

What Matters Most of All (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] So lawyers tend to have a bad reputation, right?

There's the kind of typical lawyer jokes that go around, right? Like, what's the difference between a dead chicken in the road and a dead lawyer in the road?

There's skid marks in front of the chicken. Right? So a man walking through a graveyard sees a gravestone that says, here lies a lawyer and a good man.

And the man says to himself, imagine that, two men buried in the same grave. So lawyers have a reputation and there's lots of those kind of silly jokes about them.

But we know that not all lawyers are bad. Not all. They deserve that reputation. And the same is true of scribes.

[1 : 08] We're told today of a scribe, one individual coming by himself to ask Jesus a question. And all that we have learned in the book of Mark so far about scribes is completely negative.

They get those lawyer jokes. But this man is different. But this man is different. And Mark alone shows us that side of him. And so he wants us to see that not all are what they're reputed to be.

There is hope for some who even come from a group of people who we tend to look down on. So here is this scribe who asked a sincere question, not a trick question, not trying to trap him, but a real genuine question.

What matters most? Which command is first of everything? Okay. So just to kind of set ourselves up here and be pastoral here, what about you?

What matters most to you? And don't answer. Just think. It's a good evaluation when we're looking at what matters most because often we find ourselves acting and thinking like, what matters most is my family or my career or my savings or whatever, whatever.

[2 : 40] We have tendency to go that way. So this is just a question to hold over our minds and let the Holy Spirit work in us as we evaluate what Jesus says here.

So here Jesus is asked a question to test. He's asked what matters most of all. What's the first and most essential command? And this follows a series of debates or confrontations between Jesus and the leaders of Israel.

This is now the fourth confrontation. Fourth question. But this one's different. This one is to test Jesus but not to trap him.

This is a genuine question. So we have seen in the context that we have the enemies coming to Jesus trying to ambush him through debates, try throwing up questions against him.

So at the end of chapter 11, after Jesus had entered into Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9, and allowing the people to praise him as the king, as the one, as he enters on a donkey.

[3 : 52] And then the next day, after Jesus has cleared the temple, not cleansed it, he's cleared it and condemned it, saying it is now a den of thieves. After that, these people come to him, these Sanhedrin folks, these elders, chief priests, and scribes, who come to Jesus and say, By what authority are you doing these things?

Because they're the authority. And Jesus answers them by a question. When Jesus is asked a question, he normally turns it around on the person.

And he asks them, remember, about John the Baptist, who he kind of traps, he turns the tables on them and traps them. What do you think about John the Baptist? And they can't answer that, because if they say yes or no for John, then they've set themselves up.

So they can't answer that question, so Jesus doesn't answer by what authority he has, but then he turns around and tells a parable against them. The wicked tenants of the vineyard, right? And the owner is sending messengers to get the fruit of the vineyard, and they beat up and kill and destroy, until the owner sends his very own beloved son, and that one they kill, hoping to just take the vineyard for themselves.

And of course, that parable, it says that the elders of the people perceived that the parable was against them. They got it. And then we have, remember, then in verse 13 of chapter 12, we have the question coming up from the Pharisees and the Herodians who ask him about taxes.

[5 : 29] They're trying to trap him, because they figure, you know, taxes is a bad thing, right? If you're for them or against them, which side are you on, Jesus? Is paying taxes to Caesar a good thing or not?

What should we do? If he says yes, then all the Jews will be against him for paying taxes. If he says no, then Rome will be against him. So he's trapped. What's he going to say?

And of course, Jesus turns it on him. He simply asks for a coin. Whose picture is on here and whose inscription is on here? Caesar's. Okay, then give to Caesar what's Caesar's.

And then he adds, give to God what is God's. Then we saw last week as the Sadducees came who do not believe in the resurrection, asked Jesus about resurrection.

So here again, we have a question that's not genuine. They don't really want to know about the resurrection because they don't believe in a resurrection. They don't believe in life after death. And so Jesus turns it on them as well.

[6 : 30] Well, the Sadducees only hold to the first five books of the Bible, the Torah, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. That's all they accept. It's the written word of God through Moses.

So there's no explicit reference to resurrection or life after death in those first five books. You have to look at Psalms and Isaiah and Daniel and other places to find explicit references to life after death.

So how is Jesus going to prove to them that there's always been the teaching of life after death, even in the first five books? We know that Abraham believed in life after death, right?

He was going to sacrifice his son and believe that God would raise him back up. So there was that belief. So he takes them to the heart of their scriptures. He takes them back to Exodus 3 where God is calling Moses and he identifies himself, God identifies himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.

And Jesus says, therefore, God is not God of the dead, but God of the living. And what we found surprising last week was that the argument did not turn on the present tense of the verb.

[7 : 51] We read in English that Jesus said, I am the God. But actually in the Hebrew text and in the Greek text of Mark, there's no verb.

You can't argue from tense. In fact, Hebrew has no tense. So if you go back to the original in Hebrew, you can't argue that he's talking about present tense because Hebrew doesn't have tenses. So what is he saying?

And we found that what he was saying is he's identifying him with what kind of God is he? God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob. What do those three guys have in common? So he's asking us to think.

What is he? Oh, well, God made his promises to those guys. Those are the patriarchs. He promised eternal blessings to them. And then we learned that Abraham, after he received the promise, went to live in a land.

And what does he do? He goes to the promised land and he doesn't build a house. Why not? He lives in tents. And so did Isaac and so did Jacob.

[8 : 50] Why didn't they build houses? If this is the promised land, why aren't they staking and digging in? Because they understood that there was something much better than that.

They were looking for a better country. They're looking for a city that God builds. So we learn in the book of Hebrews 11. So they understood. See, Abraham's far ahead of many of us in terms of understanding faith in that sense.

He's looking further. He's not looking at that ground in Palestine. That's not it. Have you been there? There's some beauty there. But it's not Wonder World.

A lot of swamps and a lot of dead places. It's not heaven. It's only a picture. So, he shows the Sadducees that God has always been a God of the living.

That he will fulfill his promise to Abraham. Because Abraham's still alive. Because Isaac is still alive. And Jacob is still alive. Because they're awaiting the full fulfillment of those promises.

[9 : 59] And those promises were heavenly promises. So, now we come to a fourth test. So, we've had the test from the Sanhedrin. Had the test from the Herodians.

Had the test from the Sadducees. And now, in verse 28, we have a scribe that comes up. So, this is different.

Because he comes as an individual instead of a group. He comes, yes, to test Jesus. Matthew tells us that he came to test him. But not to trap him.

He wants to evaluate Jesus. He wants to ask a real question. And we know that this guy's different.

Because at the very end, Jesus makes the statement. That you, scribe, are not far from the kingdom. You're close. You're doing well.

[10 : 54] You're on your way. Okay. So, this isn't an enemy kind of situation. This is kind of an honest, real conversation going on here. Okay.

I want you to see that. So, we see this scribe who wants to assess Jesus in his theology. Because that's really what he's doing. He's not asking Jesus just to name something.

He's asking Jesus to give the summary of his understanding of the law. He wants his theology. How have you thought and reasoned it all out?

So, two things, as Jesus answers this question about what matters most, two things stand out. Mark emphasizes two things. One, he emphasizes this man, this scribe.

Because he describes him in verse 28. But then he also describes him in verse 32 and 33 and 34 as somebody different. So, we're going to look at the scribe.

[11 : 49] Who is the scribe? And then secondly, we want to look at the question that he brings. What is the greatest command? I just want to look at the nature of that question.

So, first of all, first question is how is this scribe different from others? Because he is certainly different than what we would expect. Now, let's observe three things.

First of all, who are the scribes? It says in verse 28 that he's one of the scribes. So, who are the scribes? Who do we understand the scribes to be? Now, Mark has told us of several episodes where the scribes are involved.

And he's been very clear about what position they take in regard to Jesus. They are enemies of Jesus. In chapter 2, they're the ones sitting in the house.

Remember where they brought the paralyzed man and they couldn't get in. So, they went up on the roof. They cut a hole. Remember, they lowered the paralyzed man down before Jesus while he's teaching.

[12 : 48] They cut a hole in the roof. Right? And it says Jesus seeing their faith, not the man's faith, but the four guys that cut the hole in the roof. That's a lot of faith. They're bringing their friend to Jesus.

Says, does not heal him, but says, your sins are forgiven. Well, what's he doing? Obviously, he needs healing. Ah, first things first, Jesus says.

Forgiveness of his sins. And then the scribes respond. Who can forgive sins but God? This man blasphemed. So, there's the first instance of the scribes.

And then we see them a little bit later in chapter 2. They are terribly upset that Jesus is eating with tax gatherers and sinners. Again, critics of Jesus. Chapter 3, in Mark, they're upset that Jesus is casting out demons.

And their understanding of that is that Jesus is on the devil's side. That's why he's casting out demons by Beelzebub. He's working in league with Satan. So, again, their negative reaction, their criticism of Jesus.

[13 : 52] Then we see them again in chapter 7 of Mark, where they're talking about, Jesus, your disciples don't wash their hands before they eat. And they weren't talking about, you know, hygiene.

They were talking about a ritual cleansing. You're supposed to baptize your hands before you eat. A ceremonial washing to show that I'm coming with undefiled hands.

And remember how Jesus flipped that on them. He said, it's not what goes in that defiles you. It's what goes out that defiles you. And therefore, Jesus declared all foods clean. Another thing to be a little upset about.

So, he's had these confrontations with them before. At the end of Mark 8, 31, where Jesus was predicting what will happen when he got to Jerusalem, the first thing that will happen is he will be rejected by the scribes and the chief priests and the elders.

These scribes are the ones who will reject Jesus. And then just to get a little more flavor on who these scribes are typically, look down in Mark 12, a little further than our passage, down to verse 38.

[15 : 04] And in his teaching, Jesus said, beware of the scribes. Well, what are they? What are they like? What is it about these guys? What are they known for? Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes.

And they like greetings in the marketplaces. And they have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who also devour widows' houses, and for pretense make long prayers.

They will receive the greater condemnation. That's the typical scribe. Typical scribe is all about looking good, getting honor, liking the best seats.

And yet behind the scenes, they're devouring widows' houses. They are a den of thieves. That's what the typical one is.

But this scribe's different. So look back now at verse 28 about this scribe. How does Mark tell us he comes? Notice there's two things that draw him to Jesus.

[16 : 11] He's not sent by anybody to do a trap. He comes on his own. Mark says, verse 28, And one of the scribes came up and what? Heard them disputing with one another.

So he hears the previous debate. He hears the debate with the Sadducees. He hears how Jesus turns it on the Sadducees. How he answers the question of life after death.

How he uses the scriptures. And he not only heard that, but seeing that Jesus answered them well. He's impressed by Jesus' handling.

He silenced the Sadducees. That's hard to do. Those guys are always talking. Those guys are the big authorities. They're the priests in the temple. And he put them in their place.

You err in two ways. You err in regard to your understanding of God's scriptures. And you err in regard to your understanding of God himself, who has the power to raise the dead, just as he had the power to bring life out of nothing.

[17 : 24] So the scribe sees these things. He's impressed by Jesus.

He sees how Jesus answers well. That word for well can mean, it's like it was a beautiful answer. He answered him. That was perfect.

The scribe is not on the Sadducees' side. He's a Pharisee, not a Sadducee. He believes in life after death. So when Jesus proves life after death from the Pentateuch, the scribe's going, yeah!

Perfect. He answered him well. In fact, he's never heard an answer like that before. Nobody else has shown resurrection from the first five books. This guy takes scripture carefully.

And so he asks them a real question. He's not asking a question to trap him. He's asking him an open question. What do you think, Jesus, is the most important command?

[18 : 30] And then I want you to see how different this guy is by looking at his reaction to Jesus' answer. He asks the question, Jesus answers in quotes from Deuteronomy chapter 5, the Shema of Israel answers, Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one God, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your...

and your mind. I'll understand that. The men's group will understand that. You'll understand that. Yeah. The... What do we call it? The muchness. Yeah, yeah.

Much. I love you with my muchness, right? Chris? Okay. So he quotes that, right? And then notice the scribe's response in verse 32.

This is how he stands out different. And Mark is the only one who tells us this. The scribe said to Jesus, You are right, teacher. You have truly said that he is one, that there is no other besides him.

And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding, with all the strength, and to love your neighbor as self is much more than whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. Which, by the way, the scribe is adding that.

[19 : 43] He's adding that... Jesus didn't say anything about more than sacrifices. This man is. He's getting it. He's getting it. Yeah, that command is the most important.

He's agreeing with Jesus. He's approving of his answer. He's on the same page as Jesus. That's what I want you to see. This is not a normal scribe.

This is not a closed-minded, already made up my mind kind of guy. This is a guy that's still seeking truth. And he sees how Jesus answers the other questions with great wisdom and wants to know, what's your theology on commandments?

How have you put it all together? What is theology? Sometimes theology gets a bad rap, right? Oh, theology, they just have all the right answers, but there's no heart.

Right, gotcha. Yeah, we can do that. We can go the other way, too. No theology, right? No good understanding of the scriptures, but all heart. So what's theology?

[20 : 52] Because Jesus says, you're not far. When this man explains his theology, Jesus says, you're not far. Your theology's right on. But you are missing something. You are missing something.

You're not all the way there. Theology won't get you all the way there. But it is important. Theology is taking the scripture. What does...

So theology means the study of God. So if we're going to understand who God is, do we read one or two passages and got it? No, we read the whole thing, right? Because then we see, okay, over here, we see how holy and just and scary he is.

Over here we see, oh my gosh, he's so merciful and kind and patient. And we see all these different pictures of God. So to have a theology, I'm putting those together to have an accurate picture, right?

So he's asking for Jesus' theology of the commandments. Have you seen all the commandments? How do you understand those in terms of how they relate to one another? And where of all those commandments would you say lies the heart?

[21 : 58] What are all those commands God has given? Which is the highest? Which is the most fundamental? So obviously Jesus has done some thinking.

He has done some thinking. And so has this man. Because this man's going, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's what I see. Okay, so they've thought. They've thought. And then Jesus says, you're not far from the kingdom.

Why is he not far from the kingdom? And what does Jesus see in this man? Verse 34, Jesus saw that he answered wisely. Not flippantly.

Not carelessly. But thoughtfully. Do you remember how Jesus is often confronting his own disciples for not being very thoughtful?

Do you not yet see? Do you not yet understand? Have you not taken these truths and put them together? Are you not yet connecting the dots of everything I'm teaching you? I feed the 5,000.

[23 : 04] I feed the 4,000. Are you getting anything yet? Anything coming through? That's just a bare miracle off by itself. Doesn't relate to your life? Think, guys.

So Jesus often is calling us to think. And by the way, when he quotes the great commandment from Deuteronomy in Mark 12, 30, he adds a word that's not in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament talks about loving God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. When Jesus quotes it, he says, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and all your strength.

Jesus adds mind. Do you think thinking is important to Jesus? I think so. Yeah. Wants them to get it. Okay. Here is a scribe that is different because he is thoughtful.

He is honest and seeking truth. He is not coming to Jesus with a closed mind, but with an open mind. He is listening to what Jesus says. He's engaging with Jesus. Remember what we've learned in the Gospel of Mark about insiders and outsiders?

[24 : 18] Remember Jesus teaches parables to the outsiders so that he can teach truth and it's a way of seeing if anyone on the outside wants to come inside. Because the insiders are the ones who hear the same parable but then come up to Jesus.

I didn't get it. I didn't get it. Would you explain it to me? That's an insider. An insider comes and gets more feeding from Jesus. Right? The outsiders, well, I'm fine.

I don't have to understand that. I don't care. remember in Jesus' own family we're the outsiders remember so here we see a man that's not an outsider but wants to be an insider and Jesus says yeah you're close you're on the way you're on the right road so what I want us to understand I think what Mark wants us to understand in showing this scribe who is different from the others is that there's hope there's hope for people that you think are just lost there's a because you can kind of we kind of group our unbelieving friends and stuff right there oh yeah they're way out there they don't even want to hear anything they're so close minded and we can mistakenly put everybody we know into that category and what this shows us is no there's sometimes there's one or two that they're not like that yeah they're in that group but don't judge them by the book by the cover okay in other words there's hope here so let's see if we can talk about this this statement Jesus makes you're not far from the kingdom of God if the scribe is close to the kingdom what's he missing what's he yet missing he's got the theology so he's thinking well he's honest he's sincere that's good he's engaging with Jesus he's actually listening and learning what's he still missing that sounds good right what's he missing let's quote from another text of Jesus in Matthew 5 where Jesus talks about the same two things he talks about a scribe and he talks about entering the kingdom and I think we find a clue as to why this man was close but not yet in here's Matthew 5 17

Jesus says do not think that I've come to abolish the law or the prophets I've not come to abolish them but to fulfill them for truly I say to you until heaven and earth pass away not an iota not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven but whoever does these things and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven for I tell you watch this now for I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you will never enter the kingdom of heaven unless your righteousness exceeds the scribes and the Pharisees you will never enter wow what does that mean exceed how so let's look at the first example because Jesus starts to talk about the law he says you have heard that it was said to those of old you shall not murder where have we heard that before thou shalt not murder where did that come from have you heard that before ten commandments right okay yeah so that was the law you have heard you shall not murder and whoever murders will be liable to judgment but I say now Jesus is taking a stand but I say to you that every but I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable guilty to judgment whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council whoever says you fool will be liable to the hell of fire how is righteousness supposed to exceed scribes and Pharisees see true righteousness is not merely external true righteousness is the inner man it's our thoughts our motives our words see Jesus actually by his statement here makes obedience harder see when the command is do not murder

I'm pretty safe there right I mean I'm not tempted to murder people every day some days and I'm depraved enough that I could probably do that I hope I never do please but I feel pretty safe right adultery okay haven't done that I feel pretty safe there right okay stealing okay no I stole but you get the idea with those big ten I feel fairly safe now Jesus has kind of taken the boundary and made me closer to because if murder is now just getting angry I'm dead I'm dead that's harder I'm not safe or just insulting okay yeah might have done that once or twice or saying raka you fool by the way nobody knows what that word means raka it's probably equivalent to our our sign today where we flip people off it's probably like that in other words we don't know how they did that we know how we do that and future generations will read about flipping the bird what was that well you know what that means something like that see it's probably just something like that have we done that

[30:13] I'm not safe when Jesus gives the command what is it that the scribe is missing he's missing the purpose of the law he's missing the understanding that he's not able to keep the law what's the great command because that's the one I'm keeping and if I keep that one I keep all of them really you think you can keep that you think you can love the Lord your God with all of your heart with all of your soul with all of your strength all of your mind you think you're doing okay with that all the time well you know I mean well you know as long as it's on a curve so he exposes see now all of a sudden when Jesus says you've heard it was said not don't murder I say don't get angry now we're all falling short now we're all weak now we're all liable now we're all guilty and that's what this man has yet to understand he thinks he's okay with the law he loves the law but he doesn't yet understand that he's not able to keep it and that the purpose of the law is to reveal our sin and expose our weakness the purpose of the law is really to break us if we're honest with the law we're going to go say

God I haven't done that in fact I don't even come close to that and that's what the law is meant to do it's meant to pull back the curtains and say who are you really are you really one who loves the Lord with everything you have no I wish I was he's close to the kingdom this man because his theology his thinking is good he's on the right track but he's not yet humbled he does not yet see his need to be saved anybody here like that raise your hand no I'm just maybe you're close to the kingdom because you're tracking with the thinking you like what Jesus teaches and you understand that and you're close because why I'm agreeing with him but have you been broken have you been broken and shattered so that you can reach out for grace so let's look at the other questions we look first at who is this scribe now let's look at this question that he asks what matters most of all which commandment is first of everything now the way that it's phrased in the Greek it could mean which which is the greatest of all the commandments or it could mean which command is first of everything not just commands but first of everything which truth which essential of God is foremost of everything in other words what matters most of all what really matters what does it all boil down to okay so first of all which command he may be asking what kind of command what class of command not a particular individual command but what kind of command understand this the scribes had counted all the commandments that God has given and they came up with the number 613 can you imagine going through all okay there's one there's two 613 and then they broke those down further into 248 positive commands and 365 negative commands check the math see if that's right I don't know and then they were interested also in which commands were heavy weighty and which were light and the light ones doesn't mean you can dismiss them it just means they're just not as big they're not as massive so Jesus talked to them about that in Matthew 23 talked about the hypocrisy of the scribes and the

Pharisees who tithe the little things they tithe oh oh I got some nuts I gotta tithe on my nut I got some raisins I gotta tithe they're tithing on every tiny little scruple and then Jesus says but you miss you neglect the weightier parts of the law like justice and mercy so Jesus is identifying with them in terms of yeah there are some commands that are that are heavier tithing is one thing mercy is a whole nother league justice is a whole nother league okay and so that's what these scribes are doing they're working through what are the laws where do we kind of put them how can we systematize it right which ones are prior that lead to the other ones the other ones flow from these how can we think through daily life with that so what matters most of all what's your theology so what is first what is foremost notice in verse 31

Jesus adds to this he gives his answer of the great commandment and then in verse 31 he says the second is this you shall love your neighbor as yourself there is no other commandment greater than these so the question is what was first the scribe says which one is first Jesus says there's nothing greater than these they're the most essential they're the cream of the crop they're the most important and do you see what he does again instead of answering just the one particular question he gives a second answer do we tithe to Caesar or not yes and to God did I say tithe Caesar I'm sorry do we pay taxes yeah render to

Caesar and to God so Jesus adds a second thing there here again he's asked which one is the great commandment he gives that then he adds a second he adds a second and he says these two actually go hand in hand yes the first one is the most important loving God with all your heart soul mind strength loving your neighbor right there number two those two go hand in hand do you remember when the law was given there were how many tablets of stone two two two tablets have you ever looked at the ten commandments and see how they break down the first four relate to God alone no other gods see if I can remember no other gods no idols no taking his name in vain and remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy to the Lord and then they go so those are all vertical now they then the rest of them are horizontal then it's honor your father and mother don't kill don't steal don't commit adultery don't lie don't covet those are all this way so God's always thinking that way that we have responsibility this way to him and we also always have responsibility horizontally to one another that's just consistent with how God has established it we're not lone rangers just me and God we are never intended to be independent we're to be dependent on him and one another that's how he's created us and designed us both are great commands both summarize the law and the first one enables the second one because how can I love my neighbor unless I have a relationship a love relationship with my father so they go hand in hand so why this command

[39 : 04] Jesus picks this one from Deuteronomy 5 excuse me Deuteronomy 6 why is it loving God that is the greatest and most important command what is it about this command that makes it first because when God established a covenant with the nation Israel he gave them ten commands why isn't one of those the first one aren't those supposed to be the greatest commands in the highest morality all time and yet when Jesus is asked which is the greatest he doesn't even name one of those he doesn't say there shall be no other gods before me he doesn't say keep this habit he goes to something else which is greater than the ten commandments that might be scary for some people from a certain tradition see because all the other commands and most commands of those 613 most commands are showing us a limit they're showing us a boundary right here's the line don't cross this line stealing is the line don't cross that adultery is the line don't cross that killing is the line don't go across that a graven image that's a line don't cross that right so laws pretty much are kind of setting boundaries and limits if this happens this is what you shall do you shall repay justly that's what most laws are they're about boundaries and limits they're simply about what you can do and what you can't do when Jesus says the greatest command is to love the lord your god with all your heart soul mind strength he's going deeper he's going to something more internal that's not just outward action that's from my heart from my soul from my mind that's much deeper that's about relationship that's not simply about do's and don'ts that's about personal relationship with god to love him with all of my being now let's look at back at deuteronomy where Jesus cites this from and as Jesus recites it he recites the two parts there's two parts of this command there's the first part that talks about who god is here is real the lord is our god he is one that's the who and then there's the what what do you do you love him so let's go back and I want you to see the context from deuteronomy Jesus quotes from deuteronomy chapter 6 what is typically known to the Jew as the shema it's something that the pious every pious Jew would recite every morning and every night so when Jesus is citing this every Jew around him is going yep just said that this morning I'm going to say it tonight too shema oh Israel yeah yeah shema yisrael yahweh elah yahweh yahad that's as far as the Hebrew goes because I can't remember the with all your lavavka with all of your nefeshka with all of your ma'odka ma'odka so they're reciting that every morning every evening which is interesting somebody's already recognized that that's hard the other thing is Jesus is quoting from deuteronomy chapter 6 which comes after watch this deuteronomy chapter 5 where God gives the ten commandments a second time

first time god gave the ten commandments back in exodus right after they were redeemed from egypt right this is your ten words 40 years later deuteronomy wandered in the wilderness right for 40 years because they didn't have the faith to go into the promised land so 40 years so deuteronomy is 40 years later and now it's like okay now we're going in now it's time reminder here's the ten so chapter 5 deuteronomy 5 is the reminder of the ten those are the ten chapter 6 how am i going to do that how am i going to do those ten so that's what chapter 6 is about it's application listen to how god states it in deuteronomy 6 now this is the commandment the statutes and the rules that the lord your god commanded me to teach you that you may do them in the land to which you are going to possess it that you may fear the lord your god you and your son and your son's son by keeping all the statutes and his commandments which i command you all that days of your life and that your days may be long hear therefore o israel and be careful to do them that it may go well with you that you may multiply greatly as the lord the god of your fathers has promised you in a land flowing with milk and honey all preparation here we go now we come to what he quoted hear o israel the lord our god the lord is one you shall love the lord your god with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might and these words these words that i command you today shall be upon your heart internalized and you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house when you walk by the way when you lie down when you rise up you shall bind them as a sign on your head and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates in other words these words are comprehensive these words should be intermingled into all of your life when you lie down when you rise up you shall teach them and you shall just talk about them you shall bind them and you shall write them comprehensive in other words these words you shall love the

Lord your God are more important than the Ten Commandments because they give the way you can do the Ten Commandments they give you the motivation and the heartfelt way to keep those commandments how do I apply it you see if I love God I will keep the commands that's the reason Jesus said the same thing if you love me you'll keep my commands that wasn't a threat he's just saying the truth if you love me you'll keep my commands he's saying you better keep my commands he's saying no if you love me you won't have any trouble keeping my commands you'll keep my commands because you love me not because I have to it's my duty blah blah blah it's because no I love him I want to right and that's what God is getting at here if you keep this command you will fulfill all the law this command to love the

Lord your God is the sum of all but here's the question who can do it who is able how are we going to do that later in Deuteronomy God says this the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring so that you will love the Lord your God with all your soul that you may live in other words even in Deuteronomy even under the law there was the recognition that you can't keep that great command to love the Lord your God of all you got a heart problem how are you going to love!

him with! all your! when your heart's hardened how are you going to love him with all your heart when your heart is astray how are you going to love him with all your heart when your soul is in the dust how are you going to love him with all your mind when your mind is distorted how are you going to do that I need to work of God so the Lord your God will circumcise your heart he's going to!

[47 : 41] cut off that hardness he's going to peel away the selfishness he's going to take the hardness and make it soft I need God to work in me so I can love him so I can keep those commands that's the purpose of the law the purpose of the law was never to save us the purpose of law was yes to give us guidance to show us where those boundaries are we need that that's good for us to know because if I cross that boundary it's not going to go well for me so yeah the law is to protect me to guide me and the law is holy and righteous and just it's good it's but it's just a line it's just a line a good holy righteous line but that's all all it does to me is show me where I've stepped over that line it reveals my sin it exposes my inability even if

I'm so sincere and I really try hard I'm still going to get angry I'm still going to insult people the purpose of the law is to expose us and to produce brokenness to humble us to awaken us to shatter us if we read the law honestly we will say I haven't kept it nope broken that one broken that one broken that one I didn't want to help no I broke that one I was going to stop doing that one and I don't get it again and so it exposes us and ultimately to break us to humble us to put us to our knees and go oh God there's no hope for me I'm not good enough please be merciful remember that's how

David responded Psalm 51 right he got exposed you're the one that took Bathsheba you're the one that took her husband and killed him you're the one that lied about it you're the one that goes through the ten commands all the ones that he broke and David says I have nothing I have nothing I got!

I can't! I can't I can't I just need mercy that's what the law is going to do it's going to drive you to Jesus if you read it honest because as Paul tells us in Romans 3 there's no nobody's justified by the works of the law nobody can earn their way we are justified apart from the law we're justified by grace through faith in Christ who has kept the law for us as we read he fulfilled the law he accomplished it first one ever and then he trades us his righteousness for our sin it's a good deal so let me just close with the last question what matters most to you

I know what's supposed to you know what's supposed to matter most to you but what does matter most to you let the Lord in on that one kind of that is it Psalm 139 search me oh God yeah search me oh God see if there's anything in me is there some blind spot that I don't see is there something that I treasure more than you and I'm not even aware of it search me oh God because if you are a child of this father you're going to want to know that because you're going to love him with everything I got I want that to matter the most because when that matters the most I'm going to be on the right road I'm going to be on the right road so let us pray that God would circumcise our hearts so that we will truly love him and live let's pray father we thank you for the way your son always answers these questions with such eloquence and beauty we know oh father he is the son that he is perfect he was blameless he was without sin but father we also recognize as the gospels describe that he took on flesh and grew and learned and studied and thought and so thank you lord that we get exposed to that we see how he has not just knows the scriptures but has systematized have thought them through have connected dots help us to do that as well and examine our hearts oh father examine our hearts show us if we're close to the kingdom but not in it show us that and father for those who are in the kingdom again cleanse us and wash us lord that we might walk with you with more purity and with more honesty we pray in christ's name amen