

Matthew 5:3-12 (NKJV)

- ³ **"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
- ⁴ **Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.**
- ⁵ **Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.**
- ⁶ **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.**
- ⁷ **Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.**
- ⁸ **Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.**
- ⁹ **Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.**
- ¹⁰ **Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
- ¹¹ **"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.**
- ¹² **Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

⁸ **Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.**

How do you feel when you hear this statement by Christ? ⁸ **Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.**

Consider the statement for a moment. What do you feel?

I cannot tell you how **you** feel. But I can tell you **my** first feeling. It is **fear**. Even before we explore the meaning of pure in heart, I have a pretty good idea that it does not describe me like it should. Some days I wonder if it describes me **at all**. Pure in heart.

When did we have a single day when we could look at every single thing we **did** and **thought** and **said** and declare that it came only from **my love for God**?

Do you see what I mean? It is a bit frightening. But maybe it will help if we look at this passage in its context. Let's consider **why** it was put **where** it was in its context.

We started with the blessing of understanding our position of being a **spiritual beggar**. We have no natural resources that will produce **spiritual benefits**. We are destitute by birth of **spiritual power**.

Then we mourn because we understand not only that which is **absent**, but that which is also **present** in our lives. We are spiritual **beggars** and we are morally **filthy**. Our sins are grievous and many. We mourn.

But something begins to happen in our lives. As we realize our bad **position** and bad **condition**, we are **willing** to change. We know we **need** to change. We are now willing to take whatever direction God will give us. We look to Him as our master. Our hearts are turned away from **self** dependance and onto **God** dependance.

Then we hunger. We want desperately that which we **need**, that which we do not by nature **have**. We want **rightness** in our very core. We can't stop wanting it. And we start getting filled. And getting filled just causes us to want it more.

I want to suggest something here. I think the **hungering and thirsting verse** is the **apex** verse. The first three verses are leading up to this point. This is the state that produces that which is to follow. We talked about this not being a "**once and done**" kind of thing, any more than our daily **getting hungry** and **eating meals** is once and done. Probably every mother alive at one point wished that was true. But it is not. Meal after meal, day after day.

So we get the idea that this all is a **process**. Some moments we are hungrier than others. Sometimes we have eaten the wrong foods and interrupted the appetites that we should be fostering. But continual pursuit of **living right in the presence of God** keeps happening.

Then after that we experience mercy for those around us. Why? I think it traces its way back to being poor in spirit. Beggars find it easy to feel compassion for other beggars. They know the suffering that came about from their own condition. They do not have to reach far to have a **commonality** with others who cannot produce the spiritual changes they need in their lives. So **Mercy** corresponds with being **poor in spirit**.

As we travelled up to the peak in the beatitudes, our eyes are focused on **our own** spiritual need. It focused on what **we** need. As we descend from the peak our eyes are focused on our **Lord** and the needs of **those around us**.

Then next is purity of heart. And what matching beatitude goes with this? I think it corresponds to **mourning over sin**. When you mourn over sin, what do you want more than anything? Don't you want to be **free** of that sin? Don't you want to serve God **purely** without interruption?

And consider this, is it really possible for us to be **pure in heart** if we at first do not experience the fact that we **are not** pure at heart? Isn't it our **conviction of sin** that convinces us that we must change? Isn't our conviction required for that kind of change? We don't know purity until we experience **impurity**.

I think this helps us to see the progression that Christ had in mind for the beatitudes. We get to the place where we **see** and **fully experience** our need

for God. We hunger and thirst for Him and His righteousness. Then we are filled and that which comes from God begins to be displayed by us.

So back to our text.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

We have already spoken in depth about the word blessed. It means that these people are to be congratulated for their happy state. These are the fortunate ones. These are the happy ones who have reason to be eternally happy. The truth is evident **now** that leads to their continually **reorienting** to happiness. I like what John MacArthur said-

Chara (joy) is used some 70 times in the New Testament, always to signify a feeling of happiness that is based on spiritual realities. Joy is the deep-down sense of well-being that abides in the heart of the person who knows all is well between himself and the Lord.

Now what is pure in heart.

It is always good to define things.

First, what does the word “pure” mean?

There are two common **understandings** and **uses** of this Greek word.

The Greek word is *katharos* which we get the word **catharsis** from.

1. It means to be pure by cleansing of dirt, filth and contamination.
2. It also means to be singular.

We will see how they are actually referring to the same thing.

Let's start by looking at being free from impurities, free from contamination.

What changes the value of **gold ore** to **solid gold**? Why is **one** so much more valuable than the **other**. The answer is heat.

The ore is placed into a fire 1947.52 degrees Fahrenheit.

The gold melts. Skim off the base metals on the top. Then pour the gold into diluted nitric acid. Pour off the acid and gold remains. This is pure gold. Now from what I understand gold is never completely free of contaminants. But this is as good as it gets. 24 karat gold is 99.9% gold. It is what we call pure gold. It is only one thing. Gold.

Revelation 21:27 gives us a practical definition of what pure looks like. This verse is talking about what will be allowed into the City of God. **Revelation 21:27 (NKJV)**

²⁷ But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Purity, as described in this verse means having **nothing that defiles, or causes the least bit of deception or the least bit of intentional sin.** And

what does it describe as those **not having any of those traits? Believers.** Those whose names are written in God's book. Now this is after glorification. Believers will be perfect then. Believers will be pure. So this does not describe us yet. But this verse is helpful in describing what **impure** is. Here is another helpful passage.

Revelation 22:15 (NKJV)

15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

This is the opposite of purity. Here are the things that corrupt. Here are the impurities that cannot be allowed to pollute God's people or Kingdom.

What we see is that the **impurities** are **anything** that in **any way defy** God. It is anything counter to His nature. It is anything that says, "I will not do what God says". "I will not trust who God is". Or even, "I do not care about what God wants". It is all the same thing headed in the same direction. It is impurity. It is the opposite of purity.

Let's look at Christ here. **1 Peter 2:21-23 (NKJV)**

21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth";

23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

This is what purity looks like. If we want to know what our lives should look like, we only need look at Christ. It isn't **complicated**, but it is astoundingly **difficult**.

We see it a thousand places in scripture. Impurity is what comes from flesh. Purity is the fruit of the Spirit. Purity is knowing what God says and doing it. Impurity is choosing any other thing.

Now let's look at the slight variation of the **second way** the word pure is used. It is used of being single.

As we can see, that is not much different than what we talked about earlier.

Pure gold is single. It is nothing but gold.

Isn't our problem always mixture? Really. This past week. What was your life like? Could you say that it was **single**? Or would you say that there was **mixture**?

When we say that we did not have a very good week spiritually, aren't we describing **mixture**? And when we describe a very good week where we thank God that we lived obediently to Him nearly continually, would we not say that was **without** mixture?

The problem with is that we want 2 things. We want what **God wants for us**. **And** we want what we **want for ourselves** when it opposes what God wants for us? We **trust** that God knows what He is doing in our lives. But we **do not want to submit** to the current circumstances He has allowed in our lives at this moment. His Word is always **true**. But we do not like what His word says to us at this present moment?

Aren't our problems problems of mixture?

David understood this. Look at what he said.

Psalm 86

11 Teach me Your way, O Lord;

I will walk in Your truth;

Unite my heart to fear Your name.

12 I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,

And I will glorify Your name forevermore.

Unite my heart to fear your name. David knew that knowing the facts was not enough. Knowing the right doctrine was not enough. Knowing what God wanted in any situation was not enough. Sometimes we think, if only we knew **what God wanted** we would have lived better. But David knew himself better than that. He prayed to God a “pure in heart” prayer. He prayed the prayer we need to pray regularly. He asked God to give him singleness of heart to have the proper attitude toward God. He was saying, Purify my **intentions**. Purify my **desires**. Purify my **thoughts**. So I only pursue **one** thing. So I only live for **one thing**. Then, and only then, will I praise you Lord with all my heart.

Look what Paul said about the extent of the problem in Romans. Whether he was describing a believer, a non believer, or someone transitioning from one to the other, I think we can all relate.

Romans 7

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Look what our brother James tells us.

James 1:6-8 (NKJV)

6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

This double minded man wants 2 things. And as long as he **keeps those options open**, he cannot be counted upon. One day he will look like a stellar Christian. The next day he will be rendered useless due to one enticing sin or the other. One day he will be giving his testimony. The next day he will be engaged in sin.

What is hypocrisy? Is not hypocrisy the process of hiding our duality? I am convinced there is nothing more dangerous to raising a godly family than the sin of hypocrisy. We have a few young families. This is very important to be careful of. We can make our kids do a lot of things. But we can never make them **not notice** it when we are actively taking steps to keep the sins we regularly commit from outsider's eyes. That is a far greater obstacle to a child's spiritual growth than continual failure and honest confession. Do we solemnly teach our kids that God forbids something, or God commands something, and then we systematically violate that teaching? Do we **confess our failures** or do we try to keep our failures **from being exposed**? If we **confess** our failures, even if we must **ask our children for forgiveness** at times, we are teaching our children how to be believers. If we seek to hide our sin, taking effort to see that it is never exposed, and we refuse to confess it, we are teaching our children how to be hypocrites. And they often don't bother to model our hypocrisy. They just discount our faith altogether.

In the sermon on the mount this **singularity of purpose** is a theme. He says that if the eye is not good, and the word for good there means single. Basically Christ was saying if that which you are using to process life is not single, everything about you is going to be corrupt. There is no ½ Christian life.

Matthew 6:23-24 (NKJV)

23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Do you see the problem of duality here? Christ hammers over and over on hypocrisy and duality in the sermon on the mount. No. It will not do. It is a lie. That game will not be accepted. We need truth in the inmost places for us to live honestly, to live singularly, to live purely.

And James helps us with the cure to dual purposed living.

James 4:7-8 (NKJV)

7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.

Here is our remedy as we see a lack of single mindedness. When we see our duplicity, when we want to **be seen** as being **one kind of person** but we want the **advantage** of living as **another kind of person**. When we want our **reputations** to be better than our **character**. When we want to hold the respect like a **faithful minister** but we live the life of a **secret traitor**.

The remedy- Confession. Absolute, no holes barred, confession. A calling out to God with absolute sincerity. And then responding **in the nature** of **true repentance**.

Now you and I live real lives. We are making decisions all day long about things that do not seem to be spiritual at all. We make decisions about how many cups of coffee we want, how soon the dishes need done, what we need at the store, how can I get all the work done piling up on me. We can get the idea that none of this really matters. This pure of heart stuff seems like something that does not have anything to do with my day to day.

But we would be very wrong. Yes, we are bombarded with life's decisions every day. We get very busy with mundane stuff. But it all matters. And here is the litmus test for every thing at every moment of every day.

Do I believe God wants me doing this?

Do I believe God wants me doing this?

Not very complicated is it?

Is this thing I am doing, or thinking, or planning, or refusing, fueled by **faith** or **unbelief**? Are we existing in continual fellowship with God, or are we rebelling? Can we **thank God** for that which we are enjoying? Are we living in His presence?

Pure in heart is simple. It lives to please God. It is not easy. We already explained why. I live with a fleshly nature. It is at war against the spiritual. So it is not **easy**. But it is not **complicated**.

If we believe that God wants me doing this, and we are doing it, that is purity. If we believe God does not want me doing this and I am not doing it, that is purity.

If I am doubting whether God wants me doing it, I should stop right now and not go on until I am determined I can either do it by faith or I should not do it because of faith.

Mike used to quote this. I don't know where it came from. But he used to say that "Purity of heart is to will one thing."

That is what we have been seeing this morning.

Our brother Jones said it in a slightly different way.

To be pure in heart means to keep 'the first and great commandment', which is that 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Just one thing all the time.

Now will we do this to perfection? I don't believe so. Not until we see Jesus.

But just as we might accurately and truthfully regard a person as being a **good driver** does not they **never** take their eyes off the road. So we can accurately and truthfully say a person is **pure in heart** when not every single thing they ever do solidly is for **only one reason**. Just as we say 24 karat gold is pure gold, that does not mean it has zero impurities. So to be pure in heart is real and important, but we do not need to allow ourselves to get side tracked into the necessity of perfection. That does not help us to understand what it is that every Christian is to be in this life. We should fundamentally, and practically, be living for one thing in every area of our lives. That is purity of heart.

Now, what about this word heart.

I was studying this on the day before valentines day. This is the day that worships the psychological phenomenon of being in love. Now I have nothing against that feeling. It is another one of those many gifts from God for Christians to enjoy. But it is only a **feeling**. It comes and goes and **proves nothing at all** about real love. Just as so many of our feelings prove nothing at all about our reality. Feelings are not created to **be believed**, or certainly not **to be obeyed**. They are to be felt. And sometimes by analyzing where they come from we can learn things about ourselves, both good and bad.

But anyway, the heart, in scripture is **not** the seat of emotions like it is for us in the west. No the **bowels** was the seat of emotion for the Greeks. The heart is essentially the **core of our personhood**. In scripture our hearts **think, plan, decide**. I believe that the heart in scripture is what is created by our habits of thinking. And what comes out of it is only as good as what goes into it. It is by nature a wicked thing. But God's work in our lives changes our hearts. As we incorporate correct thinking and correct living our hearts change. And while prior to our regeneration only bad things issued from our hearts, now with our new hearts good things can come forth.

I had written this next thing down but I am not sure if it contains my thoughts or someone else's.

The heart is the core of who we are- what we think, what we are committed to, what we believe. Again it is important that we have a definition for the

words we use. If we cannot define something, we usually don't really know what it is. The heart is the fount out of which everything in our lives come. Blessed are the pure who are pure at the core of their being. Blessed are those for whom everything that they do or think or feel comes from that which is right down deep.

Now the heart is internal. It is within us. We cannot see it. We can only see **what comes out of it**. Jesus harped on those who thought that all the most important things were seen on the outside of a person's life. Jesus taught just the opposite. Everything to Him was a **heart matter**. When the heart was right, everything else was right. When the heart was wrong, everything else was wrong. He rejoiced when the hearts of men were changed fundamentally by new birth. He rebuked those who tried to focus on the outside of the cup when the inside of the cup was full of death.

Now if a pure heart is a wonderful thing, it is not hard to figure out that an **impure** heart is a real problem. Where does bad stuff come from?

This is how Jesus described it.

Matthew 15:17-20 (NKJV)

17 Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated?

18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.

19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

20 These are *the things* which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

There are a lot of people in our world who honestly believe that the problems in the world are created by people's environment. They think that if everyone had the **same resources**, if everyone had the **same opportunities**, if everyone had access to the **same information**, if everyone had the **same positive regard** from others, then suddenly all the world's problems would go away. The problem is that there is not a speck of evidence for this theory. But theories are like that. We can believe the ones we like best with no support.

Christ said no, that is not the problem. **We** are our own greatest enemy. Our hearts are the source of the evil in our lives. All of our mirrors could be engraved with the saying- **This person has a heart problem**. Isn't it true. We like to think the greatest harm done to us has been by others. But isn't the reality that we could be free of most of the harm done to us by others. The

promises and truths of God would set us free. But our hearts prefer that this does not happen.

Jesus is basically saying, you know the bad stuff you **did**? You know the bad stuff you **still do**? Quit looking around to blame that on someone. It is you. It is your heart. That is the problem.

The answer? Purity of the heart. The answer is a heart that only wants to please its maker. This is a heart that is committed to **relentlessly pursue** that goal. This heart will **not quit**. This heart tells the truth about failure. It does not waste time looking to blame the failure on circumstance or ignorance or failure of others. It says, I am the sinner. And please please please God, **change me**. Because I want to be like you. I want to be better. I want to want only what you want for me. I want to be pure of heart. I want to only please you.

And what is the reward? **For they shall see God**

Now it is difficult to know exactly how we are to understand this. There is the figurative sense that is definitely true. Do you see God in your rear view mirror? Do you see His mercies toward you? Carla and I often talk about how we can see that God arranged things in our lives much better than we ever could have done it for ourselves. We see God in so many of the circumstances and life events. I am sure you know what I mean. You probably see the same things for yourself. You see the wonderful hand of loving providence arranging things for your good in your lives. Even the hard things are arranged for good purposes.

So the pure in heart see that. I think that is true. And that is not a stretch for what this could mean about the pure in heart seeing God.

But I think there is more. I do not believe that we will ever see **the Father**. Some people see in scripture things that make them believe we will. But I don't think so. But I know one thing for sure. We **WILL** see Jesus. We will see the very spots on his hands or wrists where the spikes went because of our sin. We will see the scars in his side where the spear went. We will see the one who took all that sin that we so flippantly committed and paid the horrible price for it. We will see His eyes of love for us, the love that only God Himself could have for His creatures. We will see and know the Lamb. We may even have a chance occasionally to speak with Him privately. Can you imagine that? The most important person in the world willing to fit you into His schedule? Yes, we will see God. And this "seeing" is in the best sense possible. You and I, if we cling to our faith, will see our redeemer. We will see our God.

Doesn't that add motivation to this idea of being pure in heart? Does this not want us to, even more, live for one thing? Does it not encourage us to live to please our Master?

A simple application for this week would be asking a simple question over and over.

Does my Savior want me to be doing this? Purity of heart can always say yes.