

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

Message 12

Scripture: Exodus 33:12-23

INTRO: When we came to the first part of the sixth beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart", we had our hands full in seeking to understand what that means. The heart speaks figuratively of the vital center of man's soul. It is the most vital part affecting the self, which is the president of the whole. It is in our heart where the self works up evil. Jesus said that evil proceeds from the heart. He said in Mark 7:21-23 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

And so God has to give us a new heart, if we are to be saved. And in regeneration, in the new birth, He gives us a new heart. But the regenerated person meets a very formidable foe the moment he is saved. And this foe will deceive and destroy the new born Christian at the very first opportunity. And there, in the heart, the battle between God and Satan will take place. We have seen some of what is involved, and that we are to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. And we are to love God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all the thoughts we process. Here in this area the Bible calls the heart, and which we call the mind, the battle between God and Satan rages.

But having looked quite carefully at what it means to be pure in heart, we want to now look at the promise to the pure in heart. Jesus gave a very wonderful promise to those who are pure in heart. He said, "They shall see God." One can hardly fathom what that means. To date, no human being has ever seen God! There are those who have come close to His presence, and they fell on their faces before Him. Isaiah had such an experience. Go to the book of Isaiah chapter 6 (read 1-5).

Exodus 33:12-23 was read for us earlier. Israel had come out of Egypt. The Egyptian army had been drowned in the Red Sea, and

the children of Israel had arrived at Mt. Sinai. Here Moses had received the 10 commandments, only to come down from the mountain and find the people full swing in worshipping false gods. Well, Moses dealt with all that and then the Lord said, "Moses, get moving now. Take these people to the land I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying that I would give it to their descendants."

And Moses said, "But Lord, You have not have not let me know whom You will send with me. Please show me now Your way." And God said, "My presence will go with you." And Moses said, "If it does not, please don't send us. You know Lord, that we will be a people unlike all others and we have to have You with us." And God said, "I will do what you ask."

Then Moses said something very interesting. He said, "Please show me Your glory." I suppose Moses felt he needed some very big assurance for the job he was to undertake. And God said, "I will let all my goodness pass before you, and proclaim the name of the Lord before you and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Then God said, "But you cannot see my face; for no man shall see Me and live."

B. The Promise To The Pure In Heart

And now we come to our beatitude, and it says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And we ask, "Just what does it mean when it says they shall see God?" Our very first question then is, is this a literal or non-literal vision of God that the pure in heart will have? D. Martyn Lloyd Jones writes, "What is meant by the vision of God? What is meant by saying we shall 'see' God? Here again is a matter which has often been written about throughout the long history of the Christian Church. Some of the great Fathers and the early teachers in the Church were much attracted by it and gave a great deal of thought to the problem. Did it really mean that in the glorified state we should see God with the naked eye or not? That was their great problem. Was it objective and visible, or was it purely spiritual? Now it seems to me that, ultimately, that is a question that cannot be answered. I can only put evidence before you. There are statements

made in Scripture which seem to indicate one or the other. But at any rate we can say this much" (1625) end quote.

So, the options before us seem to be, is this seeing God speaking of seeing him in a spiritual sense, or in a literal sense? Or is it referring to both? Let me build a biblical case for both views and then give you what I believe the Lord is talking about here.

Let us look first at the non-literal view. We have read earlier that God said, "No man can see me and live." Why is that? I believe that is because God is so holy, so pure, and so full of glory that being in that presence would kill us. Let me illustrate what I see here. I did some excavation work many years ago for the British Columbia Hydro company. It was in one of those places which is guarded by high fences and inside is, I think what they call a capacitor station. Overhead were bus bars or busways that conducted huge amounts of electricity. And the man who had hired me came over to the machine. I had positioned the machine almost underneath one of those busways and had set the stabilizer bars and the front bucket and he waved me down and came to the back window and he proceeded to instruct me on the danger I was in. And he said that if I should get the boom up too high and too close to that busway, the electricity might ground through the boom into the ground and I might be sitting in the sphere of all that electricity. I don't remember all the instructions, but he said this, "If your machine should ground out all this electricity, you can be in the field of all this electricity and it won't hurt you. But, whatever you do, do not jump from your machine. If you do, the moment you hit the ground you will be fried to a crisp."

Many times I have thought of that. The closer we get to God, the less we can afford to get grounded out by sin. And if we should get close to God and get into His very presence, even the smallest stains of sin would fry us to a crisp. For many years I have hoped some day to do a message called, "Your First Day In Heaven." How is it that you and I as believers, will be able to dwell with God? I

tell you most assuredly, something is going to have to happen to the most godly of Christians before they are fit to be in the presence of God. And so, while we are in this body, no man can see God and live.

As in some of the other beatitudes, it may be that the promise in this beatitude has partial fulfillment before we get to heaven. There is no doubt to me, that the greatest part of the fulfillment is future and literal. Unlike Jones, I believe the question can be answered that this seeing God will most certainly include literally seeing Him with our own eyes. But there may be a sense in which we can say that the pure in heart get to see God now, in this life.

Go to John 1 (read verse 18). No man has seen God at any time. But the text goes on to say, "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." Now the word, 'declared' is the word, 'exegeomai.' It means He has exegeted Him. When you exegete a passage of Scripture, you lead out of the text what is in the text. Many times when a text is correctly exegeted we say, "Ah, now I see it!" When a passage of Scripture is accurately exegeted, the listener ought to get an accurate picture of what is not readily apparent in the text.

Let me show you this in the life of Christ. Go to John 14. In not too many hours from when this text took place, Christ would be crucified. And He sought to comfort His disciples (read 14:1-4). Well, doubting Thomas had a little trouble with that, so look at verse 5 (read). So look at Jesus' answer in verses 6-7 (read). The disciple Philip overheard this and look at what he said in verse 8 (read). Now look at Jesus' answer in verse 9 (read).

So we ask, how can you see the Father by seeing the Son? Well, there is a sense that when the disciples observed the life of Christ, they were seeing the life of God lived out before them. If God became human, how would He live? Well, just like Christ lived. In Christ they saw God. Let me go further than that. When you and I read the Gospels and observe the life of Christ, we too get to see God! Here, displayed in these four wonderful books is the life

of God on earth! Though we do not literally see Him, yet we see Him!

Go to Ephesians 1 (read 15-21). Paul prayed that the eyes of these Ephesian believers would be opened and they would get a glimpse of some very wonderful things. You see, we have a problem. It is a sight problem. I heard of a man who went to the optometrist and had his eyes checked. The optometrist said, "Why, there is nothing wrong with your eyes. Why did you come? You can see perfectly well." And the man said, "Well, doctor, it's like this: I just can't see myself going to work!"

Well, we too have eye trouble. The Psalmist prayed to the Lord like this: "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things in Your law" (119:18). It is not that those wondrous things are not there. The problem is that we cannot see them.

Now I propose, whether that is the intent of our text or not, there is a spiritual vision of God that many of us fail to have because our hearts are not pure. I heard that when the Russian cosmonauts of those first Sputniks were sent into outer space, when they came back they said they did not see God anywhere out there. God simply was not there. Do you know why they did not see Him out there? Because they could not see Him down here! The real problem was that they never saw God while they were here on earth. If you take one tiny ant and study it, or if you take one dandelion and observe the cells, how it reproduces and so on, you will get to see God. Go to Romans 1 (read 18-21). There was the real problem.

Now I propose to you that many of us do not get to see God in this way as we should because we are not pure in heart the way we should be. I propose that if we are carnal or live in any kind of sin, we do not get to see God the way we should. You see, we must be pure in heart before we get to see God. Lloyd Jones said the pure in heart are those whose hearts are without hypocrisy. A hypocrite is a man we call two-faced. He has two faces. The word 'hypocrite' comes from the idea of stage actors who put on masks over their own face. The guy with the mask had two faces.

Jones points out Psalm 86:11. The Psalmist said, "Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name." Here is the idea of a man who has a problem with two hearts. That is hypocrisy. And the Psalmist cries out to have his heart united. It is the person with a pure heart who truly gets to see God here and now, though the vision is not literal.

But I believe, if it is not the only intent of this promise that the believer will get to see God literally, it is the primary intent. No man can see God and live, that is true in this life. But there is a new heaven and a new earth coming, and God will come down and dwell on that new earth, and man will see God literally.

One of our folk gave me a video to watch by Douglas Hamp. It is a video that is very taxing on the brain to watch. But He argues that those parts of Scripture that we treat as anthropomorphisms may not be anthropomorphic at all. Scholars have spoken of human actions attributed to God which are called anthropoieesis; or human passions, called anthropopathy, or human form or organs or members as anthropomorphisms. These words come from the root Greek word 'anthropos' which simply means man. So these are generally viewed as human actions, passions or members which are attributed to God so we can understand Him.

But, Hamp has called into question whether these are truly anthropomorphisms. I cannot dwell on that subject other than to say I believe he has something worth more study. And so, when our text says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God", what sight is spoken of here? And I believe that if it is not the only meaning, certainly the literal meaning is the main intent. And what is that? It is that the pure in heart will literally, visibly see God!

Now let me mention a matter here that you might have questioned. In Genesis 32:30 it says, "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Jacob indicates that he thinks he saw God face to face. Verse 24 in the same

chapter says a man wrestled with him. Now the word 'man' is capitalized in the NKJV. Theologians would call this a Christophany, a pre Bethlehem appearance of Christ.

When the angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his barren wife and told them they would have a child, they were afraid that they had seen God and would die (Judges 13). But again, it was not God they saw, but the Lord Jesus seems to have appeared in a visible form, just as angels do from time to time.

But let me take you now to some Scriptures that indicate that the believer will some day see God literally. Let's go to Job 19, to begin with (read 23-27). Job said, "Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!" This is an incredible Scripture found in one of the oldest, if not the oldest book in the Bible. Job speaks of his Redeemer, and that his Redeemer will some day stand on the earth. And after he, Job, has died, he says, "This I know, that in my flesh I shall see God." Two rare OT subjects are revealed in this very ancient passage. There is life after death. There will be a resurrection! And second, after the resurrection man will see God. Job says, "I shall see for myself and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" What an incredible belief! What incredible words are these!

Now let me make a note here. One must be careful to distinguish between passages that refer to seeing Christ and passages that refer to seeing God the Father. Let me give you two such passages and they may refer to seeing God Himself. First Corinthians 13:12 says, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Listen now to Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Again, it is not certain that this refers to God the Father or Jesus Christ. But again, the seeing is future and I believe it is literal. One of our deacons shared at our brotherhood meeting the other day that some view us as

being radical. And he reminded us that God is radical, that is from a present day view. God is holy! Radically holy! And without holiness, no man will ever see Him! D. Martyn Lloyd Jones lamented men's complaints on the preaching of holiness. But the implication in this passage is that it is only those who are holy who will some day see God!

Go to 1 John 3 (read 1-6). What incredible love that God should call us His sons! It is for this reason the world does not know us, it did not know Him either. And here is the wonder. When He is revealed, we shall be like Him! And all who have this hope purify themselves, blessed are the pure in heart. And when we get to see Him, we will see Him as He is! Now look briefly at verse 6 (read).

Here, in verse 6, we get the idea of the possibility of seeing Him in this present time in the way we mentioned before. He that lives in sin cannot see Him with the spiritual eyes that God gives to those who are pure. But those who are pure can see Him here and now, in a non-literal sense.

But verses 1-3 speak of God, and it is not altogether clear when it says in verse 3 that we shall see Him as He is whether it is referring to God or to Jesus Christ. The nearest antecedent of the pronoun in the clause, 'we shall see Him' is God. But it speaks of His appearing, and that seems to refer back to 2:28, and then the pronoun 'Him' would refer to Christ. But, no doubt, when we are transformed at the rapture, that this will prepare us to see God Himself.

Go now to Revelation 4. The apostle John, is raptured, or caught up to heaven in 4:1 (read). And chapters 4-5 introduce us to heaven. And chapter 4 introduces us to the central picture of all possible pictures. It is God on His throne. Now it seems that John got a vision, somewhat like Isaiah got, but it does not seem that he saw the face of God. But it is a chapter worthy of reading (read 2-11).

With that introduction to heaven, we go now for our last Scripture to Revelation 22. Let me give you a brief

overview of the book of Revelation first. Chapters 1 is introductory. Chapters 2-3 give us the Church age in seven stages. Chapters 4-6 give us an introduction to heaven showing us where the saints will be after the rapture. Chapters 7-19 give us the tribulation time. Chapter 20:1-6 gives us the millennium. Chapter 20:7-10 gives us the final battle between God and Satan. Chapter 20:11-15 gives us the final judgment and chapters 21-22 give us a wonderful overview of the new heaven and new earth.

So, let us begin with 21 (read 1-7). Now look at 9-11 (read). Here is the capital of the universe for all eternity and this city is described in the rest of the chapter and so we go to chapter 22 (read 1-4). Wow! They shall see His face! There is no doubt to me that here is the final and fullest fulfillment of Jesus promise to the pure in heart! You cannot get to know any person in any other way as you can when you see them face to face. Here is where you truly see another person. To date, no one born of two human parents has ever seen God. Now listen to this: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!

CONCL: And so we conclude the beatitude on the pure in heart. Let me remind us that it all begins with becoming poor in spirit, humility. Man must be humbled before he can be glorified. But after becoming poor in spirit, there must come a mourning over one's sinfulness before meekness takes place. And then will come a hunger and a thirst for righteousness, and those who are filled with that great desire for righteousness will be filled with it and will become merciful. Then will be born purity of heart. And this whole process will need to happen again and again, as spiritual growth takes place. And those who become pure in heart have still more growing to do, and we will look at that in the next message.

Purity of heart involves all the parts of the heart. The data processor; data storage; the thinking through of material already stored there; the conscience and the kidneys, the strainer of thoughts.

But when we become pure in heart, and grow in this purity, the end promise is that we will see God. And I believe the final fulfilment of that will be that we will personally, literally visibly see Him! That is one huge promise and I have no doubt, just one glimpse of Him in glory will all the toils of life repay!

For now, let us have this wonderful promise go with us for the next week, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."
