

**Read: Romans 8:1-10**

## Safe and Protected in Jesus

### **Romans 8:1**

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Today's reading starts with a big word. Did you catch it? "Therefore." When Paul uses the word "therefore," he has just said something really, really important.

So what big thing did Paul say? He had just talked about a great struggle that happens in the life of every Christian. We want to obey God and do what is good. But we often end up disobeying God and doing what is evil. Why? Because both good and evil live inside of us and constantly fight to be in control of us.

There are days when we lose that struggle. We give in and do evil. And on those days, it's easy to think we're not good Christians, that our faith isn't very strong, that we're not really in God's family anymore. But Paul tells us that's not the case at all. Instead, we know exactly where we are: we're *in* Christ Jesus.

That sounds funny! How can we be in a person? What does it mean to be *in* Christ Jesus? It means that—because we believe in Christ Jesus—we are God's dearly loved children and part of his family. He draws a circle around us on the ground and says if you are *in* his circle, all your sins are forgiven. Inside his circle, we are protected from Satan and his evil.

But there's more! Because we're *in* Christ Jesus, we don't have to rely on our own strength to do good things and win the struggle. Nor do we have to worry when we do bad things and lose the struggle. We're in Jesus! Therefore, there is no condemnation for us. It means God isn't going to punish us or send us to hell—even though that's exactly what we deserved.

Why doesn't God condemn us? Because he condemned Jesus instead. Jesus took on our punishment and suffered and died in our place. Now that we're *in* Christ Jesus, our sins are outside his circle. God doesn't see our sins anymore. He only sees Jesus' perfect life—a perfect life that covers all of our sins now and assures us that we too enjoy the perfect life in heaven someday.

In the meantime, we're always going to have a struggle between good and evil inside of us. But because we're always *in* Christ Jesus, we're protected and safe—and there's nothing we can do to make God stop loving us. How comforting!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- What big word does Paul use at the beginning of today's reading?
- Who did God condemn instead of us?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- What do we deserve from God because we often lose the struggle between doing good and evil?
- Instead of seeing our sins, what does God see when he looks at us?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Why don't we have to worry when we lose the struggle and do bad things instead of good things?
- What does it mean to be *in* Christ Jesus?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear God, thank you for promising that you will never condemn us, even when we lose the struggle to do good. May we always find safety *in* Christ Jesus. Amen.