getting in tune with your breath.⁴

But are those really the solutions that will last? *[pause]*

Well how does the truth found in Romans 8:33-34 apply here? *[pause]*

It shows us that...

1. You are not condemned based on what others think about your parenting.

When you are a parent, you hear a lot of thoughts and judgments about your parenting from others. *[pause]*

If you raise your children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,”⁵ then some people in our culture will not like that. *[pause]*

They will say that you are “indoctrinating” your children.

They will claim that you are raising your kids to be close-minded, ignorant, and hateful. *[pauseee]*

How will you handle that criticism?

Will you give in to their pressure, and give up on raising your children according to what God has said? *[pause]*

Will you let their disapproval get to you? *[pause]*

⁴ <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/mom-guilt>.

⁵ Ephesians 6:4.

It could be easy to feel condemned by their thoughts, and want to avoid that feeling.

Many want to please others, and do not want to look “weird” to the world. *[pauseeee]*

So what’s the solution to this condemnation of the world concerning your parenting? *[pause]*

Remember that what God thinks of you is what ultimately matters.

And what is God’s posture towards those who are ‘in Christ’?

He is for us, no one can charge or condemn us, and nothing can separate us from His love.
[pause]

Though the world be against you, God is for you.

And so what matters is what God says of you, not what the world says of you.

Rest in that knowledge, and so let their judgments slide off your back, for the highest Judge has declared your verdict in Christ: justified! *[pauseeee]*

Other times, there will be people who will try to condemn you for choosing to do this and not that.

They will say, “How dare you give them that?!”

Or, “How could you NOT give them this?!” *[pause]*

Now certainly, God does teach and command us how we are to parent our children, and we are called to follow His ways.

But what I’m talking about is things that aren’t morally right and wrong. *[pauseeee]*

People try to condemn other parents for what they give them to eat, or what brand of soap they use. *[pause]*

People try to condemn other parents for so many of those types of things. *[pause]*

So how can you not sink under the weight of all the guilt and shame that others try to throw on your back?

Remember, no one can bring a charge against God’s elect.

No one can condemn! *[pause]*

If you are in Christ, you are not condemned!

You are a precious child of God, who loves you, and so you should just be concerned with following God and resting in His love. *[pauseeee]*

You don't need the approval of others to be approved.

You don't need to be justified in their sight, for you are justified in God's sight because of Christ.
[pauseeee]

You are not right with God based on how others think you are doing in raising your kids. [pause]

Their evaluation doesn't affect your relationship with God in eternity. [pause]

No one will be able to stand up before God and say, "They don't deserve to be in Heaven, for just look at how they used those chemical-filled wipes on their baby."

No, God loves you because you are His!

And His grace leads us to want to simply and faithfully follow Him, and care only what He thinks of us. [pauseeee]

So if no one can bring a charge or condemnation against God's elect that means that even *your* thoughts can't condemn you. [pause]

Your eternity isn't based on how well you think that you are doing as a parent, but it's based on the fact that Christ died, rose, ascended, and is interceding for you. [pause]

If you trust in Him, nothing can alter your standing with God!

Not even your own thoughts and judgments! [pauseeee]

What about this...

What happens if your children never once show you appreciation for all that you've done?
[pause]

Is that going to utterly crush you? [pause]

Certainly *they should* show you appreciation, but what happens if they don't? [pause]

Will that completely destroy you?

Or are you going to be content in the fact that God loves you no matter what, and you have His approval because of Christ? [pause]

Get this: you don't need the praise of your kids to be approved!

God justifies! God loves you in Christ!

And nothing can separate you from that love! [pause]

It's His love, His approval, His justification that can stabilize us no matter what we receive or don't receive from our kids. [pauseeee]

You can think, “Yes, others may try to condemn me for parenting in God’s ways...”

Others may try to judge me based on what they think I should or shouldn’t do...

I may have my own thoughts that try to condemn myself, and my children never once showed me appreciation.

But that’s not going to crush me or make me feel any less like a loved child of God, who is justified and declared righteous in God’s sight.

For I am His, I am His, I am His!” *[pauseeee]*

Mothers, sometimes you can let what others think and say about your parenting choices crush you.

But don’t let them! *[pause]*

Without question, seek to follow God’s ways, but know that what others think doesn’t alter your standing with God.

For it’s all based on Christ’s work on your behalf. *[pauseeee]*

A second application from this great theological truth is this...

2. You are not condemned based on how your children turn out.

Now to be clear, this doesn’t mean that we don’t pursue being a godly parent.

Just because we are not condemned based on how our children turn out doesn’t mean that it’s okay to just sit back and be a horrible parent. *[pause]*

We should seek to be godly parents!

We should pursue good works!

There *should be* fruit in our lives, for we have the Spirit. *[pauseeee]*

Secondly, just because you aren’t condemned based on how your children turn out doesn’t negate the fact that bad parenting does have consequences.

We can affect our children’s lives. *[pauseeee]*

So then you may be wondering, what difference does this truth about ‘no condemnation’ make then? *[pause]*

It means that amidst my failures, my sins, and my weaknesses as a parent I can confess it to the Lord, and then rest and say, “My standing with God hasn’t changed!

He loves me! He approves of me! I am not condemned!” *[pauseee]*

You see, it's actually this amazing love and forgiveness of God that frees you to confess your sins to your children. *[pause]*

Since there's nothing that can separate me from God's love, even this sin is not crushing, but I can confess it, and rest in His love knowing that God is still for me and hasn't given up on me. *[pause]*

I have *not* become an enemy of God due to my sins.

I have *not* become forsaken by God because of my failings.

I am justified in His sight and forgiven due to Christ dying for my sins and taking my place! *[pauseeee]*

No one can bring a charge that affects my standing with God, and no one can condemn me eternally. *[pauseeee]*

That means that how your children turn out can never be used as a charge for the person who is in Christ, for Christ paid the penalty! *[pause]*

No one can say, "Look at how his children turned out, so he doesn't deserve to be right with God."

No, God is the one who justifies! *[pause]*

No one can say, "You are now condemned eternally because your child is a prodigal."

For God answers back and says, "Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died"! *[pause]*

He took the condemnation that you deserved, so that you never have to face it!

Not even how your children have turned out can change your fate from not condemned to condemned.

And the fact that Jesus rose and is seated at the right hand of God is your constant proof. *[pauseeeee]*

Surely, follow God's ways in how to parent your children - yes, yes, yes!

But know that even when you struggle and fail to do those things, God loves you and has proven it in Christ. *[pause]*

He has shown that His grace is greater than your sin.

For He doesn't say, "Wow, your parenting performance has been really bad lately, I'm done with you."

No, for if you have trusted in Christ -- then you can know that Christ died for you and God has justified you, and that won't change. *[pauseeee]*

It's because of that great, steadfast love that I am freed up to openly confess my sins to my child, and say, "What I did was wrong. It was sinful. I wasn't being a godly parent back there, and I'm sorry."

And you can do that because you know that your loving Father treats you with unending love and unceasing forgiveness. *[pauseeeee]*

As parents, we can very easily take it hard when our children turn out not so good. *[pause]*

There's devastating guilt and shame often associated with how a Christian parent's children turn out. *[pause]*

You could feel like an utter failure, and unworthy of anything good from God. *[pause]*

You could feel like your standing with God has been hit down a couple notches, for just look at the way that your child is living.

But how your children turn out doesn't change your standing with God, nor does it condemn you. *[pause]*

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus! *[pause]*

Mothers, fathers, and everyone who trusts in Jesus Christ alone - you are not condemned based on your past.

You are not condemned based on your sins, failings, weaknesses, and flaws.

You are righteous only because of Christ's work on your behalf! *[pauseeee]*

So mothers, you are not condemned based on your messy home, what you feed your kids, your failures as a mother, your inability to cook, or your rebellious children. *[pause]*

You are not condemned based on your inability to meet the expectations and standards of your mother-in-law, friends, or society. *[pause]*

You are not condemned, because if you are in Christ, your righteousness is in Christ alone.

So rest and find relief in the love and acceptance of being a daughter of God, who is justified by faith in Christ alone. *[pause]*

And it's because of that great "no condemnation declaration" over our lives that we are free to follow Christ...

...Free from trying to please others, free to confess our sins, free to find contentment in God's approval, and free to experience joy forever in the Lord.