**YOU CANNOT SEPARATE LAW AND GRACE!**

All my preaching life, I have heard the expression, *“We must separate law and grace.”* It’s one of those campaign-style slogans that is supposed to teach a profound truth. In reality, it is a wonderful piece of foolishness that reveals a profound ignorance of the Bible. Now, before you get all upset, let me explain...

**1. Grace is what saves us from our sins.** *“For* *the grace of God that brings salvation* has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, *who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed* and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” (Tit.2:11-14).

**2. However, sin is the transgression of law.** *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law:* *for sin is the transgression of the law”* (1Jn.3:4, KJV). “For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, *and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,* how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him” (Hb.2:2-3).

**3. Therefore, if there’s no law, there’s no sin!** *“For where there is no law there is no transgression”* (Rm.4:15). “For until the law sin was in the world, *but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”* (Rm.5:13).

**4. So, if there is no law, we don’t NEED grace!** There is simply no way around that conclusion! Stated another way, you cannot separate grace and law, because they go hand in hand. *If there is no law, I have not sinned; and if I have not sinned, then I don’t need grace to forgive my sins!* This can only mean that those who say we must separate law and grace have no idea what they are talking about. I know that sounds harsh, but those are the facts!

The idea that “we must separate law and grace,” goes hand in hand with the “do nothing religion” of most modern churches. They will shout from the rooftop that “There is nothing for us to do to be saved.” And then, they turn right around and say, “You must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved.” Beg pardon? Isn’t faith something that “I” must do? These folk need to make up their minds! Is there something we must do to be saved, or not? And taking this a step further, doesn’t faith require obedience? It certainly does! (Jm.2:14-26)

Now, if they are trying to say that we can’t earn salvation, then I am in full agreement (Ep.2:8-9). But I am persuaded that they mean much more than this, for they get upset anytime anyone suggests that there are commandments to keep. *“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked”* (1Jn.2:3-6).

Before I close, there is one loose end I need to address. The basis for some saying, “we must separate law and grace” is found in Romans 6:14, which says, *“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”* On the surface, this seems to support their claim; but careful study will show otherwise. Keep in mind the facts already noted: If there is no law, there is no sin; and if there’s no sin, we don’t need grace. Now, add to that, the context of Romans 6. Note: *“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!”* (v.1-2). And then there’s this: *“Even so we should walk (live) in newness of life”* (v.4). *“Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts”* (v.12). So, in context, Romans 6:14 is an ellipsis – the omission of words that are obviously understood (cf. Merriam-Webster). It means, *“for you are not* ***(merely)*** *under law,* ***(but also)*** *under grace.”* And that, my friends, CONNECTS law and grace!

--Lanny Smith