

*Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

I consider this “the gem of the Beatitudes,” for although each one is a singular treasure, this one stands out as the high pinnacle of achievement for the Christian – a pure heart and seeing God. What true citizen of heaven does not long for a heart that is pure and a greater vision of God?

### **ITS PLACE IN THE BEATITUDES**

As we approach this precious sixth Beatitude, let us look at how it relates to the others before we examine it for itself.

(1) First, like the others, we note that purity of heart is the path to true happiness. To seek after a pure heart is to seek after ultimate contentment. You want true happiness? – then seek a pure heart.

(2) Secondly, we remember that this is what we ARE as a believer – it is what constitutes the very nature of a citizen of heaven. This is not what we aspire to be, but cannot attain, it is rather what we ARE and must continue to pursue. So let this inform our consideration.

(3) Thirdly, we have come to see that these Beatitudes have a progression to them, in that one seems to follow the other in an understandable order. It is not that we are at one point in an eight-step process; rather, that we are at all points at the same time, but one aspect naturally (or should we say, supernaturally) leads to the next. So, being merciful to others as God is merciful to me leads me to greater purity of heart. As I emulate God in this showing of compassion and choosing not to give others what they might deserve, I find myself wanting and even yearning to be more like my Heavenly Father in purity of character. Showing mercy urges me on to greater godliness.

(4) But there is another way that I see that this sixth Beatitude is carefully and divinely chosen to this unique place in the order. We have noted that Beatitudes 1,2 and 3 are a progressive emptying of self, resulting in hungering and thirsting for righteousness (Beatitude 4). And Beatitudes 5-7 are a practical living out of that righteousness (mercy, purity of heart and peacemaking); and that the result of this righteous living is persecution for righteousness (Beatitude 8).

I further suggest (along with Martyn Lloyd-Jones) that each of the first quartet of Beatitudes is closely related to the corresponding second quartet. #1 is related to #5, #2 is related to #6, #3 is related to #7 and #4 is related to #8.

- (a) re: #1 and #5 It is when I realize the full poverty of my spirit apart from Christ that I am prone to be merciful to another who is impoverished. Emptiness of self is most likely to show practical compassion to another.
- (b) re: #2 and #6 It is when I mourn for the blackness of my sin nature that I am most prone to long for the pure whiteness of a cleansed heart. Despondency over my inconsistency of godliness is what best motivates me to long for the consistency of a pure heart.
- (c) re: #3 and #7 Furthermore, it is the gentle and humble who are the best “peacemakers.”
- (d) re: #4 and #8 We have previously noted that “righteousness” is a key aspect of both.

It is helpful to observe our 6<sup>th</sup> Beatitude in its place in the whole. But let us now examine its 3 basic components in turn - (1) the heart, (2) purity and (3) seeing God.

### **THE HEART**

When the Bible speaks about the heart of man, it is not speaking only of the seat of our emotions. Rather, it speaks of the whole of man – mind, will and emotions. The “heart” is not so much referring to that pulsating organ that pushes blood around our body, as it is referring to the core of our very person – body, soul and spirit. The heart is the true center of who we are as a person.

That is why when we talk about inviting Christ “into our heart” we are meaning to say that we invite him to be the C.E.O. and blessed controller of all that we are. When Revelation 3:20 says that

Jesus is knocking “at the door” it means to say that Jesus wants entrance into your “heart,” that is the center of your very being.

Apart from Christ in our “heart” it is not at all pure. Hear what Jesus said about the heart.

**Matthew 15:18-19** *The things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.*

We might try to “clean up our act” on the outside to look righteous, but again, hear Jesus:

**Matthew 23:25-26** *Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.*

If a glass were dirty, you wouldn’t offer it to a guest having only cleaned the outside of it. In fact, most important of all would be to assure that the inside was sparkling clean as possible. Remember what Samuel said about external vs. internal:

**1 Samuel 16:7b** *God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*

God wants our heart, meaning God wants all of us wholly devoted to Him.

**Matthew 22:37** *[Jesus:] You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*

## **PURITY**

The biblical concept of “purity” has two distinct and yet related meanings.

1. **SINGLENESS** The implication is of no two-sidedness, no hypocrisy, no insincerity but only of single-mindedness. This means I don’t just believe that God hates divorce – I never speak of it as an option. This means I don’t just avoid sexual acts of impurity, I shun mental thoughts of impurity. This means I don’t just say I forgive someone, I treat the one as if it never happened. This means I don’t just say church attendance and involvement is a high priority, I make it a high priority. This means I don’t say I’m doing something out of kindness but also have a hidden agenda of benefit to self. And so on. Singleness. Our devotion to God is to be UNDIVIDED. I don’t have one foot in the kingdom of man and the other in the kingdom of God. Single-minded devotion – that is purity.
2. **SPOTLESSNESS** The second implication of purity is that my sinfulness is washed spotless. There is no imperfection, spot or wrinkle. I have washed and keep washed my inner self. Personal holiness is a high and continual priority.

**Hebrews 12:14** *Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification [purity] without which no one will see the Lord.*

**1 Timothy 1:5** *But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

Anyone should quickly realize that this purity is impossible to achieve naturally. It must be a supernatural act of God’s cleansing and giving of single-mindedness. That is why I have said that it is closely related to the second Beatitude, which mourns for sin. Just as the sin can only be removed supernaturally, so the heart can only be purified supernaturally.

Remember, purity of heart is what we ARE as believers. In the past sense it has been accomplished through renewal of our inner selves at the moment of salvation. In the future sense it will be perfectly accomplished when we are transformed into our spotless resurrected selves. But in the meantime, we are left to tend to our hearts with continual care. More on this in a moment.

## SEEING GOD

This is the amazing promise for the pure of heart. Is Jesus speaking literally or figuratively or both?

**John 1:18** *No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

**John 14:9** [Jesus:] *Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen ME has seen the Father; how can you say, "Show us the Father"?*

**1 John 3:2-3** *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. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

Even Moses, though asking to see God, was only allowed to see His backside – meaning he never really saw God. The prophets of old were only given murky visions, and even John in Revelation tries to describe the indescribable and explain the unexplainable. Though there is a surety that in heaven we will see God with the veil of this life removed, we still don't know exactly what we will see.

And remember – this Beatitude speaks of what we ARE as kingdom citizens, so I suspect that the primary intention is to say that we better see God in his glory when our heart is pure. "See" God, then, is more to the effect of figuratively seeing God for more of who He is. (After all, will we ever "see" God for all He is – even COULD we?)

The popular Christian song "Open the Eyes of My Heart" is a request that I might better "see" God. And when my heart is "open," that is, pure – single-minded and cleansed – I will better see God in nature, in circumstances, in others, in the Scripture in everything!

Jesus was the ultimate in us "seeing" God because his thoughts, teachings, actions, reactions and very demeanor demonstrated the very nature of God. And, of course, Jesus was indeed God in the flesh. As my heart is pure – single-minded and cleaned – I will see Jesus for the divine Son of God He indeed is, and "see" the unconditional love, amazing grace and boundless mercy of the Almighty.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

**Psalms 51:10** *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

**Psalms 24:3-6** *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. He shall receive a blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face – even Jacob.*

**James 4:8, 5** (8) *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (5) Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us."*

I said earlier that if we are believers not yet in resurrected form, we are left in this life to tend the hearts that have been purified by the indwelling Holy Spirit, yet with original sin within us that continues to battle for control of that heart. God does the miracle of purity, but He wants my cooperation! I am to:

- ✓ Draw closer to God and you will "see" Him
- ✓ Strive for personal holiness and undivided devotion
- ✓ Empty self and fill with the Holy Spirit (repeat continually!)

There is NOTHING God wants of you more than a PURE HEART. He has given it to you, in that you have the Holy Spirit living within and you are seen as a "saint." You are righteous and pure in His sight. And you will receive it "in spades" when you get to heaven. You will be perfected in the sense that your sin nature will be removed.

In the meantime – we are to tend that heart of ours – meaning the unique individual that we are. We must ever join God in the everyday task of cleansing, renewing and purifying our heart.

Don't let it "get dirty" – keep it from those things and places that would contaminate it. And when it does get dirty, which it will, take it to the "heart-wash" – through confession, accepting of forgiveness and renewed righteousness. Work on those areas of weakness where you are not as "single-minded" as you should be, asking God for continued strength and help to overcome. Emulate the example of others who have found victory in the areas you yet struggle.

Thank God for the victories. Mourn with Him over the failures, but don't let them keep you from persevering in personal holiness. Find a brother or sister who will keep you accountable and in whom you can confide your progress. Always be working on one or more area of weakness. Never assume you "have arrived." Help others who you see are going through the same areas in which you have now found victory. You are in a "race" – finish it strong to the end.

*"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."*

That's me, thanks to you, God. Amen!