

LAW AND GRACE

Does The Law Have A Place In The Age Of Grace?

Introduction

Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last days some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.

1 Timothy 4:1

I heard about a man who was told he needed a brain transplant, and being a Christian, requested a Christian brain. So the good Doctor ushered him into a room where 3 brains were preserved in large glass jars for selection. The Doctor showed him through the line explaining his choices. "This first choice is a Baptist brain. It's in great condition and if you choose this brain, you will live the rest of your life knowing that you are always right. (Smile) And it's just \$5000.

"This second brain is a Presbyterian brain. It's also in good condition and if you choose this one you will live in an amazing assurance that once you are saved, you are always saved. And it's just \$8,000.

"Your 3rd choice is this Charismatic/Pentecostal brain. This brain will give you great faith in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and a great desire to move in the power of God. The only problem is the price; this brain is \$25,000."

The man was shocked and asked the Doctor, "Why is the Charismatic brain so expensive?"

The Doctor replied, "Because it's never been used."

I. There is a Problem of Anti-intellectualism in the Charismatic Community

A. The False Choice Between The Spirit And The Word

1. There are still many churches out there that deny the power of the Holy Spirit and insist the focus be on Bible doctrine and teaching.

2. On the other hand, there are many charismatic churches that pursue the power of God but have very little depth in the Word.

3. History teaches us that no church that denies the power of the Holy Spirit has ever changed the world! But it doesn't mean you can't have the power of God unless you turn your brain off!

CHRISTIAN BILLBOARD

“Turn your brain off-let the Spirit take over.”

a. This attitude is why there has been so much doctrinal error in spirit-filled churches!

4. But a few verses after Paul warned Timothy that the danger of the last days would be people following wrong teaching, he said this to the young pastor:

Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

I Timothy 4:16

5. We believe in the charismatic gifts of the Spirit and the power of God! But we also believe we must be grounded in the Word so we can discern truth from error! And that's the challenge...

“For most Christians today, the challenge of learning how to discern orthodox from heretical doctrine (or teaching) has not been faced.”

Robert M. Bowman

6. So I'm asking you to please turn on your brain and look at some dangerous teaching errors sweeping through the church on the subject of *grace*; sometimes known as the “Grace Revolution”.

a. In his book, “Hyper Grace: Exposing the Dangers of the Modern Grace Message”, Dr. Michael Brown says....

“There is no doubt in my mind that some of this new teaching is unbalanced, overstated, at times unbiblical and sometimes downright dangerous to the well-being of the Body of Christ.”

Dr. Michael Brown

7. I never attack a brother minister personally; but we have to be willing to confront serious errors that the devil has always used to divide the church: a confusion about the relationship between Law and Grace in the Christian life.

8. We all know the importance place of grace for a believer. But does the Law have a place in the age of grace?

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Does The Law Have A Place In The Age Of Grace?

I. History Lesson

A. The Great Confusion About Law And Grace Is Not New!

1. For 2000 years, the Church has repeatedly fallen into the error of one of two extremes: Legalism and License:

There is a misuse of God's Law that produces "Legalism"; but there is can also be a misuse of God's Grace that leads to "License" or "licentiousness".

2. Either extreme can hurt the church. And that is Paul told Timothy to take heed about what he was teaching!

"We should no more tolerate bad doctrine than we would tolerate sin."

Bishop J.C. Ryle

3. When Jesus warned His disciples about the "leaven of the Pharisees", he was referring to their teaching. Look at church history...

a. It was **bad teaching in the Church of Rome that plunged western civilization into the "Dark Ages"**.

b. The church had slipped into a Gospel of legalism that you could only be saved by works.

4. **It took the Protestant Reformation, led by Martin Luther, to bring the church back into the light by recovering the doctrines of grace.**

a. The danger of that day was legalism.

5. But the danger in our day is *not* so much the misuse of the law as much as it is the misuse of grace, which our friend Dr. Michael Brown calls "hyper grace"...

"Hyper-grace is the great deception of the 21st century."

Dr. Michael Brown

B. What Is “Hyper-Grace”?

1. The “Grace Revolution” is a new version of the age-old heresy that once you are saved by grace you are no longer obligated to obey the moral laws of God.

a. It means that **God’s grace does away with God’s law.**

2. The Apostle Paul had to deal with this false teaching when writing to the Church of Rome.

a. Paul had taught them that they were saved by grace alone, not by keeping the law; but some were teaching that God’s grace eliminated God’s law and that the more they sinned, the more God’s grace would abound! So he wrote...

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

God forbid!

Romans 6:1-2

3. Even in the early days of the church, there were people who claimed that they knew Christ; that they were saved by grace and were not obligated to obey God’s law. So the Apostle John wrote...

And this is how we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that says, I know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1 John 2:3-4

4. The same bad teaching emerged during the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. The Reformers restored the doctrine of salvation by faith alone to the church. But some were teaching God’s grace had done away with God’s law. Luther gave called this error: “*antinomianism*.”

The word comes from the Greek “anti”, against and “nomos” law, and signifies opposition to the law. It refers to the teaching that the moral law is not binding upon Christians as a rule of life.”

Alexander M. Renwick, Baker’s Dictionary of Theology

a. Another says this...

“Antinomianism means ‘against the law’ and is the belief that there are no moral laws that God expects Christians to obey. It is the unbiblical practice of living without regard to the righteousness of God, using God’s grace as a license to sin and trusting grace to cover our willful sin.”

5. We should have seen this coming. This error always creeps into the church when we preach a Gospel that presents Christ as a Savior to be believed but not also as a Lord to be obeyed.

a. This has been called “easy believism”. R.C. Sproul comments...

“Easy believism is a modern form of the ancient heresy of antinomianism. It asserts that once a person makes a decision for Christ or prays to receive Jesus as Savior, it is not necessary to embrace Him as Lord. There are no requirements of law that bind the Christian.”

R.C. Sproul

6. This age-old error has made a comeback in our day; it’s being taught by some of the most popular preachers; and being believed by multitudes of misled churchgoers who are attracted to a “feel good” message of grace that’s not attached to any kind of call to holy living.

“I love this grace thing.”

7. No one loves the message of grace more than me; if it’s biblical grace!

a. But the grace message preached by some of those in the “grace revolution” effectually eliminates the believer’s obligation to live according to God’s moral law.

“Any concept of grace that makes us more comfortable sinning is not biblical grace. God’s grace never encourages us to live in sin. On the contrary, it empowers us to say ‘no’ to sin and ‘yes’ to truth.”

Randy Alcorn

8. When we say the law has a place in the age of grace, we run into...

C. A Doctrinal Dilemma For A Faithful Teacher

1. Those of us who are committed to teaching the “whole counsel of God” always run into a “doctrinal dilemma” when it comes to law and grace.

2. We must preach grace so much that it sounds like a license to sin; but we must teach God's law enough to be accused of legalism!

3. The Apostle Paul taught so much about grace that they accused him of encouraging Christians to sin without fear.

“There is no better test as to whether a man is really preaching the New Testament gospel of salvation than this, that some people might misinterpret it to mean that because you are saved by grace alone it does not really matter what you do; you can go on sinning as much as you like. That is a very good test of gospel preaching. If my preaching of the gospel does not expose it to that misunderstanding, then it is not the gospel.”

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

a. So we must preach grace gospel that we can be accused of antinomianism.

4. But a faithful minister, at some point, will always include a call to a life of holy living and that we must always be ready to repent of any known sin.

Of course doing that will get you accused of legalism!

“YOU BELIEVE IN WORKS SALVATION”.

5. So have a little pity for the poor pastor who is committed to preaching the whole counsel of God!

III. Conclusion:

A. Grace is Primary

1. We cannot preach too much grace:

- We are saved by grace, not by works (Ephesians 2:8-10)
- We are not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14)

2. So why does it matter to speak of the Law at all?

- **It matters because God's law does have a place in the life of grace**
- It matters because what you believe determines how you live and how you live determines whether you end up in heaven or hell
- It matters because faith without works is dead;

- It matters because we are saved by faith without works; but the faith that is saved is always followed by works
- It matters because at the Final Judgment, we will not be judged by what we believe but by how we lived

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Matthew 16:27

...the righteous judgment of God will render to every man according to his deeds...

Romans 2:5-11

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:10

...and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Revelation 2:23

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Revelation 20:13

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

Revelation 22:12

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

John 14:15

So now you know the truth!

