

Matthew Message 71

The weightier matters of the law

Matthew 23:16-24

16 “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ 17 You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? 18 And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ 19 You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20 So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. 21 And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. 22 And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. 24 You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

sinful obedience

Did you know that there can be such a thing as sinful obedience? Let me explain.

There once was a man who worked hard his whole life to build his dream home. He sacrificed and struggled and worked hard for many years and eventually built for himself a beautiful, but modest home that he cared for very well. He was especially proud of his gardens and landscaping- his beautiful lawn, his prized roses and perfect beds of flowers that adorned the home. They were the talk of the town.

Now this man had a son, and the son was a wicked, ignorant boy. He was boastful and proud, and did not understand what his father was like. One day the father came to the son and told the son that he was going a way for a week and leaving the son in charge of the home. And the son would be responsible for doing the chores and keeping the rules of the home and caring for things. And so he took his son around and showed him how to properly care for the yard, how to mow, how to weed and water the plants, how to prune them and trim them. When he was finished showing the young man, he wrote out a list of rules, directions to be followed all week. He told the boy that no one would be allowed in the house while he was away, and that the lawn must be cared for exactly as he said.

The next day the father left. And the boy looked at the tasks on the list. With a sigh, he thought “I better make sure and do all of these things”, not because he cared much about his father or the lawn, but because he didn’t want to be punished, and wanted to stay on his father’s good side, with the hopes of one day inheriting the house and all his father’s money. So off he went to do the things on the list. First, he saw that the rules said “mow the lawn once” during the week, and he dreaded it, so he thought “I will just go get it done now.” So, though the lawn had just been cut the day before, out he went with the mower and did exactly as his father showed him, cutting the lawn just like he was shown- and accomplishing nothing at all, since the grass was still short. When he was done, he carefully cleaned the mower and put it back in the shed.

“Now, for some fun” he thought. And he proceeded to call his friends and invite them all over to have a party. “None of you are allowed in the house” he told them when they arrived. So the party started, and everyone trampled around the yard, turning most of the grass to mud, and trampling all the flower beds, and breaking the rose bushes, making a complete mess of all of it. At the end of the night, everyone left, and outside the son went with his list. “Water flowers ten minutes” the list said, and out he went and held the hose over the broken, trampled flowers for ten minutes. “weed the front beds” was next, and off to the beds that were trampled into nothing but mud and mulch, and he sought diligently through the mud until he found some weeds, and pulled them all up. “Water the lawn” was next, and he turned on the sprinkler system and watered the mud that used to be a lawn. Then it was time to prune the roses, and so he took out the pruners and picked up the rose bush that had been ripped from the ground, and turned it this way and that, and pruned what he thought needed to be pruned, and threw the bush back on the ground.

Now this went on each day the father was gone. A party, more destruction of the yard, and at the end of the day the son going through the rituals on the list, doing exactly as was told him. And at the end of the week, the son stood on the porch with the list of rules carefully checked off- the flowers long dead, the lawn, where there was grass left overgrown, the roses uprooted and brown: yet he was proud that he had kept the rules and had carefully performed his duties exactly the way that his father had shown him. And true enough, he had kept the letter of the law. Each rule was kept.

It is a ridiculous story of course, but you see the point. You can obey, and not really obey at the same time. Think about this question- would any of us say that the son really kept the father’s rules?? Was the son obedient? We all see the problem- the son had no real idea at all of what the father’s rules were about, and **why** he was keeping them. He did not understand his father’s love for the yard, and he had no desire to protect it for the father. He in some sense kept the rules, but not for the right reasons, and in doing so neglected the most important thing of all- what was behind the rules, the reason FOR the rules. **Let me ask you- is your obedience to God like this?** A sinful obedience?

It is possible, you see, to keep rules **and yet still be disobedient**. To miss what is behind the rules, to miss the heart of the rule giver, and therefore to really not be pleasing to the rule giver at all in what you are doing. And this is, of course, what I fear might be the case for us. Here’s what I mean- this is what I want to know this morning- **why do you try and not sin?** What is **behind** your rule keeping? We are talking on Wednesday nights about fighting sin. And I know that some of you strive against sin. I would say all of you **in some sense** avoid doing some things at least, things that are labeled as “sin” or “wrong to do.” But **why??** What is your motive? Is it God’s motive, the right motive? Does your fight against sin **even have anything to do with God?**

Why do you attempt obedience? Are you in your attempts to do those things, **under the same condemnation that Jesus pronounces today in our text?** Are you like the boy in the story I just told? The Jews in our text **are just like that son**.

Again we find this morning the Leaders of the Jews being condemned by Christ. We have seen now for a few weeks that this is the case, that they who have rejected God are now being rejected themselves. We have seen that the Jews missed so much, that they have purposely rejected the kind of salvation that God has offered them- thinking that they did not need it. We saw last week that they missed the very purpose of the law God gave them. God had given them the law, in its first use, to do what? **To show them their need so that they would embrace the salvation He offered.** But instead they twisted the law into that which showed off, so they thought, their own goodness and worth. **The full weight of the law and what it said never really hit them.** They never really understood their condition before God. They would not admit, would not permit themselves to see, that they were desperately in need of help and grace. And I have been asking you- have we? Do we hear this talk of the first use of the law and think “yes, yes, I know that, can we now move on to some OTHER kind of salvation and learn about that? Perhaps we can talk about how to save me from some earthly discomfort I want to escape?” That’s the danger, that we assume we get it, just like the Jews. And this morning in these verses the woes against them continue, the harsh words from Christ condemning them. And today Jesus is explaining to them that all their so called obedience **is not really obedience at all. He is explaining to them that though they think themselves keepers of the law, all they have done is proven their blindness.** In fact, He calls them blind four times in these eight verses. What are they blind to? Like the boy in our story, they keep the rules, but, in reality, DON’T keep the rules. They do things in line with what the Father demands, but completely disobey the Father at the same time. Guys, **the Jews didn’t understand what the rules were really all about, and they didn’t obey them in light of what they were really all about, and so it was all worthless.**

We must not close our eyes to the fact that Jesus has strong, condemning words, perhaps stronger than anywhere else in Matthew’s gospel, for these men before us in our text today **who are attempting obedience but doing it in wrong ways for wrong reasons.** That should wake us up, guys. You all do works that are attempts at obedience. And so I am calling upon you right now- **examine your obedience, examine your avoidance of sin this morning- ask, why? why do you obey?**

Missing the weightier matters of the law

Look at the scribes and Pharisees in our text today, guys- do you understand what they are doing!? Let’s start by looking at the second half of the text, starting at verse 23. Jesus says to the crowds,

23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. 24 You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

Look at this, understand the foolishness and blindness here. The Pharisees are so concerned with keeping the rules, so it seems. To tithe is absolutely commanded in the law- though to tithe things like mint and dill and cumin is not mentioned- the tithe involved main crops, not herbs. But the Pharisees, so dead set on keeping the rules, go over and above **and even tithe their herbs.**

And notice that Jesus does not say this is wrong, or even that they should not do it. In fact, He says that they should NOT neglect doing this and the other things they do. But the problem is they have missed something else, something much more important. In trying to keep this part of the law- in great detail- I mean, can you see them sitting there counting out a tenth of their dill seeds and their mint and all their herbs?- but in doing this Jesus says they have **“neglected the weightier matters of the law.”** What does *that* mean? **Are there parts of the law that are “weightier?”** According to Jesus here, yes, **there are.** And He names them – things like justice and mercy and faithfulness.

So what does it mean that they are **weightier?** I think what Jesus means is this- there are parts of the law **that are reflections of exactly what God is-** things like justice and faith and mercy. And then there are parts of the law that are **ways we act in light of what God is like. And the parts of the law that are direct reflections of God are weightier than the parts that tell us what to do in light of who God is.** So, for instance- God is merciful. And so the law demands we do acts of mercy- for example, that farmers leave the edge of their fields un-harvested for the poor to eat. That’s a merciful thing, right? A rule based on the mercy of God and how God loves mercy. But if the farmer follows that law exactly, and leaves the edges of every field intact for the poor, and then goes to the city and walks past someone who is in need, and has the ability to help and doesn’t, has he really kept the law? And if that is his constant practice, to carefully leave the corners of his fields and then pass by and even ridicule those in need, is he a keeper of the law? Of course not. He has kept the practice of the law in a small detail, **but has neglected the weightier matter of the law.** He is missing the point of the law- the point of leaving the edges of his field for the poor- because God is merciful and loves mercy. He may have left the edges of his field un-harvested, perhaps even left MORE than the other farmers for the poor- and did it only because he wants to show how good he is at keeping the law. So, in some sense he did what the law said, but at the same time is utterly disobedient and has actually been more evil **by how he has attempted to keep the law.** It’s just like the boy in the story I told- not really understanding what is behind the law, the reason for it.

The weightier matters of the law are those things which are the reason for the laws in the first place. They are those things that closely reflect all that God is, and are the basis for the rest of the laws we are given. God says the same kind of thing in Micah, condemning the Jews for the same thing they are condemned for here in Matthew 23:

Micah 6:7-8

- 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”
- 8 He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

So listen to me- God is not simply requiring in the law that we keep the rules He spells out, **but that we do it for the right reasons, with a right and proper understanding and love for what is behind the law.** The weightier matters of the law, **these must be understood and loved and adopted as motives- without neglecting to do the other things as well!** So understand- it's not as if God is saying "just love mercy, and want to be merciful"- no, Jesus is saying "love mercy, and want to be merciful, **then don't neglect doing all the law says is merciful to do.**" THAT is what the law lays out for us, guys. That we would be obedient in our actions, and in our motives for them. And the Pharisees are missing the most important part, the motives! They are doing the things the law commands, **but for the wrong reasons, and neglecting to do the kind of good that flows from someone who has the right motives!** What Jesus says about it is perfect- they are straining out gnats and swallowing camels! Very concerned with this tiny, tiny wrong thing that they have to correct, but then ignoring this hug, horrible evil that they are tolerating!!

They are blind. **They don't see the truth about what is really most important.** And if we now turn to the first half of the text, this is what is confirmed. The first half of the text that we didn't go over yet confirms this, it shows that the reason that they neglect the weightier matters of the law is because **they are unable to even understand the things that ARE important to God.** He reveals this to them by pointing out something very foolish they say about making oaths. The Pharisees had rules for what made a promise- an oath- something that was binding, and what did not constitute a binding oath. But their reasons for why one oath was binding and another was not was ridiculous, and showed how they didn't understand God at all. He says this to them-

16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' 17 You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? 18 And you say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' 19 You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20 So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. 21 And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. 22 And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

This is pretty stupid if you think about it- the Jews are claiming that **the gifts on the altar are more important than the altar that makes the gifts important in the first place!** It means nothing, they say, to swear by the very altar of God, or the very temple of God- what is important is the gift on the altar! They seem blind, ridiculously blind, to the fact that the God who is at the heart of the temple is more important than any gift that they could swear by in the temple. **But God, and the things of God have no value to them-** what has value is the gold. What has value is the gift. What fools! **They are not seeing what is behind the gifts that make them important, the same thing they do with the law- they don't see what is behind the law that makes it important. The Jews think that the lesser items are the greater items, the lesser things are the more important things.** Make sure to give a tenth of your dill seed to God, but hate His very Messiah and seek your own glory. Swear by the gold in the temple, but the God of the temple? That means nothing! They are so foolish, so blind that He says of them in verse 17 "you blind fools", which could very easily be translated- "you blind morons."

What it comes down to is this- our text this morning is teaching us that the Jews don't see the God behind the temple and the gifts, and in the same way they don't see the God behind the law and the rules they keep.

Like the son in the story, they don't get what dad really wants, what really is important to Him. So all their law keeping, all the rule keeping, it's worthless.

Our failure to keep the weightier matters

Friends, understand- the law demands we must not only **understand** the "why" of the law, but **agree with it and live it out**. It is not enough to tithe a tenth of every bit of everything you own. It is not enough to do what the law says concerning mercy or love or kindness or justice- **you must have the right motive in your obedience. You must do it for the right reasons. You must be merciful, not just do a few acts of mercy. You must not neglect the weightier matters of the law!**

This is why I asked you to stop and think about WHY you avoid sin. Why **do** you avoid it? Why **do** you want to fight it? **Because you love mercy, you love faithfulness, you love justice and kindness and holiness?** Why do you fight sin? Why do you obey? **Why have you kept the law in the ways that you have kept the law? What was behind it?**

Listen, let's get real personal here. Can you please explain to me how it can be any real rule keeping, any real goodness or law keeping, if you twice this past week did something nice for someone else, but then the rest of the week retreated to your own comfort and didn't even consider those around you? **Doesn't that reveal that you don't really love mercy or kindness, even if you managed to make yourself do what the law said a few times? Doesn't your very behavior reveal that you do not adequately understand and love what is behind the law, even while you attempt to do the things of the law?** Don't shut down- think with me- let's continue to ask some hard questions here. How is it real obedience, real love for what is behind the law, if you sing a song in God's honor on Sunday, but then go the rest of the week and barely a thought of thanks is lifted in His direction? Is that real? What if you then go off and spend the week emerged in the world, in things that dishonor Him? Doesn't that reveal that you don't love the God behind the law, the law you say you keep for His honor? Is this not a trampling of His roses while you water them too? Are you not just like the son in the story I told? Please explain this to me. We go to church on Sunday, and use our mouths to pray or sing songs, and then the rest of the week from that same mouth comes things that ought not come out of it- curses, or lies, or harsh words or mean things, or gossip, or complaints? Why? On Sunday you go to church, think about God for an hour, and then the rest of the week not give a thought to Him? How is that anything good? Doesn't it reveal that there is no real understanding of what is behind the law? No doubt you fight to avoid sin- you fight your flesh, and you don't give in to this or that sin- but why? Why did you fight? Why did you do it? Did you at all, in any way, **think of Him and His honor as you fought sin? Did you want to obey because you love what God is, because you love God so much that you can't stand the thought of bringing dishonor to Him by your sinning??**

Even if that was *partially* your motive, you understand it was not **completely** your motive, right? There is so much of why you don't sin **that is garbage**- it is done because you want to avoid consequences or make yourself look good or boast in your obedience or some other such things. How ridiculous we look, guys, going about keeping this rule or that rule- rules that we pick that might be a bit easier for us to keep, or rules that we can fight and struggle to keep in order to make ourselves look good or feel good about ourselves- **and the whole time not really doing it for the right reasons, missing the God behind the law.**

And you know what? You aren't even good at the things that Pharisees did wrong! What I mean is, I couldn't even think of examples of things we spend ourselves on in the law that we are trying to be perfect about like the Pharisee's did! ***Where are we even attempting to do what the law commands?*** Things that Jesus said we should NOT neglect? Jesus is saying in this text, "don't do them for the wrong reasons- but don't neglect them either!" **And we fail on both counts.** You aren't counting your dill seeds, and you aren't caring about the weightier matters of the law either!! You are not caring about dad's lawn, and you aren't out there watering it after you ruin it either!

Friends, we have been poor keepers of the law in the small things, but more than this, what we see in light of this text today is this- **we have more so neglected the weightier matters of the law.** We have done our seldom, small, weak acts of law keeping ***for wrong reasons***, and so even our feeble attempts are nothing more than more sin and self-righteousness! We have neglected the weightier matters of the law. To love kindness, to love mercy, to love faithfulness, to love God with all that we are.

The answer is not to return to law keeping!

And God forbid any of you hear that and think this- "oh, I see- yes, you are right. I have not obeyed for the right reasons. I know what I need to go out and do- I need to this week keep the law for the right reasons and stop being a hypocrite!" Friend, ***do you think you can do that?*** Listen to me- to make the application of this passage "go and don't be like the Pharisees, but keep the weightier matters of the law so that you aren't a hypocrite" would be to do nothing more than tie a burden upon your back, not lift a finger to move it, and make you a child of hell, condemned with the doors of the kingdom shut in your face. ***You can't keep the smallest bit of the law, let alone the weightier matters of it!*** Please, please do not think that the answer is simply to go off and work more to not be like the Pharisees. Please see how impossible that is!

Let me show you- Let's go through your BEST day and see how you hold up by the standard that Jesus is laying out here before us. Let's say you get up, and the first sin you face that you want to defeat is the desire to sleep in and not read the word or pray. And let's say you fight it, and you get up, and you read the word. You battle through it, **and you do it.** You succeed, you win the battle. Then you eat, and get ready for your day, and you are tempted to ready yourself in such a way that exalts you- that is all about showing YOU off. And you see that, and you fight it, and you instead just rush through getting ready and head off. Again, victory. And you go to school or work or whatever you do, and as you get there you are almost instantly tempted to complain. But you fight it, and you overcome the temptation, and you don't do it. You instead thank God.

The day goes on, you leave, get home, and know you should do this or that favor for someone who asked, but you feel like resting on the couch. But you fight it, and you go and do what you think is the loving thing to do. Then you sit down for the night, and think about perhaps reading a good book to help you understand something about God or the Bible, and you are tempted to just give up on that and spend four hours watching movies, something you had made up your mind you were not going to do every night anymore. And you fight, and you read the book. Then you get ready for bed. **And tell me- if you had a day like that, where you faced all those temptations and defeated the sin, you would feel pretty good about that day, wouldn't you? That is probably a better day than most of us have normally- to even SEE the battles, let alone fight them and overcome them.** You would feel like a really good law keeper, I bet. **Yet, even on such a day, I wonder if you would realize- you are nothing more than a hypocrite and a law breaker that has neglected the weightier matters of the law.** No? Tell me, was it that in all those battles **you obeyed purely out of love for God and desire to see Him exalted?** Of course not. So under the law it's all worthless. The whole day was a day of **mixed motives**, where much of what you did was dirtied with a desire to exalt self and be self-righteous and prove to God and others and yourself how good you can be. Not only this, **but the whole day you completely failed to love God with all your heart and all your mind and all your strength and all your soul. Not for two seconds of the day did you qualify by the law's standards.** Not once where you walking in total victory over all sin. **You fought and fought- and you only succeeded in straining out the gnats of small tasks and swallowing the large camels of lack of love for God and others. The weightier matters of the law, the things that your Father really is concerned about- they were not the goal for you most of the day, nor did you love those weightier matters the way you ought.**

So how foolish would we be to think that we are going to leave here and the take away from this text is going to be "go be keepers of the weightier matters of the law!"

Driven to Christ, and works of faith

So what am I saying? That we are never going to do any good works at all, that we should all give up and there is no chance of doing anything pleasing to God? No, **that is not at all what I am saying.** You **can** do works that are pleasing to God. You can do good things. **And we must not remain like the Pharisees.** But the things that we will do that are good things, that are good works, they are not going to be works of law keeping, **they are going to be the works of faith.** **And I don't know if we understand that. I don't know if we even understand what a work of faith is.**

A work of faith, friends, is that which we do in obedience to the law *now written on our hearts*, out of a motive of love for God, all of which springs forth from our faith in Him and His promises in Christ, *and done in faith that we and the works are acceptable in Christ.*

Here's what I mean: This is what should happen when we encounter this text this morning. Instead of running out to go be better keepers of the weightier matters of the law than we have been, the first thing that should have happened to us this morning is that **the first use of the law should have fallen upon us**. We should have seen clearly, beyond a shadow of any doubt, that we are a people who at our best deserve hell. **We should have despaired at the thought of any of our own attempts to keep the law**. We should have looked upon our attempted obedience and see it for what it was- and we should have to some degree felt a fear, a moment of panic, an awareness of need- that on our own we stand condemned, that we are not good in and of ourselves, and that we need help. **We should have mourned our lack of real obedience, and found in ourselves a longing for real righteousness, for clean, pure righteousness: the kind of righteousness we don't seem able to produce. Was there anything at all like that in you this morning?**

And then, in light of that, we should we have done?! Friends, this is the most important part! In light of that, we should have and we must now turn and look at Christ! Brothers and sisters, after such a view of yourself under the law, look to Christ! Look to Christ, and before anything else realize this- **Jesus Christ was not like the Pharisees in His obedience! And He was not like you in your failed attempts at law keeping!** How beautiful is our Jesus in how *He obeyed!* You who this morning long to set your eyes on real obedience as you see the lack in yourself, turn to Christ and feast your eyes **on true law keeping!** We all know well that Jesus is the perfect keeper of the law. Jesus, as a man, kept the law and did it in the way it should be kept! And it is so wonderful, so beautiful to look upon Jesus in His life and see His obedience, and to realize that it is REAL obedience. In other words, Jesus is showing mercy not just because He was told to. He is not showing mercy just because He can get applause from the crowds if He does. He is not showing mercy to the sick and the poor and the sinners because He is scared of being punished if He doesn't or just to check it off a list. **He shows mercy because He truly and really loves mercy- He loves all that the Father is, and does all that Father does, and does it because of pure motives of love for the Father and others!** *Pure* motives, guys! Here is something really lovely to set our eyes on! To see real obedience. Kindness that is really kindness motivated out of a love for God, truth spoken by one whose heart loves truth, and loves to tell it! Here is faithfulness and purity, here is justice and humility, here is One who in all ways keeps the law perfectly and perfectly for the right reasons- He keeps the law with His eyes on the Father, with a love for the Father and a desire to exalt the Father. **How wonderful it is to know that there is One who did this!** And He did it perfectly- **never was there a moment that He was neglecting the weightier matters of the law. No, He loved the weightier matters, He embodied them, lived them out perfectly, displayed them beautifully!**

And as we look to Christ and see this perfect obedience, what should we then do? Brothers and sisters, daily as Christians we should be undone by the law as we have seen today, and then look to Christ and see His obedience, and then what we should do is run to Him, and run to this, His obedience, and understand it is what we need- and that it is being offered to us that it might be our obedience as well!

The law kept, all of it, the weightiest matters of it loved perfectly and carried out, *must be found to be credited to YOU.*

So let us understand that, as we think on Jesus' perfect obedience as a man, that He came and lived out that obedience **so that it COULD be credited to your account.** He was not just an example for you to follow. For the Christian, His perfect, beautiful obedience is now YOUR perfect obedience before God, and God sees it as yours! For those of you who have come to Christ, He was your substitute, He took your place and did for you **what you could not do and what the Pharisees could not do and what no man could do.** His goodness, that perfect goodness we just described, is credited to you, **and you are now free.** What wonderful news! What beautiful truths these are! This righteousness is mine!
Through the work of Christ, and my trust in that work for me.

So before you run to asking "but don't I have to keep the weightier matters of the law now!" - please stop and understand- *you already did.* You kept them perfectly- in Christ.

"So I just go and sin, then, and not care about the weightier matters of the law?" People will always try and abuse the gospel that way. **But the truth is, no one who has really come to Christ in this way would ever even consider such a thing!** They will long to now do the good works that are written on their hearts- the weightier matters of the law are now written on our hearts, friends! We now long to do these things, though we still struggle with indwelling sin and are not able yet to perfectly do them.

But this is what you must remember- seeing what Christ did for me, seeing this finished work for me will birth love for God in my heart. Seeing the depth of forgiveness offered me will produce love for Him. And from that love will spring good works- the works of faith. All real obedience springs out of love- Jesus said the one who loves Him **will obey His commands.** So, as you set your eyes on the finished work of Christ for you, you will love Him, and you will do good works!

"But won't they still be tainted, these works? Won't we still have mixed motives, and impure ideas, and won't we still fail so badly to keep the weightier matters of the law perfectly?" **Yes.** Yes, your works will be tainted. **But they will be the works of faith- works done in faith.** What faith? What does that mean? This is what I want you to see- when I say we now go and do the works of faith what I mean is this- we will go and we will, out of love for God- sometimes mixed with other motives, sometimes seemingly forced, sometimes seemingly broken and mixed with sin- but we will go and we will do works because we love Him- and the whole time we do them they will be done **in faith- faith in the fact that though they be unpolished works, tainted and dirty works lifted up from soiled hands, works that don't look all that good or win any approval or notice, they will be accepted works, pleasing works, from children who are pleasing in His sight- not because the works are good in themselves, and not because the children are good in themselves, but because all of it, the works and the children, are under the blood of Jesus Christ.** We will work, and we will LIVE, believing that we are pleasing to God not because of anything other than the blood of Christ. **It is that act of faith that constitutes all our real obedience now.**

To say- I see how incomplete I still am, and I grieve it and fight sin and long for more holiness- but all the while I know I am completely His, and no word can be spoken against me to accuse me at all, ever again.

And now what we do is the greatest work of faith there is- we rest. Go rest friends- I mean rest *from your attempts at law keeping.* **Your work now is to trust in His righteousness as being for you.** Your work now is to rest in His finished work, to know, and believe, and rejoice in the truth that **it is finished.** Otherwise you insult the very work of Christ, and miss the whole point of why He came! Do not run off to get right your doing the weightier matters of the law, run off to rest from all law keeping, and run off to cling to Christ who kept the law for you. **What love will spring from your heart when you think on these things! And from that love will flow all real obedience, and from that alone.**