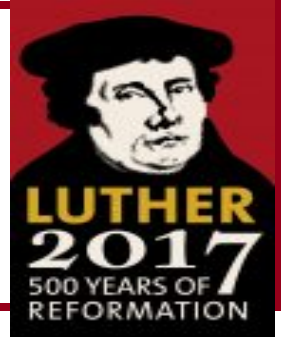


You Have A Spiritual Obligation

Romans 8:1-13 Galatians 5:13-21 Matt 15:10-20

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Martin Luther once said this:

The believing man has the Holy Spirit; and where the Holy Spirit dwells, He will not let a man to be idle, but **stirs him up** to all kinds of godliness and good works, and of true religion, to the love of God, to the patient suffering of afflictions, to prayer, to thanksgiving, and the exercise of love towards all men. <http://www.azquotes.com>

This is what St. Paul calls our spiritual “**obligation**”: **to live godly lives as the Holy Spirit “stirs us up”**. This is your **obligation** to the Lord; it is what is **expected** of Christians; it is your **duty** and **responsibility** in faith. *Theologically, it your response to God’s mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

This “obligation” is the result of the righteousness of Christ in your life!

When you realize and believe who you are in Christ Jesus, what Jesus has done for you on the cross, and that the Holy Spirit lives within you, then holy, godly living will be your goal. ***Faith naturally thanks and praises God, serves and obeys Him!***

In the book of Romans, St. Paul teaches us that we are **righteous in God’s eyes** through faith in Jesus. Jesus’ *perfect life* and His *sacrificial death* are “transferred” to you through faith, and you are declared “**not guilty**” of sin in God’s heavenly courtroom. ***You are set free*** from sin, guilt and death! In Romans chapter 8, Paul picks up on that legal terminology and he adds ***another layer*** to it.

Therefore, there is now **NO CONDEMNATION** for those who are in Christ Jesus ROMANS 8:1

“No Condemnation” means that no accusation can come against you in God’s presence. Every accusation against you --- whether from the Law of God, the devil, or your own conscience --- falls on Christ and not on you. There is **NO CONDEMNATION** against you! You have been set free from sin, its guilt, its sentence, and its punishment. All of your condemnation fell on Jesus. *Jesus was condemned on the cross so you never will be! He took your sin, its guilt, its sentence and its punishment to the cross and died in your place! Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, you will survive death and escape the final judgment! There is NO CONDEMNATION for those who trust in Christ Jesus!*

To stress this, Paul changes the word order of the sentence so that the idea is ***absolutely NO CONDEMNATION --- not a single one of any kind!***

This is what God has done for you in Christ! He sent His Holy Spirit Who worked through Baptism and the Word of God to open your heart so that you realize and believe that you are righteous in Christ, and there is no condemnation against you! The Holy Spirit remains with you so that you can now live a holy and godly life!

**This Spirit driven, holy life
is what St. Paul calls your “obligation”.**

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an **obligation**—but it is **not to the flesh**, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. ROMANS 8:12-13

Your first response to the gift of righteousness is to renounce everything that is unrighteous! Your sinful nature, the “flesh” only seeks that which is unrighteous. It delights in sin and evil. There is a part of you that loves to sin --- it will lie, deceive, and lead you into misbelief, despair and other great shame and vice.

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires ... The mind governed by the flesh is **death** ... The mind governed by the flesh is **hostile to God**; it **does not submit to God’s law**, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh **cannot please God**. SYNOPSIS ROMANS 8:5-8

Your sinful nature desires its own will and wants to be independent of God and His Word. Your sinful nature, your flesh”, has all kinds of little slogans to help you feel better about sinning:

- ✓ If It Feels Good Do It
- ✓ Do What Makes You Happy
- ✓ Love Yourself
- ✓ Live Your Life And Have No Regrets
- ✓ You Only Live Once
- ✓ Follow Your Heart
- ✓ + *100s of others saying and slogans that indulge your sinful nature and make you feel better about sinning!*

Your sinful nature, the flesh, is condemned by God’s Law.

The acts of the **flesh** are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. GALATIANS 5:19-21

Your first obligation and response to the gift of God’s righteousness in Christ is to renounce everything that is unrighteous!

That is why we confess our sins each week in worship. If you let your sinful nature get control of your life, then you will die in your sins.

Repentance and confession of sin checks your sinful nature. Repentance is God showing you your sin, leading you to turn away from it, and confessing it to God. Then through faith in Christ, God declares you forgiven: you are holy and righteous in His sight. There is “no condemnation” against you!

Your first obligation and response to the gift of God’s righteousness in Christ is to renounce everything that is unrighteous!

Your second obligation and response is to LIVE FOR CHRIST; to live a holy and godly life as the Holy Spirit guides, directs, and motivates you.

A holy and godly life begins by learning and obeying the 10 Commandments. *In fact, how can you even begin to live a holy life if you do not know what pleases God in the 10 Commandments?*

For God is not gracious and merciful to sinners to the end that they might not keep his Law, nor that they should remain as they were before they received grace and mercy; but he condones and forgives both sin and death for the sake of Christ, who has fulfilled the whole Law in order thereby to make the heart sweet and **through the Holy Spirit to kindle and move the heart to begin to love from day to day more and more.** Martin Luther

A holy and godly life will love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

A holy and godly life will love your neighbor as yourself; you will choose to be patient and kind to other people regardless of what they do to you. In fact, you will pray for others, even your enemies!

A holy and godly life is concerned about God and His kingdom: you will worship the Lord weekly, you will keep God's Word sacred as you study and learn it; you will hallow His name on your lips as you pray, sing, and share it with others.

A holy and godly life is filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, and self control.

Because there is no condemnation against you, you live a holy and godly life guided, directed and motivated by the Holy Spirit. St. Paul calls this your "obligation"; it is your joyful response the righteousness of God that sets us free from our sin and its punishment!

Your first obligation and response to the gift of God's righteousness in Christ is to renounce everything that is unrighteous!

Your second obligation and response to the gift of God's righteousness in Christ is to live for Christ; to live a holy and godly life as the Holy Spirit guides, directs, and motivates you.

May you believe there is NO CONDEMNATION against you; and respond with a holy and godly life! Amen!