

# Hearts Aflame: How to See Jesus in All of Scripture (Part 5)

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## 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)

### The Story of God’s Unfolding Plan of Redemption in Jesus

- A. If I had to define what the Bible is, I suppose I would put it like this: the Bible is the story of God’s unfolding plan of redemption in Jesus.
  - 1. What this means is that if we are not reading the entire Bible to and through Jesus and the gospel then we are reading it wrongly.
    - a. And because the Bible isn’t merely some history book or some piece of fiction from your English class, if you get it wrong, you don’t just get a D on your test or whatever. Your entire life goes awry.
- B. The Bible is God’s revelation to us about how life and our hearts and our relationships and things work. And if we aren’t reading it rightly then everything gets off kilter and broken and confused. It all just goes off the rails.
  - 1. The Bible is meant to, before anything else, lead you to Jesus who unlocks the mystery of the meaning of life and if you don’t see him there you won’t see what this life is all about. Your heart will be cold and hard and confused and weighed down . . .
- C. . . . Much like the hearts of these two disciples on the road to Emmaus before Jesus confronts them and alerts to his place in all of Scripture. They were down and depressed.
  - 1. Then Jesus opens the Scriptures and shows them what they had heretofore missed and never seen: namely, that he’s on every page—[“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself”](#) (Luke 24:27).
    - a. You don’t have to wait for the New Testament to get to the good news of the gospel and the cross, it’s on every page of the Old Testament in one way or another. God knows we need fresh vision of this every day, so he puts it on every page.
      - i. And it’s only as these disciples start to see that fact that their hearts begin to burn within them. And it’s then and only then will that our hearts will begin to catch fire as well.

## The Holy Book As a Matchbook

- A. You know we had students from Megan's eighth grade Earth Science class over this past week to look at the stars with Donl through his impressive telescopes and things.
  - 1. And while kids were waiting in the front yard for their turn to come into the back and get a viewing of Jupiter or the moon or other constellations, we lit a fire for them in one of those little bonfire pits, to warm them up. It was a cold night, maybe low 40s.
- B. Listen, some of us are living in that spiritual climate, it's cold it's dark. Your heart's got frostbite. Your soul is shivering.
  - 1. How do you bring warmth to that? How do you light a fire on the inside?
    - a. You need the kerosene of God's grace. The kindling of Christ's cross. The spark of the Holy Spirit. That's what Jesus is giving these two and that's what he gives us. In the gospel. In the Old Testament.
      - i. When we open our Bibles we may as well be opening a matchbook!

## Hearts Aflame: How to See Jesus in All of Scripture

- A. That's what I want you to experience. That's what I want you to see. And that's really the point of this little mini-series we've been running, entitled [Hearts Aflame: How to See Jesus in all of Scripture](#).
- B. This is now part five. And you remember we're making our way through the hub diagram I presented a while back.
  - 1. The idea with the diagram is that Jesus is the hub of the wheel that is the Christian life. If he's at the center, it turns, it goes somewhere. If he's not, it doesn't.
  - 2. 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 eight to this point and this morning, we're just going to look at one more (we'll come back for the last three after Christmas): Spoke #9: Jesus Is the Obedience of Every Command. So let's get to it!

## Spoke #9: Jesus Is the Obedience of Every Command

### Warm My Heart?

- A. When we're talking about things in the Bible that warm your heart, I don't think many of us would naturally begin thinking of all the commands. Like "I just love it when God starts bossing me around, telling me what to do, it gets me all fired up and excited." I don't think so.

1. Nobody likes to be told what to do. Especially here in America, right? We're a nation of individuals in many ways. We decide for ourselves what's right and wrong and which course of action we'll take and things.
- B. I've seen an hilarious example of this lately with my boy.
1. He hates to pick up, like most little boys do. But he thinks, in his own way, he's found this loophole—this way out of having to obey my commands, if you will.
  2. So here's what he does: he actually cleans up his room before I ask him.
  3. Now, when I first saw this I said: "No way buddy, thanks for being so on top of it, so thoughtful. Why'd you clean up your room before I even asked?"
  4. And his answer was ridiculous: "I cleaned up my room so that I don't have to clean up my room." You catching this? He cleans up his room before I ask him so that he doesn't have to clean it up later when I ask him. "Now you can't command me, Dad. Now I don't have to obey. Because it's already done. I already did it. And I did it on my terms, not yours."
  5. And I'm like: "You little rascal, you got me. I've got no other card to play. I can't make you clean up your room if you already cleaned it."
    - a. It's genius and foolish at the same time, right? And you know it's illustrative of this deeper issue that we have, where we don't want to be told what to do.
- C. But in the Bible God clearly claims authority over us and all human beings and he issues commands, things we must follow.
1. By commands here, I should say, in particular I'm thinking of what's been classified as the moral law—those instructions from God that clarify for us who we are to be and what we are to do or not do in an ethical sense.
    - a. And, again, if you've ever been reading through the Old Testament in your devotions or whatever and you come to some of these commands, my guess is, far from warming your heart, you probably came away feeling more burdened and concerned: "Is this what I'm supposed to somehow muster up the strength to do?"
      - i. The trajectory in it all isn't usually towards encouragement and joy but condemnation.
- D. And that's what we're going to deal with here in this sermon. When you come to these commands, where is Jesus? Where is the gospel . . . and the fire?

## Two Extremes

- A. It seems to me we often tend to swing to one of two extremes on this issue . . .

### Extreme #1: All Law

- A. On the one hand, you have those who think that relating to God is all law. It's all about works and obedience and keeping the commands and things.

1. So you have people that try really hard, I mean they go all out trying to be a “good” person, right, or get God to like them or bless them. They try to pay back the years of sin as some sort of atonement. They get it in their mind that in one way or another the Christian life is one of tireless working and earning.
- B. And this sort of thing can happen in any church, even a church that began with a solid understanding of grace.
1. I’ve been listening to a podcast about the fall of Mars Hill—that megachurch in Seattle that actually used to be the flagship church of the Acts 29 network that we’re a part of. And as they’ve been discussing what happened, what went wrong, in the last episode they bring out the fact that the church, perhaps began by grace, but it veered off into legalism—there was this culture of works: you had to be a certain way, do a certain thing, or else. And the gospel took a backseat.
    - a. Those that could meet the standard got all swollen with pride and those who couldn’t would come away feeling so beat up and depressed.
- C. Maybe you’ve been a part of a church like this. Where grace, perhaps, is still preached from the pulpit from time to time, but in the culture, it’s all law. They placed this yoke on you and it almost crushed you.

## Extreme #2: All Grace

- A. On the other hand, there are those who swing off in the other direction and assume relating to God and the Christian life, it’s all grace.
1. There’s no commands to follow anymore. Jesus did that. We’re free. Any talk of obeying is immediately brushed aside as “legalism.”
    - a. “Brother/sister, we’re not under the law, we’re under grace.” And, to them, what that means is: “Stop talking to me about a right or wrong way to live. It doesn’t matter anymore. I’m saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. So back up. And let me live how I want.”
- B. Maybe you’ve been a part of a church like this before. Where you’re just amazed at the stuff that these so-called “Christians” are doing with a seemingly clear conscience. They’re just so casual about it.
1. “Are you seriously getting drunk right now? Are you really going to talk like that? I’m sorry, you said you did what with your girlfriend?”
    - a. Something feels off, you can’t quite put your finger on it, but you don’t want to be labeled as a “legalist” so you go with it for a time. Maybe you even start to buy into it. “Who cares how I live, I got the get-out-of-hell-free card in my back pocket. It’s all grace.”

- i. And, ironically, that kind of thinking, too, will end up crushing you in the end, albeit in a different way.

## A Third Way

- A. But neither of these extremes represent the Bible's take on the matter. The Bible presents it not as either/or but as both/and. The two come together in the gospel and are kept in tension in some way—not at odds, but symbiotic, synergetic, that sort of thing. They go together.
- B. Perhaps the clearest place in all of Scripture to see this is the book of Romans. In that letter, Paul almost systematically addresses both of these extremes in turn and then shows us a third way, a way forward in Jesus.

## Against Extreme #1: From Law to Grace

- A. So in the opening chapters, Paul just dismantles the notion that anyone Jew or Gentile could be justified, or counted right, before God on the basis of their own works or following the commandments and things.
  1. The Jews, of course, liked to think they could, and they look down their noses at the Gentiles because of it. "Surely we're superior, we have the law, and we do a pretty darn good job keeping up with it. We're not like these heathens. God must be pleased."
    - a. But he's not pleased. He doesn't give the law as a ladder up which men can climb and then boast over and against their brothers and sisters who have not the wit nor the strength to get quite as high. Not at all.
- B. So Paul says in Rom. 2:17-24: "<sup>17</sup> [I]f you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God <sup>18</sup> and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; <sup>19</sup> and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, <sup>20</sup> an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—<sup>21</sup> you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? <sup>22</sup> You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup> You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. <sup>24</sup> For, as it is written, 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.'"
  1. What an indictment for a people who thought they were so much better off. He says: "Brothers, sisters, check your heart. Oh, you may look better on the outside, you get all cleaned up for church and things, but you're really no different than the Gentiles on the inside. In fact, because you know better, you may even be the worse off for it."
- C. Indeed, Paul's logic here is just driving relentlessly towards the sweeping crescendo that comes in Rom. 3: "<sup>9</sup> What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, <sup>10</sup> as it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one . . . .' [and he goes down in vv. 19-20 and says:] <sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. . . . [so finally he concludes:] <sup>22</sup> [T]here is no distinction: <sup>23</sup>

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,<sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,<sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith” (vv. 9-10, 19-20, 22-25).

1. So gone is the notion that it’s all law here—that we can get to God by our own good works and keeping of the commandments. No! We’re justified by grace! And he takes the next couple chapters to build that out.

D. One extreme has been dealt with. But then he proceeds to deal with the other . . .

## Against Extreme #2: From Grace to Law

A. “It’s of grace,” people say, “not of works. Oh, I get it, and isn’t that wonderful. I hear what you’re saying Paul. Now my works don’t really matter at all, do they? Who cares about obeying the commandments of God, right? In fact, it seems the more sins I commit the more grace I get it. It’s a win-win. And I can go live however I want now and I get heaven later.”

B. In [Rom. 6](#) he anticipates this abuse in view of free and extravagant grace and he beats them to the punch: “<sup>1</sup>What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?<sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?<sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?<sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (vv. 1–4).

1. We must not make the fatal assumption that grace is contrary to law nor law contrary to grace.
  - a. Law leads to grace in the sense that it awakens our sense of need for forgiveness—it shows us how far from God’s character and standard we really are. As we’ve said in the past, it is spiritual MRI that exposes the spiritual tumors in our soul. It leads us to cry out to God for mercy, to come to the cross and find forgiveness in Jesus.
  - b. But, in a similar manner, grace leads us to law. That’s essentially what Paul is saying here. If you truly come into saving relationship with Jesus Christ, you can’t go on living in sin (contrary to the moral commands of God). That’s because grace doesn’t just cover you, it transforms you from the inside out. He saves you not so that you can go off and live however you want, but so you can “walk in newness of life” ([v. 4](#))—in a manner like your Savior and heavenly Father . . . in a manner that fulfills the law.

C. So, in [Rom. 8](#) Paul goes on to say: “<sup>2</sup>[T]he law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.<sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,<sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (vv. 2–4).

1. The Spirit of Christ does not lead us away from the law but towards it.
2. Grace doesn’t nullify the law it fulfills it.

3. Jesus and the gospel don't make the moral law of God irrelevant, they make it possible.
4. The law of God is not a detour it is a destination!
  - a. The ten commandments are just a transcript of God's character in many ways. Because he doesn't murder, but gives life . . . we shall not murder but work for life, because he doesn't steal but is abundantly generous . . . we shall not steal but instead should give. Because he doesn't lie but is always truthful . . . we shall not lie but instead should be honest.
    - i. The moral commands of God are not a detour, they are a destination. This is the type of person God is making you and I in Jesus. And to say, "I want grace but not the law" is to miss the glorious trajectory and ultimate aim of grace: namely, that you would live a life in conformity with the law, that you would actually be renewed inside and out in the image of your Creator and Redeemer. That's the fullness of what it means to be "saved"!

D. This is why Paul goes on in [Rom. 12](#) and says: "<sup>1</sup>I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (vv. 1–2).

1. It all begins with "[the mercies of God](#)" (v. 1), but that mercy inevitably transforms the way you live.
  - a. And that's why Paul goes on from here to get so profoundly practical. "In view of the gospel, here's how you should talk, here's how you should treat your enemies, here's how you should treat one another, here's what you should do when there's a difference in personal convictions and things" . . . and on and on.
    - i. But, again, It's all grounded in mercies of God—the grace he's shown us in Jesus. You set your roots down in the gospel, but then that bears fruit, good fruit that ultimately leads to the fulfillment of the moral law.

### A Third Way: "The Obedience of Faith"

- A. This is why Paul begins and ends his letter stating that the goal in all of this is to bring about what he calls, interestingly, "[the obedience of faith](#)" ([Rom. 1:5; 16:26](#)).
  1. It sounds odd at first, doesn't it? By our usual reckoning we would think of obedience as having to with law and faith having to do with grace.
  2. But Paul brings them both together here. When you really have faith in the gospel and encounter the grace of God, it will lead to obedience and fulfillment of the law and a life transformed.
- B. So you see the Christian life isn't all law, nor is it all grace (in the cheap grace sort of way), but the gospel cuts through the middle of those extremes and holds both together.

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- A. “Okay,” you say, “well and good, but I thought this was a sermon about seeing Jesus in the Old Testament. What does all this have to do with that?”
1. Well, in a word: everything. You see, we’re so prone to read the moral commands of the Old Testament and think in either of those two extremes.
    - a. Either we read them and immediately try to apply them, to do them, we hoist the weight of them upon our shoulders and go about our day trying to carry them.
    - b. Or we assume they’re no longer relevant, because we’re not under law but under grace, so we skim over them and don’t give them a second thought at all.
    - c. But when we understand that law leads us to grace and grace leads us to law—or perhaps better put: that law leads us to Jesus and Jesus leads us to law—well, that changes things.
      - i. Now we see the law as relevant to our lives, and important to follow, but we no longer feel burdened or condemned by it because we aren’t approaching it in our own strength, we’re approaching it with Christ, in Christ, the only one who ever truly fulfilled it through and through.

## The Ten Commandments

- A. You know, when you go back and actually read the giving of the ten commandments, which really are the essence of the moral law, you see straightaway that God always intended law and grace and grace and law to go together. The two are from the outset, inextricably interwoven.
- B. So, have you ever noticed how the ten commandments begin there in [Exod. 20](#): “<sup>1</sup>And God spoke all these words, saying, <sup>2</sup>‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. <sup>3</sup>You shall have no other gods before me’” (vv. 1–3).
1. And he carries on with the rest of the commandments from there. But did you hear it? The whole thing begins with a trumpet blast of grace! “I am the God who has set you free.”
    - a. This is not a master barking at his slaves. This is a redeemer declaring the constitution of his liberated ones. This is a father lovingly instructing his children in the ways of life.
      - i. The whole moral law must be set within this context of redeeming grace, or it will be radically misunderstood. It’s not: “I’ll redeem you because you obey.” It’s: “Obey because I’ve redeemed you.”
- C. If you keep reading on in the legislation in Exodus and Leviticus and other places, you’ll notice that God is time and again grounding his call for Israel’s obedience in his own work of redemption.



1. Take [Exod. 22:21](#) for example: “You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.” “Remember, I showed mercy to you. Therefore, show mercy to them.”
- D. And, furthermore, you recall God even builds into the law there at the very beginning a means of rectifying things when men failed to uphold it. I’m thinking here, of course, about the sacrificial system. God didn’t just say: “You must or else.” He said: “I’ve begun this in grace. Your continued reflection on grace will enable you to obey. But if and when you fail there’s provision of pardon in the sacrifice of a spotless substitute.”
1. You don’t pay God back by trying harder. You can’t. You make atonement through the blood of another. You deserve that death. But a blameless one will take your place.

## The Day of Pentecost

- A. It’s all anticipating how law and grace and grace and law will come together in Jesus in the gospel. No doubt it’s still incomplete and in shadow form at this point, but it’s all there, and it prepares us to see what’s coming in Christ.
1. Let me show you what I mean (and this is amazing!) . . .
- B. Do you remember when it was that God gave the ten commandments at Sinai? [Exod. 19:1-3](#) tells us when: “<sup>1</sup>On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.<sup>2</sup> They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain,<sup>3</sup> while Moses went up to God.”
1. Remember, the people of Israel had a calendar composed of 12 lunar months, so the “[third new moon](#)” here, is the beginning of the third month in their year. The Passover happened in the middle of the first month of their year.
    - a. And this puts their arrival at Sinai about seven weeks after the Exodus event which coincides with what would become the Feast of Pentecost, which among other things actually celebrates the giving of the law ([Lev. 23:15-21](#)).
- C. So let’s get the story straight . . .
1. Israel is released from bondage in Egypt at the Passover through the blood of the lamb.
  2. Then they travel some 50 days in the wilderness and arrive at Mount Sinai.
  3. Moses goes up the mountain to meet with God.
  4. There’s fire and smoke and the whole mountain is trembling.
  5. Moses is given the ten commandments inscribed by the finger of God on tablets of stone.
  6. And he comes down with them, but the people down below had already given themselves to significant rebellion and idolatry—they’d already broken off from the Lord. And God is still holy, ferociously so, and so on that day the law was given some “[three thousand](#)” people die from God’s judgment ([Exod. 32:28](#)).

- a. It's not exactly a failure to launch here, but it is an indication that what was happening at Sinai wasn't sufficient to change men's hearts. Things weren't going deep enough. There's law and grace but it was anticipating something even more substantial. Something that would only ultimately come in Christ.

D. So think about this . . .

1. Jesus, the only innocent one, is killed when? At the time of the Passover. He's our Passover Lamb, working a new and grater exodus. We're coming out from bondage.
2. Then he rises up from the dead and he goes up to the Father, at the top of the mountain as it were, and he says: "Don't go anywhere until I come back down to you in the Holy Spirit."
3. So the disciples wait until when? "[T]he day of Pentecost" (Acts 2:1).
4. So some 50 days after the Passover, Jesus comes down from the mountain, as it were, he pours out the Holy Spirit, and what happens? Well, there's a rushing wind, and you imagine things start to tremble, and then, interestingly, tongues of fire, we're told, come to rest over each of the disciples. The fire that was once on the top of the mountain, that stood for the presence of God, that no one could get to but Moses, well in Christ that fire has come down, and it's not consuming, it's resting. It's not devouring, it's transforming.
5. And then by the Spirit, we're told that the law was now being written not on tablets of stone as in the day of Moses but on human hearts (2 Cor. 3)—so there's a change inside of us now. It's not just outside, it's in here. Grace doesn't take the law from us, it puts in the law in us!
6. And the end result? Peter begins to preach the gospel with boldness to the crowds that had gathered round about them and on that day, we're told that, instead of some three thousand people being judged for their sin, now some "three thousand" people are saved from it through Christ (Acts 2:41).

E. What began with the interweaving of law and grace on Sinai is brought to its climactic goal in Christ and the cross and the outpouring of the Spirit. He is the obedience of every command, the fulfillment of the law in its fullest sense.

## Falling in Love

- A. Now, again, you may be asking: "What does all this mean . . . for me, when I'm reading the Old Testament, when my heart's feeling cold and burdened. That's some neat theology there, Nick, but I don't see how it's relevant." Well, let me spend what time we have left helping you with this . . .
- B. If Jesus is the obedience of every command, if he's the fulfillment of the moral law, if he's the one who bring law and grace and grace and law together, if he lives the life I should've lived and dies the death I should've died and now comes in the Spirit to help me walk this out as well . . . then, when I come to the moral commandments and things in the OT, before I ever try to muster up the strength and do it myself I must first read such things towards Jesus and the gospel and Pentecost.
  1. I need to see how Jesus lives this out for me before I ever try to walk it out for him.
- C. You remember those bracelets from a while back—they had that big WWJD on them? "What Would Jesus Do." You were supposed to look down and be like: "Okay, be like Jesus. Don't cheat. Don't steal. Jesus wouldn't say that, I shouldn't."

1. They mean well here, and Jesus is our example. But before he's ever our example, he's our savior, right? Before we ask what Jesus would do we must remind ourselves what Jesus has already done . . . for us. Because of what he did do, I can do what he would do. But now it's not me, it's him in me. It's law leading me to grace and grace leading me to law.
- D. I love how Tim Keller puts it: "The moralistic person obeys the law out of fear; . . . the Christian sees the beauty of the One that fulfilled the law and falls in love."
- E. Here's another way to think about it. If you've got a bent metal rod and you want to get it straight, you've really only got two options:
1. You can try to force the thing back using sheer force with a hammer or something, but you run the risk of snapping the thing and even if you do get it back somewhat straight it will be structurally weaker now no doubt.
  2. But the best thing you can do is heat it up, right? Get the metal hot and reforge it and in the old days such a process would not only get the metal back to shape it would remove impurities and make it stronger as well.
- F. The idea is: when you come to these commands and you want to change and follows, you have two options:
1. You could either beat yourself up and try to force yourself into submission, which never works, ends up breaking you and making you weaker in a spiritual sense.
  2. Or you could melt the heart by reading that command towards Jesus and the gospel and seeing how he's done it for you and now, by grace, wants to do it in and through you. You don't just see a command and fear. You see the beauty of Jesus and fall in love.
    - a. You go out and obey the law but with a radically different heart—not to get God's approval but because you already have it; not to prove your worth but to prove Christ's worth to those all around.

## A Closing Example

- A. So let me give you one closing example. Jesus says that one of the commands in the OT that really sums up much of the law is there in [Lev. 19:18](#): "[Y]ou shall love your neighbor as yourself" (cf. [Luke 10:25-28](#)). So let's say you're reading in Leviticus and you come to that.
- B. Now, if you don't read that towards Jesus, and see him as the obedience of that command before it ever lands on you, you're going to do what that lawyer does with Jesus in [Luke 10](#), do remember that? They're talking about this commandment and he says: "Well, okay, if I have to do this to get eternal life, I guess I'll try, but then I really need to know: '[W]ho is my neighbor?' (v. 29)."
1. You see what's happening there? Because his heart's not been warmed by grace, he's only interested in doing the bare minimum, whatever he has to do get God on his side and prove he's good. He's essentially asking: "How far do I have to go?"
    - a. "Surely I don't have to love that guy or that gal? They live across town. And don't even get me started with the Gentiles around the way, or those Samaritans, nope. I

guess I can maybe manage loving the people right next door but even that's pushing it, right? I'll do the bare minimum. Just define that for me. Who's my neighbor?"

- C. Now, read that commandment towards Christ, see the way he's fulfilled it for you before you ever try to fulfill it yourself. Before you go and do, come and see.
  - 1. Isn't that what Christmas is really about?
    - a. Who was Jesus' neighbor, when he was with the Father in glory before the ages began? Did he have to come down, did he have to move into your neighborhood, move towards you in your guilt and your shame, show concern and compassion? Couldn't he have just kept his distance? He could have. But he didn't.
      - i. And he didn't just move into your neighborhood he loved you to death. That's what the cross is. Love for neighbor in the fullest sense.
- D. And when you experience the love of Jesus for you, that melts your heart, something starts to burn within you, and you start not just feeling like you have to love others like this, but like you want to.
  - 1. And that's the essential difference. When the law is just on the outside, it's: "How far do I have to go?" When the law comes inside by grace you start asking: "How far can I go?"
    - a. You start dreaming, not just about yourself and your little life, but about others. You've fallen in love with the one who's so loved you. And it's got moving out in love for neighbor. You're fulfilling the law and you may not even know it.
- E. Jesus is the obedience of every command. That'll start a fire in your heart!