

Sum of Commandments is Love

Let's pray. Oh Lord God, we do pray that You convict us of our sin as we have considered the Ten Commandments for a long time, let us recognize our need to love our neighbor. Let us recognize our need to fulfill all the commandments of the law which are summed up in "love your neighbor as yourself." As we consider this tonight, let us be convicted to have the zeal not just to hear these things, but to do these things. We ask this in Your Son's name, amen.

I think when I started, although it's been a year and a half ago, I started out talking about the reason you go through the Ten Commandments is that the Ten Commandments are about what does it mean to love. It is about the greatest commandment and the one that's like it from Matthew 22:37-40, "Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.'" This is the summary of all the Ten Commandments. We went through all these commandments one by one and we thought of some of the implications of all them, some of the behavior that should be driven because of them. I just wanted to close going through the Ten Commandments by reminding us that the thing that undergirds all the Ten Commandments, undergirds all the obedience to all the Ten Commandments is supposed to be love, that's what's required, is to love. In all the implications of all the Ten Commandments, they're just instructions on how to love God and how to love your neighbor. All the things we talked about and all the various commandments, we don't know how to love, we need God's instruction on how to love. Obviously I only covered a fraction of the implications for each law, but all those implications are required not to make you right with God because there is no law that can make you right with God, but if you want to love your neighbor perfectly, that's why you keep the implications. If you want to love God perfectly, that's why you keep the implications. Not because it makes you righteous but because you are trying to love your neighbor, you are trying to love God. That's why you study the Ten Commandments because if you think the natural man knows how to love, you are wrong. The natural man doesn't even know how to love himself. Look at the drunkard who thinks he is loving himself, but yet he wakes up in the gutter or the drug addict or the person who destroys his marriage because he commits adultery, or the person whose life is consumed by anger. As I list those traits certain people come to my mind because I've known people that fall into all those categories and all those people who would not obey the laws, in the end, they hated not just their neighbor, not just God, but they actually hated themselves as well. The law of God is about love and when we reject the law of God, it is always about hatred. We may not think it's hatred, we might think that it's loving, but we're wrong. God is the One who defines what is love and what is hatred. When we're dead in our sins and trespasses, when we have not entered into the rest of God it's easy to look at the law and think that if I just do these things I will be made right with God. When God gives you a new heart, when He gives you the ability to start esteeming others better than yourself, then what you want to know is how do I be a blessing? Not just how do I escape the wrath of God, that escape happens, you've entered into His rest, but the next thought is instead of being a curse to

my neighbor, how do I start being a blessing to my neighbor? This is part of being saved. I now love God so I want to love my neighbor and if I want to love my neighbor I need to learn how. If you think the world is going to teach you how to love your neighbor, it's not going to. Look at the destruction in our society because people want to say we know how to love our neighbor. No, we need God's word to know how to love our neighbor. Because the old man is still in us, it teaches us that we can't trust our own judgement about these things, we have to go to the Word of God. If we want to love God and love our neighbor, on these two commandments hang all the law and prophets. We have to go to the law and the prophets in order to understand these things. So I wanted to finish this series by preaching through Romans 13:8-14, because it also says what we're supposed to do about it. But before we start tackling those verses I want to consider the context. Romans 1-11 is setting the stage by declaring who God is and who we are, that God is sovereign over all things and that all things work together for good to those who are the called and those who love God according to His purpose. There's a reason why Israel falls, there's a reason why all these things happen and they're because God is good, not because He is failing, but because God is good and He is powerful and He is mighty. Then he continues on and it says, the response is to be a living sacrifice in 12:1-2, the response is to renew our minds. Then Paul spends a section saying, what does this look like? He talks about how we're supposed to use our gifts in the church, how we're supposed to love without hypocrisy and he describes what that looks like. Then he continues to work on and he works down to the point where he says you aren't the ones to do vengeance, vengeance is mine says the Lord. That's the end of Romans 12 and as he starts in Romans 13, he starts by describing that you don't get to do vengeance, vengeance is Mine and I've appointed avengers of My wrath. I have appointed civil magistrates to avenge My wrath, to constrain evil in the world. Then he says in Romans 13:7, "Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor." So he goes back to debt, we don't have the right and duty to do vengeance. That is God's, unless you are the civil magistrate. We do have the responsibility to pay our taxes, to pay our customs, to show fear and to show honor to those who are the civil magistrate. We owe the civil magistrate honor which sets up the context so let me read Romans 13:8-14, "Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." So verse 8 is, "Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law" Paul's been narrowing down the application to the civil magistrate then he gets to the application of the civil magistrate which is, here's what you owe the civil magistrate, you owe him taxes, you owe him customs, you owe him fear, you owe him honor, and then he expands it out and says this is our duty towards everyone, owe no one anything except to love one another. This means we do owe something

toward one another and the things that we owe to one another are in the law and they are love. How does a child love his parents? It's a real duty the child has to show honor to his parents. When Paul says to owe no one anything except to love one another, he's not saying to owe them money, he's saying to not accrue this obligation. The word there is 'opheiletay' and it really means that, it means to accrue a debt. It's don't sit there and not do your duty. The child who does not show honor to his parents, he's one who owes something because he has the duty of honor. The parents have a duty to train their children. Employees have a duty to be diligent for their employers. Employers have a duty to pay their employees and provide what they said they would provide for them. Each of us have duties towards one another, we have duties towards our neighbor, we have a responsibility to speak to our neighbor, a responsibility to rebuke our neighbor, a responsibility to how we speak to edify instead of tear down. We can go through all those Ten Commandments like we have over the last year and a half, and all these are real debts that we have because they are all part of love. So let's recognize that 'owe no one anything except to love one another', the commandment is to do all the things we have been talking about for the last year and a half. That's a real debt that we have. It's really easy to hear these things and say we should do that some time, or do this some time, but what Paul is saying is when you don't do that, you are accruing an obligation because we actually have an obligation to do these things. Whether it's preventing them from turning to idolatry, whether it's protecting other people's goods, all these things are a positive duty that God has given you that makes up love. So in other words, do your duty, don't just think of the things we have talked about in the Ten Commandments as something nice to do. Actually recognize that you owe them love and that is the definition of love. All the things that we talked about, and we're all going to fall short and we're all going to misinterpret, but let's not say that we're loving our neighbor when we won't take God's Word and His commandments and ask what God says love looks like. That's when we know we are loving our neighbor. We're all going to fall short of it, but if all we do is hear it and don't actually do it, if all we do is listen to the things and don't fulfill them, we're showing hatred towards our neighbor. We're accruing our debt because we have a real duty to the people around us. When you hear about the good Samaritan and Jesus Christ asked who was the good neighbor, it was the good Samaritan because he sees the person beaten on the road and he does something about it. The rest didn't treat him like a neighbor, the rest didn't love him like a neighbor. We actually have a positive duty to love him like a neighbor. So if you're disrespectful towards the avenger of God, the civil government, if you don't show them the respect that they deserve, that's a debt that you have created. We can create all kinds of debt, when you see someone in sin and you do nothing to deal with it, you have created a debt towards that person because the Bible says to rebuke them. If you see somebody's ox go astray or you see them lose their keys and you find the keys and you don't make an effort to return them, you owe them that effort. We owe one another things, that's what love looks like, it's that there is this creation of debt, not an arbitrary debt, but a debt that God has specified and that's what we have an obligation to fulfill. So if you're being disobedient to your parents, start obeying. If you're being lazy at work, be diligent. If you're failing to discipline your children, use the rod. Don't just think that these are things where, yeah I should love them better. Understand you are accruing a debt towards them and that debt frequently has to be paid. The employee that won't be diligent, he gets fired. The parent that won't use the rod, the child will end up running the home. God has told us how to love and there are real consequences when we fail to

obey God's commandments to love. The person who looks at women to lust after them, his wife is going to start looking at him and constantly questioning and his marriage will be undermined. As we think the person who lies all the time, people will stop believing him. When we don't fulfill our obligation, when we have that debt that we owe other people, it has real consequences just like if you owe a debt to the bank, there are real consequences and there are real consequences if you are a gossip. There are real consequences if you are looking at women to lust after them. There are real consequences if you are an angry man. There are real consequences if you turn to idolatry, you become blind to truth. There are real consequences so don't accrue a debt, don't accrue this debt that you owe to your neighbor that you owe towards God. Mark 7:9-13, "He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"—' (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.'" This is what the Pharisees would do, they wouldn't say there are things you should do, what they would do is redefine love. God says take care of your father and mother, they say instead of doing that, take the money and use it for the church. They are now hating their father and mother and they are hating the church. That hatred will have real consequences going forward. This is what the Pharisees did, they took the good commandment about God, that it was given by God about loving God and their neighbor, and they turned it and made it something else and they changed it so it was no longer love. Instead of considering what we owe, we start to pay things we don't owe. The person who tries to be the avenger of God's wrath, it's not the civil magistrate, he doesn't have that duty, the right to pay that debt, but he's chasing and doing that instead of shepherding his family which is his duty. Because the heart of man is rebellious, we all have a tendency to do things we haven't been commanded to do and not do the things that we have been commanded to do. So we accrue debts, I've seen this so often, Sunday school teachers who don't want to teach their own children, but they are quick to teach other people's children. They say they are loving God, but the answer is that they are accruing a debt. They have a real debt to their children and they will have to pay that, there will be consequences. Or the person who wants to just sit around and critique what others do rather than getting busy and doing it themselves, they are accruing a debt if they had a gift that God had given to the body and they weren't exercising that gift, they're accruing a debt. In the modern church we have this idea, and we talked about that this morning, if you're zealous enough about that one thing, people cover up all kinds of other sins. That's not how God looks at it. How God looks at it is those other sins are accruing a real debt of love towards people. The pastor who's caught in adultery and they say, 'But he's such a great preacher', sorry, but it doesn't work that way. The fact of the matter is that he is an adulterer. The fact of the matter is that he is in sin, he is unloving towards his wife, towards his family, towards the church, and it doesn't matter how much effort he has put into this other thing. So maybe he's exceeded people's expectations, he is still unloving and the church, the modern church tends to forget these things over and over and over again, but they shouldn't. They are real debts according to Paul's calculation. Too often we'll want to do something that we're not commanded to do instead of doing what we are commanded to do. Zeal can be covering up real sin, it can be covering up real failure. Paul is

warning us to make sure that we're not accruing obligations. What area of sin in your life, whether it's that you're not doing the things that you ought to do or you are doing things that you ought not to do, are you actually showing hatred towards your family? Are you actually showing hatred towards your church? Are you actually showing hatred towards your God? Don't look at the things you are doing and say that it wipes the slate clean, that's not how it works. What debts are you accruing because you have duties that you aren't fulfilling. What sins are you grasping onto so you aren't loving God and your neighbor as you ought to love them? Paul had talked about that we have a duty to be a living sacrifice, and this is what it means to be a living sacrifice, it's to say how do I love my neighbor instead of saying how do I love myself? We need to understand that God has given us commandments of things to do and we need to do those things, but in the end if we're doing it out of self-righteousness, if we're not doing it out of love for God and love for our neighbor, it's not helpful because all we're doing is puffing ourselves up rather than giving glory to God. Our debt to love one another can never be fully discharged, we don't even love ourselves as we ought to and we clearly don't love others as we're supposed to. We always have an obligation to become better at loving our neighbors. Do you recognize that's what it means to be more like Christ? Christ came and He loved His neighbors perfectly. 1 John 2:7-8, "Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard [b]from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining." So he writes a new commandment that's not a new commandment, it's the old commandment which was to love God and love your neighbor. The new commandment is walk as Christ walked. There is no contradiction between those commandments because the way Christ walked and the example that He gave, the thing that was true in Him and in you because the darkness is passing away and He is the true light, it's to do what Jesus Christ did which was to fulfill the law, all the implications of it and He did it all perfectly. So as we follow after Christ, the way we know we're growing in Christ, the way we know we're being conformed to the image of Christ is looking towards the law and asking if we are being faithful in loving our neighbor and God according to the definition given to us of what love is, which is the Ten Commandments and all the implications thereof. Jesus Christ didn't come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it, to do every part of it, every implication, every aspect of it. That's what Jesus Christ did, He did the fullness of the law, there was no part of the law that He was lacking in. He's the One who owed no man anything because He did it all, He loved His neighbor as Himself, He loves God the way He was supposed to love God, so He's the only one that never had a debt to anyone because He didn't owe anybody anything because He actually loved them with a perfect love. That's what we're supposed to be growing towards and maturing into. As we think about through these Ten Commandments and all these things we talked about, let's remember that, this isn't just some side thing, this isn't just about something that's interesting, this is about how we are supposed to love our neighbors and love our God. Jesus Christ was born under the law and He fulfilled the law perfectly which is why He can be a Savior, because He had no debt for Himself. We all have debts for ourselves, there's no way, it talks about Daniel, Job, and Noah, if they died, the only person that they could save was themselves. Not true for Jesus Christ because His righteousness was perfect. Our obligation to our Lord and Savior is not just to passively sit back and say, 'Well, God saved me so I don't need to worry about the judgement of God.' No, when

He saves us, He saves us to love and that love creates real obligations to strive, real obligations to work, real obligations to start with a heart's desire to do the things that God's law has said. Again, we're not going to do this perfectly, but recognize you have a duty to try. Be perfect as I am perfect is what God says, He doesn't say you will never be perfect so just hang it up and go do whatever you want. He says to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, He doesn't say you will never be perfect so why even try. We are going to stumble and fall, we are going to do things that are unloving, we are going to be tempted and we're going to enter into sin, but we need to start with recognizing our obligation is to love our neighbor and love our God which means we actually have to work at it. Not because this saves us, but because this is our response to being saved, this is what it looks like to become sanctified. That's how the law is fulfilled, the fulfillment of the law is to complete the intention of the law. The intention of the law is Christ gave it to us, the intention of the law, to love our neighbor and to love our God. Verses 9-10, "He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him." This verse is very clear, loving is not doing what feels right to you, loving is doing what God said. All are summed up in this saying, you shall love your neighbor as yourself, that's the summary of the law. Just because that's the summary of the law doesn't mean we can ignore what God said about the tongue, we can ignore what God said about adultery and theft. No, if it's summed up in that, it means every one of those parts is perfect because if any one of those parts is missing, then we're missing an aspect of love. In the New Testament era people say no longer is He the God of wrath, now He is the God of love. Paul goes back and says how do you love? You keep the same law that the 'God of wrath' gave us. No, that law was not to punish Israel, that law was to be a blessing to Israel. It's given to them after they're redeemed from slavery, not before. It's given to them when they're outside of Egypt, which is the picture of being released from slavery. That's when God gives that law, not to curse them but to bless them. God's commandments have always been about the right thing to do. Yes, they do convict of sin because they teach everyone that they fall short of the glory of God and they point to the need for a Savior, but they also instruct every government- civil, ecclesiastical, and familial what the standard should be. But the primary reason God has given His commandments is for Christians to know how to love. That is the primary purpose of the law because we need the instruction, this is how we renew our minds, this is how when we think of the loving thing to do, we go to Scripture and see that's actually not the loving thing to do because God says to do the opposite. That's how we decide what is the loving thing to do, by looking to the Word of God. The primary purpose of all the commandments is so that we can know what righteousness is, we can know what love is. Paul uses the commandments from the second table of the decalogue for his primary example, but in the end he includes all the commandments of God. If there is any other commandments, they are all summed up in loving your neighbor as yourself. Whether it's stopping someone from bowing down before other idols or putting them before yourself, all these are about loving your neighbor. So we need to be willing to say that following God's law is loving and rejecting God's law, even when emotionally it feels like you are being so caring is actually being careless. It's not caring for the person because it's rejecting the ideas that God's ways are better than man's ways. Rejecting God's law is hatred, it is the opposite of loving. For instance, now as a society we think it's loving to let every man worship according to his own conscience. Since when is it ok to let someone lead somebody else to idolatry? You know it's a false religion that leads to

hell, you're not loving somebody by allowing a mosque to be built in the neighborhood. You're not loving somebody who is going door to door and they're trying to pass our tracts for Jehovah's Witnesses and to not say anything and just say that's what they believe and you believe what you believe so you let them go and you let them mislead your neighbor. In the Old Testament, the law says they're supposed to be put to death. I'm not saying you go put them to death, you're not the civil magistrate, but do you think just letting them walk through the neighborhood is a loving act? It's not. We need to let God's Word dictate what love is and not our own thoughts. Then he ends with "love does no harm to a neighbor." It's easy to look at this and say the rebellious son who goes to this city, the parents then go, and they testify and they take him out and stone him, that that's doing harm to a neighbor. No, that's following God's law, that's not even doing harm to a neighbor because in the end what they're doing is they are giving him an opportunity to repent so even that is an act of love. It's way too easy for us to ignore what love really looks like. It's an act of love to do any of the law, it's not harming your neighbor, it's loving your neighbor. We know what the definition of harm is, the definition of harming your neighbor is to disobey the law of God. Now if you do it where you're trying to enforce the law of God, but you just want to rebuke your neighbor and rebuke your neighbor and you're doing it without love, you can harm your neighbor because you're not fulfilling the commandment the way God told you to fulfill the commandment. We need to recognize that the fulfillment of the commandment is to love, it is to do no harm. The commandments that God gave are not to harm people and it's really easy to say we know according to God's law I'm going to do that, but that would really hurt this or really hurt that. Let's get that concept out of our mind because God didn't give the law for how to harm your neighbor, He gave the law so that you would know how to love your neighbor. If what you're doing is to hurt them, then yes you can take God's commandments and twist them, but if you are fulfilling them in the way that Jesus Christ fulfilled them you're not doing harm to your neighbor even though it might look to them and feel to them like you are harming them. The person who confronts their neighbor in sin, their neighbor might think you are harming them, but the reality is that you are supposed to be trying to rescue them, that's love and that's what love looks like. We can misuse or use the commandments of God so that they end up being a curse rather than a blessing. Think of the Pharisees, Matthew 23:4, "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." We can try to use God's law to harm them, but if we're using it that way we've lost the literal meaning of the law, we're twisting the law because that's not why God gave the law. All of the laws, all the commandments are summed up in this- love your neighbor as yourself. They are all part of that additional problem that adds up with the total of loving your neighbor as yourself. We need to recognize our duty to renew our minds. That's why we did the Ten Commandment series, so we can work on renewing our mind. If all you do is see the things and not put them into practice, your mind is not going to be renewed. The renewing of the mind actually requires work, it actually requires saying that you're going to think about it this way rather than thinking about it that way. The way we love isn't a natural thing, it's part of the new man and not the old man. If we just think that our gut feeling is going to be right, we are thinking the old man is right. We need to put to death the old man, we need to train ourselves to think differently, to think what it looks like to not harm our neighbor. The answer is that it looks like obedience to God's law. You have to be very careful not to make the mistake to think that we can know how to love our

neighbor without renewing our minds according to the commandments of God. We need to be very careful not to think that love is some emotional feeling instead of actually saying, according to God how do I not do harm? Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law, all the applications that we've gone through about the law, it's all about how do you love your neighbor, it's all about avoiding lifting ourselves up above our neighbor. It's about the proper balance between caring for ourselves and harming our neighbor. That's why love is the fulfillment of the law, it's not at all separate from the commands. Instead it's how we learn to love, by understanding the commandments. Verses 11-13, " But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father." Don't be deceived, we were all asleep. When you're dead in your sins and trespasses, you are asleep from the things of God, the carnal man cannot understand the things of God so when God wakes us up, the waking up is now we are free from our bondage of sin so now we can actually start to obey the law of God. That's what it means to be awakened, that's what it means that the dead person who is dead in their sins and trespasses has no spiritual life, when God grants him that life, now it's time to wake up and to do the things that God commanded. We're all born sinners, we're all born in darkness and then God calls us to light. He is the light of the world, why is He the light of the world? Because He came and walked in perfect righteousness, because He also says the church is the light of the world. That's not because our righteousness is perfect, but we're shining forth the righteousness of God's ways, we're shining forth what true love is. Before our salvation all our thoughts were not about glorifying God as God, not about being thankful, but about pursuing our own lusts and desires, about making ourselves God or at least putting ourselves in the position where we get to rule and say this is God and this is not God. That's what it looks like to be dead in our sins and trespasses, but when God in His mercy awakens us, there's the picture in Ezekiel where he calls to the dead bones and they become alive, the first thing that you have to do when you become alive is wake up. Wake up! It's high time to be awake. The things in the law, the things that we've considered over this last year and a half, don't just think they are interesting things, but wake up and recognize this is your obligation to God now, this is your duty to God now. Not sometime in the distant future, this is your duty now. Don't act like you're still asleep, don't act like you aren't awake to the things of God because if you're not awake you are dead. Those are the two states and if you don't want to hear what God has to say, if you don't want to strive to obey the things of God, you should ask yourself if you are awake or if you are still asleep, if you're still dead. If God has awakened you, He says He will conform you to the image of His Son and His Son walked in perfect obedience to His law. The promise of Scripture is God will take that rebel and make him a servant. If your desire is not to serve God, to not do the things that God has commanded, you're still a rebel. That doesn't mean that we do this perfectly, but it means that we actually have a duty to work at it and Paul's term is that it's 'high time to wake out of sleep for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed'. Whenever you were saved, today you are closer to glorification, you are closer to meeting God face to face than you were when you were saved. How much more have you moved? How much have you progressed? You actually have a duty to move, you have a duty to progress. When He says that

now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed, I think that we should consider that in the theological term of glorification, the day when He will possess, when He will come and take His redeemed possession. That day is closer than it was when you first believed. Have you made progress? Have you changed? Are you striving to change? Are you acting like you're asleep or are you acting like you are awake? Those who God has awoken, they act like they are awake. They head in a direction and they get up and move. They don't say that maybe someday God will save them from sin, no that was supposed to already happen in Christ. Philippians 2:12-13, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." It's not like we do it by our own strength. We strive because Paul says to strive, God commands us to strive. If we're dead we're not going to strive. If we're still bound by our sin we're not going to be able to put off the sin, but none of that means that we don't have a duty to strive. That's what it means to be awake rather than to be in darkness. That's what it means to be in light rather than darkness. Are you still in darkness? Can you look and see what God has been about in your life? Can you look and see how your salvation is nearer, that you're more conformed to the image of Jesus Christ today than when you were saved? That you are actually walking in obedience and growing in righteousness and growing in obedience to God's law? That's the only way that you can measure whether you are growing in righteousness or not. It's the standard that defines what righteousness is. Are you growing in righteousness? Are you becoming more like Christ or do you still walk in darkness? Cast off those works of darkness. Don't think you can't help them, don't think that you just go, 'Well, I'm in this sin'. No, just do it, that's what Paul is saying; wake up, don't act like you are a slave to sin, get busy and go do the things to turn from sin, go do the thing so that you don't owe anybody anything except to love. Go love. Don't blame God for your sin, put on the armor of light, study God's Word, renew your mind, walk as a living sacrifice. This is what our actual duty is, it's not just to go as an interesting intellectual exercise about what the Ten Commandments are about. It's so we know how to apply this to our life so that we love our neighbor. Think about how much time you spent walking in darkness saying the night is far spent, the day is at hand. If God has saved you and you're in light now, walk like you are a creature of the light. Don't go back, don't say you're just going to ignore these laws. Instead say you are going to run towards the law of God because you want to know how to love, you want to know how to love God, you want to know how to love your neighbor. Don't say tomorrow you will stop sinning in such and such a way. The examples Paul gives are revelry, lewdness, and drunkenness. Nobody in this room, that I know of, has terrible problems with these things, but how about these last ones? Strife, would your wife ever say you have a quarrelsome attitude? That's walking as a child of darkness. Don't excuse yourself by just saying that's your nature. I've heard a lot of people say that they just have a short temper. You know that is sin, that's nothing else, that's just sin. We can redefine sin and make it sound like a characteristic. No, that's sin. The homosexuals too, they say it's a gene. No it's not, it's your behavior and it's sin. You don't have a short temper, you're just quick to sin. Walk as a child of the light, don't just act like you're bound in your sins. Act like you are free because if you have been freed in Christ you don't need to say that you don't have any choice and this is just my nature. God gave you a new nature, He broke the bonds of sin. Or envy, we ended up ending about covetousness. Do you want what other people have? Do you complain about what

God hasn't given you? Do you complain against your Creator? Do you grumble and complain and say you did all this work and you should have gotten a different increase than you got? Repent and trust God to be God. Covetousness is a serious sin. Just like I said on one side you have put no other gods before Me and the tenth commandment is the most obvious way that we put other gods before Him, where we treat Him like He's not the righteous God. We say we should have this or we want that instead of saying that God has what's best for me. Envy, that Paul ends with in this list, envy is the one that's so easy to break because it is covetousness. You have to know that if you don't have something that God said it wasn't good for you because who knows how to love perfectly? Jesus Christ demonstrated how to love perfectly on this earth, but also God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, all of them know how to love perfectly so if you don't have something the answer shouldn't be that God was wrong to not give it to you. The answer of faith is God gave you the right thing. Walk as a child of light rather than a child of darkness. Whatever sin you struggle with, don't put it off, deal with it. I've heard people talk about how they just have these sins that are just always there. That's really no excuse, that sounds like bondage. Repent, work at it, don't just think God will work in you sometimes. God works in you when you hear a sermon and you realize you need to repent and then you repent. That is how God works in you, you read God's Word and it says to repent and you turn and you stop doing it. That is how God works, it's not this magical and mystical thing. It's the same as faith, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Repentance comes because you were confronted in your sin by hearing God's Word and you say you are going to stop. That is by the strength of God, but it's you doing it at the same time, it's you saying that you need to stop. Whatever sin you struggle with today, turn from it. The Ten Commandments can do a great job of showing you your sin, but now that you have seen your sin don't continue to walk in it. The day of salvation is nearer today than it was yesterday. Don't waste anymore time. Verse 14, "I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one." This is the basic definition of how to walk as a creature of the light. It's not all about stopping doing things, it's also about actually doing them. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul uses the word that means to put on like a garment. God has already told us what it means to walk uprightly through His commandments and God has told us through all the law and the prophets what we're supposed to do. Then He gave us an example of what we're supposed to do with Jesus Christ. This is exactly what you're supposed to do so put on Christ, put on Christ means to say God's promise is that you will be conformed to the image of Christ so I'm going to start acting like Christ. As we've been going through Acts we get to Acts 22 and it continues, what we see is this example of Paul putting on Christ. He's being persecuted in the same way, he's being beaten the same way, he's being tried the same way and in all these ways we are seeing the example of what it looks like to put on Christ. It doesn't mean that we will put on Christ to the same extent as Paul did, but the place to start is the beginning. Put on Christ. Christ obeyed the law, put on Christ. Walk the way that Christ walked. He gave us a living example of walking in righteousness so act like Christ. Think of what He was willing to sacrifice, think of His testimony of love, think of His testimony of love towards God. He said to let this cup pass, but not My will, but Thine will be done. When He's sweating drops of blood, this is how He shows love for God more than love for Himself. He died so that people could be saved, this is how He showed love for His neighbor more than He

showed love for Himself. Put on the mind of Christ, put on the actions of Christ and the law of God tells us how to do that. He did not sin, no deceit was found in His mouth. He was a blessing to all those who He came in contact with, even those who rejected Him and would receive a greater condemnation because they would not hear Him. He gave them the opportunity to hear and have faith. I'm not all of a sudden becoming Arminia, but the reality is there is a general call and Jesus Christ gave the general call so the blood of the people of Judah were not on His hands. When Jesus Christ did it He didn't do it to harm His neighbor, He did it to love His neighbor. Put on Christ, speak the words of Christ. Even the rich young ruler who loved his possessions, after he said he kept every law of God, Jesus Christ says to sell all you have and give to the poor. It says Jesus loved him before He says the words that caused him to reject Christ and walk away. Love is saying the right things, love is not dependent upon the person's response. Put on Christ, walk the way Christ walked. Jesus loved the rich young ruler and He loved him by rebuking him for his idolatry. He loved him by saying the words that He knew that the man would not accept and that He would walk away, but that was still love. We need to understand God's definition of love and then we need to strive to do it. We need to strive to walk like Christ walked. Then Paul ends with, 'make no provision for the flesh'. The Greek word is 'pronoia'. 'Pro' means 'forward' and 'noia' means 'thought'. Making no provision for the flesh, we don't usually think of provision as pro vision. Making no provision for the flesh means don't look ahead and give yourself any opportunity to sin. A lot of our sins, there are sins that we will stumble into, there are temptations that will come from outside, but how many of our sins come because we looked ahead and we didn't remove that thing that was going to cause us to sin? That's making provision for the flesh. The person that decides there's a pretty girl so I'm going to walk this way instead of that way, that's making provision for the flesh. The person who says they will be a glutton if they eat too much food so they go to that restaurant, that's making provision for the flesh. The person who says they're going to go by this car lot because they really want that car, that's making provision for the flesh. That's setting yourself up to sin. On the one hand you're supposed to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and on the other hand you're supposed to intentionally direct your steps so that you walk in ways that don't trigger sin. This is really basic, but this is the end, without this the Ten Commandments and the teaching of them is useless if we're not actually going to obey them. If we're not going to direct our steps to avoid sin by walking in a way that would tempt us to sin, if we don't say we're going to walk in the way God would have me to walk, don't make any provision for the flesh. We've talked about things like fiction and I think fiction is such a provision for the flesh, it's such a temptation to want a different world than the one God has for us. Think about the books that you have, are those books leading you to sin or are those books leading you to righteousness? They are all doing one or the other. Look at your house, what are the things in your house that are set up that cause you to sin? What areas are there in your life that you have set up in such a way that they're automatic provision for the flesh? How many people actually need to have that internet accessible at every moment of the day? How many people have to be there with their cell phone looking at stuff all the time? It gives you such an opportunity to sin, make sure you're not making provision for the flesh when you're just using it as an excuse. You say you really need it for work and you use that as an excuse so you're set up so you can sin. Make no provision for the flesh. Examine where you go. James tells us to flee from lust. Look at the law of God and ask if you go to places where you're likely to obey the law of God or do you go to places that you are likely

to disobey the law of God. That's making provision for the flesh. Don't see how close you can come without falling. If you're seeing how close you can come without falling you are making provision for the flesh. Examine how you spend your time. Spending your time on lawful things might also be making provision for the flesh. Doing good things, if you do them to the extent that you don't do other things, it's good to donate to the church but they said it's corban, we won't care for our father and mother. It wasn't that it was bad to give money to the temple, it was bad to fail to care for their father and mother is what the sin was. Examine how you spend your time, examine how you spend your resources and make sure you're not doing something lawful to the extent that you fail to do other things that are required by the law. Don't say you're going to work twenty hours a week, but abandon your family then say that work is good, God says we should work. That's all true, but that doesn't give us an excuse. Make no provision for the flesh means that you're a living sacrifice, that's your reasonable service.

Applications:

1. Recognize your need to learn how to love. Don't think you know how to love. Don't presume that you know how to love, you have substituted godly love for emotion if you think you know how to love. You only know how to love to the extent that God has taught you through His Word how to love.
2. You need to practice love. Are you actually practicing love? Are you practicing putting the commandments into practice in your life? Are you a hearer and not a doer? If you're a hearer and not a doer you're not loving God because you're not treating Him as Lord. You're not hearing His commandments and saying you should do them, you're not loving God. You're unloving towards your neighbor if you hear His commands and don't do them because doing them is loving your neighbor. So if we hear God's commands and don't put them into practice we are loving neither God nor our neighbor. It's only when we put them into practice, are you working to put all these various outworkings of the Ten Commandments that we talked about, are you working to put them into practice in your life? James 4:17, "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" We've talked about a lot of things and that creates real obligation, the things that you have heard and to put them into practice.
3. Do you recognize your need to love your enemies? Not according to what society says about loving your enemies, which it says to love your enemies by letting them do anything that they want. Biblically loving your enemies is taking the law of God and righteously applying it to them, allowing them to sin against you is not doing what's best for your neighbor. Is your response when someone wrongs you to say that you're going to get your revenge or get your pound of flesh? Or is your response to ask how you can truly be a blessing to that person? That's the best way to be a blessing rather than a curse, that's what it looks like to love your enemies, you take the law of God and you rightly apply it. One of the basic functions is to start with the idea of esteeming your neighbor better than yourself, to esteem your enemy better than yourself rather than saying how you can get your revenge you say how can you be a blessing to that person who cursed me. How can I show love to this person who cursed me? How can I do no

harm to this person who cursed me? It's not a blessing to leave them dead in their sin and trespasses, it is a blessing to confront them in their sin, that's the greatest blessing that you can do, but if you're even doing that out of 'look how holy I am', you have turned that blessing into a curse. Make sure that you love your neighbors or make sure that you love your enemies. We will all encounter difficult people in our path and it's the law of God that tells us how we're supposed to treat them. So as we come to the end of the Ten Commandments let's remember to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Let me close us in prayer. Oh Lord God, we do thank You that You are a God who has given us instruction for we are a people who do need our minds renewed. We are a people who do need to understand what You have for us, to understand that Your ways are better than our ways and Your ways higher than our ways are. Lord, we pray that You sanctify us by teaching us how to walk in Your ways, that You sanctify us by giving us the strength, giving us the will, giving us the desire to turn from our sin and not just abiding in it, but act like we're free because if we are in Christ we are free indeed. Lord we pray that You bless the conversation after this message. We pray that You use it to convict us and use it in our knowledge and obedience to You. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, amen.