

*Don't think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. **I didn't come to destroy, but to fulfill.** For most certainly, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not even one smallest letter or one tiny pen stroke shall in any way pass away from the law, until all things are accomplished.*

*Whoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and teach others to do so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but **whoever shall do and teach them shall be called great** in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that **unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way you will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.** (Matthew 5:17-20)*

The **Law** will always **describe** what truth lived out looks like. But it can **never provide** any effective **power** to make it appear. It is **only a reality check**, not a source of proper motivation.

Because as humans we are reflectors, **we have no inherent power** to live according to the Law. Attempting to achieve conformity to the Law by human effort is analogous to a **mirror attempting to give light** without first receiving it. It simply is **beyond the capacity design** of the mirror to do so.

The Law was **never a source** of righteousness but only an **objective description** of what it might look like. This is why it was **not the Law** that was not **done away** with at the cross, but rather **its misuse as an authoritarian dictator** that condemns that was **revoked**.

Jesus clearly declared He did not come to do away with the Law but to **fulfill** it

Jesus fulfilled the law by showing **how a human may reflect the essence of what the Law describes** – the character of **God who is love**. A description has **no power to replicate itself in anyone**. Staring at the Law thinking it is **up to us to keep** every meticulous detail **subverts its purpose** and induces condemnation, shame and fear. This is how sin misappropriates the Law and discredits it resulting in condemnation instead of liberation. The Law is a **description** of what **freedom** looks like, not slavery.

When we feel enslaved by the Law it is **not** because of a **problem with the Law** itself, but rather indicates a **problem in how we imagine the Law relates** to us.

*For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his natural face in a mirror; for **he sees himself**, and goes away, and **immediately forgets what kind of man he was**.*

*But he who looks into the perfect law of freedom, and continues, not being a hearer who forgets, but a **doer of the work**, this man will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:23-25)*

Continuing to look into the perfect Law of liberty means getting the **Law back where it originally was intended** to be – an objective **reference to make us aware** of what reflecting God looks like.

The Law then becomes an **essential assistant** to **protect us** from being **seduced** back into the deception of sin. It does this **not proscriptively** but purely as a reference, a **baseline of truth**.

The **Law describes** truth, but **Jesus embodies** truth as the first fully functional human reflector of God.

Jesus demonstrated the original design of humans made to **reflect** God's character of love continually. Now Jesus calls us to follow His example, not through Law keeping but **by receiving love** so we may freely emanate it.

The **Law and the Gospel compliment** each other. They are **not antagonistic** to each other.

Jesus said He came to **fulfill the Law, not eliminate it**. But He did **not fulfill it by working hard** to obey it but **by reflecting the One the Law describes**. And John describes the nature of this reflection as **glory, graciousness and real truth**.

*The Word became flesh, and lived among us. **We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.***

From his fullness we all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:14,16-17)

A distorted perception of the function of law was handed down from Moses

Graciousness and truth is revealed through Jesus from God where He sourced it.

Grace thus is **not law exemption** (vacuum) but **graciousness from God** (substance).

Just as **darkness is not substantive** but only the absence of light, **graciousness is substantive** light.

Jesus demonstrated how living under the **authority of graciousness** produces a **true reflection** of God's love through a human **mirror created for that** very purpose.

Removing the Law out of the design **destroys the very fabric** of creation and **dishonors God**.

Believing the **Law is done away** with is the same as **insisting God is irrelevant** to reality and truth.

It is the **misapplication** and **repurposing** of the Law by the deceiver that is **done away with**.

The commandment, which was for life, this I found to be for death; for sin, finding occasion through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me. Therefore the law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good. Did then that which is good become death to me? May it never be! But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good; that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful. (Romans 7:10-13)

We are **no longer under the Law**, not because it loses legitimacy, but **because it is restored to its descriptive role** instead of being exploited as an authority to induce fear, shame and condemnation.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has punishment. He who fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because he first loved us. (1 John 4:18-19)

Perfect **love expels all fear**, for fear has to do with punishment, for **punishment distorts** God's design.

God's design is for us to be **expanding reflectors** of His image of love. This is how the glory of God is **reproduced** in the lives of those willing to **receive and cooperate** with His indwelling **Spirit** in them.

God is gracious, merciful, **kind**, loving, **forgiving** (never taking offense) and **humble**.

Yahweh passed by before him, and proclaimed, "Yahweh! Yahweh, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth, keeping loving kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and disobedience and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the children's children, on the third and on the fourth generation." (Exodus 34:6-7)

All of these attributes **go far beyond** what the Law describes. Thus the **Law is inadequate** to **empower us** to be **reflectors** or **participants of the divine nature** for which we were created. Yet the Law never lost its purpose to **act as a rumble strip warning** us when we deviate from living in love.

The Law was **returned by Jesus to its original role** of alerting us, **not compelling** or **condemning** us.

To ignore warnings, whether directly from God or through the Law, is always **very dangerous**.

Our **problem** is not in taking warnings of the Law seriously, but **thinking it is our job** to make ourselves **compliant to the Law's definition** of what right living looks like.

Right living happens as a natural fruit of **submission** to God who is **love**; **Reflective righteousness!**

*Now the Lord is the Spirit and **where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty**. But we all, with unveiled face **beholding** as in a mirror the **glory** of the Lord, are **transformed into the same image** from glory to glory, even as **from the Lord, the Spirit**. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)*

*So then, my **beloved**, even as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling. For **it is God who works in you both to will and to work**, for his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)*

We work out our salvation with fear and trembling, **not out of fear of punishment** but **fear of slipping back into dark distortions** about God's disposition towards us due to **patterns of former ignorance**.

Our **salvation works out**, **not by trying** to be **obedient to the Law**, but **obeying the words of God** through Christ who restored the **original purpose** of the Law, **replacing its inappropriate use** with **His own reflection** of God's gracious glory seen in truth and love.

That table filled with kind animals exemplifying the kingdom of love, brought to light how the King of Grace reproduces fruit after its own kind in even animals who can coexist in harmony and love for each other under the 'spell' of grace and truth.

Being loved is the key for living far beyond the crude and narrow descriptions provided in the Law.

Receiving freely empowers giving freely.

We love because we first are loved, and we believe, embrace and then reflect the love of the Father as our sole source of identity, worth and purpose for existing.

Resistance to forgiving anyone, especially myself, appears to be equivalent to despising the kindness, graciousness and forgiveness of God towards everyone.

God, deliver me from this body of death! This deadly resistance to graciousness that steals joy and peace and blocks me from living freely in the circulation of life-releasing love flowing from the throne

I choose to forgive each person I feel resistance or bitterness towards and receive God's peace.

I choose to forgive myself, to let go of my unbelief, to revoke the myriads of lies lingering about God.

I believe God is a forgiving God, and while accepting that forgiveness is not an exemption from cause and effect principles that governs all reality I embrace the reality of His favor.

I choose to let God commune with my heart more readily and to resist allowing my head to seize control of the conversation before my heart has plenty of time to engage.

The Law can partially describe truth, but it doesn't begin to describe graciousness.

Jesus highlights most the light of God's graciousness and simultaneously reveals the truth the letter of the Law attempts to convey through the clumsiness of words.

One main particular that came to me in the past few days is the central theme of focusing total emphasis on the constancy of God's mercy and no emphasis on anything I can do or have done.

*I prayed to Yahweh my God, and made confession, and said, Oh, Lord, **the great and dreadful God, who keeps covenant and loving kindness with those who love him and keep his commandments,** Lord, **righteousness belongs to you,** but to us confusion of face, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, who are near, and who are far off, through all the countries where you have driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against you.*

***To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness;** for we have rebelled against him;*

*...Yahweh our **God is righteous in all his works which he does,** and we have not obeyed his voice.*

*Lord, **according to all your righteousness,** let your anger and please let your wrath be turned away from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain....*

*My God, turn your ear, and hear; open your eyes, and see our desolations, and the city which is **called by your name:** for we do not present our petitions before you **for our righteousness,** but for your **great mercies' sake.** Lord, hear; Lord, forgive; Lord, listen and do; don't defer, for your own sake, my God, because **your city and your people are called by your name.** (Daniel 9:4,7,9,14,16,18-19)*