

## Blessed and Pure in Heart

There was a time when Jesus sat on a hill in front of a great crowd, with his disciples standing in front of him, and delivered an address about the kingdom of God and righteousness. He began this address with something we call "**The Beatitudes**" ~ The *Blessednesses*.

In it, he listed **8 IDENTIFYING MARKS of a genuine follower of Christ** and paired them up with a list of **8 BENEFITS** of being a genuine follower of Christ.

**Last week:** Blessed are the merciful [ID mark], for they shall receive mercy [Benefit]. **Matthew 5:7**

**Today:** Blessed are the pure in heart [ID mark], for they shall see God [Benefit]. **Matthew 5:8**

"Seeing God?" -- a familiar idea to the "Bible people" to whom Jesus was speaking.

**Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?** He who has clean hands and a **pure heart**, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive **blessing from the LORD** and righteousness from the God of his salvation. **Psalm 24:3-5**

3 LINKS between **5:8** and **24:3-5**, THEN: To see God, you need "clean hands" and a "pure heart."

And we need a definition. Not of the word **pure**?

None required. "Free of all impurities": All one thing: pure gold / chocolate / coffee. Uncontaminated!

But what is an *uncontaminated heart*? DEFINITION is required: "**heart**"?

In the Bible, not "*emotions*"; "*feelings*." (In the **Greek** of the N.T., *emotions*, *feelings* come from the "bowels"!

→ "compassion"; "pity"; "love" Unstable! Often short-lived.

The "heart," on the other hand, is "the fountain of life."

**Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Proverbs 4:23** The heart" is the source of our strong "inclinations."

Jonathan Edwards used the word "affections" [**Religious Affections**] → strong, settled "*inclinations*" Our defining "*loves*." And our defining "*hatreds*."

**THIS SERMON IN ONE SENTENCE ? ... the blessing of God ... pure / uncontaminated inclinations.**

A pure heart, an "uncontaminated heart" has loves that are not in conflict or at odds with its hatreds.

For a "heart" to be "pure", all the loves and hatreds it contains or creates must be in harmony.

e.g. Contaminated, non-pure hearts.

**COMPARE these examples of a conflicted "contaminated heart"**

**Loves** being an A+ student but **hates** studying. (cf. *hates wasting time!*)

Or, **Loves** an uncluttered house but **hates** tidying up. (cf. *loves tidying up and hate clutters!*)

Or, **Loves** a good night sleep but also **loves** the all-night Taco Bell drive-through.

Q. → What sort of "pure heart" was Christ blessing?

A. Think of whom he was talking about! Peter, Andrews, James, John → leaving their nets

(**Matt.4**)

WHY? → To follow Christ: *God's anointed one!*"

Matthew (**Matt.9**): leaving his career

cf. The “rich young ruler” with “too much to lose” ! (Matt.19) → Loved money;(hated poverty)

A “**pure heart**” is an IDENTIFYING MARK of a follower of Christ: so we are looking here at the idea of loving God, loving God in human form, Christ, with an uncontaminated, unconflicted, non-contradicted love.

ISN'T THIS THE ROOT CAUSE OF OUR SPIRITUAL ISSUES? It's a “HEART CONDITION.”

The “great and first commandment” You shall love the Lord your God with **all** your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. **Matthew 22:37,38**  
Emphasis on the word “all.” (Of course, you love him with your heart!)

Compare: Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **1 John 2:15**

Q.s: *Isn't this an intimidating idea!* “IDENTIFYING MARK”!!!

*What sort of follower of Christ am I? OR What sort of follower of Christ would I be?*

The Old Testament people knew some things about this.

**1000 B.C.** These people (e.g. David the king) knew that they needed God's help. Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. **Psalms 86:11**

600 B.C. Jeremiah the prophet I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.

**Jeremiah 32:39,40**

**THIS SERMON IN ONE SENTENCE:** Only God can decontaminate our hearts. GOOD NEWS!  
 (“gospel”)

## **AND HERE'S HOW**

1. He makes a covenant. A blood covenant. And the blood required is the blood of Christ!

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those

days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. **Jeremiah 31:31-33**

→ He decontaminates our hearts by writing his Law on them (Compare **Jeremiah 17:9**)

→ It's a work of God. A work of God, the Holy Spirit. **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Ezekiel 36:26,27**

→ Promised / predicted centuries before Christ came into the world. See the plain connection between the Holy Spirit and a changed heart. As in: **... God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Romans 5:5** This new heart is a new capacity, a purified ability to love God.

**BUT there's more to it than this *decontaminating*.** More good news!

→ Learning to love God with an uncontaminated love is not an all-at-one-time experience: **It is 2-dimensional.**

~ The old bishop to the young believer: *"My dear young man, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I have been saved and I am being saved..."*

More good **news!** The day-by-day, life-long experience (and challenge!) of becoming a better follower of Christ

2. **He uses a book.** His own book. To change our loves and hatreds.

**SOMETHING WE CAN DO → Keep some of the Words of God in mind more often**

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." **John**

**8:31,32** The assumption is that, as disciples of Christ, we are abiding (remaining, staying) in the Bible

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; **Because of what he loves! → but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.** And here is the blessing → **He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. Psalm 1:1-3**

Q: What comes first: loving the Lord or meditating on his Word.... *chicken and egg*

Take for example these words from the Psalms → **Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart... Psalm 24:3,4** Write them out on a card and carry it around. Or better yet: memorize them. Then repeat them to yourself. Try emphasizing different words... God does the work. He uses the Bible to do it. **For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12**

YET more GOOD NEWS! Learning to love God with an uncontaminated love is not an all-at-one-time experience: it is **3-dimensional**. What the old bishop ACTUALLY said: *“My dear young man, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I have been saved and I am being saved and I SHALL be saved!”*

3. He will do it in person.

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. **Philippians 1:6** *“Glorification”* → saved from the presence of sin → God finishes what he started

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. **1 John 3:1-2**

Was this the experience Jesus was thinking of when he said, *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!”* ?

**And it's true, because God, but only God, can decontaminate our hearts.**

**NEXT WEEK:** March 4

***Blessed are the Peacemakers***

**Matthew 5**