

# Blessed Are the Pure in Heart

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] If you would open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5, it's on page 962 of your Pew Bible. And let me read, let me read the beginning of this sermon from Jesus.

Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him, just like we've come to Him today. And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

May God bless the hearing of His word. Well, if you are a follower of Jesus, if you are a Christian, you are a citizen of heaven.

[ 1 : 2 1 ] You have been delivered from the domain of darkness, and you've been transferred into the kingdom of His beloved Son. What Jesus says here is the kingdom of heaven. And in God's kingdom, character matters.

In His kingdom manifesto, the Sermon on the Mount, which is Matthew 5, 6, and 7, Jesus begins with an eight-point character profile of each and every one of His kingdom's citizens.

This is to be true of every one of us who are a follower of Jesus. This is to be true of every one of us who are a follower of Jesus.

But I do have Google. So I looked up what is an echocardiogram, and I'm summing it up, but this is what it is. It's a painless process by which your heart in your chest is mapped by sound waves.

So there's an echocardiogram machine. It gets hooked up, and it shoots sound waves into your chest, and an image is put forward of your heart.

[ 2 : 5 4 ] So your doctor can see the structure of your heart fundamentally to make sure you're alive. Also, the doctor wants to see the blood flow in your heart to make sure there's no kind of buildups within your heart.

And she's also checking for the right ordering of your valves. So an echocardiogram, well, it's a tool to assess the physical well-being of that one-pound muscle pumping blood in your chest right now.

But this morning, these words of Jesus are an echocardiogram of a different sort. His words are echoing through your soul.

And we're going to see some things. It may not be painless this morning. We know from Hebrews chapter 4 that the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword.

It pierces joint and marrow and discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4.12 isn't talking about the muscle in your chest.

[ 4 : 17 ] It's talking about this part of you that is the central operating system of your being. These words of Jesus, blessed are the pure in heart.

It's his divine echocardiogram to help us see our own health of our own hearts. And so this echocardiogram this morning is going to proceed in two steps.

Step number one, we're going to ask this question, what does Jesus mean by pure in heart? We're going to spend the bulk of our time this morning on that phrase. And then we're going to proceed to the second question, what does Jesus mean by this promise?

For they shall see God. What I want you to help you to see is the pure in heart, well, they know they're not pure in heart. But because of God's grace, they're striving to be pure in heart because they're in the kingdom.

The pure in heart strive to be pure in heart. So let's ask and answer this first question. What does Jesus mean by being pure in heart?

[ 5 : 39 ] Blessed are the pure in heart. What does that mean? Again, we're not talking about the muscle in your chest. Jesus is talking about a different heart. And I just want to help you think, what does the Bible mean by heart?

First, when the Bible talks about our hearts, the heart is central to your being. Your heart is central to your being.

The Bible talks about the heart as the operational center of who you are. We see that in Hebrews 4.12, but we also see it in Proverbs 4.23. Guard your heart above all else, for from it flow the wellsprings of life.

You live your life out of your heart. Here's the thing, Americans make this head-heart split. You think with your heart, and you think with your head, and you feel with your heart.

The Bible's use of heart doesn't rule that way. The Bible talks about the heart as the seat of your thinking, of your emotions, of your desires, and of your will.

[ 6 : 45 ] It's all in one spot. And it determines how you live your life. Any Star Trek fans?

I'm not talking newer Star Trek. I'm talking old school Star Trek. Yeah. Captain Kirk. Scotty. Bones.

Spock. If you were a Klingon, and you wanted to take over the USS Enterprise, where would you be beamed into?

The bridge. Because the bridge of the USS Enterprise is the controlling center of the ship. You've got comms there, weapons there.

You've got navigational direction, the throttle, whatever that looked like. It's all there on the bridge. Whatever controlled the bridge of the USS Enterprise controlled the USS Enterprise.

[ 7 : 44 ] So it is with your heart. Your heart is the place, the operational center of your life, and whatever controls your thinking, and your feeling, and your desires, and your will controls your life.

Your heart is central to your being. But it's not just central to your being. It's central to your worship. What you worship.

It's your praise factory. God has hardwired you for this. There's 8.2 billion people on the planet.

And they're all hardwired to worship. It's not if you're going to worship something. It's what are you worshipping.

Etymology is the study of the origin of words. and the etymology of the word worship is quite interesting. It comes from an old English word, worth-ship.

[ 8 : 58 ] It's where you are recognizing something's value, something's worth, and then you're responding accordingly to it. And when we talk about worship in the context of God, it's we are recognizing His unsurpassed worth and we are giving Him the praise due His name.

Psalms 96.4, Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. That is a function of your heart. And so when Jesus says, blessed are the pure in heart, He's addressing the center of your being, the center of your worship, of your praise generator, of your worship center, and I hope you're starting to sense how important your heart is to God.

Your heart is also central to your problems. Yesterday morning, I gave a talk to the men of our church on self-control and sexuality, and at one point I said this, when the world, and what I mean by that is sinful humanity in organized rebellion against God, when the world sees someone doing something wrong or evil, usually the world will explain that in one of two ways.

Nature, they were genetically disposed to that, or nurture, well, they were raised in a context that predisposed them to that. Your Bibles tend to not disregard those, but what your Bible will do, what God will do, is say the source of evil in human beings is a nasty, not nature, not nurture, nasty.

It's your heart. The source of evil in each of us is resident in our hearts. When Adam and Eve sinned, they introduced sin into the world, into our experience, and each and every one of us since has been born with a sinful nature.

[ 11 : 20 ] And so, if you would turn with me to Mark chapter 7, I want you to see how Jesus talks about it. Any IT people in the room? IT?

I don't even know what it means. That tells you how IT-oriented I am. But let's just say this. If your heart is the operating system of your life, sin is a wicked malware that came with it.

Listen to what Jesus has to say. Mark chapter 7, verses 20 through 23. Jesus' disciples didn't wash their hands.

The Pharisees are like, naughty boys, you've been defiled in the eyes of God. And Jesus is like, no. It's not what goes into you that defiles you.

And then he goes, in verse 20, what comes out of a person is what defiles them. For from within, where, Jesus? Where from within? Out of the heart of man come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

[ 12 : 44 ] 13 things. Just, it's representative. All of these evil things come from within, and they defile a person. John Calvin talked about your heart as being an idol factory.

Sin factory. So, so not only is your heart the center of your being and the center of your worship, it's the center of your problems. It's the source of sin in you.

You can't blame nature. You can't blame nurture. You got sin in you that God holds you responsible for. Here's the effect.

It deadens you to God. In Ephesians, chapter 2, verse 1, says, and you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, dead to God.

And that's just not deadness. You've been defiled. Your sin defiles you in God's eyes. That's what Jesus' point is in Mark 7. And it's just not that.

[ 13 : 54 ] Sin brings about a disorder of loves in your heart. It's the whole point of Romans chapter 1. You exchange the truth of God for a lie. You exchange the creator for the creature created.

And you're going to have idols all abounding. It disorders your loves. You start to put created things over the creator.

That's a sinful disordering. That's called idolatry. Your heart is central to your problems.

Anybody want some good news? your heart is central to God's work of salvation. Do you know what's amazing about God's love?

We were just singing about it. For God so loved the world. Sinful humanity and organized rebellion against God.

[ 15 : 04 ] For God so loved the dead in their sin. The defiled in their sin. The disordered loves of sinful humanity. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

It's not that we're lovable. It's that he is loving. And in his great love for us he carries out a work of salvation that addresses this sin problem deep within us.

In fact Zach alluded to it in his prayer. This has always been the plan. In Ezekiel chapter 36 we hear this prophecy.

I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 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.

[ 16 : 17 ] You see in the new covenant that was established by Jesus on the cross he brought in Ezekiel 36. Salvation now at its essence is a heart transplant by the miracle of the Holy Spirit working in you.

He removes your stony heart that was dead to God and replaces it with a fleshly living heart wanting to obey God. What a glorious plan.

It's something only God can do and that gets us at the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When a sinner dead in their sin defiled by sin disordered by sin puts their faith in the Christ who died and was raised for their sin that alone has the power to flip a human being from being a worshiper of sin to a worshiper of God.

That alone changes their hearts. It's a miracle. It's a miracle. Ephesians 2 talks about it as being dead in sin but God made us alive in Christ.

Your heart is very important to God. He sent Jesus to change your heart. So you may be asking, okay, why is Jesus getting to the heart now in the Beatitudes?

[ 18 : 04 ] We're on Beatitude number six. If the heart is so important, why is he talking about it now? He's been talking about it all along. Poor in spirit, where do you think that is?

Mourning your sin, where do you think that comes from? Being meek, humble, of heart? What do you think hungering and thirsting for righteousness is?

It's a heart posture. What do you think mercy flows from? Oh, he has been talking about the heart all along here. He just gets explicit right now.

But then, for the rest of the sermon, for the rest of the sermon on the mount, he pounds the heart. He goes after the internals. It's one big echo cardiogram of a sermon.

God's God's God so much so that Jesus, God in the flesh, suffered God's wrath on the cross for you and then was raised from the dead to give you a new heart.

[ 19 : 18 ] Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are those who God's grace has fallen upon, whose the spirit has given new life, who've gone from being dead to alive.

Blessed are the pure in heart. Your heart's important. You live out of your heart. Now let's talk about this word pure.

Blessed are the pure in heart. What is this purity business? Well, at least implied, this purity that Jesus is talking about is not a self-generated purity.

The purity that he's talking about here, it's a made alive purity. This is a purity in your heart that doesn't come from your wicked heart.

This is a purity that comes from the God who's made you alive. life. There's no way human obedience and works can bring about a spiritual life that brings about a purity of heart to a heart that is dead and defiled and disordered.

[ 20 : 35 ] The purity first and foremost that you need to understand is a living purity. This is a spirit made alive purity.

This is a born again John 3 purity. Given a new heart, the spirit blows where he wishes. Not just that, it's a purity that has brought someone who's dead into spiritual life by the spirit of God.

It is a washing clean by the blood of Jesus purity. It's a washing clean of the defilement that made us so grievous in God's sight.

It's referred to in Ezekiel 36 as that sprinkling clean. It's in Isaiah 1.8, come let us reason together so that your sins that are scarlet can be washed white as snow as wool.

That's the cleaning we're talking about here. When the Bible talks about cleaning, purity, it's talking about forgiveness of your sins, of making you clean in God's sight.

[ 21 : 54 ] There's this great passage in Colossians. It uses a little different language, but you'll get it. In Colossians 2.13, we read this. And you, who were dead in your trespasses, in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.

By canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands, this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. The forgiveness of sins is being talked about as a cancellation of debt in this context, but we can talk about it as being washed clean, by the blood of Jesus.

It's another way, another description of it. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

This washed clean, this purity in heart is a cleansing that comes from the shed blood of Jesus on the cross, in which covering you, it's cleansed you.

It happens at the moment you believe, at your conversion. There's this positional cleansing in which you've been forgiven of all of your sin, past, present, and future. It is a yes and amen.

[ 23 : 27 ] And then there is this ongoing need for cleansing, because even though the penalty of sin has been paid, the power of sin has been broken, the presence of sin remains, which means even though I've been made pure positionally, I'm going to continue to sin, and I'm going to continue to need to be forgiven, and I'm going to continue to need to be cleansed.

And so when we read a passage like 1 John 1, 9, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

There is this, you have been made pure, you are being made pure, and you will be made pure, fully and finally and completely. It's going to happen at his appearing when you see him, 1 Corinthians 15.

Your imperishable tent is going to get swallowed up by what is perishable. And at that moment, in the twinkling eye, and the blowing of the trumpet, you see him. And you're going to be made new all the way through.

That wickedness in you, that idol maker in you, gone. All by the blood of Jesus. It's all the fruit of his cross work.

[ 24 : 45 ] His positional cleansing, his practical day-by-day cleansing, and then this promised full and forever cleansing that will come where he deals with the defilement of our sin.

Hebrews 10, 14 says it this way, for by a single offering, he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. Or in the language we've been using, for by a single offering, by a single cleaning at the cross, he has purified for all time those who are being purified.

But this purity is not just being made alive from the dead, it's not just simply being washed clean from defilement, it's having your loves rightly reordered.

The effects of sin on our humans, on our hearts, is idolatrous.

We would oftentimes rather worship at the altar of comfort than to live fully for our risen king.

[ 25 : 59 ] When you got flipped, when you were delivered from the domain of darkness and you were transferred into the kingdom of the beloved son, all by God's grace, a miraculous work, at that moment you got rightly reordered.

Jesus became the controlling center of your life. He is the great one thing. He's the great first love.

When Jesus comes to town and he claims you as your own, he is going to reorder your loves. In Matthew 22, a lawyer approaches Jesus.

Can you hear? What's the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus responds. The first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

And the second is like it. To love your neighbor as yourself. These two great love commandments, all of the prophets hang on them. God's love.

[ 27 : 22 ] And it's for us a reordering of our loves. He is going to want to reorder in you on a daily basis a love for God first and foremost that controls everything, even your love for your neighbor.

It's a reordering of our loves. You could say it this way. You were redeemed to live for the glory of God.

And so if you're following me, this purity of heart is being made alive by the spirit, being washed clean by the blood of Jesus, and now you've been reordered, realigned to live for the glory of God.

How about that for purity in heart? So what is purity in heart? Well, it's a heart that's been made alive by the spirit, washed clean by the blood of Jesus, and it's a person who is now living for the glory of God.

Blessed, blessed are the pure in heart. It shows that they have been graced of God. It's at this point, though, I've got to let you know about something.

[ 28 : 51 ] The book of Matthew is very, the structure of the book is beautiful. Here are these eight beatitudes at the beginning of the book, and towards the end of the book, in Matthew 23, we have seven woes.

Jesus speaking woe on the scribes and the Pharisees. They are the opposite of being pure in heart.

They emphasize being clean on the outside, of having a righteousness that everybody can see. Let me just read to you what Jesus has to say to them in Matthew chapter 23.

This is verses 25 through 27. Jesus says this. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Those are heart products. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and plate, that the outside also may be clean.

[ 30 : 09 ] 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.

Cleanness! So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Jesus is making a stark contrast between the blessed ones of his kingdom who are pure in heart, and not necessarily perfect in heart, but striving for purity, and these Pharisees, woe to them!

They're under God's curse! They're not in the kingdom, because they're dead in their sin! They're defiled! They're disordered! It's a sober warning for us.

And it gets at something that is essential to what it means to be pure in heart. Your heart is aimed at one thing. Jesus.

Treasure Him above all else. It's an undivided heart. A pure heart is a heart that has a singularity of purpose and focus. Treasuring Jesus above all else.

[ 31 : 28 ] Okay, I'm going to bring you now in this echocardiogram. We're going to get some specific work done. When Jesus speaks of being pure in heart, it applies to your anger.

In 521, Jesus says, You have heard that it was said, to those of old, you shall not murder, and whoever murders will be liable to judgment. But I say to you, that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.

Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council. And whoever says, You fool, will be liable to the hell of fire. Sinful anger is an impurity of heart and must be confessed.

Lust. You've heard that it was said, verse 27, you shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

It's not simply not doing things externally. It's what's going on on the inside. Lust is an impurity of heart. He goes on to talk about many other things.

[ 32 : 49 ] One being hate. Okay, we are in a contentious political cycle. Right? Election for president. Listen to this. Verse 43, You've heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

But I say to you, love your enemies, even political enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. Hatred towards others is an impurity of heart.

Needs to be confessed. He goes on to talk about greed. He goes on to talk about anxiety. He goes on to talk about in chapter 27, that if you are judging other people and not first taking the log out of your own eye, you are impure of heart.

Again and again, this whole sermon is one big echocardiogram to not only expose, for His Word to expose us and the way to respond to this when you're seeing this stuff in your heart, which we all do, is to say, Oh Lord, have mercy on me.

Pour out Your grace on me. Make me pure as You are pure. Purity of heart we're talking about are those in the kingdom who've been made pure on one level, but they're aware of their impurity on another, and yet they're striving to be pure in heart because they've been brought into the kingdom.

[ 34 : 35 ] It's all by God's grace. Now quickly to this promise. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

This is talking about when you will actually lay your eyes on God. It's when, what Paul talks about when faith becomes sight.

Right now we are looking at it through a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. This seeing God is this literal when you will be in His presence, in His place, and you will see Him.

And the first time you will see Him is at His appearing. And your Bible has much to say about that. In Titus chapter 2, verse 13, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our God, great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 1 John 3, 2 speaks of His appearing and the purifying effect it is to anticipate that.

It speaks of in 1 Corinthians 15 all the way through the return of Jesus, and it has this strengthening effect for those who are doing the work of the Lord. that you will see Him with your own eyes.

[ 36 : 11 ] This is a promise for those of us in the kingdom so that we keep on pursuing purity of heart. What's beautiful about the promise, it has this kind of anticipation of a future seeing Him as a present purifying effect.

Longing for Him, pursuing holiness, persevering. What does Jesus mean by being pure in heart?

Well, He means that those blessed of the Lord, those who are in the kingdom are made alive by the Spirit of God, that they've been cleansed by the blood of Christ, that they're living for the glory of God.

They know they haven't arrived, but they are continuing to pursue greater degrees of holiness and purity. And what does Jesus mean by we shall see God?

Well, this promise is that we're one day closer to seeing Him face to face. And the only way He can wipe a tear from your face is if He's face to face.

[ 37 : 27 ] So let me close with just four questions for you. We've come to the end of the echocardiogram. Does your heart need Spirit reviving?

Has sin deadened your heart? Dulled your heart? Distracted your heart? Cry out. Don't wait. Spirit, revive my heart that I would want Jesus.

Are you in need of fresh cleansing from the flood, from the fountain, from the blood of Jesus?

Don't, don't wait. 1 John 1.9, if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Is your life out of order? Are you putting third things first instead of first things first?

[ 38 : 46 ] Do you need to go to your King and say, oh, forgive me, Lord. help me to treasure you above all else.

You are the controlling center of my life. And finally, have you forgotten that you're going to see Him face to face?

Maybe this afternoon. Take some time out. Pull out your Bible. read Revelation 19, 20, 21, and 22.

Pull out your Bible. Read 1 Corinthians 15. Pull out your Bible. Read Matthew 24 and 25. Where we're given these sites of Him.

We're citizens of the United States in an election year. But we're citizens of the kingdom forever.

[ 39 : 58 ] So let's, by God's grace, strive to be pure in heart. Amen? God in heaven, we are so grateful that you address us so lovingly.

It's out of love, Jesus, you speak these words. And it's out of love for you that we receive them and we say, oh, Lord, thank you. Would you purify our hearts?

Would you grow us in Christ-likeness? Lord Jesus, we recognize you as being the purest in heart of all.

Thank you for dying for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. God.

Thank you for God. For God in heaven