



World Christian Fellowship

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Beatitude 06- Blessed are Merciful.

Matthew 5:3-10, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. ⁷Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

The Beatitude’s Structure

To answer this, it helps to see the structure of the Beatitudes.

There are eight Beatitudes.

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit.
2. Blessed are they that mourn.
3. Blessed are the meek
4. Blessed are hunger and thirst after righteousness.

5. Blessed are the merciful
6. Blessed are the pure in heart.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers.
8. Blessed are persecuted for righteousness.

The first four Beatitudes describe the broken, grieving, quiet person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness.

The second four Beatitudes describe the merciful, pure peacemaker who gets persecuted for his righteousness.

Overflowing from what they have received from the Lord.

1. Who are we?

The heart is what you are, in the secrecy of your thought and feeling, when nobody knows but God.

What you are at the invisible root matters as much to God as what you are at the visible?

1 Samuel 16:7, *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."*

Proverbs 4:23, *Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.*

From the heart are all the issues of life.

What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart.

Matthew 15:18–19, *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. ¹⁹For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*

Matthew 12:33–34, *“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. ³⁴Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

So, the heart is utterly crucial to Jesus. What we are in the deep, private recesses of our lives is what he cares about most. Jesus did not come into the world simply because we have some bad habits that need to be broken. He came into the world because we have such dirty hearts that need to be purified.

David asks this question.

Psalms 24:3, *Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?*

David also answers this question for us.

Psalms 24:4, *He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.*

2. What is purity of heart?

Most of the time, when the Bible speaks of “the heart”, it is not talking about the physical organ that pumps the blood through your system. It is speaking of your inner self: your spirit, your soul, your mind.

Jeremiah 17:10, *I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.*

Heart and mind are parallels, which tells us they are synonyms. So, when Jesus is talking about “heart” here, He means your inner self not physical body.

The word “pure” here is the Greek “*katharos*”, which means “clean.”

In the Law, God commanded His priests that the temple and people of God were not to be “contaminated” with animals or other things that had been devoted to other gods. If the

people of Israel came in contact with anything “unclean”, they had to be “cleansed” before they could worship God.

So, they had rituals of “washing” for themselves or their things, to make them suitable for God.

God commanded them to carry out these rituals – but unfortunately, like we often do, many of the people took these things too far.

By the time Jesus came in the New Testament, the religious group called the Pharisees were totally consumed with the issue of keeping themselves outwardly “clean”. They would wash every cup and basin, and wash their hands ceremonially, and go through all kinds of ceremonial “washings” to keep clean.

Mark 7:1-7, *Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. ²Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. ³For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. ⁴When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. ⁵Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders,*

but eat bread with unwashed hands?” “He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honours Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. ’And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

Do you see what Jesus was saying here?

Jesus was reprimanding them for being ritualistic about their outward “cleansing.” They are SO concerned with these “traditions” of outward cleansing.

It is not the outward cleansing you should be concerned about, but the cleanness of your heart.

So, it contrasts with that religious mindset.

Matthew 5:8, *“Blessed are the pure in HEART ...”*.

Jesus wanted them to be concerned about the INWARD purity of their heart.

This was not “new”!

God had always looked at our heart.

Jeremiah 17:10, *I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.*

God was saying, I care about your heart and mind, not just your body and your outward appearance.

3. What is it to have pure heart?

Living for the purpose of God, having a single-minded devotion to God.

God wanted His people to know that He is a holy God, and He expects His people to live life according to the standard He has set for them.

Exodus 31:13, *“Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.*”

Leviticus 10:3, *And Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the Lord spoke, saying: ‘By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.’” So Aaron held his peace.*

Leviticus 11:44-45, *For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth.* ⁴⁵*For I am the Lord who brings*

you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

Also, by making the arbitrary distinction between clean and unclean, God wanted His people to know that He was God. God made the rules, and they were to live by these rules.

Matthew 4:4, *But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "*

It is not for us to understand everything God does, but it is for us to obey. Moses, while reiterating the law, makes a very significant comment.

Deuteronomy 29:29, *"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

From the very beginning, it has not been the matter of outward observance of some rules and regulations; it has been the attitude of the heart toward God that was in focus.

Deuteronomy 10:16, *Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.*

1 Samuel 15:22, *So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.*

It is easier to follow rules and forget the matter of the heart. We are more careful to keep everything clean that is seen by others and forget about the things that only God can see. If my hands are muddy, nobody would want to shake hands with me, so I better keep them clean.

If I were wearing a dirty shirt this morning, you would give more attention to my shirt and not hear what I am saying. We want to keep up appearances before man, but we forget about keeping straight before God.

That is why Jesus' harshest and most scathing rebuke was reserved for the scribes and Pharisees, who thought themselves the purest of all people. They were extremely careful to keep their outward appearance clean before men, but they did not worry about their relationship with God. Jesus told them:

To have a pure heart means to have a heart that is committed to living a life that is totally pleasing to God.

1 Chronicles 28:9, *"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a*

willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.

Psalms 139:23-24, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*

So, a pure heart means living by the rules of God, living a life that is pleasing to God.

What God can do and cannot do?

There are certain physical or natural laws that man cannot break without consequences, but God can.

For example, you cannot put your hand in the fire and not get burned. That is the law of thermodynamics. Also, you must have lots of food to feed five thousand people. But God can break these laws.

God can let people walk through fire and not even get their clothes singed.

God can feed five thousand people with just a couple of loaves of bread.

We call these miracles. The word “miracle” means something happens that cannot be explained by natural laws.

Then there are moral laws that man can break but God cannot.

Do you know there are certain things I can do that God cannot?

I can lie.

I can commit adultery.

I can cheat.

I can steal.

But God cannot break the moral laws, nor can He ignore them when they are broken.

We are extremely careful to observe the natural laws because they have immediate consequences, but many times, we ignore the moral laws that have far more serious consequences. Having a pure heart means keeping God’s moral laws.

So, first, having a pure heart means living by the rule of God, living a life that is pleasing to God.

Secondly, having a pure heart means living for the sole purpose of God, to have a heart that is fully devoted to God. It means single-minded devotion and commitment to God, doing

anything and everything in our life for the sole purpose of glorifying God.

1 Corinthians 10:31, *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

“Pure” in this sense means unadulterated.

What is adultery?

When we think of adultery, we think of it in the physical sense, having a sexual relation outside the marriage bonds.

The Bible does talk about this kind of adultery and certainly prohibits that.

However, the Bible talks about spiritual adultery far more than physical adultery.

Hosea, a whole book written to deal with the issue of the spiritual adultery of the people of God.

There are many chapters in the Old Testament that deal with the spiritual adultery of the people of God.

Ezekiel 16 and 22.

In the New Testament, Jesus said you cannot worship God and mammon. When we devote our hearts to anything that is other than the cause of God, we commit spiritual adultery.

James 4:4, &8, *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

⁸*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

Both the Old and New Testaments tells us to love God.

Matthew 22:37-38, *Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”*³⁸*This is the first and great commandment.*

Deuteronomy 6:4-5, *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!”*⁵*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*

This is a pure heart in the spiritual sense.

4. How Can We Have a Pure Heart?

A heart that is fully devoted to God.

First, we must realize that we cannot attain a heart that is morally pure and fully devoted to God.

Genesis 6:5, *Then 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.*

Jeremiah 13:23, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.*

Although it is impossible for us to have a pure heart in and of ourselves, we can have a pure heart by the grace of God.

What is impossible for man is possible for God.

A pure heart is a gift from God, and it comes by a new birth, by a new creation, and by the Spirit living in us.

Jeremiah 31:33, *But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

Jeremiah 32:39, *then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them.*

2 Corinthians 5:17, *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

There are ways we can maintain the purity of our heart, and one of the most primary is our time in the Word of God.

Psalm 119:9, *How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.*

Psalm 119:11, *Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.*

A second way to maintain the purity of our heart is through fellowship with the people of God. It helps to be accountable to one another.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, *Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labour. ¹⁰For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up.*

That is why the author of the Book of Hebrews exhorts us.

Hebrews 10:24, *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,*

Thirdly, we can train our heart for pure living by doing the works of God. As we are involved in His service and as God uses us for the blessing of others, we are encouraged towards our devotion to God and to keeping our hearts morally pure.

5. What is it to see God?

a) To be admitted in His presence.

To see God means to be admitted to his presence. After the plague of darkness on Egypt, Pharaoh exploded to Moses with these words.

Exodus 10:28–29, *Then Pharaoh said to him, “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!”* ²⁹*So Moses said, “You have spoken well. I will never see your face again.”*

When a king says, “You will never see my face again,” he means, “I will never grant you admission again into my presence.”

In the same way, we call the doctor today and say, “Can I see the doctor today?” We do not mean, can I see him from a distance. Or, can I see a picture of him?

We mean, can I have an appointment to be with him?

Seeing God means is being admitted to his presence.

b) Awe of His Glory

Seeing God means being awestruck by his glory by a direct experience of his holiness.

After God confronted Job.

Job 42:5-6, *“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. ⁶Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes.”*

Virtually all our spiritual sight in this life is mediated to us through the word of God or the work of God in providence.

We “see” images and reflections of his glory. We hear echoes and reverberations of his voice. 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 (Revelation 21:23) and the beauty of his holiness will be tasted directly like honey on the tongue.

So, seeing God means not only being admitted to his presence, but also being awestruck by a direct experience of his glory.

c) Comforted by His Grace.

Seeing God means being comforted by his grace. Again and again the psalmists cry out to God that he not hide his face from them.

Psalm 27: 7–9, Hear, O Lord, *when* I cry with my voice! Have mercy also upon me, and answer me. ⁸*When You said,* “Seek My face,” My heart said to You, “Your face, Lord, I will seek.”
⁹Do 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.

“Hide not thy face from me,” is the same as saying, “Be gracious to me!” This means that seeing the face of God is a sweet and comforting experience. If God shows his face, we are helped. If he turns his face away, we are dismayed.

So, when Jesus promises the reward of “seeing God” there are at least these three things implied.

- We will be admitted to his presence, not just kept in the waiting room.
- We will be awestruck with a direct experience of his glory.
- We will be helped and comforted by his grace.

We will have in part now, and fully in the age to come if we are pure in heart.

How about this Life?

The Christian life is not just “pie in the sky.” It is pie in my hand right now. If we live with a pure heart, a life that is morally pleasing to God and fully devoted to Him, we will enjoy God’s presence in our life right here, right now.

1 Peter 1:3-4, *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you.*

1 Peter 1:8, *Though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an expressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

Psalms 36:7-9, *How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. ⁸They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. ⁹For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.*

The greatest blessing and the noblest goal of the Christian life is to know God, to experience His presence in our daily life, and to live for His glory.

If we have this goal for our life, the outcome will be a daily walk with God that delights God, blesses us, and fills our life with joy until the time we go to be with Him forever. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

Conclusion:

One runner warming up, who looked very impressive. He had a spiffy uniform, as well as some custom socks and some golden shoes, and all the most fashionable accessories. He went through his warm-ups in a professional manner, with all the right moves, the right preparation. Everyone cannot wait to see this guy run — he must really be good. But when the starting pistol went off, almost all burst out laughing. This “impressive looking runner” was the slowest guy on the track! He looked SO good — but he performed so badly.

This is typical in our society, where “appearance” means everything.

Does not matter as much how good you are, as how good you LOOK.

Too often in our church, appearance is more important than substance.

Appearance may mean everything in the church on this earth, but it is not so in the Kingdom of God. It is the substance that matters in the Kingdom, the heart.

Psalms 139:23-24, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*