



## **FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 5**

### **WEEKLY WORD**

Read Romans 8:1-11. The 8th chapter of Romans is jam-packed full of theological material to chew on. If you've been "weekly walking" with us before this week, you should know by now that Paul is wordy and often requires a 2nd or 3rd read through. You may want to read these weekly texts in more than one version of the Bible, just to get a wider perspective of meaning. If you

go to [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com), you can look at any verses using any version. Once again, you may find *THE MESSAGE* version particularly helpful with these verses.

### **WEEKLY CHEW**

*Please wrestle with these questions during the week and feel free to offer your thoughts or questions on our LIVING WATERS LUTHERAN CHURCH SR WEEKLY WALK page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/251008952628293/>.*

1. Paul starts out with this week's theme verse: *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* He kind of jumps to the punch line and then tries to defend and explain the meaning of that declaration for the next 10 verses. In some ways, Paul mirrors God's declaration to us in the waters of our baptism where we are given the grace of God's adoption and salvation, after which many of us then spend the rest of our lives trying to understand and believe what that declaration in our lives really means. Think to your own faith journey and the challenges in believing your salvation is already a done deal. Why are we often reluctant to really believe that? Why might we think that our actions may easily mess up this gift and we'd better DO something to get back in God's good graces?
2. Paul talks about no condemnation to "those in Christ Jesus." So...six million dollar question here...what do you believe about those who are not "in Christ Jesus?" Do you think baptism is the only way "in?" What do you believe about people from other faith backgrounds or people who don't believe in any sort of God? Are they, therefore, condemned, or could there be other ways that God's grace is extended to them as well?
3. In the recent news, we've been hearing about *GODZILLA*, the large dust cloud from the Saharan Desert that has drifted over parts of the United States, causing a thick haze. *THE MESSAGE* describes our freedom through Christ from the effects of sin as "no longer [having] to live under a continuous low-lying black cloud." It goes on to say that the strong wind of the Spirit has cleared the air. What are some ways you feel that clearing wind blowing in your life, or are you feeling still stuck in the haze?

4. Paul talks about setting one's mind on either the flesh or the Spirit. What is your experience in making that choice? Is it something you are aware of? Something you think about and work on daily? Is it something that comes naturally?
5. If we are to truly believe that salvation is a done deal because, in baptism, we are brought *into* Christ, how might that change how we frame our day to day lives and the world around us? It's been said that instead of waiting for this life to end and our life forever to begin, we ought to think of our eternal life already taking place right here and now. What do you think of that?

## ***WEEKLY PRACTICE***

Think about the ways you have learned about this gracious gift you HAVE. Who were the people who helped you realize that you need not fear condemnation from God. Parents? Teachers? Friends? Pastors? Consider thanking them, if that is possible, and thanking God for them. Sometimes it is encouraging for "seed-sowers" to hear that the seeds have taken root. Consider the ways YOU are or can be a seed-sower as well.

## ***PRAYER***

God of freedom and forgiveness. You have accepted me and promised me your never-failing love before I even knew you existed. I did not choose you but you chose me. Help me to live in the freedom of your grace today and each day. Amen.

