

## Grace , Faith and Giving

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Let's break down the concepts of grace, faith, and their relationship to the works of the law, as well as explore some related Biblical teachings and practices.

Grace and faith are foundational concepts but serve different roles:

Grace is the unmerited favor and love of God towards humans. It is not something that can be earned by any action or merit on the part of the individual; it is given freely by God. This is key to understanding Christian salvation—it is a gift, not a reward.

Faith, on the other hand, is the human response to God's grace. It involves trust, belief, and reliance on God and His promises. Through faith, a person accepts the grace offered by God and the salvation that comes with it.

### Salvation by Grace, Not by Works.

The concept that we are saved by grace and not by the works of the law is central to much of the New Testament; especially in the writings of Paul. For instance, Ephesians 2:8-9 states, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." This passage highlights that salvation is a gift from God that comes through faith, not by adhering to the law or performing good deeds.

### The Yoke of the Law vs. The Yoke of Christ

Example:

In Matthew 23:23, Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for their strict adherence to the tithing (a form of the law) while neglecting "the weightier matters of THE LAW": justice, mercy, and faithfulness."

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithing of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of THE LAW, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Yes, He called it THE LAW. Here, the "yoke" refers metaphorically to the obligations imposed by the Pharisees' interpretation of the law, which Jesus contrasts with His teaching. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus offers a different kind of yoke, one that is "easy" and "light," symbolizing his grace and the relief from the burdensome legalistic adherence to the law.

He points out that they are meticulous in tithing even the smallest herbs, but they neglect the more important matters of the law.

We're not talking about the 10 Commandments here.

Matthew 5:17-18 KJV

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

There some 600+ precepts under the Mosiac law that became very burdensome and almost impossible to keep, As well as the various animal sacrifices and sin offerings.

In The Book of Malachi, the prophet is primarily addressing the priesthood of Israel, who were responsible for collecting tithes and offerings according to the Law . Malachi criticizes these religious leaders for their corruption and for failing to uphold the integrity and the SPIRIT OF THE LAW. The priests were not only responsible for collecting tithes but also for using these contributions properly and leading the people in true worship of God.

Malachi emphasizes that the priesthood's failure to lead faithfully has broader consequences for the community's relationship with God. By neglecting their duties and mishandling the tithes and offerings, the priests have contributed to a larger pattern of spiritual neglect and social injustice, which Malachi urgently addresses. This admonishment serves to remind the leaders of their duties and the serious nature of their roles within the spiritual life of the community.

The Widow's Mite

Mark 12:41-44

41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

The story of the widow's mite is a powerful illustration of the principle that what counts is not the amount given, but the spirit in which it is given. Jesus commends the poor widow for giving out of her poverty all she had to live on, highlighting her heart and devotion. This teaches that God values the intention and sacrifice behind our actions, not the material value.

Does this mean you can't or shouldn't tithe a percentage of your income? By no means. Tithe 30 percent or 50 percent if you want. Do it out of a joyful heart. It's not the act of giving, but the SPIRIT of giving. Give wisely. We are saved by grace. Not by works of the law. Therefore:

2 Corinthians 9:7:

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Luke 6:38

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

Matthew 6:3-4

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."

Acts 20:35

"I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."