

"Blessed Are The Pure In Heart" Matthew 5:8

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 August 2022

Preacher: Nate Taylor

[0 : 00] All right, we're in Matthew chapter 5. We're back in our, you know, one of the most stretched out sermon series ever in the Beatitudes. By the way, it doesn't hold the record for most, like, elongated sermon series ever.

John Calvin, he was exiled from the city of Geneva for three years. And he came back in his very first Sunday back in the pulpit. And he tells everybody to open up to the psalm that he left off on in his sermon series.

Total boss move, right? So, for us, it's just been a few weeks. No big deal, right? We're not John Calvin. But as a way of reminder, in these Beatitudes, it's the beginning of what's called the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus is introducing what it means that he is king and what life looks like in his kingdom for citizens of the kingdom. And these first few verses, they're called the Beatitudes.

We get that from the very first word of each verse. Blessed. Blessed. Right? The Greek there is makarios. In Latin, it gets translated into beatus.

[1 : 07] And that's where we get beatitude from. And what it means is happy. Blessed. Flourishing. And it's all these descriptions, right? It's describing the good life and the person who is in this state of happiness.

And, of course, just like Jesus, he's flipping things upside down of expectations of what that could look like. Because, after all, he is the king who suffers and is humiliated.

And then he rises and is ascended and glorified. Right? And so that's the pattern. As the king goes, so goes his people. Before we look more closely at today's beatitude, though, let me pray for the preaching of God's word.

Would you pray with me? Lord, we ask that you would help us to focus on you and your truth. That we would behold you for who you are. That we would see the kind of love that you have for us.

That we would gaze upon your beauty and your glory. And in doing so, may we become more like you. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

[2 : 18] All right. So the year is 386 A.D. Great year. And there is this 31-year-old professor of rhetoric named Augustine. What you need to know about Augustine, he was this guy who had these deep, kind of insatiable urges and longings.

He wanted, in a way, to be embraced by something larger than himself. And he didn't know how to find that. And so his idea is what most people do in the world. To find blessedness.

To find happiness. To find something that can enrapture his soul. He ends up going from woman to woman. Trying to find the embrace that will satisfy him.

He ends up going from city to city. He goes from Carthage to Rome to Milan. He goes from worldview to worldview. He's constantly looking for all these different philosophers and their philosophies.

Something that will kind of make sense of life and bring this inner peace. This joy. Doesn't really work out. Like most people who kind of follow that path of seeking.

[3 : 21] He grew disillusioned. He hadn't come any closer to finding the embrace that he longed for. And he still had all of these unanswered questions. And all that he was left with is kind of this divided, weary heart.

And he also had a son from a teenage pregnancy. So it's August of 386. It's later in that year. And he's at a friend's home. And he ends up walking out in the garden.

And he's kind of restless. He's deeply disturbed by these questions. Where can I find joy? What is this purpose? What is the thing that I'm looking for? And he realizes that he's out there with his friend that he's wrestling with God.

All these questions and doubts swirling inside of him. He realizes he's wrestling with God. He writes this. He said, A huge storm blew up within me and brought on a heavy rain of tears.

And it's in that exact moment that Augustine hears a child's voice on the other side of the garden wall. And the child's voice is chanting, Tole lege.

[4 : 21] Tole lege. Which means, Take it up. Read it. Take it up. Read it. And Augustine took this as a divine command. So he goes back inside his friend's house. And he opens up his Bible.

And he opens up to Romans 13. And it says this. Not debauchery and drunkenness. Not sexual immorality and sensuality. Not arguing or jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's in this moment that Augustine felt like the Lord had exposed his heart. He had confronted all the things he had sought for joy and for life.

And he understood this call as a call of love. A call to move away from a divided, impure heart and all of its disordered loves and to embrace something more beautiful.

Or to put it another way. To be embraced by God. To seek and to see his face. To put on Jesus. To gaze at him. This is how he writes later about this conversion.

[5 : 20] He says this. You pierced my heart with your love. And I fell in love with you. This is the guy who had earlier, he had written, I searched for something to love in love with loving.

He says this about God. You pierced my heart with your love. And I fell in love with you. Late have I loved you. Beauty so old and so new. Late have I loved you. The lovely things kept me far from you.

Though if they did not have their existence in you, they had no existence at all. You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent. You put to flight my blindness.

You were fragrant. And I drew in my breath and now pant after you. I tasted you and I feel but hunger and thirst for you. You touched me and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours.

Whoa. Well, why mention Augustine's conversion? Well, it's because today's beatitude challenges our allegiance and our loyalty.

[6 : 22] And even more than that, at a deeper level, it goes after what we desire most. What we love and our struggle in that. It's about a purity of heart and about seeing God.

That's today's beatitude. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. I don't know how much that makes sense to us right in the moment. Maybe it just sounds like a nice little Christian phrase. But let's look a little bit more closely at it.

I want to ask two questions for our outline. First one is what does it mean to be pure in heart? And then secondly, what's the promise attached to it? So first part, second part. What does it mean to be pure in heart?

And then what's the promise attached to it? So first off, what does it mean to be pure in heart? And one of the ways to answer a question first is to say what it doesn't mean. What it does not mean, what's not entailed when Jesus is talking about being pure in heart.

First off, it does not mean mere outward conformity to rules. It's not blessed are the goody two-shoes. It's why it mentions the heart. This beatitude shows that God is not content with a mere surface level righteousness.

[7 : 32] He's not talking about a skin deep purity, but a purity of heart. Jesus is actually going to talk about hypocrisy later in the Sermon on the Mount. And if you remember, we said the opposite of blessed, in this sense of the way it's being used in Beatitudes, is not a curse, but rather the opposite of blessed is woe.

That's what Jesus gives. He gives the woes to the Pharisees in Matthew 23. So he says to them, So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

So it's the same. If you choose looking nice and polite and well-dressed, but inside you are judgy and self-righteous and constantly finding ways that you're better than people and you're always right and you envy others and you always try to make your name great, you have not chosen the good life.

You've not chosen the blessedness, but the woeful life. One theologian puts it this way. He says this beatitude, it interrogates our hearts with awkward questions like, What do you think about when your mind slips into neutral?

How much sympathy do you have for deception? To what do you pay consistent allegiance? What do you want more than anything else? What and whom do you love?

[9 : 07] To what extent your actions and words constitute a cover-up for what is in your heart? What it's getting at is just imagine it would be a really bad idea to spend a lot of money on a really nice car that's super awesome on the outside and on the inside you just put the crummiest, cheapest engine and you decide to never change the oil, right?

You might pull up at a stoplight and impress some people, but it's not going to get you very far and you're going to end up stranded on the side of the road. So purity of heart, it's not mere outward conformity to a moral code.

So then what does it mean to be pure in heart? I think to answer that, an example, an analogy is helpful, and the example is that of gold. Gold, because in the Old Testament, God tells his people, he instructs Moses to build a tabernacle and lots of tabernacle is the precursor to the temple.

And lots of different pieces of that were supposed to be made with gold, but not just any kind of gold. It was supposed to be pure gold.

You know, like what's impure gold? It's not gold that lies about its accomplishments on its CV, right? It's gold that in its substance, it isn't mixed with other things.

[10 : 27] Well, you say, it's mostly gold. It's like 90% gold. Uh-uh. It's not good enough. It needs to be 100% gold. It needs to be pure, not mixed with anything else.

You know, it might need some polishing on the outside. That's fine. We can work with that. But if its substance is mixed, it can't be used. All right? And that's why I say this beatitude is talking about our allegiance.

It's referring to a heart that is unmixed. To be pure in heart. A heart that isn't mixing its allegiances. It's not that Jesus gets some spiritual sliver of your life and the rest is yours.

No, he's Lord of all. It's not like what he wants out of you. What he really cares about is what you do from 11 a.m. to noon and 6 to 7 every week on a Sunday.

And the rest of the week, have at it, you get to decide. No. The king whose kingdom you're invited into wants your total allegiance. And he actually promises that that's the true path to happiness.

[11 : 34] One pastor puts it this way. He says, Jesus refuses to be part of your life. However, he will be your life. So the hypocrite, they don't have purity of heart because they lack a righteousness of their whole inner person.

Right? It's not a pure heart that they have. It's a divided heart. Sure, God, you can have this piece of it, but I want to control this. Ooh, and I'm really going to serve that. That's a divided, that's an impure heart.

Jesus, he's quoting Psalm 24, which we sang earlier in the service. And it asks the question, who gets to ascend the hill of the Lord? What's the answer?

The pure in heart. And then the very next line, the way Hebrew poetry works, it kind of explains what it's talking about in the pure in heart. It says, the one who does not lift up his soul to what is false.

In other words, a pure heart is one that is wholly devoted to the Lord, not giving itself to false gods, idols, or other masters, whether it's Buddha or your belly, molek or money.

[12 : 40] Peter Lighthouse's theologian, he describes it this way. He says, purity of heart means the complete and single-minded devotion to God that is rooted in the heart, but expresses itself in everything we do.

In the Bible, the heart is who you are at your core. It is the seat of your affections. It's command central for your life.

It's why Jesus, he's not just concerned about outward conformity. He wants to go after your heart because he wants you, the real you. All of you. And it's death to divide your heart.

To divide your heart amongst a bunch of other masters is like death. You're like Voldemort creating a bunch of different horcruxes, right? If you don't understand that reference, that's fine. Let's move on.

But when we split our heart to these false gods, it makes us less and less human, and it brings about death in our lives. It's not the blessed life to serve all different sorts of masters.

[13 : 42] Don't you know this to be true in your life? It's not. It is a woeful experience to kind of run on the proverbial hamster wheel of performance, where we just have to look good enough on a Sunday, and we have to be the impressive parent, and our kids better perform otherwise a pox upon your house, right?

Or we're supposed to achieve all these things at a certain point. And we wonder, is everybody wondering, why am I not married by this age? Or on the other side, people are asking, why would you want to get married and give up your freedom?

What is wrong with you? We're constantly wondering what other people are thinking about us. And then on top of that, you feel like God is a God who is only ever just intolerant and disappointed in you and doesn't actually love you.

These are all false masters that we give our allegiance to. Sometimes it's willingly. Sometimes it's begrudgingly. Sometimes it's unknowingly. We serve them, and they do not bless us.

They are incapable of doing so. And so you either become like a Pharisee whose purity of heart is skin deep. It's about all we can accomplish. Or you end up like Augustine in his early life, you know, going from thing to thing, philosophy to philosophy, lover to lover, city to city, career to career, wandering aimlessly.

[15 : 03] Heart gets divided along the way. But the pure in heart, the pure in heart have an audience of one. There is one voice that they want to hear. There is one face that they seek. And when they hear that voice and they see that face, it is enough.

Do you know that experience? I wonder if you're here this morning, do you know that that's possible? That you don't have to have a divided heart serving all these different masters?

That purity of heart is held out to you as a joy, not a death sentence. It's life. Let me apply this in one quick way before we go to our next point.

Just take some time this coming week in your own spiritual disciplines to examine your heart. Where are your allegiance? Heart. Where do I serve? Where is my allegiance given?

That's what we ask. And confess those things to God and talk maybe to another Christian, whether it's one-on-one or in a group, like a city group. So to be pure in heart, it's not just to be an outwardly moral person.

[16 : 08] It's to have a heart whose allegiance is to Jesus and it's not going to compromise that allegiance. Second question then, what's the promise attached to this beatitude? And it's this.

This is the promise. You heard it earlier. Here, the pure in heart will see God. Now, I don't know about you, but two questions come up for me when I hear that.

The first question is, what if I'm in pure in heart? Only the pure in heart get to see God? Got a little something I need to tell somebody.

My heart's allegiances have been divided before. Do I get that? It's my first question when I come to it. And the second question is, why see God?

Is that that good? Is that a great promise? How do those two things connect? And this is what I mean. If you read the beatitudes that came before this, they seem to kind of feel like, oh, I see how they're going.

[17 : 07] You know, the poor in spirit, they get the kingdom of God. Those who are mourning, you get comfort. Those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, satisfied. Right?

Like, okay, that makes sense. The pure in heart get to see God. Maybe that sounds like a wonderful thing to you, and that's kind of my point here. It is a wonderful thing. But if we're going to be honest, sometimes we read those things and you're like, what does that mean?

Like, oh, it's God. Hey, pure in heart. Like, is that it? Right? It's the one-time thing. Like, what is actually being promised here?

Those two questions are connected, and I actually want to answer them together. What about if you're impure in heart, and why is it so good that we get to see God? Here's my answer. Buckle up.

To see God is what we're created for. Right? A face-to-face relationship with God is what theologians call the visio day, the vision of God, or another term that they use because they like to use Latin.

[18 : 07] The beatific vision. Did you hear beatific? It has the same root as beatitudes. Right? Beatific means happy. It's the sight, the scene, the vision that makes happy.

The blessed vision, the beatific vision is to see God's face. I mean, think about it, right? It's nice to hear somebody's voice. It can be comforting. It can be soothing.

But it's not enough. You want to see their face. You know, sometimes I'll call Erin as she's driving. And the people move around with all our kids in it. And we'll talk.

And if the kids are in the car, eventually, you know, they're hearing Daddy's voice. They want to throw something in. They want to tell me something. And so we go on and they tell something. And then sometimes our youngest, he gets a little upset because he knows about FaceTime.

Right? And then he'll start to complain. And he'll say, I want to see Daddy. I want to see him. Right? Erin's like, we can't. We're driving right now. Can't do that.

[19 : 04] Right? It's just his voice right now. Why? Why does he want? Because it's not enough just to hear. You also want to see. The face of God. Seeing God is what Adam and Eve lose in the garden.

The curse in Genesis 2.17. It says that you shall surely die. Adam and Eve don't drop dead there on the spot. Right? They eventually do. What do they lose immediately?

What is death? Communion and fellowship and the face of God. That's what they lose immediately. They lose this intimacy with God. But God is gracious and he wants his people to see him again.

And yet he is also loving and understanding. So he hides his face from them. I'll explain more about what that means in a second. So what he does is, you know, picking parts in the Old Testament.

But he redeems his people, Israel, out of slavery in Egypt. This guy named Moses. He takes them out and they get to Mount Sinai. Right? And Moses goes up the mountain to get the Ten Commandments.

[20 : 04] And he's up there hanging out with God. And it is a great experience. And he's listening to God. He's hearing God's voice. It's instructing. It's naming. It's constituting a people. But he says, that's not enough.

He wants FaceTime. Where's that button? He asks. He asks God. Can I see your face? And what does God say to him? No. No.

No, because you see, if you saw my face, it would end you. You'd be done, Moses. To see God in all his glory would end somebody with an impure heart like you.

And like me. And like Moses. I mean, just think about it by way of analogy. You know, if you've wronged somebody. And you know you've wronged somebody. And you don't want to apologize.

And you feel super guilty about it. What do you avoid? That person. And if you happen to enter the same room as that person. And you're feeling that guilt and that shame.

[21 : 03] What do you avoid more than anything else? What is it? The face, right? You avoid eye contact. If you owe someone money, you try to avoid them. Because if you do, you know you've got to pay the debt.

And you know you can't pay it. Story about younger Nate. I was like 15 or 16. I think it's like the year 2000 or 2001. And a kid at my school comes up to me.

Out of the blue. Friend. And he said, Nate, I'm going to bet you \$10 that the New England Patriots will beat the St. Louis Rams in the Super Bowl. And I didn't have \$10.

But the St. Louis Rams were favored by a lot. They were way better record that season than the New England Patriots. I didn't have \$10. But I was like, this is the easiest \$10 I'm ever going to make.

This isn't an example of what to do, folks. And so I said, sure. Well, guess what happens? The New England Patriots upset the St. Louis Rams and win the Super Bowl.

[22 : 01] I still didn't have \$10. And so I went to school the next day. And guess who I actively tried to avoid? The kid. Right? Because I knew I owed him. I didn't want to see him.

And if that's true of a tenor, how much more so when we meet our holy creator. This is why the Apostle Paul writes, the wages of sin is death.

There is a debt because of our sin. And to see God's face is to call that debt to account. So God says to Moses, no, Moses, you can't see me. What I will give you because I will condescend to you is just kind of like the back trail of my glory.

And I'm going to hide your face in the cleft of the rock. And that's all you're going to get. And even just that makes Moses' face shine so brightly that nobody can even look at him. The face of God is the thing that we need to see.

But if we see it, hasta la vista. Bye-bye. So in the Old Testament, the solution was a professional substitute called a high priest.

[23 : 06] We created this tabernacle, this temple, and you got this high priest. And he had to do all of these rituals in order to purify himself. He'd make sacrifices on behalf of the people.

And they would only choose the most spotless animals, symbolizing purification of the impure. The people have a high priest. But no matter how many rituals that you went through, and no matter how many animals that were spotless were sacrificed, more was needed.

People still had an impure heart. A truly pure high priest is needed to show up. A truly spotless substitute on behalf of the people needs to be sacrificed.

And so there's this guy named Jesus who shows up, and John the Baptist's first words about him are, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin, the impurity of the world. And in John 1, John writes that no one has ever seen God, but that in Jesus we beheld his glory and he makes the Father known.

He mediates the glory of God so that it will not end you. You can look at Jesus and see the glory of the Father through mediation.

[24 : 16] And you don't have to be afraid. That's what we sing in Hark the Herald, in Israel, Behold in flesh. The Godhead, See. Later, Matthew 17, Jesus takes three disciples up another mountain, and it's called the Mount of Transfiguration.

And up there, his appearance gets transfigured. It says that his face shines white with light. And Peter, he asks a question. He says, Should we build some tents?

He's not asking a camping question. Like, hey, does everybody just want to hang out here and do some camping? No, what he's asking, the tent is the tabernacle. Like, whoa, what I am seeing is bright and glorious. Do we need to build some more tabernacles?

Do we need some priests to come in for what's going to happen? Are we going to be okay in this glory? And a voice speaks from heaven saying, this is my son in whom I'm well pleased. And the three disciples hear this.

And they fall to the ground. They're absolutely terrified by just the voice, not even the sight of the face of the father. And this amazing thing happens.

[25 : 21] Jesus tells them, stand up and don't fear. Somehow, because of the work of Jesus, the glory of God is no longer a threat. And you don't have to be afraid.

Getting closer. And so Jesus goes up another mountain, right? He goes to the Mount of Calvary. And on the cross, God's glory peeks out in a new and profound way. And reflecting on this priestly, sacrificial work of Jesus on the cross, the writer of Hebrews says this.

He says, if the blood of goats and bulls were sacrificed for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who offered himself without blemish, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

In other words, he's saying this. Jesus is better and purer. And if he did that, he can make you pure. So don't settle for dead works of surface level righteousness, but serve the living God with a pure, undivided heart.

You know, Jesus is the only one who has ever lived whose heart is wholly devoted to the Lord. He says, what does he say? What does he come to do? I've come to do the will of the Father. I've come to live in allegiance to him.

[26 : 34] A pure, undivided heart, and even in his greatest moment of need in the garden, he still says, not my will, but yours be done, Father. And he offers himself as your high priest.

But you have to forsake all other allegiances to have him as that. In Jesus, what we get is the purity of heart we need.

And because of that, we get the face of God. And so now, as Christians, we can kind of see. Or to put it like Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, right?

We see now in a mirror dimly. Back then, their mirrors were in glass. It would be like polished metal. So it would be like a dim reflection. But then, face to face. So now, we see, but there's still a vision to come.

It's what we read in 1 John 3. When he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

[27 : 36] And now, by faith, to have God's voice in his word. It's amazing and good, but it's not the end. Right? We want Revelation 22. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and the Lamb will be in it.

And his servants will worship him. And they will see his face. If you're a believer, what we say, what we believe, if you've come to Jesus, your impure, divided heart, if you come and say, Lord, would you make me pure?

I admit, my allegiance goes in all sorts of directions. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. Here's my heart. Take and seal it. Would you do that, Lord? We believe when we come to them that he actually gives us this promise that we get to meet him.

That we got to start to see, by the Holy Spirit, we get to start to experience the glory of God. But it's not everything. There is more to come. And what's promised for the believers is a glorious future.

A new heavens and a new earth. Think about it. A restored cosmos. A restored world. If you like hiking in Scotland, just wait for the new creation.

[28 : 42] We're promised resurrection bodies. Maybe your years of playing five-a-side and rugby are long gone. Just wait until your resurrection body. It is going to be great.

There's going to be so many things in the new heavens and new earth to explore and to search. And you will not be able to plumb the depths of it. But all of that stuff, all of it, is just the appetizer to the main course.

See, what we're longing for is the face of God. That's going to be our greatest delight and the center of everything. To see his face is for the door that our hearts have been knocking on all our lives to finally be opened.

And we get to enter in. And we will be received. And we will be loved. And we will see. And we will know him as we are fully known. Some of you here this morning, maybe you don't know you long for this.

But this is it. Beneath all your other longings. Beneath all your other desires. Beneath your heart that is searching for all these allegiances to give yourself to.

[29 : 43] To be embraced by something larger. This is the thing you're looking for. That's what the Bible says. It's the face of God. To see him. That this is what it is. All the longings of your heart go in the direction to God's face like all the rivers of the world flow into oceans.

This is it. This is the medicine that will heal your wounds. This is the food to feed you. The drink to quench your thirst. The cord that's going to resolve the melody of your heart. The peace to calm your anxiety.

The word to affirm you. The poem to celebrate you. The culmination of all your longings and hopes and dreams. It will be found and satisfied in his face. And he wants to show it to you.

He wants you to see it. To partake. This is what we want. You know, it's like David says in Psalm 27. One thing I seek in that I would ask that I would dwell in the house of the Lord forever and gaze upon his beauty.

I heard a quote of poem by a Scot. The bride eyes not her garment, but her dear bridegroom's face. I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of grace. And one day, after all these years of singing prone to wander, Lord, I feel it prone to leave the God I love.

[30 : 54] Here's my heart. Oh, take and seal it. Seal it for thy courts above. We will come and we will enter in and we will find that the blood of the Lamb really did seal our impure hearts. And will make us pure.

And we will be welcomed in. So, what do you do with this beatific vision? Seeing God. How's that going to change this week, right? You're going to go up on a mountain and just kind of like meditate or something like that?

Is that what he's asking you to do? If Jesus doesn't come back this week or if you don't have an Augustan experience, how is it supposed to change you? Let me close by applying it to you by way of illustration.

Any golf fans here? Scotland, right? Birthplace of golf. Is there supposed to be? I was like, I don't know. I know some here are golf fans. Phil Mickelson is considered the greatest left-handed golfer ever by many.

I don't know much about golf. I don't really watch it. I don't play it. Sorry. If I want to take a nap, I turn on golf. That's about it. But this is what I heard. Phil Mickelson, considered the greatest left-handed golfer of all time.

[31 : 58] But here's the thing about Phil Mickelson. He's right-handed. So, everything else was his right hand. Like, well, how did he start to play golf with his left hand, right? Well, his dad played golf.

And Phil Mickelson loved his dad. And his dad, who had these big clubs, would buy these little clubs. And so, wee little Phil Mickelson would go.

And as his dad was practicing putting, he would grab his clubs and he would gaze at his dad. He would look at his face and he would mirror him. And so, if you're mirroring somebody, if his dad's doing it right-handed, he starts to do it left-handed.

So, something that should feel so odd and foreign, it starts to switch in his mind and his brain. Why? Because he's beholding. Because he's seeing his father.

And all his golfing glory. He learned this new habit. And it starts to become second nature because he beheld his father as a beloved son. He looked and he looked until it changed him.

[33 : 03] So, what do you want you to do? This week, I want you to see. To see. To see the love that God has for you. To see his glory in the person of Jesus.

In the words of scripture. And as you give your heart to him, you will start to look like him. As you come to him and you confess where the impureness in your heart, the dividedness is. You don't stop there.

But you gaze. And you look. And you look. And you look. And as that happens, something new will occur. Because you see, blessed are the pure in heart.

For they shall see God. And when you see him, you will be like him. Thanks be to God. Let me pray for us. Father, would you give us clean hands?

Would you give us pure hearts? Would you help us not to lift our hearts to another? Would you give us an allegiance to you, Lord, that is firm and unswerving.

[34 : 05] But not in our own power. Not skin deep, Lord. Not just on the outside. We don't want to settle for that. Because we are seeking true blessedness. True joy. So, Father, we pray that we would see the glory of Christ in the cross and the empty tomb.

That we come again and again to that. That we would look at him. That we would behold. That we would see what kind of love the Father has for us. That we could be called children of God.

Father, we pray that this beholding would take place in our daily and weekly habits. That it would take place in our conversations. That it would take place in our imaginations.

That stories would stir us to think of the wonder of the love that you have for us. Lord, and that we would long to see your face. That we would long to see it.

That we would see that beneath all these other struggles and wandering hearts, that there is this desire to be known and to be loved. And to see something that is rapturous.

[35 : 07] And we can be taken up within it. Father, would you convince our hearts and would you lead us to see that it is the beatific vision. It is the thing that we see which makes us happy. That it is you and you alone.

Would you be our ultimate good. Our highest good. The thing that we glorify and we love the most. Would you do this for your glory. For our good. And for the good of our neighbors.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.