

Title: The Law and Grace: A Symphony, Not a Conflict

Introduction

Friends, family, brothers, and sisters in Christ, today we come to wrestle with a foundational and often misunderstood truth of our faith: the relationship between the Law and Grace. For some, these two ideas stand in stark opposition, like opposing forces in a cosmic tug-of-war. They hear the familiar phrase "*grace, not law*" and conclude that in the light of God's unmerited favor, the Law is an obsolete relic of a bygone era.

But that is not what the Scriptures teach. Jesus himself declared, "*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them*" (**Matthew 5:17**). The relationship between law and grace is not an either/or proposition, but rather a "both/and." It is not a conflict, but a symphony, where two different instruments play distinct, yet beautiful, parts in the same divine composition.

The Purpose of the Law: A Mirror for the Soul

To understand the harmony, we must first understand the purpose of each. The Law, given through Moses, was never intended to be the means of salvation. It was meant to be a mirror. The mirror reveals our sin. Imagine walking into a dressing room to try on a beautiful new garment. Before you put it on, you look in the mirror. You don't just see a clean canvas; you see the smudges, the wrinkles, the imperfections.

The Law acts as this mirror for our souls, reflecting God's perfect standard of holiness and, in doing so, showing us our own sinfulness and inability to measure up. As **Romans 3:20** says, "*through the law comes knowledge of sin*".

The mirror exposes our inadequacy. The Law holds up a standard we cannot possibly reach on our own. For all who rely on works of the law, Paul writes, "*are under a curse*" (**Galatians 3:10**).

The Law's relentless demands expose our helplessness and drive us to seek another way. The mirror points us to the Redeemer. This is the Law's highest purpose. It becomes our "*guardian to lead us to Christ*" (**Galatians 3:24**). By showing us our spiritual bankruptcy, it points us toward the only one who can pay our debt.

The Power of Grace: A Gift for the Undeserving

If *the Law is the mirror that shows us our need*, then *Grace is the gift that meets that need*. Grace is not just a free pass to do whatever we want; it is the active, transformative power of God poured out on those who deserve nothing but judgment.

Grace brings justification. We are not saved by our efforts to keep the Law, but "by grace you have been saved through faith" (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). This unmerited favor declares us righteous in God's sight, not because of our work, but because of Christ's.

Grace brings transformation. For those who believe, we are no longer "under law but under grace" (**Romans 6:14**). This does not mean **we are free to sin; it means we are free from sin's dominion.** *Grace is not lawless. Instead, it empowers us by the Holy Spirit to live according to God's will, not as a burden, but as a joyful response to our salvation.*

Grace brings obedience through love. When we understand the depth of God's grace toward us, our motivation for obedience shifts. We no longer obey in a desperate attempt to earn his favor, but out of gratitude for the love we have already received. As **1 John 5:3** says, *"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome."*

The Harmony: Law Fulfilled by Grace

The genius of the gospel is that the Law and Grace do not cancel each other out; they complete one another. In Christ, the two come together in perfect harmony.

Jesus fulfilled the Law perfectly. Jesus lived the life we could not live and died the death we deserved to die. His perfect obedience fulfilled the Law's righteous demands on our behalf. Grace establishes the Law. Paul asks in **Romans 3:31**, *"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law".* By fulfilling the Law, Jesus made it possible for its righteous requirements to be met in us through the power of the Holy Spirit (**Romans 8:4**).

The Law as a map, Grace as a guide. *Think of the Law as a perfect map to a destination, righteous living.* The problem is, as fallen human beings, we are terrible at reading maps and worse at following them. We always get lost. *Grace, then, is not the cancellation of the map, but the arrival of the mapmaker himself, the Holy Spirit, to serve as our personal tour guide. He takes our hand and leads us along the path, allowing us to follow the Law out of love and a transformed heart, not out of legalistic striving.*

Conclusion

The twin errors are to see the Law as a way to earn God's favor or to see Grace as a license for lawlessness. Both destroy the beautiful symphony of the gospel.

So let us not put grace and law in opposition. The Law is the velvet backdrop that makes the brilliant jewel of Grace shine all the brighter. It is the diagnosis that makes the cure of Christ's atoning work so wonderfully precious. ***Let us approach God's commands not with fear, but with joyful obedience, because we are empowered by the very grace that saved us.***