

Hearts Aflame: How to See Jesus in All of Scripture (Part 4)

Introduction

The Text

They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24:32)

A Preacher’s Pyrotechnics

- A. The goal of every preacher, I think it’s safe to say, is to light a fire in the hearts of his congregants in one way or another—to start a holy conflagration that burns on the inside.
 1. Think of it in reverse: no preacher, no minister, wants his people nodding off, falling asleep, going cold—where they walk away from the sermon and the service thinking: “Well that was rather dull and drab, a yawn, was it not? Now let’s get home and turn on the TV. There’s a game on!” No preacher wants that. He wants to start a fire.

- B. But here’s what we must understand: there are various ways a minister may try to accomplish this—and you’ll see these play out even in churches round about us here in this city.
 1. Some try to use emotional froth and fervor. So you get the music going. And he starts crying, he’s always got tissues up there near the pulpit. He tells these stories, tearjerkers, things that tug at the heartstrings. You play to the emotions to try to light a fire in your people.
 - a. But such a thing, in my view, is as a fire composed only of kindling. You can start it for sure, and people get caught up in it, and they go home emotionally charged . . . for a day or so. But there’s nothing substantial to keep the flame going. And it quickly threatens to burn out. So you have to keep coming back for the music and the stories and the dim lights and things in order to keep the flame alive.

 2. Some other ministers aren’t as congenial in their approach. Rather than playing to emotions in some positive sense, they use threats and fear to light a fire, as it were. So you maximize the judgement and wrath of God, and downplay his grace and kindness. “People just abuse grace. They go home and live however they want if we give them grace. If you really want to move people, well you do it with threat of judgment and things. You scare them into action.”
 - a. Suffice it say, this doesn’t so much light a fire inside you as much as it lights a fire under you, if you know what I mean. You’re going to burn—not in a good way, but in a burdened way. You may be motivated, but not from love . . . from fear.

3. Another option the preacher has is self-pandering manipulation or ear-tickling. In other words, he spends his time in the pulpit simply telling his people what they want to hear. Sometimes this involves merely not telling the whole truth—avoiding the stuff that would bore or convict or trouble you. Other times it’s just outright lies. So he tells you: “If you do this or that, God will reward you now with health and wealth and prosperity.” And because you want these things so badly, your ears prick up. You’re tuned in and interested. And your heart catches fire for a bit.
 - a. But now here is something akin to the lighting of that “[unauthorized](#) [or ‘strange’] [fire](#)” mentioned in [Lev. 10:1](#). This is not a fire lit in honest worship of the Lord. This is a fire lit in worship of other gods, of idols and things. Oh you’re excited and all that. You’re “on fire,” as they say. But this fire isn’t burning with a passion for God and his glory. At the end of the day it’s just burning with a passion for you.
- C. So none of these strategies will do for any true minister of God, will they? Not at all. And, thankfully, Jesus in our text, shows us a better way. He too wants to light a fire in the hearts of these disciples—these two on the road to Emmaus.
 1. And he does, effectively so! After all, what do they say: “[Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?](#)” ([Luke 24:32](#)).
 - a. Like any good preacher, he used the Scriptures, the Bible in some way. But how does he do it, what does he show them there? What is it about this Bible study that sets them aflame?
- D. Well, in a word, he shows them himself. He preaches to them the gospel from all of Scripture, not just the NT (remember they didn’t have that at this point) but even and especially from the OT.
 1. Hence, you remember, back up in [vv. 25-27](#): “²⁵ [And he said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!’](#) ²⁶ [Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’](#) ²⁷ [And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.](#)”
- E. That’s what sets their hearts to burning. Seeing Jesus and the gospel in all the Bible.
 1. Does such a thing influence our emotions? Sure.
 2. Is there fear and threat of judgment in the cross and things? Absolutely if we reject him.
 3. Are there wonderful promises that correspond to the deepest longings of our hearts? Yes!
 - a. But if we’re to light a true and lasting fire in the heart, all of these things must be seen through the grid of the gospel. That’s the deepest and most substantial piece. That’s where the hardwood that really adds substance to the flame. So that’s what Jesus focuses in on.

Every Day + Every Page

- A. It’s as we’ve been saying these past few sermons, Jesus knows that what we need more than anything else every day is to see him and the gospel afresh—that’s what will truly light up our

hearts—and that’s why God has painted portraits of him and the gospel on every page of our Bibles. You find him everywhere. All the roads lead to London, as Spurgeon said.

- B. And that’s what this little mini-series we’ve launched off into now is really all about. I want to try to help us with this. So the title: Hearts Aflame: How to See Jesus in All of Scripture.
 - 1. This is now part 4 and you recall we’re making our way through a little diagram I created called the Hub Diagram.
 - a. The idea is if Jesus and the gospel aren’t at the center of your Christian life, it won’t turn.
 - b. And the twelve spokes coming out from this hub really are twelve different ways we can see Jesus and the gospel in the Scriptures as a way of keeping him ever before us.
- C. We’ve covered the first six to this point . . .
 - 1. Jesus is (1) the Realization of Every Promise; (2) the Fulfillment of Every Prophecy; (3) the Essence of Every Symbol; (4) the Substance of Every Shadow; (5) the Apex of Every Attribute; and (6) the Unveiling of Every Mystery.
 - 2. And this morning we’ll look at two more: Spoke #7: Jesus Is the Epitome of Every Theme; and Spoke #8: Jesus Is the Climax of Every Story. So let’s go!

Spoke #7: Jesus Is the Epitome of Every Theme

- A. When you read the OT, all manner of themes emerge. And what I want you to realize is that we can, in almost every case, trace the theme towards Jesus and the gospel as the epitome of it in one way or another.
 - 1. Whether you want to talk about the theme of God’s holiness, or his compassion for the lowly, or the theme of covenant, or kingdom, or land, or judgement, or light and darkness, or friendship, or sorrow, or joy. And we could just keep going.
 - a. But they all can be traced to the cross and seen with the utmost clarity there. Indeed, we won’t fully comprehend the theme until we see it in Calvary’s light. And our hearts certainly won’t catch fire as God intends they should.
- B. So I figured I’d take just one seemingly random theme and show you what I mean . . .

The Lord Is My Shepherd

- A. Let’s take the theme of shepherding. Let’s say you’re reading some OT text and the idea of shepherding is there and you say: “Well, Nick said I could take any theme travel that backroad to London, trace my way to the cross. So I’m going to try it . . .”
- B. Now, full disclosure here, I’m going to draw much of what follows from a wonderful book written by an old seminary professor of mine, Tim Witmer, entitled [The Shepherd Leader](#).

1. I actually include parts of this book in the elder process here. But in the opening chapters, he riffs on the biblical theme of shepherding and I want you to see some of this. It's profound.

God Himself

A. All throughout the OT, actually, if we're paying attention, we see this idea of God as a shepherd.

1. Perhaps the most famous example, of course, is [Ps. 23](#) which begins: "¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³ He restores my soul" (vv. 1–3).
 - a. It's a wonderful passage. But this theme in the Scriptures is so much bigger than [Ps. 23](#). Indeed, it covers territory spanning from [Genesis](#) all the way to [Revelation](#).
2. So back in [Gen. 48](#), when the great patriarch Jacob is laying on his sons to bless them, he describes God as "the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day" (v. 15).
3. And then [Ps. 78](#), recounting the events from the books of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and things sums it all up like this: "[God] led out his people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock" (v. 52).
4. [Ps. 95](#) puts it most pointedly: "⁶ Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! ⁷ For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand" (vv. 6–7).

Through Men

A. All of these texts so far, speak of God himself as actively shepherding his people, but of course we know that one of the ways he does this is through human shepherd-leaders. Men in the OT like Moses and David.

1. So of Moses, we read in [Ps. 77:20](#): "You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."
2. Or of David, we read in [Ps. 78:70-72](#): "⁷⁰ He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds; ⁷¹ from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance. ⁷² With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand."
 - a. You remember where David was when Samuel comes to anoint one of Jesse's sons as king. He's out "keeping the sheep" ([1 Sam. 16:11](#)). That shouldn't be lost on us.
 - b. And what about Moses? Where was he before he was called to shepherd God's people through the wilderness? He was "keeping the flock of his father-in-law, [Jethro](#)" in the wilderness ([Exod. 3:1ff.](#)). That's what he was doing when God called to him from the burning bush.

- B. And consider what God does with Moses' shepherd's staff. It's profound. Let me quote Witmer on this: "The Lord took Moses' humble shepherd's staff and transformed it into the symbol of God's call and [that] through which his mighty deeds were accomplished that brought the people out of bondage. 'You shall take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs' (Ex. 4:17). It was this staff that became a serpent in the presence of Pharaoh. It was through the staff that, in the Lord's power, the Nile was turned to blood, the dust was turned to gnats, the hail fell on Egypt, and the locusts came upon the land. It was when this staff was lifted up that the waters of the Red Sea parted and God's people passed through safely. When Moses raised it again the waters crashed down on Pharaoh's soldiers and chariots. It was with the staff that Moses struck the rock in Horeb and the water flowed in quantities sufficient to satisfy the thirst of his people in the desert" (15). And so on.
- C. Shepherding is perhaps a much bigger theme in the Scriptures than you ever realized. God as shepherd working in and through human shepherd-leaders.

Failure and Promise

- A. But as we trace the theme out through the OT, what we come to realize is that, in every instance the human shepherd falls devastatingly short of the call. And this is true even for men as prominent as Moses and David.
1. So for Moses, do you remember what the sin was that caused God to hold him back from entering the Promised Land? He misused the staff. In anger at Israel, and perhaps even at God, he struck the Rock once more when God said only to speak to it.
 - a. It was a failure to shepherd.
 2. And for David, do you remember the big sin that would ultimately be the beginning of the end for him and his kingdom and things? It was his adultery with Bathsheba. But I wonder if you ever noticed: when Nathan the prophet comes to confront David on this, he tells a parable to get at it. And the parable utilizes a shepherding motif. The upshot is this: "David, as king, you have all these sheep and all these flocks, and yet you go and steal the only lamb that Uriah has, Bathsheba, his wife.
 - a. It was a failure to shepherd.
- B. And all of this is put in even more sweeping fashion in [Ezek. 34](#), when God is considering all of Israel's leaders at this point: ¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? ³You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. ⁴The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. ⁵So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; ⁶they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.

⁷ “Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ⁸ As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep, ⁹ therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ¹⁰ Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.

¹¹ “For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³ And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴ I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁶ I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. . . .

²³ And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David [remember, David is already dead at this point, he’s speaking of the one to come who will sit on David’s throne forever], and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴ And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.

²⁵ “I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. ²⁶ And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. ²⁷ And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. ²⁸ They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. ²⁹ And I will provide for them renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations. ³⁰ And they shall know that I am the LORD their God with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Lord GOD. ³¹ And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord GOD” (vv. 1–16, 23-31).

C. Three quick observations can be made regarding this:

1. First, the shepherds of Israel are fleecing, and even eating, the very sheep they are called by God to provide for and protect.
2. Therefore, second, God himself will come and pursue his sheep and bring them back under his care.
3. And, third, he will do it by bringing in one final and enduring shepherd who will come from David’s line but will not be marked by David’s sin. This coming shepherd will rescue, and protect, and feed, and satisfy. He will bring God back to the people and the people back to God. And his name, of course, is Jesus.

- a. You remember that prophecy in Micah we read every Christmas, hear it again now with all this in the background, Mic. 5:2-4: “² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who

are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.⁴ And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.”

The Good Shepherd

- A. Jesus is the shepherd of all shepherds. Or as Jesus himself would put it: he’s the Good Shepherd, John 10:11-16: “¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.”
1. This Good Shepherd isn’t going to fleece his sheep for his own profit. He’s going to let himself be fleeced for his sheep’s profit.
 2. This Good Shepherd isn’t going to feed himself on the flesh of his sheep. He’s going to feed his sheep with the flesh of himself. “This is my body, broken for you. Take and eat!”
 3. This Good Shepherd isn’t going to throw his sheep to the mouths of wolves. He’s going to throw himself there: “I lay down my life for the sheep” (v. 15). That’s what the cross is. “Let the devil have his way with me, but don’t you lay a finger on my flock!”
- B. And I said the theme stretched all the way to Revelation, didn’t I?
1. Well, do you remember when John sees those who have come out from the great tribulation, around the throne there in heaven? Do you remember what we’re told concerning them? Rev. 7:16-17: “¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Hearts Aflame

- A. Don’t you see? If you’re reading the OT and you come to Ps. 23 or one of these other texts—of course there’s still some encouraging stuff to glean from them in and of themselves—but when you trace that theme to its epitome in Jesus and the gospel, doesn’t that just transform it? Doesn’t that just light a fire in your heart?
- B. What does it mean: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Ps. 23:1)?
1. It doesn’t mean you’re going to get everything you want this year for Christmas, right? You come away thinking that and you’re going to be confused and letdown in the end.
 2. No . . .

- a. It means the deep soul-thirst and heart-hunger that you have can be satisfied in Christ.
 - b. It means however many ways leaders and authority figures in your life have hurt you and taken advantage of you (be it your parent or your spouse, your boss or your pastor), Jesus will make it right in the end.
 - c. It means you are so loved—because Christ your shepherd chose to die for your sin; and so secure—because Christ your shepherd rose again and he’s here right now!
- C. I mean, listen, I don’t care how independent, or self-sufficient, or “macho” you think you are. Don’t you long for this?
- 1. To be led to quiet waters and green pastures. To be freed from oppression. To be provided for, protected, and safe. To be forgiven and loved. To know God. Listen, with Jesus as your shepherd you get all of this and so much more!
- D. Don’t you think Jesus with these two on the road to Emmaus could have pointed to any of these texts in the law, the prophets, or the psalms and said: “There I am! How could you have missed me?!”
- 1. And don’t you think that’s part of what caused their hearts to start burning within them, when they saw him there for the first time?!

Spoke #8: Jesus Is the Climax of Every Story

- A. Remembering again, as we said in the very first sermon of this mini-series—that the whole OT is structured with a view to the promise of [Gen. 3:15](#) regarding this coming offspring of the woman who would save and redeem us from the curse and things—it should come as no surprise really that Jesus is the epitome of every theme and now, as we see, the climax of every story in the OT.
- 1. All of these stories are incomplete and full of tensions that don’t really resolve until we get to Christ and the cross.
- B. So you read these OT stories, and if you don’t read them towards Calvary, well, frankly, you read them wrongly. You’ll inevitably misunderstand and misapply them.
- 1. We aren’t to look at them merely as individual threads, as it were, but as threads woven into and part of a much larger tapestry and story that God is telling in the Bible in Jesus.

Abraham and Isaac

- A. I think I’ve shown you this example before, but it’s a relatively accessible one, one that you’ll be able to wrap your mind around pretty well, I think. Let’s consider the story of Abraham and Isaac for a moment. You remember this?

1. For so long Abraham and Sarah had been childless and then God, in mercy, comes to Abraham and says: "I'm going to give you a family and through your family all the families of the earth will be blessed."
2. And he promises it's all going to get started with a son. "You won't be childless anymore."
3. But he sure he takes his time, doesn't he? Years go by and Abraham and Sarah get older, and it seems less and less plausible that God is going to deliver.
4. Then at last, when he's some one hundred years old, Isaac comes. And Abraham is overjoyed, and amazed at the grace and power of God working for his good. What a thing!
5. But then the unthinkable happens. God, one day, desiring to test Abraham's faith, asks him to sacrifice his son, not just figuratively, it would seem, but physically, as a burnt offering to God. [Gen:22:2: "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."](#)
6. And here the old man is thrown into crisis, no doubt. What's he to do? Well, of course we know, in a great feat of faith, he prepares to go through with it. So [Gen. 22:6: "Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together."](#) Clearly Isaac is not some little baby at this point—he's a young man, capable of carrying the wood here on his own back. And together they walk up the mountain that God had directed Abraham to.
7. And, as they're going, Isaac notices what he thinks to be a glaring oversight in the plan here, and he pipes up in [v. 7: "7 'My father! . . . Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' 8 \[To which Abraham responds:\] . . . 'God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.' \[And again it says:\] So they went both of them together" \(vv. 7–8\).](#)
8. And when they arrive at their destination, Abraham builds the altar and ties his boy up. What a tragic scene this would be.
9. And he proceeds to raise that knife up over his son, his only beloved son, no doubt with tears welling in his eyes. And, just as he's about to bring the blade down, God speaks from somewhere above him: ["11 'Abraham, Abraham! . . . 12 Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' 13 \[And we keep reading:\] And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called the name of that place, 'The LORD will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided'" \(vv. 11–14\).](#)

B. What a story! So many striking parallels with Jesus and the gospel, of course (if you are looking for it), but for now I want to consider: what if you just stopped at this and didn't read it with Jesus as the climax of all stories in Scripture?

1. Well, I think for one thing you'd be confused, at least at first. Why is God asking Abraham to kill his child? That sounds crazy. It sounds wrong on so many levels. Can this God be trusted? I thought he was good. Would he ever ask me to do such an outlandish thing? Is that what it means to follow him? I thought he speaks out everywhere against child sacrifice and things, as the Gentiles would do with Molech and others. And yet here he is calling for the same?

2. But, suppose you got past this initial confusion in one way or another, the next fatal error would be to do what so many have done with the story: namely, you begin considering Abraham as simply some example of good behavior and strong faith. “Be like Abraham” is the big takeaway. And so you start looking for idols in your life that God would be calling you to sacrifice in figurative and in physical ways. If you don’t, you won’t have God’s blessing like Abraham did.
 - a. There certainly is some merit to this reading, but only in its place after reading the story towards Jesus and the cross . . .

Christ As the Climax

A. Here's what I mean: this story can only be understood rightly when we perceive Christ in it. He's the climax. The story isn't done with the close of the chapter. Far from it. It's only just begun.

1. And God was showing us such a thing all along the way if we were looking for it . . .
 - a. Who is Isaac, but the promised offspring, Abraham's only beloved son. With the wood for the offering placed on his back, ascending the mount, to be sacrificed. Sound familiar?

B. And yet Isaac isn't Jesus. He's just a foreshadowing of him.

1. We know that because the blade is called off of Isaac and a ram is sacrificed in his place.
2. But you see, there's no response from God the day Jesus hangs from the cross. Oh he cries out, in a similar manner to Isaac here: “Father, is there any other way? My God, why have you forsaken me? Where's the lamb?”
 - a. But the heavens are silent this time around. The blade called off of Isaac comes crashing down upon him.
 - i. Indeed, that's why it can be called off of Isaac (and off of all of us)—because God would provide the sacrifice, just as Abraham said. “[On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided](#)” (Gen. 22:14).

C. And you know here's the crazier thing. This “mount Moriah” only shows up explicitly one other place in Scripture: [2 Chron. 3:1](#). And there we're told that it's upon this mount in particular that Solomon would build the temple.

1. David, his father, had marked the land off for it years before. We learn of it in a story similar to that of Abraham and Isaac ([1 Chron. 21](#)).
 - a. His sin had brought God's judgment on the land and the people and, in a vision God gave him, he could even see the angel of the Lord with sword outstretched over Jerusalem there.
 - b. And God says again: “Set up an altar on this mount and offer burnt offerings to me there.”

- c. And David does so and the angel sheaths his sword. The plague, the judgment is averted, because of substitutionary sacrifice.
- D. And so they build the temple there, where year after year, day after day, substitutionary sacrifices would be offered—all picturing and pointing to the one who would come at the climax of the story and offer, not some animal, but himself for the sins of the world.
- 1. It's as John the Baptist once said with his finger pointed at Jesus: *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).*
 - a. *"On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."* And it has been. Jesus is crucified there in the same location as the temple, and the sacrifices of David, and the offering up of Isaac. What a thought!

Hearts Aflame

- A. Don't you see how you read that story back in [Gen. 22](#) so differently when you read it towards Christ and the cross as the climax?
- 1. Abraham and Isaac aren't first some example for us to muster up our strength and follow. No!
 - 2. They are a picture for us of the grace of God in the gospel—that God didn't withhold his only beloved Son but gave him up for us all—to save us from the curse of his judgment due our sin.
- B. It's not first about what I must do. It's about what he has done! That's what sets your heart on fire.
- 1. That's why Paul would say: *"[It's in view of] the mercies of God, [that we] present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom. 12:1).* You see his mercy, and that'll set your life ablaze like an offering to God!
 - 2. That's why John would say: *"We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).* We see God's love for us in Jesus, and then we're ready to lay our lives down in love for him and other.
 - 3. That's why Jesus says: *"[T]ake up [your] cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).* Do you catch the logic? We must first see Jesus carrying his cross for us before we can ever come along behind and carry our cross for him.
- C. Don't you see the clear implication in all of this? Our sacrifice is always in view of his sacrifice. That is the essential order.
- 1. When you get the love of God for you in Jesus, then, and only then, are you truly able to follow after Abraham's example. You are able to lay down your dreams, your desires, your plans, all of that, to trust him, because you know he's good and he's got you.
- D. So I do wonder: what is God calling you to let go of, to put in his hands? What are you holding too tightly? A job, a plan for your life, your money, a relationship?

1. It may seem severe at first and so very hard. But remember, you put it all in hands that still bear the scars of love for you. Think about that.
 - a. When you're struggling to surrender or trust like Abraham, spend some time with Thomas placing your fingers in the nail-scars of your Savior's hand. Remember his love, then release your grip on whatever it is. He's got you. He's good.
- E. Can't you imagine Jesus on the road to Emmaus, talking with these disciples about [Gen. 22](#). "There I am! How could you have missed me?! I'm the only beloved Son that laid down his life for you."
 1. Oh and as their hearts started to burn within them, don't you think they were ready at last to go out from there and lay their lives down for him?
 - a. Let's go and do the same!