



Part 25: Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God

Matthew 5:8

God created us to find everlasting and overflowing joy by looking into his face, and Jesus opens the way for us to see him if we will receive the gift of purity and surrender to his process of making us pure in heart.

I. Our place in the Beatitudes series

The Beatitudes of Jesus are both pronouncements of good news for the socially powerless, and expressions of a way of living that embodies God's beautiful kingdom.

Today's beatitude falls in the category of a beatitudes describing the embodiment of God's kingdom—Followers of Jesus, citizens of God's kingdom, are pure in heart. And they will see God.

II. Blessed are the Pure in Heart

Blessed could be translated: "Congratulations! Joyful are . . ."

This is meant to be joyful good news!

A. The longing heart

The human heart, in the Hebrew understanding, is the core of the human person.

And God also says that "he has put eternity into our hearts" Ecclesiastes 3:11.

See C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*.

B. The Pure and Impure Heart

The difference, put simply, between a pure and impure heart is where we direct our eternity-sized longings. Our heart becomes impure, or in Jesus' words "defiled" when we direct our great longings to things other than God himself and choose sinful ways to try to satisfy our hearts.

As Psalm 24 says, "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 his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully."

Impurity of heart, then, can be summed up by idolatry and deceit.

1. The Impure or Defiled heart

"Hear and understand . . . What comes out of the mouth defiles the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, false witness, and slander. These are what defile a person," Matthew 15:20.

2. The Pure Heart

The word "Pure" in the Greek is *katharos*, like catharsis: Clean. Clear. Undivided. Full of Integrity. Wholehearted. Free of deceit.

The reason this statement of Jesus is not bad news, but good, is that we know from the rest of the scriptures that the purity of heart God requires is, in his kindness and great mercy, is both a gift and a process.

C. The Gift

"If I do not wash you," Jesus tells him, "you won't belong to me." John 13:8

- Jesus' blood: "The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin," 1 John 1:7.
- The Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 10:19, 22; Acts 15:8; Eze 36:25-27.

So the purity of heart God requires, God gives to us as a gift through the ministry of Jesus.

D. The Process

Progressive transformation: We are called to GROW.

Phil 1:9; 2 Cor 3:18 ;1 John 3:2-3

Dale Brunner: "Every struggle for purity through obedience to Jesus' commands is an investment in a clearer knowledge of God."

III. They shall see God

A. The Face of God

"In the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us either with one expression or with the other, either conferring glory inexpressible or

inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised. The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall actually survive that examination, shall find approval, shall please God. To please God . . . to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness . . . to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or a burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is,” C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*.

“There is fullness of joy with your face,” Psalm 16:11

B. For not, how do we see God?

We will be able to see him in creation, in our lives, in his word, and in the Face of Jesus.

Elizabeth Barret Browning

*Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes—
The rest sit round and pluck blackberries.*

“I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus,” Mother Teresa.

IV. The Prayer of Examen

Consciousness and Conscience

Please see the Examen practice on the Greenwood website: GreenwoodCC.com/Examen

Discussion Questions:

1. What is your heart's initial response to this beatitude?
2. How do you resonate with the idea that having eternity in our hearts creates heartache and longing?
3. What do you feel when you think of seeing God's face?
4. How do you respond to Jesus' invitation to be made pure—both as a gift and as a process?
5. Have you tried to pray a prayer of examen before? Are you planning to try it now? What intrigues you about it? What might be challenging for you as you try it?