

# Blessed Are The Pure In Heart

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[0:00] All right, let's start off with something we can all relate with. Surely, surely all of us are regularly, regularly tempted to disobey our Lord.

Do I have an amen? All of us are regularly tempted to disobey our King. And there are temptations that we all face that are common to man.

Outbursts of anger. Do I have an amen? Impatience. Various kinds of sexual impurity. They're all out there. Maybe you can relate with anxiety or despair that springs from unbelief.

It will keep you up at night. Another temptation common to man is this pride in all of us. It has many manifestations.

It shows up in a variety of ways. But at its core, it's usually me first or I'm better. It kind of runs along those courses. You ever tempted to greed?

[1:09] You ever tempted to lie? Be lazy? These are just temptations that are common to us all.

You're going to face one today, I'm guessing. Maybe this afternoon. Tomorrow morning. Lying in bed tonight. What if? What if? What if? What if the next time you are being wooed to disobey your Lord?

What if? What if? What if there's this foreign thought that gets imposed upon your thinking? Now your first reaction to this foreign thought may be, whoa, where did that come from?

And you'll know. It comes from your Lord. It's a timely kindness to you. So what is this foreign thought, this glorious thought that the Lord impresses upon your thinking?

Well, here it is. It's that moment when you see your Savior face to face. So you're being wooed to sin and all of a sudden upon your mind is this thought, glorious thought of seeing your Savior face to face.

[2:30] And what is so distinct about this particular thought is that it's the deep creases in His smile.

Now, you have this thought that not only are you happy to see Him, but He is delighted to see you. Now with that glorious thought of one day seeing your smiling Savior in mind, what would happen to that present temptation?

What do you think would happen to that wooing to sin? Well, I'm guessing that the thought of your smiling Savior who awaits you will cause you to gratefully obey that same Savior now.

Blessed are the pure in heart, Jesus says, for they shall see God. This morning I want to call you to something. Brothers and sisters, set your heart on Jesus.

[3:44] Fix your eyes on Him now because you're certainly going to fix your eyes on Him then. Seeing Him, knowing you will see Him, compels you to live for Him now.

And I just want to bring three points up. I want to draw them right from this passage. Three points. We could all, we could say there are three words from this text.

They're the words heart, they're the words pure, and the word see as in S-E-E. Your heart matters to God. Purity of heart is the active pursuit of holiness.

And the last point will be, you will see Him, brother. You will see Him, sister. You will see the creases in His smile. Set your heart on obeying Jesus now, for you will see Him.

You will see Him. It's just a matter of time. First point, your heart matters to God. Blessed are the pure in heart. I'm not a doctor, nor do I play one on TV.

[5:06] I know enough to know that cardiology is the study, the science of the heart. And as Americans, when we hear the word heart, we tend to

think of that fist-sized muscle pumping blood in your chest right now.

And so we go to our minds and think, okay, what does heart health look like? But if you're not thinking about your heart in that kind of physical, muscular sense, usually you'll be thinking about the heart in more of a metaphoric sense, that place from which your feelings come.

You've heard the expression, think with your head, feel with your heart? That's an American expression. And so as Americans, we either tend to think that our hearts are that muscle in our chest or that place where we feel from.

Well, the question we've got to ask this morning is, what did Jesus mean by heart? Blessed are the pure in heart. What does the Bible mean when it uses the word heart?

Well, it's more than just feelings. When you read that word heart in your Bible, usually what it is meaning is the totality of who you are on the inside.

[6:24] It's the location, it's the seat of your intellect, of your feelings, and of your will. All together, it's the control center of your being. And whatever controls your heart controls your life.

And so what we need to understand is when Jesus says, blessed are the pure in heart, he's talking about your inner man.

Your intellect, your feelings, emotions, and your will. That part of you that decides upon doing something. And that's why this is so important.

Your heart is of vital importance to God. It's the mainspring of a human being.

It's the fountainhead from which all of your thoughts, feelings, and actions flow. You live out of your heart, biblically speaking. Proverbs 4, 23, guard your heart above all else, for from it flow the wellsprings of life.

[7:33] Your heart is of vital importance to God. Whatever you give your heart to ends up controlling you. You live for what you give your heart to.

Your heart weighs things. Your heart considers the worth of something. And then your heart will either delight in it, or it will be turned off by it, but certainly it will move toward deciding whether you're going to pursue it or not.

It all happens in your heart, biblically speaking. The mainspring, the fountainhead of your being. And God's designed you that way.

That's not a mistake. He made your heart for that purpose. It is designed to be the mainspring of your life. It's designed to be the fountainhead from everything which flows.

St. Augustine said it this way. This is an often spoken quote. Thou hast formed us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their final resting place in thee.

[8:51] God designed our hearts to worship. To see something's worth, to delight in it, and then to live for it.

You were made to worship God from your heart with your intelligence, your emotions, and your will. We were designed, our hearts were designed by God to worship Him. So when Jesus talks about the heart in Matthew 5.8, He's speaking of your inner being, the place where worship comes from. It's really important. It's that from which you devote yourself to something. He's not just talking about your feelings. He is.

But so much more. So, your heart is of vital importance to God because it's the place from which you worship.

[9:54] Do you think God cares about what you worship? Of course He does. Worship really matters to your God. In fact, what you worship, He takes personally.

You were made to worship Him. And there's a reason why He will hold everyone who has ever walked the face of this planet accountable to this.

You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not bow down or serve anything but God because God is a jealous God. He's rightfully jealous of what you worship.

You were created to worship, to live for Him. And He is jealous of the fame and devotion that is due Him alone as the one true God over all.

So you can start seeing why your heart is of vital importance to God. It's where you worship from. And God is really interested in what you worship because ultimately, all worship is His.

[10:58] Here's some bad news. Maybe you've been to a cardiologist before and you've gotten bad news.

Well, biblically speaking, what we learn from the Scriptures is that every heart of every person has a deadly and disorienting disease.

Heart disease. Biblically speaking. It's called sin. Jeremiah 17. Jeremiah says it this way. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick.

We have all inherited a spiritual heart disease called sin. And it disorients our worship. It's unbelievable what sin does. It takes a heart that's designed to worship and redirects it from the worship of the Creator to the worship of created things.

It's idolatry. And if that weren't bad enough, that disorientation, that movement of worship off God into the created things, it carries a capital punishment.

[12:19] It's a capital offense to worship something other than God. So biblically speaking, this heart disease called sin hasn't stopped you from being a worshiper.

You're still a worshiper. What sin does is redirects our hearts to worship things that are not God. You can see why God would consider your heart very important.

He's interested in your heart. Jesus says something later in Matthew. It's in Matthew 15.

He's talking about what defiles a person. And Jesus is very clear on saying, here's what really makes someone defiled in God's eyes. He says this, but what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart.

And this defiles a person. From out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder and adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person.

[13:30] But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone. Your heart, John Calvin would say, is an idol factory. Our sin really distorts our worship.

That's the bad news. Here's the good news. God offers a one-of-a-kind cure for our heart disease. Because He wants all of you for Himself. He wants all your heart, all your being, all of it for Himself. And so He's offered a one-of-a-kind cure. And this cure gets at the radical nature of your estranged heart.

This cure is able, and this cure alone, is able to resurrect a dead heart, and it's able to reorient a heart that's been set on things other than God.

[14:35] This cure, of course, is Jesus. Jesus is God's cure for the disease of our sin.

It's through Christ that God offers sinners new hearts, new life, new purpose. So, when we read blessed are the pure in heart, you've got to realize that what Jesus means by heart, there's a whole lot of kind of like biblical freight that comes with that.

He's very interested in who you worship. And mind you, the one speaking this is God's cure for your heart. Today's Palm Sunday.

And we can imagine Jesus walking into Jerusalem and people laying down palm leaves. And oh Jesus, you're so awesome. He came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday in order to address the human heart.

He's on mission. He would hang on the tree and be raised from the dead in order to radically change our hearts from being diseased and disoriented to new life, new worship, new men and women in Christ Jesus.

[15:58] It's something only He can do. He wants your mainspring. He wants to change the fountainhead of your being. And only He can do it with His power. And so, your heart matters to God.

So much so, God sent Jesus to radically change your heart. So this morning, I just got a really simple question for you.

Do you realize how important your heart is? Your heart. Do you realize how important it is to God? What you worship matters.

And your heart matters to God. Which brings us to the second point for this morning. That little word, pure.

Blessed are the pure in heart. And this morning, what I want you to see is that the purity of heart that Jesus is talking about is not some kind of settled state of sinless perfection, but it is an active

pursuit of holiness.

[17:13] The first thing I want you to see is the location of this purity. Purity of heart. Jesus locates this purity within a person.

Internal. It's not external. Jesus is going after your heart. And this is to be a distinguishing mark of a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Inner purity.

Later on in Matthew in chapter 15 and in chapter 23, if you want to turn to chapter 23 with me right now, Jesus is going to indict the Pharisees, these religious leaders, for emphasizing an outer purity at the expense of inner purity.

He drops all these woe bombs on these Pharisees. And in 25 and 28, you see Jesus kind of locating something.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside, inside, they're full of greed and self-indulgent.

[18:24] You blind Pharisees, first clean the inside of the cup. He's talking about your heart and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like whitewashed tombs which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.

So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within your heart, you're full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. This call, Jesus is calling on us, his followers, the citizens of his kingdom.

Whatever he means by purity, what is to characterize us is we're to have a purity of heart inside of us. First and foremost, God wants your heart.

He wants your heart to be pure. These are the happy ones. So I want you to see the location of this. This is inner purity.

The second matter that we need to clear up this morning is what Jesus actually means by pure. Blessed are the pure in heart.

[19:45] Because I'm guessing some of you in this room right now who are believers, you've been justified, you stand in the finished work of Jesus, Jesus' righteousness is imputed to you, but when you hear the words, blessed are the pure of heart, your mind immediately goes to, well, I just did this this morning, I'm not pure in heart, how can I be a citizen of the kingdom?

Because you're thinking that what Jesus means by pure is some kind of settled state of sinless perfection. A perfect holiness of heart 24-7, 365 days a year.

A perfection of heart where sinful thoughts, feelings, and actions do not exist. If that's what Jesus is saying, well, none of us can ever be citizens of the kingdom because we all know by experience this is not true of us.

At least on this side of his return. What we know is we're a people who are simultaneously justified and sinners all at once. We're a mixed bag, aren't we?

So what does Jesus mean by pure? Well, I am so grateful for the logical flow of the Beatitudes. Jesus didn't just throw this stuff together.

[21:12] He intentionally laid it out. And there is a case to be made from the flow of the Beatitudes with what Jesus means by pure.

Remember, each of these Beatitudes is to be true of every kingdom citizen. And so, in chapter 5, verse 3, we read that there to be poor in spirit, that we would have declared spiritual poverty, that we know that we're in debt and we cry out to God.

That's to be true of us. 5.4 says, blessed are those who mourn. Mourn over what? Mourn over sin. It's a present participle. Who are mourning. Present participle. They haven't ceased to mourn their sin.

They continue to mourn sin. And they will find comfort in Christ. Spiritually bankrupt, mourn in sin. They are the meek. Blessed are the meek.

[22:21] They've been put in their place. They've been rescued from that vain and idolatrous notion that I am at the center of all things. We've realized that's not true.

We've been made meek. We have this new craving for Christ-likeness. We hunger and thirst for righteousness. We know that's not from us.

that that is an appetite given by the Almighty. We crave to be like Jesus in 5.7 so we show mercy. We've been shown mercy by God. Now we show mercy to others. That leads us to 5.8. Pure in heart.

You see, the pure in heart are the spiritually bankrupt who know that. The pure in heart are those who are mourning their sin. It's not an absence of sin. It's a mourning of sin. You're very aware of it in light of God's holiness.

[23:24] Pure in heart are the meek. They crave Christ-likeness. They're quick to mercy. The pure in heart are not the sinlessly perfect incarnate.

The pure in heart are those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb who want to now be holy. Who have a singular purpose.

Holiness. These are men and women born by the Spirit with a new appetite despite ongoing cravings for sin. The pure in heart are those who are simultaneously made righteous and continue to sin.

The purity of heart is a pursuit of holiness. The Beatitudes themselves when taken together help us to understand that what Jesus means by pure in heart is not sinless perfection on earth but an active pursuit of holiness.

That's what he means. That word pure in the original language is the word that we get catharsis from or catheter. In its most general meaning it means clean.

[24:51] But it also has a fuller sense. It's John MacArthur helping me understand helping us understand that this word was commonly used to describe metals that had been refined until all the impurity were removed.

It's unmixed, unalloyed, unadulterated metal. There is integrity to the metal. The finest gold is the gold subjected to the longest refinement.

And when we think about the heart and we apply this word pure to the heart, the idea is unmixed motive. Single-minded commitment.

Undivided devotion. Spiritual integrity. Not pharisaical hypocrisy. Unity of heart.

Oneness of heart. So when you hear Jesus say, blessed are the pure in heart, be thinking single-minded pursuit of God's holiness.

[26:01] Unity of heart and the worship of God in every area of your life. It's a huge call. It's what's to mark each of us as citizens of the kingdom.

We are to be singular in our pursuit of holiness. So this is not something to diminish, but something to realize this is a call on all of our lives.

It is comprehensive in its nature. Every area of your life. A singularity of focus. Holiness. It's an all-consuming pursuit of that which pleases God most.

Holiness. 1 Peter, be holy for I am holy. 1 Thessalonians, God's not called us for impurity, but in holiness. This purity of heart is not sinless perfection, but it's an active seeking of holiness in your inner being.

And so you end up having to deal with your sin. You deal with your sin in the ways that God has prescribed. You deal humbly with it.

[27:21] The pure in heart want holiness more than the fleeting pleasures of sin.

And so what I'm trying to help you see this morning is that this purity of heart is not a settled state of sinless perfection, but an active state of single-minded pursuit, all-consuming pursuit of the holiness of God.

And so I want to kind of tease this out a little bit before you. And so here are five dynamics of the pure of heart. Here's what this looks like on a daily basis.

So this active pursuit of God's holiness means that the pure of heart are always aiming their heart at God. Always aiming your heart at God.

You might stumble, you might fall down, you might skin your knee, but you get back up, you wipe it off, and you go after God again. Aiming, always aiming your heart at God.

[28:28] A verse like Psalm 115 would be something nice to hang on this. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory because of your

steadfast love and faithfulness.

I think of 2 Corinthians 5.15. He died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised. It's all about him. Always aiming your heart at God.

That's why Jesus shed his blood for you. To reorient your heart from yourself, from sin, into God. So the first dynamic of the pursuit of God, of the purity of heart, is always aiming your heart at God. That's what you've been bought for. The second is ceaselessly uniting your life for God. Always aiming and then uniting your heart.

Do you know what cowboys do? They herd cattle. And cattle, I have no experience herding cattle, but I can imagine it. I've seen enough movies to know that cattle are herding something that is living and active.

[29:38] And sometimes the living and active herd finds ways to go places they're not supposed to go. And so what do cowboys do? They herd them back to where they need to go.

And so when we talk about uniting, ceaselessly uniting your heart, what that means is you start recognizing when there's an aspect of your heart that is wanting to go away in a direction other than God's glory and that you herd it back.

You herd it back. Every area of your life, you are actively herding your heart unto God. What's going on there?

I need to herd that back to the Lord Jesus. Yeah! Yeah! Come on now! Come on! Come on! Come on, heart! Come on now! Yeah!

That wasn't in my manuscript. Yeah! But you know what's going to happen when you're hurting your heart?

[30:44] There's going to be desires. There's going to be decisions. There's going to be actions that are like, that's wrong. And so not only are you always aiming and ceaselessly uniting, you are quickly confessing.

A pure heart quickly confesses confesses sin. 1 John 1.9, I hope you know this, if we confess our sins.

That word confess simply means to agree. You are, you are agreeing with God that what I just did was wrong in His eyes. You're calling it what it is.

If we confess our sins, 1 John 1.9, we're quickly confessing our sins. That's part of hurting your heart. It's part of being a cowboy for Jesus.

Always aiming, ceaselessly uniting, quickly confessing. Fourth, because of your quickly confessing your sin, you are regularly receiving forgiveness and cleansing from God Almighty.

[31:54] If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just. It's right of Him based on what Jesus has done for you to forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. You experience it.

Purity of heart is dealing with your sin and receiving God's forgiveness and His cleansing grace time and again. The fifth thing that the pure heart do, they are eagerly expressing their gratitude. When you're hurting your heart and you recognize sin and you quickly confess it and you go to your God with it and you confess it and you know He's forgiven it based upon the finished work of Jesus, do you know when that happens?

Gratitude. You remember that prostitute that showed up at Simon's house when Jesus was in there eating dinner? And she shows up and she's just an emotional mess and she's like weeping and crying washing Jesus' feet with her hair.

And Simon's like surely he knows who this woman is. And Jesus drops a parable on him. This woman loves much because she's been forgiven much.

[33:11] Simon, you don't love much because you don't think you have a need to be forgiven. When we are aiming our hearts, when we are uniting our lives, when we are quickly confessing and regularly receiving, you're going to be a grateful brother and sister in Christ.

You're going to be constantly aware of your ongoing need for the blood of Jesus. And the result is gratitude. You are happy in your holiness.

holiness. You're delighting in your devotion. By God's grace, those who are pure in heart are happy.

They're blessed. Do you know what OCD is? My kids call me OCD once in a while. Dad, you can see you being so OCD. OCD. Obsessive compulsive disorder.

What we're talking about, the pure in heart, are OCD. It's not a disorder. It's devotion. Obsessive compulsive devotion to Jesus.

[34:25] It's what you're living for. It's your singularity of aim. It's what you're going after. It's what you're hurting towards. It's what you're dealing with for the glory of Jesus.

These are the pure of heart. Purity is an active pursuit of holiness. That's what Jesus is calling us to here.

The third and final point of this morning's message is this. You will see Him. You will see Him. Your heart matters. Purity is an active pursuit of holiness.

And you will see Him. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Amazing. Amazing what's being said.

It's amazing what Jesus is saying here. Those who are active pursuing holiness, because they've been changed, they're going to see God someday. God's happy.

[35:29] Why are the pure in heart happy? Because they're going to see God someday. You know, we're all looking forward to something. We're all looking forward to laying our eyes on something.

I mean, it's tax season, and maybe some of you have got a tax return coming, and you're just looking to lay eyes on that tax return check, or at least on your online account where you see it deposited.

You just want to lay eyes on that. I think I'm going to owe money this year, so I'm not looking to lay eyes on that. But you may be. Or others of you on a chilly Palm Sunday morning are looking forward to laying your eyes on a sandy beach.

Crystal blue water. A steady 84 degrees. Slight wind coming out of the east. You can hear kids giggling.

You can feel the sand between your toes. It's a warm beach. Oh, I can't wait to lay my eyes on that. We're all looking forward to something, aren't we?

[36:43] We're all looking forward to something. Maybe you're looking forward to laying your eyes on a loved one. Maybe you have a loved one living in another state that you don't see too often, and you're just looking forward to seeing them.

Maybe you have someone serving in the military, and you're just looking forward to seeing them when they get back. So they get back. Maybe you have someone living in prison, and you're just longing to see them.

Lay eyes on them. Someone who's away from you. You want to be in their presence.

In Matthew 5, 8, Jesus gives us the reason why the pure in heart are so blessed. They will see God. They will be in his presence. Brother and sister of a pure heart, those who are actively pursuing holiness, be happy, for you're going to see him.

You're going to see him. You're going to lay your eyes on him. You will be in his very presence. What I love to think about it is, I'm one day closer than yesterday than seeing him face to face.

[38:04] The window's getting smaller. God, there's coming a day when you will lay eyes on your Savior. You're going to see the creases in his face.

You're going to see the twinkle in his eye. You're not going to be disappointed. Not in the least. In fact, probably the biggest problem we're going to face, I don't know if there's traffic in heaven, but the biggest problem we're going to face is getting our eyes off Jesus. We're just going to be fixed, transposed.

We just want to be with him. The Apostle Paul talks about this a little bit in 1 Corinthians 13. He's talking about, now I see him through a glass dimly, but then face to face.

Right now, we see through eyes of face. We fix our eyes on Jesus by faith. But there's coming a day when faith turns to sight.

[39:07] We see him face to face. You're going to be face to face with him. When was the last time you imagined that? When was the last time you brought to your mind that you were going to stand face to face with your

king, Jesus?

The one who shed his blood for you. What are you going to do in that moment? So when you think about that, that you will see him someday, what effect does that have on your pursuit of holiness now?

It's to motivate you to pursue holiness. Seeing him then, the promise of that compels us to live for him now.

In other words, this promise to the pure in heart is a way in which we aim our hearts at our Lord has a purifying effect.

Your heart matters to God. This purity of heart is an act of pursuit of holiness and it's capped with this wonderful promise you're going to see him face to face.

[40:34] So brothers and sisters in Christ, can I just call you to something now? To two things. Set your heart, set your heart on Jesus. Pursue holiness and long for the day that you'll see him face to face.

You will experience his blessing. Strive for holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Hebrews 12. Let's pray. God, we can just spend a lot of time thinking about that day.

God, we come to you now and ask that in light of what you've done for us already and what you will do for us then that you will now make us holy as you are holy.

That you would do a deep work in us. That we will crave for that which was foreign to us. That we will crave holiness.

That we would be the pure in heart. Pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. God. Amen.