

**Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia**

**Bible Study - February 23, 2023**

**Prepared & Presented by; Pastor James G. Austin, Jr., PhD., D.Min.**

**Title: The Sermon on The Mount - Part VII**

**The Beatitudes - Part VI**

**Scripture Reference: Matthew 5:8**

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

**I. Introduction**

A. As a little boy growing up and always in church on Sunday morning, I learned and memorized Matthew 5:8, and it became my favorite Bible memory verse.

B. This is one of those passages of Scripture whose depths are immeasurable and whose breadth is impossible to completely encompass. However, my prayer is that this lesson will deepen your insight into and appreciation of this tremendous Biblical Truth - **"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."**

C. The subject of holiness, of purity of heart, can be traced from Genesis to Revelation. The theme is so great, and it touches on virtually every other biblical truth.

**II. Exposition [Part I] - The Historical Context**

A. When Jesus began His earthy ministry, Israel was in a desperate condition - politically, economically, and spiritually. For hundreds of years, with only brief periods of relief, Israel had been under the oppression of foreign conquerors.

B. The country had limited freedom to develop its economy, and a

large part of income and profit was paid to Rome in taxes. Those were problems that every person saw and felt.

C. The less obvious problem was by far the worst. For longer than she had suffered political and economic oppression, Israel had suffered spiritual weakness and faithlessness.

D. However, that problem was not recognized by many of the Jews. The Jewish leaders thought their religion was just fine, and they believed the Messiah would soon solve their political and economic problems.

E. But when He came, His only concern was for the spiritual problem, the problem of their hearts.

F. At the time of Christ, the most influential religious force of Judaism was the Pharisees. They were the chief managers and promoters of the on-going legalistic and ritualistic system that dominated Jewish society.

G. Over the centuries various rabbis had interpreted and reinterpreted the Jewish Scriptures, especially the law, until those interpretations - known as the traditions of the elders - became more authoritative than Scripture itself. The essence of the traditions was a system of dos and don'ts that gradually expanded to cover almost every aspect of Jewish life.

H. To the conscientious and honest Jews, it had become obvious that total observance of all the religious requirements was impossible. Because they could not keep all of the law, they no doubt developed feelings of guilt, and frustration. Their religion was their life, but they could not fulfil everything their religion demanded.

I. Consequently, some of the religious leaders came up with the

idea that, if a person could perfectly keep just a few of the laws, God would understand. When that proved to be impossible, some narrowed the requirement to just keep one law perfectly.

**Comment:** That idea may have been in the mind of the lawyer who tested Jesus with the question, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matt. 22:36)

J. Perhaps the lawyer who posed the question to Jesus wanted to see which of the many hundreds of laws Jesus believed was the single most important one to keep - the one that would satisfy God even if a person failed to keep the others.

K. Jesus responded by quoting Deut. 6:5, part of the Shema, used by all Jews in their daily prayers.

L. The religious leaders knew that the Scriptures taught of One who would come not simply to demand but to redeem, not to add to their burdens but to help carry them, not to increase their guilt but to remove it.

M. Luke tells of another lawyer who asked Jesus, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25). He asked the question to test Jesus, and after Jesus gave an answer, the man tried "to justify himself." (v 29). But despite his insincerity, he had asked the right question.

N. A rich ruler asked Jesus the same question: "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18). This man apparently asked sincerely, but he was unwilling to pay the cost. He wanted to keep the wealth of this life more than he wanted to gain the wealth of eternal life, and the Scripture records, "And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful:" (Luke 18:23a).

O. He knew he needed something more than outward obedience to

the law, at which he had been diligent since childhood (Luke 18:21).

P. He knew that, with all his devotion and effort to please God, he had no assurance of possessing eternal life. He was seeking the kingdom, but he was not seeking it first (Matt. 6:33).

Q. Many others were asking "What must I be to belong to the kingdom of God? What is the standard for eternal life?"

R. It was to answer that need that Jesus came to earth. It was to answer that need that He gave the Beatitudes. Jesus shows simply and directly how sinful man can be made right with holy God.

### III. Exposition [Part II] - the Literary Context

A. This sixth beatitude, like every part of God's Word, is part of the beautiful and marvelous sequence of truths that are here laid out according to the mind of God.

B. It is the climax of the Beatitudes, the central truth to which the previous five lead and from which the following two flow.

### IV. Exposition [Part III] - The Meaning

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

(Matt. 5:8)

A. The word **blessed** implies the condition of well-being that results from salvation, the status of one that has a right relation to God.

B. **Heart** translates **kardia**, from which we get cardiac and similar terms. Throughout Scripture, as well as in many languages and cultures throughout the world, the heart is used metaphorically to represent the inner person, the seat of motives and attitudes, the center of personality.

C. But in Scripture it represents much more than emotion, feelings. It also includes the thinking process and particularly the will. In Proverbs we are told, "For as he [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he." [Prov, 23:7, KJV]. Jesus asked a group of scribes, "**Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?**" (Matt. 9:4; cf. Mark 2:8).

**Comment:** The heart is the control center of the mind and will as well as emotion.

D. In complete contrast to the outward, superficial, and hypocritical religion of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said that it is the inner man, in the core of his very being that God requires purity.

E. What Jesus said was not a new truth, but an old one that was long forgotten because of ceremony and tradition.

F. The writer of Proverbs said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23).

**Comment:** The problem that caused God to destroy the earth in the Flood was a heart problem. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5).

G. David acknowledged before the Lord, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:6, 10).

H. Evil ways and deeds begin in the heart and mind, which are used synonymously. Jesus said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness,

blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man:" (Matt. 15:19-20a).

I. God has always been concerned above all else with the inside of man, with the condition of his heart. When the Lord called Saul to be Israel's first king, "God gave him another heart: ..." (1 Sam. 10:9b).

J. Until then Saul had been handsome, athletic, and not much more. But the new king soon began to revert to his old heart patterns. He chose to disobey God and to trust in himself. Among other things, he presumed to take for himself the priestly role of offering sacrifices (1 Sam, 13:9), and he refused to destroy all of the Amalikites and their possessions as God had commanded (1 Sam. 15:3-19).

K. As a result, the Lord took the kingdom from Saul and gave it to David (1 Sam. 15:23-28). Saul's actions were wrong because his heart rebelled, and it is by our hearts that the Lord judges us (1 Sam. 16:7).

L. It was said of David's leadership over Israel, "So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands." (Psalm 78:72).

M. God took the kingdom from Saul because he refused to live by the new heart God had given him. God gave the kingdom to David because David was "A man after [God's] own heart." (1 Sam. 13:14).

N. David pleased God's heart because God pleased David's heart. David's deepest desire was, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." (Psalm 19:14).

O. The word **pure** translates **katharos**, a form of the word from

which we get **catharsis**. The basic meaning is to make pure by cleansing for dirt, filth, and contamination. Catharsis is a term used in Psychology and counseling for cleansing of the mind or emotions.

P. The Greek word is related to the Latin **Castus**, from which we get, **chaste**. The related word **Chasten** refers to discipline given in order to cleanse from wrong behavior.

Q. The Greek term was often used of metals that had been refined until all impurities were removed, leaving only the pure metal. In that sense, purity means unmixed, unalloyed, unadulterated.

R. Applied to the heart, the idea is that of a pure motive - of single-mindedness, undivided devotion, spiritual integrity, and true righteousness.

S. Those who truly belong to God will be motivated to purity, Psalm 119 is the classic illustration of that longing, and Romans 7:15-25 is the Pauline counterpart.

**Point:** The deepest desire of the redeemed is for holiness, even when sin halts the fulfillment of that desire.

T. Purity of heart is more than sincerity. A motive can be sincere, yet lead to worthless and sinful things.

U. The pagan priests who opposed Elijah demonstrated great sincerity when they lacerated their bodies in order to induce Baal to send fire down to consume their sacrifice (1 Kings 18:28). But their sincerity did not produce the desired results, and it did not enable them to see the wrongness of their paganism - because their sincere trust was in that very paganism.

V. The scribes and Pharisees believed they could please God by such superficial practices as tithing "mint and dill and cummin"; but they "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: ..." (Matt. 23:23).

W. They were meticulously careful about what they did outwardly but they paid no attention to what they were inwardly (Read Matt. 23:25-26).

X. Even genuine good deeds that do not come from a genuinely good heart are of no spiritual value.

**Point:** Though we may be extremely religious and constantly engaged in doing good things, we cannot please God unless our hearts are right with Him!

Y. the ultimate standard for purity of heart is perfection of heart. In this sermon in which Jesus gave the Beatitudes, He said "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48).

**Point:** One hundred percent purity is God's standard for the heart.

Z. Man's tendency is to set the opposite standard. We may be Inclined to judge ourselves by the worst instead of the best. (Read Luke 18:11).

AA. God's standard for men, is Himself. David asks, "Who shall Ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy Place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; ..." (Psalm 24:3-4a).

BB. It is impurity of the heart that separates man from God. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities

Have separated between you and your God." (Isa. 59:1-2a).

**Comment:** Just as impurity of the heart separates men from God, only purity of heart through Jesus Christ will reconcile men to God!

//Please stay with me.//

CC. As we look at Scripture we discover six kinds of purity:

1. First, there is **primal purity**. This kind exists only in God. This kind of purity is as essential to God as light is to the sun or wetness is to water.
2. Another form of purity is **created purity**, the purity that existed in God's creation before it was corrupted by the Fall.
3. A third kind of purity is **positional purity**, This is the purity we are given the moment we trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior. When we trust in Him, God imputes (i.e., places on our account) Christ's own purity, and His own righteousness. (See Rom. 4:5; cf. Gal. 2:16). From that day on, the Father sees us just as He sees the Son, perfectly righteous and without blemish (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:14).
4. A fourth kind of purity is **imputed purity**. God grants actual purity in the new nature of the believer.
5. The fifth kind of purity is **practical purity**. This is the hard part, the part that requires our supreme effort. //Please listen carefully.//

- a. Only God possesses or can possess primal purity. Only God can bestow created purity, ultimate purity, positional purity, and actual purity,
- b. But practical purity, though it too comes from God, it demands our participation in a way that the other kinds of purity do not.
- c. This is why Paul says, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1).
- d. Finally, for believers there will also one day be ultimate purity, the perfected purity of God's redeemed people, who will experience this when they are glorified in His presence.

**Point:** All sins will be totally and permanently washed away, and "... we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2).

#### **V. Exposition [Part IV] - The Way To Holiness**

- A. Throughout the history of the Church people have suggested various ways to achieve spiritual purity and holiness.
- B. Some have suggested monasticism, getting away from the normal cares and distractions of the world and devoting oneself to meditation and prayer.
- C. Others claim that holiness is a second work of grace, by which God miraculously eradicates not only sins but the sin nature, allowing a sinless earthly life from that point onward.
- D. But neither Scripture nor experience supports either of those views.

**Point:** The problem of sin is not primarily the world around us but the worldliness within us, which we cannot escape by living in isolation from other people.

E. Never-the-less, God always provides for what He demands, and He has provided ways for us to live purely. First, we must realize that we are unable to live a single holy moment without the Lord's guidance and power. "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Prov. 20:9).

The obvious answer is "No one."

**Point:** Cleansing begins with a recognition of weakness. Weakness then reaches out for the strength of God.

F. Second, we must stay in God's Word. It is impossible to stay in God's will apart for His Word. Jesus said, "**Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.**" (John 15:3).

G. Third, it is essential to be controlled by and walking in the will and way of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16 says it clearly: "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

H. Fourth, we must pray, We cannot stay in God's will or understand and obey His Word unless we stay near Him. "with all prayer and petition" we are to pray at all times in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18; cf. Luke 18:1; 1 Thess. 5:17).

## **VI. Exposition [Part V] - The Result of Holiness**

A. The great blessing of those who are pure in heart is that "**they shall see God.**"

**Comment:** I don't want to be too technical but please listen to the beauty of this last part of Matthew 5:8, with an explanation of the Greek text.

B. The Greek is in the future indicative tense and the middle Voice, and a more literal translation is, "**They shall be Continually seeing God for themselves.**" It is only they (the Emphatic autos), the pure in heart, who shall see God.

**Point:** Intimate knowledge of and fellowship with God is reserved for the pure in heart.

C. When our hearts are purified at salvation we began to live in the presence of God. We begin to see and to comprehend Him with our new spiritual eyes.

D. Purity of heart cleanses the eyes of the soul so that God Becomes visible.

E. One sign of an impure heart is ignorance, because sin Obscures the truth (John 3:19-20). Evil and ignorance come in a Package.

F. Other signs of an impure heart are self-centeredness (Rev. 3:17), pleasure in sin (2 Tim. 3:4), unbelief (Heb. 3:12), and Hatred of purity (Micah 3:2).

**Point:** Those who belong to God exchange all of those things for integrity and purity.

---

It is time to complete the biblical passages which follow by filling in the blank spaces. Each passages has been taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

"He that loveth \_\_\_\_\_ of heart, for the \_\_\_\_\_ of his lips the king shall be his \_\_\_\_\_."

[Proverbs 22:11]

"The words of the Lord are \_\_\_\_\_ words: as \_\_\_\_\_ tried in a \_\_\_\_\_ of earth, \_\_\_\_\_ seven times."

[Psalm 12:6]

"Do \_\_\_\_\_, O Lord, unto those that be \_\_\_\_\_, and to them that are \_\_\_\_\_ in their \_\_\_\_\_."

[Psalm 125:4]

"Who shall \_\_\_\_\_ into the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord? or who shall \_\_\_\_\_ in his \_\_\_\_\_ place? He that hath \_\_\_\_\_ hands, and a \_\_\_\_\_; Who hath not \_\_\_\_\_ up his soul unto \_\_\_\_\_, nor sworn \_\_\_\_\_."

[Psalm 24:3-4]

//I pray that this lesson has been a blessing to you and as you live a life that is pleasing to Almighty, He will bless you abundantly.//

In the Master's Service

Pastor Austin