

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: Blessed Are The Pure In Heart - Part 2

Text: Matthew 5:8

Introduction: Purity of heart is more than sincerity. A motive can be sincere yet lead to worthless and sinful things, cf Proverbs 23:7; 4:23. Jesus said that out of the heart come "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders." Though we may be extremely religious and constantly engaged in doing good things, we cannot please God unless our hearts are right with Him.¹

Men have a tendency to set opposite standards of what God has set. The Pharisee who thanked God he was not like the publican, used his own filthy standards to set the bar, Luke 18:11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector." When we begin to think of ourselves as pure, righteous and sinless on our own merits, we no longer view God as holy, but like us!

Application #1 - We can all tend to feel better about ourselves when we see others doing worse things. Doing this constantly means you're looking for those worse than you to set the standard. And it goes downhill from there.

Point 1 - God's standard for men...is Himself. David asks in Psalms 24:3-4 "Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, And has not sworn deceitfully." It is the impurity of the heart that separates men from God. Isaiah 59:1-2 "Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." Only purity of heart through the reconciliation of Jesus can bring men to reconciliation to God. 2 Corinthians 5:18a "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ..."

Many have head religion which trusts in creeds, knowledge and hand religion which trusts in good works. The only true religion is that is based upon God's imputation of righteousness to us. When we believe, God imputes to us not only His righteousness, but also His purity, 2 Corinthians 5:21 "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." The fact is we aren't just saved for heavenly purity, we are saved to be pure here, to honor Him, to live a holy life.

Point 2 - The Way To Holiness. It's not being isolated in a remote wilderness. It's not a second work of grace that somehow makes you immune to ever sinning. God always provides for what He demands. First, we must realize that we are unable to live a single holy moment without the

¹ The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; Matthew 1-7, p. 205

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Lord's help and guidance.² Proverbs 20:9 "Who can say, I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?" The Ethiopian cannot change his skin nor the leopard his spots. Cleaning begins when we recognize we are weak, helpless and cannot do this on our own. Second, we must stay in God's word.³ John 15:3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." We must also be controlled by the Spirit, "Walk in the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

Point 3 - The Result Of Holiness And Purity. The result and hope of this text is "they shall see God." Minds cannot wrap around such an image. The Greek is in the future indicative tense and the middle voice. A more literal translation would be "they shall continuously seeing God for themselves."⁴

It's only "they" the ones who have a pure heart, who shall see God. When we are saved, we begin to see things differently. We act differently. We respond differently. We live differently. The Amazing Grace lyrics ring true.

Purity of the heart cleanses the eyes of the soul so God becomes visible. In other words, we begin to see God in everything. In life's struggles, in nature and in His working out things under the sun. We see God in the midst of suffering, trials and tribulations. It has been said that we truly begin to live in the presence of God. We have new spiritual eyes.

To see God was the greatest hope of Old Testament saints. Psalms 42:1 "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You." Job 42:5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You." Purity of heart cleanses the eye of the soul so that God becomes visible. However, a sign of an impure heart is arrogance, Revelation 3:17 "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing, and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." Pleasure in sin, 2 Timothy 3:4 "treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." Those who belong to God and seek for purity exchange all these worthless pleasures and pride for the glory of seeing God clearly.

The greatest sight of all is when we lay hold of the glory of God in person. As Matthew Henry comments, "It is the perfection of the soul's happiness to see God; seeing him, as we may by faith in our present state, is a heaven upon earth; and seeing him as we shall in the future state, in the heaven of heaven." 1 John 3:2 "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 13:12 "For now we see in a mirror dimly,

² The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; Matthew 1-7, p. 207

³ The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; Matthew 1-7, p. 207

⁴ The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; Matthew 1-7, p. 207

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but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.” And to see Him forever, face to face, that’s happiness.

A final quote from Matthew Henry “*The happiness of seeing God is promised to those, and those only, who are pure in heart. None but the pure are capable of seeing God, nor would it be a felicity to the impure. What pleasure could an un-sanctified soul take in the vision of a holy God? As he cannot endure to look upon their iniquity, so they cannot endure to look upon his purity.*”

Finally, “*When I in righteousness at last, thy glorious face shall see; when all the weary night has passed, and I awake to thee; to view the glories that abide, then and only then will I be satisfied.*”⁵

Application: Are you pure in heart? Do you seek to be like God? In actions? In deeds?

⁵ The Gospel of Matthew; William Hendriksen, Grand Rapids, Baker, 1973, p. 278