

## Rom 8:1-2 – Easter Day

Well good morning everyone, and Happy Easter.

This morning I'm going to share with you two mental images, one about good Friday, and one about Easter Sunday. So I hope you've got your imagining hats on this morning.

If you can remember these two mental images, then you'll understand the fantastic news of Easter, **and** you'll understand these great verses from the book of Romans.

So are you ready? Here's the first one.



I want you to start by imagining fire.

That's right, a huge wildfire spreading through a big forest, unstopably moving through. It's very dangerous, it destroys everything in its path, and of course it's quite scary.

Now, there are some people, in danger from this fire.

But do you know what they do?

They clear a circle, they chop down some of the trees and get rid of them, and if there's time, they dig a trench around the outside. Then, most importantly, they carefully burn, everything in the circle. So that the circle is totally burnt out. It's all black, full of ash and so on.

Can you picture it?

Why do they do that? Well, fire doesn't burn in the same place twice. So when the huge fire arrives, the people shelter in the circle which is already burnt. The fire goes around the circle – destroying everything, but the people who came into the circle are safe.

Why is this a helpful picture?

Well, because it's a picture of what happens on good Friday. The great news of Easter is this:

**'Jesus' walks in with the cross, places it within the rope circle at the front of church.**

As Jesus died on the cross, the fire of God's condemnation was poured on him.

If we look at the man on the cross, it actually seems sad, to think how Jesus died.

But – we call it *good* Friday, because what Jesus was doing, was burning the circle, making a way that we could be safe!

Just like preparing a burnt out circle protects from a forest fire.

And he says – 'come', come to me, come to the cross, step into the circle – which we do **by faith** in Jesus – and be safe.

You see, the reason that Jesus came, wasn't just to teach, it wasn't just heal sick people, or feed hungry people – although he did those things. It was a rescue mission. We need rescuing from the fire of God's condemnation.

All four eyewitness accounts of his life, make it clear the reason Jesus came: was to die – and he died on the cross, out of love for us, as a rescue mission.

The book of romans we've been studying has been building up to this point.

Romans 8:1 **"Therefore**, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Jesus has made that **safe circle**, safe from the condemnation of God. It was costly, he had to die. But he loved us that much, that he was willing, he was happy, even really pleased to do that for us – because he loved us!

He *really* wants you to come! Come in!

So, this is where I need some help, can I have N & N to help me out, and come and sit in the circle? "Come in, Come!"

I want us to see why this really is such great news!

So you two are demonstrating what it means to be "in Christ Jesus" (to have faith) – you've stepped into the burnt out circle, which Jesus made.

The verse says "there is **no** condemnation"

But, these two **are** naughty children, they do things wrong. They disobey their parents, they tell fibs – isn't that right.

Just like *all of us*, we do things which we shouldn't, and that sin, brings the condemnation of a good God.

But if we come to him, our Sin is transferred to him.

**N and N begin to stick post-it's on to the cross.**

The post-it's represent the sin of N and N.

And putting them on the cross, represents the transfer of their sin, onto Jesus.

This happens as soon as we have faith. We don't need to confess every single one.

As soon as we come into the circle they are all transferred to Jesus.

That is why the verse says there is **no** condemnation.

Jesus has already taken **all** their condemnation, not some of it, or most of it, all of it! They're completely safe!

Christians don't need to be perfect after they come to Jesus - in fact they won't be.

That means, even if you tell another fib (which would be bad) you are completely safe.

The fire has already burnt out. There is **no** condemnation.

That's the great news of Good Friday. So come! Come to him!

That's why it's so important to have faith in Jesus.

Anyone outside of the circle, who doesn't have faith in Jesus Christ, no matter how nice, or what other religion they follow, they still hold their own post-its.

Their sin is *not* put onto Jesus, and so when God's fire comes, they will be burnt up with it.

Only those who come to Jesus are safe, but they are completely safe. And he loved us enough, that he died to make that possible.

I wonder how that makes you feel? I wonder if you do feel completely safe?

Think of when you've done something wrong, and you feel guilty. Or if you feel constantly inadequate.

Are you confident that you are safe, acceptable to God. That your sin is not a problem?

Well you can be confident! Because if you have faith in Jesus, you're in the circle, where the fire has already burnt, completely. It's fantastic news.

And what *amazing* love Jesus has shown to us, to make that possible!

That's the first half, that's the good Friday picture. There is also an Easter Sunday picture.

So I want you to get your imagining hats on again.

For the second half:

I want you to picture a barren landscape: no green, no life, no hope, nothing.

Imagine the black and bleak and dry land.

Some people think that become a Christian is like leaving the luscious green forest and walking into that wasteland.

But that's not right at all.

The second picture is this:

Of a green shoot springing up, out of that dead landscape.

A picture of new life, coming from death.



We often talk about a chick coming from an egg, BUT... although it looks unexciting, it does have life in it already, just hidden away. What we're thinking of is life coming from death.

Romans 8:2 says we need help from God the Holy Spirit. He is even named "The Spirit who gives life"

Today, Easter Sunday, we celebrate that Jesus didn't stay dead. He **was** totally and completely dead, but God the Spirit who gives life – gave him life, from death.

That mental image of the plant, is a picture of Jesus.

And it reminds us that, amazingly, 2000 years ago, a man died and came back to life.

Jesus is stronger than death, he defeated it, it could not hold him in.

And, do you know why Easter is such good news,

Jesus didn't just defeat death for himself.

He defeated death for everyone who steps inside that circle.

You see, our faith unites us to Jesus, so that, on good Friday he takes and pays for our sin.

And Easter Sunday means that the same Spirit who raised him from the dead, because we're **spiritually tied** to him, will also raise us from the dead!

Listen to the final words of today's reading!

"And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you [by faith], he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you."

So that green plant, growing up from death, doesn't just picture Jesus – but it can be you too. Those who have faith in Christ will live forever with God in heaven. They will be raised from the dead, given new bodies like Jesus had on that first Easter Sunday.

Easter Sunday means that we have hope, hope for the future.  
In the face of **any** struggle, even death.

I've seen him work in, those with difficult marriages, addictive behaviours, depression and even those who are terminally ill.

God can strengthen us and bring hope into any situation. He is the God who can bring life from death. That green shoot is a picture of how he raised Jesus to life from death, and how he *will* work in those who have faith in him.

If you remember those two mental images, you'll remember Easter.

--Jesus died to make a safe place for us escape the fire of God's condemnation.  
We have a God who loves us so much he would suffer in our place.

--Like that green shoot, Jesus rose from the dead, and those united with him will rise from death too. We have a God so powerful that we can have hope in any situation.