

Title: Blessed are the Pure in Heart (Beatitude #6)

Text: Matt 5:8

Date: Oct 25, 2020

INTRO. My niece, Emery Morton, is a precious little girl. My brother and his wife (Emery's parents) didn't realize how serious her vision problems were. Emery had eye trouble!

- Kept having to move to the front of the classroom to see the board.
- Affected her everyday life, but she just lived with it.

But when she got the correct eyeglasses, everything changed. She could see!

- Emery commented when riding home from the eye doctor with her new glasses:
- *The trees aren't just green blobs...I can see the leaves.*
- *The traffic lights aren't just hanging...I can see the bright green, yellow, and red.*

Many of us don't "see God" because we don't have a pure heart, a heart cleansed by the Holy Spirit.

Some of us have dark, rebellious hearts – no wonder we think God is far off; we can't see him in anything.

But those with pure, humble hearts – hearts cleansed by the Spirit – they are learning to see God in everything.

First, when we speak of the heart, we are speaking of the epicenter of the human being.

Heart = the totality of my thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and decisions.

Heart = the control center of who we are.

This has always been present in human language → *I love you with all my heart...you broke my heart...I gave you my heart...she stole my heart...you have such a kind, giving heart...coaches tell their players: you gotta play with heart. Or if someone is mean: "you got no heart."*

The heart has been understood as the centerpiece of who we are.

All of our life/being, is bound up in, and flows from our heart.

Intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually – it's all connected in the heart.

So when Jesus speaks here of the pure in heart – He is likely reiterating what the OT consistently taught about the ceremonial, purification rituals and laws – but he's moving inward, not outward.

The religious Jews had a great look on the "outside" – but Jesus is drilling down into the inside.

Psalm 25:24:3-4, *Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not appealed to what is false, and who has not sworn deceitfully.*

Second, no one is naturally pure in heart. We are just the opposite. We are depraved & sinful.

- All the way back to Genesis 3:1-7; the fall of Adam and Eve.
 - *Naked and ashamed.*
 - *We will surely die.*
 - Adam and Eve – relationship of friction/contention.
 - Eve: struggle for headship.
 - Adam: struggle with fields/seasons to provide.
- All of this is a product of sin!

Jer 17:9, *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*

Rom 3:10, *There is none who are righteous; no, not even one.*

Rom 3:23, *All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*

Matt 15:10-11, *Hear and understand, it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.*

Matt 15:17-20, *Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a person.*

We are all so focused on everything out here – and our eyes are never satisfied, we always want more!

- Prov 27:20, *Hell and destruction are never full, so the eyes of man are never satisfied.*

But the Bible is focused on the heart...and the sweet satisfaction/purity that Christ brings!

Third, a changed heart is the work of divine grace! A new heart is the direct result of the Gospel!

John 3; Jesus' conversation at night with a Pharisee named Nicodemus.

John 3:3 → Jesus, *"You must be born again to see the Kingdom of God."*

John 3:4 → Nicodemus, *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb a second time?"*

John 3:5 → Jesus, *"Truly, truly, I say: unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*

Jesus' point: Jesus is referring to spiritual birth, which cleanses from sin/guilt, and brings spiritual "heart" transformation.

2 Cor 5:17, *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, everything is made new.*

FACT. You cannot remove cancer from your body...it requires surgery (a doctor).
You cannot change your heart...it requires the touch of Christ.

- When you are saved, there is a simultaneous remove and bestowal.
- A removal of the penalty of sin...and a bestowal of the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, the world notices outward appearances. But the Lord looks at the heart.

1 Sam 16:7, *But the Lord said to Samuel, do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature...For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.*

The world: looks, appearances, education, successes, "easy on the eyes" (shallow),

The world: who owns the company? How much is he worth? What can he do for me? How will being with him improve my status?

But the Lord: Are you humble? Loving? Kind? Selfless? Do you put the interest of God's Kingdom and other people before yourself?

The world: correct yourself from the outside in: education, medicine, surgery, exercise, cosmetics.

Jesus: you can only live well when you are corrected from the inside-out.

We used to sing a song years ago with these lyrics:

<i>Everlasting</i>	<i>In my heart, in my soul...I give you control</i>
<i>Your Life will shine when all else fades</i>	<i>Consume me from the inside out, Lord</i>
<i>Never ending</i>	<i>Let justice and praise...Become my embrace</i>
<i>Your Glory goes beyond all fame</i>	<i>To love you from the inside out</i>

Fifth, God wants me to love Him – with my heart. My love gift to God is seeking a pure heart.

Prov 4:23, *Keep your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.*

Psalms 119:9, 11, *How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it with your Word. Your word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

Mark 12:30, *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*

So when Jesus speaks here of “blessed are the pure in heart” – he’s literally talking about →

- Singleness of heart.
- An undivided heart.
- A heart that is totally, exclusively His.
- Not a heart that chases after idols/sin.

Are we tempted to sin? Yes. Does my heart struggle? Yes.

But the key to a pure heart → it daily fights the war of sin, flesh, world, and the devil.

Who are people that we might call “the pure in heart?”

W. Barclay, the word “pure” means: purity of devotion. It was used to describe clear water, metals without alloy, grain that had been winnowed, and feelings that are unmixed.

Quite literally – “purity of heart” means: free from every taint of evil.

- Forgiven people.
- Saved people.
- Humble people.
- People that don’t gossip – they privately go straight to the source.
- People that want nothing to come between them and their relationship with God.
(ILLUS: my relationship with my wife, or Pastor Johnny – protect it).

Who are people that we might describe as not necessarily pure in heart?

- Stubborn...prideful.
- Lack a teachable spirit.
- Angry when they don’t get their way.
- Self-sufficient...self-righteous...judgmental.

How can we become more pure-hearted?

- Put your faith in God (Matt 8:10) (Matt 9:22) (Matt 14:31).
- Do you believe God can do anything? Then act like it!
- Give people the benefit of the doubt. “*Love covers a multitude of sins*” (1 Pet 4:8).
- Develop this mindset when you are tempted to be critical:
 - *If it weren’t for God’s grace...and people that helped me, trained me, and were patient with me...wow...where would I be?*

“Blessed are the pure in heart – for they will see God” → **How do we see God?**

- Creation (see Psalm 29).
- Our conscience (see Rom 1).
- Difficulty (see Job 42:5).

We see/experience God when we ponder his hand in these three ways.

But this is today’s lesson: the purer our hearts become, the more we see God.

1 John 3:2, Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who has this hope purifies himself just as he is pure.

Q: What do you do with a dirty heart?

A: Bring your heart to Jesus.

Psalm 51:10, Create in me a clean heart, and renew a steadfast spirit within me...do not banish me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit away from me.

Song from Natalie Grant

There’s nothing so dirty...that You can’t worthy...You wash me in mercy, and I am clean!

LESSON: Cast yourself upon the grace of God and receive his radical renewal!

There’s nothing out there...that can fix what’s wrong in here.

And what’s wrong in here...is what’s created such havoc out there.

Other religions do things to appease their guilty hearts and temporarily make them feel better.

FACT. Only God in heaven...by sending down His Son in love to the cross...has the power to breakthrough and transform your heart!

Q: What do you do with a heart that isn’t sure about what to do next?

A: Humble your heart before the Lord...worship Him...and tell him you want to trust Him.

Psalm 25:12-14, Who is this person who fears the Lord? He will show him the way he should choose...The secret counsel of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he reveals his covenant to them.