

In the Name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

St. Paul writes to men yet in the flesh. He writes to men like you. The proof of their status, the proof of your status, is that St. Paul writes to men that sin against one another. He writes to men that covet and lust after the things those around them have. He writes to prideful and jealous men. He writes to men dead in their transgressions. He writes to men who sinfully desire to be famous and rich, and are quite discontent with what they have. He writes to men who barely have enough to survive. He writes to men who eat the leaven of the Pharisees, which is to say those deceived by false doctrine.

So the congregation at Rome was much like our congregation. There were sinful men and women gathered around God's gifts for the forgiveness of their sins and the strengthening of their faith. And among them, as among us, there were those who did not believe. But all of them deserved nothing except God's wrath and condemnation. And that is what every sinful man deserves. That is what you have deserved.

So it is no small thing that our sins are forgiven in Christ. Indeed, it is everything. For in this we have peace with God. God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that sin in the flesh be condemned. He Himself, becoming Man, suffered Himself to be condemned. He became sin for you. He assumed a debt that was not His – your debt to God.

He who was equal to God made Himself a debtor on your behalf. He took your sins upon Himself. Bearing your sins, covered in your transgressions, He stood before the Father as the most vile sinner to ever have lived. So was the sinless Son

of God condemned for your sins. God's wrath was visited upon Him. Hell was visited upon Him. By Him is the righteous requirement of the Law fulfilled, for He fulfilled the Law.

Thanks be to God, by His grace, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. There is no condemnation for you, dear Christian. The wrath of God was spent on His only Son. There is no wrath left - only love - for you who bear His Name. And as that Name, that fearful, powerful majestic Triune Name is placed upon you, His Spirit fills you. That is why Baptism is the washing of regeneration – because there you receive a new Name, God's Name, all your sins are forgiven, and you are filled with the very Spirit of God.

And that Spirit, the Spirit of love and truth, the Spirit of holiness and purity, leads you to walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And by that Spirit, your mind is set on the things of the Spirit, which are Christ and His Mysteries. And so to be spiritually minded is life and peace. For in Christ, of whom the Spirit testifies, there is eternal life and peace with God.

There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. There is no condemnation, but rather forgiveness and eternal blessing, to those who eat His Body and drink His Blood. To walk according to the Spirit is to gather here, to hear the Word of Christ, to eat and drink the Holy Eucharist, to receive the forgiveness of your sins, and to be one with those who are spiritually minded, here now on earth, and there forever in eternity..

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