

The Beatitudes Blessed Are The Pure In Heart Matthew 5:8

Introduction

Let's begin by reading the blessings once again from Matthew Chapter 5. And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated, His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:
"Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed *are* those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Blessed *are* the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. Blessed *are* the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy."
(Matthew 5:1-7 NKJV)

Today our lesson comes from verse 8 – Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. It is relatively easy to change the way we appear outside without a real change of heart inside. For the most part, being religious is mostly about external appearances, but true Christianity is about transforming a person's heart and purifying their life.

Some people will go to great lengths to try and change their behavior and even seem to succeed for awhile. But then, out of the blue, they revert to their old ways, revealing a really unchanged heart. Outward appearances may give us a picture of the human will, but only God knows your true motives.

The truth is, the cost of a pure heart is too high a price for many to pay. We cannot change, reform, or improve our human hearts to become like God's heart. The human heart is utterly corrupt, and any attempt at "renovating" it is a waste of time. The prophet Jeremiah wrote, "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" (*Jeremiah 17:9*).

"...the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (*Genesis 6:5*).

Every religion in the world is about people changing themselves. But the reality is that no amount of self-help can change the human heart. The only way our human heart can change is for God to give us a new one! What we're really talking about today is a heart transplant! The old heart cannot be reformed, converted, or improved.

Real change can only happen when the old heart is replaced with a brand new one. The prophet Ezekiel wrote, "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God." (*Ezekiel 11:19-20 NKJV*)

I. A Pure Heart

The first thing we observe in this beatitude is that Jesus is concerned with our hearts. It is not enough to clean up your act on the outside. Jesus said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also." (Matthew 23:25-26 NKJV)

God's goal is not to reform the manners of society but to change the hearts of sinners. The Bible used the word heart to describe who you are. It's the person you are in the secrecy of your thoughts and feelings when no one knows but God. At the core of your being, what you are may be invisible to others, but it's not to God!

Everything about you is visible to God. But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the* LORD does not *see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7 NKJV)

From the heart flow all the issues of life. Jesus said, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." (Matthew 15:18-19 NKJV)

Speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus said, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by *its* fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." (Matthew 12:33-34 NKJV)

The heart is physically necessary to a quality life; it is utterly crucial spiritually to eternal life. What we are in the deep, private recesses of our lives is what God cares about most. Jesus did not come into the world because we have some bad habits that need to be broken. Jesus came into the world because we have corrupt and evil hearts that, without His help, are eternally lost.

When Jesus uses the phrase 'pure in heart, he's not talking about the physical organ that pumps blood through your body. Some scholars refer to the heart as the source of our emotions and affections. Others refer to the heart as the whole of our being. The Hebrew Torah describes the heart in the great commandment "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." – and then defines what it means by heart – "your soul, your mind and your strength."

- The soul represents the spiritual part of a person.
- The mind represents the mental part of a person.
- The strength represents the physical part of a person.

The commandment was to love God with your whole being – spiritually, mentally, and physically. New Testament Greek used these same concepts but described them a bit differently. To the Greek:

- The soul was the "psyche," which meant 'breath of life.' The soul was what animated or gave life and movement to the body. It was the source of the mind, will, and emotions.
- The spirit, or "pneuma," meant 'breath of God.' The spirit is what connects us spiritually to God.
- The body was the physical house of flesh.

These terms are often used interchangeably; however, even if the Greek and Hebrew concepts are mingled throughout the New Testament, we still have an idea of what Jesus taught. In essence, what Jesus teaches is that every person has a will and can decide between doing what honors God in the spiritual realm or what exalts man in the physical realm. According to Jesus, a person's own decisions will ultimately determine where they will go and what they will do.

Information that comes from our emotional or rational parts of the mind will be accepted or rejected by the decision of our will based upon an inner motivation. Unfortunately, many people are very inconsistent and can't make up their minds or follow through on their decisions. Have you ever made a decision completely convinced that it was the best one based on the information you had, only to cancel it a later in favor of something else more convenient? Sadly, fewer than five percent of people who claim to give their lives to Christ follow through on their commitment. Their emotions may be touched or their minds challenged, but the heart has not changed. Their inner motivation remains the same.

The pure in heart come to God in genuine repentance, and it becomes their will to do what God wills. Jesus sets the example for us. He said it over and over, "I am come to do the will of him that sent me, and my meat is to do the will of my Father." Even at the end of His life, Jesus told His Father, "Not my will but Thine be done."

A person committed to Christ and motivated by the Holy Spirit is not doubleminded, unstable, or deceptive. For the believer, our inner motivation comes from the life in Christ through the breath of the Holy Spirit. James writes, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded." ([James 4:8 NKJV](#))

Christ purifies your heart and helps you do the right things for the right reasons. David prays the prayer of the pure in heart in Psalm 51 when he cries out, "Create in me a clean heart O God and renew a right spirit within me." The cleansing and purifying of your life is more than a soft, sentimental wish. It is something that transforms your desires and inner motivation. It causes you to give up a life focused upon self-centered desires to embrace a life dedicated to living the Christ-life.

Peter says that Christ's "divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1:3-4 NKJV)

Christ promises the pure in heart will see God!

II. Seeing God

To see God means to be allowed into his presence and to see from God's perspective. After the plague of darkness on Egypt, Pharaoh lashed out at Moses with these words, "Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face, you shall die!" So Moses said, "You have spoken well. I will never see your face again." (Exodus 10:28-29 NKJV)

When a king says, "You will never see my face again," he means, "I will never grant you admission into my presence again." When you call the doctor's office and ask, "Can I see the doctor today?" You don't mean, Can I get a look at him. Or, Can I see a picture of him? You mean, "Can I get an appointment with him?"

Seeing God means is being admitted to his presence. Seeing God means being awestruck by his glory and holiness. When God confronted Job in the whirlwind, Job said, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor *myself*, And repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:5-6 NKJV)

Most of our spiritual sight comes through the Word of God. The images we see reflect God's glory. We hear echoes and reverberations of his voice in all of creation. But there will come a day when God himself will dwell among us. His glory will no longer be inferred from lightning and mountains and roaring seas and constellations of stars. Instead, our experience of him will be direct. His glory will be the very light in which we move.

When John wrote about the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:23, he said, "But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light." (Revelation 21:22-23 NKJV)

Seeing God means being awestruck by a direct experience of his glory, but it also means being comforted by his grace. Again and again, the psalmists cry out that God does not hide his face from them. In Psalm 27, David says, "Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice! Have mercy also upon me, and answer me. *When You said*, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek." Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation." (Psalms 27:7-9 NKJV)

Have you ever prayed that prayer? Seeking the face of God is a comforting experience. When God shows His face and His glory shines upon us, we are helped. If he turns his face away, we are in deep trouble.

The pure in heart have no problem seeing God at work in their lives. That vision of God causes a definite shift in the direction of our priorities. God's interests become our interests. Our former lifestyle loses its fascination, and we gain an extraordinary sensitivity to the voice of the Holy Spirit. God's ways become our ways, and we acquire an intense sense of spiritual purpose.

The pure in heart can also see the work of Christ in others. We begin to see the potential Christ sees in them. The pure in heart see Jesus as much more than a historical figure or creed or doctrine or religious experience. They see Jesus as their savior, and living Lord, and personal friend. They also see the Holy Spirit as Comforter and Counselor and constant Companion.

The pure in heart have a view of God in all of the Earth. They see as David did, "The earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein." (Psalms 24:1 NKJV)

And that, "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork." (Psalms 19:1 NKJV)

The pure in heart see God in His word – both spoken and written. Jesus said, " *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*" (John 6:63 NKJV)

The pure in heart see Jesus as the living word of God, the spiritual manna from heaven. – The Bread of Life!

When Jesus promises the reward of "seeing God," it is the beginning of a whole new perspective and view of life. It is a view that stretches beyond the material world to the eternal world. It is a view that gives us an eternal sense of blessing.

III. The Blessing

The blessing is that your soul possesses a joy that is God-breathed. We are blessed because the Almighty God has touched our lives with His goodness.

Psalms 144 says, 'Happy is the people whose God is the Lord', and Psalm 116 says that "God is the soul's rest (Psalm 116: 7)."

When your soul connects with God, you are truly blessed! The blessing of God makes you better than you could ever be, even with your very best efforts. Proverbs 13:19 says, "A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul." The Apostle Peter says, "Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls."

The blessing of God fills your soul with the abundance of God's presence. It quenches the thirst of the soul. Psalm 36 says the soul bathes itself in the water of life. The blessing of God provides variety that keeps you from boredom. Colossians 1:19 says that in God, there is a fullness that satisfies the soul.

In God, there is a blessing and goodness that delights the soul even during the trials of life, and the joy in God's blessing is perfect. The blessing of God has eternity stamped on it. It is fixed. It needs no changes or alterations.

The Bible says, "Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord."

Conclusion

Who are the pure in heart? Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Only those who have surrendered their hearts completely to Jesus that he may reign in them alone. Only those whose hearts are undefiled by their own evil—and by their own virtues too." (*Dietrich Bonhoeffer The Cost of Discipleship*)

In his book, 'Sermon on the Mount, Clarence Jordan wrote, ' "...when [people] attempt to live a double life spiritually, that is, to appear pure on the outside but are not pure in the heart, they are anything but blessed. Their conflicting loyalties make them wretched, confused, tense. And having to keep their eyes on two masters at once makes them cross-eyed, and their vision is so blurred that neither image is clear.

And Jim Forest wrote in 'The Ladder of the Beatitudes,' "Opposing purity of heart is lust of any kind—for wealth, for recognition, for vengeance, for sexual access to others—whether indulged through action or imagination.

A pure heart loves God with the whole heart - your soul, mind, and strength. Our love is not divided. It has no rival.

Simon Tugwell wrote, "There is an interaction between seeing and being. The kind of person you are affects the kind of world that you see - And conversely, what you see affects what you are." (*Simon Tugwell, The Beatitudes*)

What do we need to search for when God is right before our very eyes? What would satisfy a person who will not be satisfied with God? The pure in heart are blessed because they see God. To see God is to recognize God and be able to stand before him, knowing you are accepted in his presence.

Do you have a pure heart? Because "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."