

Pure Ambition

The Beatitudes

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Bible Verse: Matthew 5:8
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Well, after that very encouraging hymn, I invite you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Matthew 5 as we continue our study of the Beatitudes. Even though I've taught through these many times, it's still remarkable how deeply instructive they are, and how much is packed into so few words in the words of Jesus.

We've come to Matthew 5:8 in our sequential exposition, the sixth beatitude, which simply reads, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Those words, beloved, we will see by the end of the evening are profoundly challenging, and they are also profoundly encouraging as we look at each section of the meaning of the verse.

We have dealt with some painful beatitudes up to this point, painful in the sense that we've considered our poverty of spirit in verse 3, the mourning of sin, the repentance over sin that comes about hungering and thirsting for righteousness and recognizing what we lack and longing for the fulfillment of what we desire in expressing our love for God, and those early beatitudes force us to recognize sin and to mourn our lack of merit. There is no entrance into the kingdom of God apart from that. There is no entrance into the kingdom of God with a sense of self-righteousness or a sense of entitlement. We come as beggars to the throne of God, we come as beggars to Christ, having nothing but our guilt and shame to offer him and asking him to give us the fullness of himself in return. It's really a remarkable exchange, isn't it? But now as we move into verse 8, Jesus is now setting the positive goal of spiritual life. When God brings someone to his Son, when someone is born again, when they have new life, when they've been made a new creature, this is the goal of what is to come. This is the goal of repentance. This is the goal of the new birth. And as I said, it is just profoundly, infinitely challenging and yet, beloved, it is infinitely and eternally encouraging as well.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones said this about this beatitude. He says, "Anyone who realizes even something of the meaning of these words can approach them only with a sense of awe and of complete inadequacy. Our best plan, perhaps, is just try to grasp something of its central meaning and emphasis." That's Martyn Lloyd-Jones saying you can't exhaust the meaning of this verse, and we certainly won't do that tonight, but we're going to look at three principles from this verse that point us in the right direction and give us really a

sense of clarity about the goal and the purpose of the Christian life and what it is that we're to be seeking after.

Those of you that have been with us for any period of time, I believe that you're here at Truth Community Church because you genuinely want the spiritual realities of Christ. You're not here looking for God to help you have a happy life, per se. You're not looking to have things easy. You want the truth. You want Christ. You want the spiritual realities. And that's a great encouragement to me, because I do too. And even though I fall very far short of what we're going to see this evening, it's the desire of my heart, and I believe it's the desire of yours as well and it's a privilege for us to come together in the midst of the challenges and the resistance and the difficulties of life, and for us to come apart and to gather around an oasis, as it were, and take drinks of clear, pure water in our spiritual lives to refresh us for what lies ahead in the week that remains. And so I'm very grateful for each one of you, very grateful that we can share in life in Christ together, and your faithfulness is just an incredible encouragement to me, far more than you would begin to know.

Let's look at this great, great beatitude, and first of all consider the need for a pure heart. the need for a pure heart. Jesus, once again, is making an exclusive statement when he says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they," and they alone, "shall see God." Anyone that does not have a pure heart, as Jesus means it here, will not go to heaven. They are not part of the kingdom. They will not see God, certainly not to see him in a state of blessedness and in a state of love, as Dane opened for us in the beginning of our service. They'll see God as a judge and God as a wrecker of vengeance but Jesus isn't talking about seeing God in vengeance here. He's talking about seeing him in love and in the fullness of his blessed being but he says that only those who are pure in heart will see him in that way. And so we'll either see God in this way because we have a pure heart, or we'll face judgment, and so the stakes, the eternal stakes, couldn't be higher in what we're considering here and you see immediately why Martyn Lloyd-Jones says we can only approach these words with a sense of awe and a trembling sense of fear and majesty at the greatness of everything that is at stake. We're not just talking about three steps to a better relationship in your marriage or in your family, these things that have their place but are not of transcendent, eternal importance. This is the whole ballgame right here, everything is at stake in what we're about to consider because Jesus said only the pure in heart will see God and everyone else faces eternity in the lake of fire, Revelation 20.

So, the need for a pure heart is urgent for each one of us. This matter of a pure heart is extremely vital for every person. There is nothing of greater consequence to your entire soul and everything for which you were created and for which you exist, and everything about your eternal destiny rests upon what we're going to see here this evening from this beatitude and so to help us get a proper biblical context for it, I invite you to turn to Psalm 24. Psalm 24, which emphasizes this need for a pure heart as well, with echoes that sound like Psalm 15 in many ways. In fact, we may go to both of them just to emphasize the point, but we're in Psalm 24 for right now, beginning in, well, let's just start from verse 1, why don't we, and we'll read through verse 5. "The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the

seas and established it upon the rivers." That's a quick, short summary of everything we've been considering on Sundays about God as Creator and God as the providential orderer of everything in the universe, and the earth belongs to him. And so there's this massive statement of his sovereign majesty and his ownership over all things right from the beginning of the psalm and so the question becomes then, who can be with a God like that? Who is qualified? How can a sinful creature be with a holy Creator? These two things do not go together, these two things do not mix at one level. And in verse 3, we see the question and the problem set forth before us when we read, "Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?" He asks the question and then he answers it. Who can be with this God who is the Creator of the heaven and the earth? That's basically the question. Who can have that privilege of being with God? In verse 4, he answers it, and you see the echoes of Matthew 5:8, "He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation." You must have a pure heart if you're going to be with this God. Otherwise, the doors, the gates to heaven are locked, barred, shut, and you will be on the outside and so this is of great consequence.

In a similar manner, look at Psalm 15, Psalm 15 where we read, "O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?" You start to get the idea that this is an important question in biblical literature, that who can be with God as a matter of transcendent importance as shown by the fact that the question is asked so many times. Who can do this? Who can be with you? Verse 2, you see the matter of the heart raised again, "He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; who swears to his own hurt and does not change; who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved." There is this purity of heart as expressed in the manner of a true life, a faithful, biblically loyal life, that is what is required. We haven't answered the question yet, what is a pure heart, we're just seeing how utterly essential it is and that we are looking at something that every one of us should desire deeply in our hearts, realizing the eternal stakes that are at play.

You don't need to turn there, but in Hebrews 12:14, we read this, "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." The holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Now, this is not something that the merchants of the prosperity gospel can emphasize. This is contrary to their message. This is raising a realm and an issue that has nothing to do with the false wares that they peddle from their little spiritual chuckwagon. No, this is what the Lord requires, and he set it forth plainly, hasn't he? "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they and they alone will see God." Who may dwell on your holy hill? Only those with a pure heart. A pure heart. You see, beloved, in the most basic, simple sense, we must understand this: God is holy. He is separate. He is far apart from us in every moral dimension. He is set apart from us in his essence and because he is holy, which means he is set apart and he is morally perfect, beloved, you and I have a problem. We've got a really, really big problem because only those who

share in his holiness can share in his presence. If you do not have the holiness of God, you cannot be in the presence of God, and that means that you're facing a time of eternal separation from him; kind of mixed time and eternity there with that turn of the phrase. You will spend eternity away from him because only those who share in his holiness can be with him. That's the need for a pure heart. You need a pure heart because the stakes are so massive, so great, so long-lasting and eternal in their consequence.

So, having seen what the stakes are, I think, don't you, that it's pretty important to find out what this means. We need to know precisely what it means to have a pure heart if it is precisely only those who are the pure in heart that are going to see God and be with him and so let's look at our second point here this evening, the meaning of a pure heart. The meaning of a pure heart and here we have a little bit of spade work to do, you might say. We need to dig and turn over the soil a little bit because we've been conditioned to think about a pure heart in an overly restricted way, especially for young men coming up, dealing with the temptations that young men deal with, and because there's such a plethora of books about this and podcasts that talk about this and chastise young men in their struggles, many in the church, therefore, think of purity as simply being something that's regarding matters of sensuality, you know, and that we need to avoid pornography, and we need to avoid lusting after the opposite sex, or these days, you know, lusting in other directions as well that aren't even fit to be mentioned. Many in the church think about purity in that manner of referring to it as sensual matters and the temptations that come from the lusts of the flesh. Now, let me say this, beloved. This phrase, as Jesus uses it, "Blessed are the pure in heart," this phrase would include that portion, that idea, that aspect of holiness, it would include that aspect of holiness. I'm not denying or diminishing how critical that is but, beloved, this phrase goes so far beyond that, that to simply think about it in those terms is really ultimately to miss Jesus' point altogether. It's to put your nose down on the table and look at little threads in the carpet, again, mixing my metaphors because there's carpet on my pulpit table here, you get down on the floor and look at the threads of the carpet, you go to the mountains and you focus on a single rock and miss the great span of the Rockies in front of you, you know, your focus is so limited that you're really not seeing anything when you consider it like that because this phrase is far more than that. It's something that goes far beyond young men. It goes to mature saints, both men and women. It goes to young boys and young girls for their consideration as well. It goes to those happily married. It goes to those that are single. This covers everybody, okay? And the fact that perhaps you're at a point in life where you don't struggle with those young person's temptations anymore has nothing to do with complying with and being affected by and searched by what Jesus says about a pure heart, and so we need to spend our time thinking about this pretty carefully.

This word for purity refers to something that is unmixed. It is 100% pure. And you can think about this purity in the sense of clear water, pure water from a high mountain stream that bubbles out from the spring, and it's pure. There are no impurities in it. There's nothing unhealthful in it. It's water that is clear and 100% safe and without any dirt or anything like it in there, dirt being a good way to think about it. This word for pure can refer to metals that have no impurities; pure gold, as opposed to that which is mixed with other elements that are not gold. So you get this idea of purity and of a single focus,

a water that is purely H₂O, metal that is purely what it is supposed to be and everything impure has been skimmed off of it through whatever refining process it has. That's the idea, something that's pure and unmixed.

Now, what is Jesus saying then when he says, "Blessed are the pure in heart"? Well, beloved, what he's saying, what he's calling us to, what he is commending, what he's saying the only thing that God accepts is someone that has somehow a heart that is unmixed with foreign contaminants, a heart that is unmixed with ungodly desires. He's talking about the inner man and saying that in the inner man, there is a single focus to that inner man, and that's what he pronounces blessing on. This is what God is working out. You're starting to get the sense, I haven't even gotten into details yet, but you're starting to get the sense of why I opened in saying this is profoundly challenging. This is profoundly challenging because each one of us struggles with mixed motives and each one of us has our ups and downs and our bad days, and we look at, you know, we just look at superficially at our life and we say, "Oh boy, this is way above me. If this is going where I think it's going, it's way above me." Yeah, that's precisely right. It's disturbing to consider.

Look over at Psalm 86 as we look at what Jesus is after here, what he is commending to us. Psalm 86. Oh, this is so, so wonderful. And let's start in verse 8. I hadn't planned to go that far back for context, but when we start in verse 8, you start to see the lofty, pure nature of God, and it sets the stage for the verses that I want to call your attention to. Notice how holy, how set apart God is as described by David in Psalm 86. He says, "There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God." Utterly set apart. No one like him anywhere in the universe. You could go back into the ages and not find anything. You could go forward in the ages, you will never find anyone like the God of the Bible, like the Lord Jesus Christ. He's utterly, completely unique. There's no one like him. He alone is God, verse 10. Now, this is an important bridge that we're about to cross. This is an important pivot point here in verse 11. What is the response of the inner man to the holiness of God, to the exalted nature of God? What is the true response of the true believer to that incomparable holiness? Verse 11, "Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. I give thanks to you, O Lord my God," here it is, "with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever." "God, I bring my full inner man completely to bear on the matter of submission and worship to you. I pray for your help that you would unite the sometimes scattered elements that stray away like foreign asteroids spinning out of orbit. I pray that you would bring all of those in and gather them together and make them one in my inner man, an inner man that is totally set apart as an altar of worship to you with no reservations, with no doubts, with no fears, with no hidden sin, hidden agendas, hidden desires. God, make my inner man something that is purely devoted to you. Unite my heart in that direction so that it will fear your name. I thank you, Lord, with my whole heart. I'm not holding back resentments against you. I am not harboring unconfessed sin. I'm not harboring anything that has even a whiff of rebellion against you. The fullness of my heart is submitted to you, O God, with no remainder, with nothing left over. Everything

about my inner man is submitted to you in dependence, in worship, and in humble desire."

You don't need to turn there, but in 1 Corinthians 10:31, you see this union of all of it together in the outer and inner man when the Apostle Paul tells us, "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Do you see it, beloved? Unite my heart to fear your name. Do everything to the glory of God. Do everything with a motive so that everything that comes out of your life, the engine driving that is an engine that is exclusively devoted to wanting to glorify God in grateful response for your eternal salvation in Christ. And how could it be, beloved, how could it be any other way? I ask you, think about the glories of Christ in his person and his work, in his active obedience, his passive obedience, having rendered a full and complete redemption for us, and graciously sharing his perfect righteousness with us so that we could stand justified before a holy God. Think of Christ suffering on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me," as the Father turns away and Christ bears alone the sins of everyone who would ever believe in him. And then the Spirit of God comes to you during the course of your natural life and through the word of God, convicts you of sin and changes your desires so that you come willingly to Christ in faith and repentance and all of that to bestow love upon you, as Dane spoke from 1 John 3:1, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God, adopted into his family, once separated and now an heir of glory, a brother with Christ, and whatever happens to us in the course of this life, the fulfillment of the ages for us will be the presence of God in eternal blessedness with him. That's what Christ has done for us and so I ask you, remember we're talking about the meaning of a pure heart and the necessity and the desirability of a pure heart, beloved, how could it be any other way? How could you be, how could you and I ever accept a state of mind where we had divided loyalties and that, you know, part of us loves Christ and part of us loves the world and, you know, wants to pursue sinful desires and still go to heaven? How could that be? If you understand the glory of Christ and the glory of salvation, how could there be any divided motives in it?

It just occurred to me to have you turn to Matthew 6, which, depending on if we continue through the whole Sermon on the Mount we would come to this, but in Matthew 6, in verse 24, Jesus famously said, making the point about a unified heart, doing all to the glory of God, no mixed motives, Jesus says in Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." You're not able to do that. It's an impossibility. You can't do that and so you have to make your choice. Is your heart going to be devoted to the God you claim to know in Christ? Or are you going to give yourself over to the pursuit of earthly things and let that be the great desire of your heart? You can't have it both ways. You can't have two kings sitting on a single throne and so the question is, which king do we embrace? The king of this world, the God of this world, the God of fleshly carnal desires, or this glorious Christ?

So what does all of that have to do with a pure heart? Well, beloved, I think it's starting to unfold for us as we look in God's word together. What Jesus is describing here, at the very least, at a very minimum, is a man or a woman who is utterly sincere. There's no

hypocrisy in his profession of love and loyalty to the Lord. That alliterates. Love and loyalty to the Lord. It's sincere. He has a life that is transparent before God and a life that is transparent before men. Stated differently, this is a man who, a woman who hates hypocrisy, hates deceit, because there's a sincere, whole, pure desire to be responding to God in holiness without an admixture of sin in the midst of it. And so there's this purity, this refusal of hypocrisy and, beloved, how can we know that that's included in the elements of what Jesus is talking about? Because he makes the same point in this self-same sermon on the Sermon on the Mount. He gives us the Beatitudes, he gives us the character of what it means to be born again, what it means to be truly repentant, and then in those first eight Beatitudes, verses 3 to 10, 11 to 12, tacked onto them, and then as he goes on, he works out the implications of that character in a lot of practical ways. One of the ways that he works it out is by highlighting the sin of hypocrisy and how that's something to be turned away and purged out of your heart. Chapter 6, verse 1 in Matthew 6:1. where Jesus says, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, don't call attention to yourself," I'm paraphrasing, "as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. I tell you, they've received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Same thing in prayer, same thing in fasting, beware of this hypocrisy of mixed motives, of outwardly appearing pious, but really inwardly just wanting someone to congratulate you for how godly you are. Jesus says, you live that kind of life, there's no reward with your Father who's in heaven. So go to pains, go to lengths, take measures so that when you're practicing giving, when you're practicing prayer, when you're practicing fasting, you're doing it in a way that does not call attention to yourself. You're not proclaiming it. You're not posting on social media pictures of your open Bible and your steaming cup of java and saying, "Oh, it's so good to have my time with the Lord today." Beloved, that is exactly the kind of hypocrisy that Jesus is calling us to repent of and yet it's so common because you can get so many "likes" by saying, "Oh, I'm being godly here. Give me some love as I practice my godliness."

The one who's pure in heart hates that kind of hypocrisy, wants nothing to do with it, repudiates it for the sake of living to the glory of God alone, not wanting the praise of man for godliness and righteousness, content if God sees, even if no one else sees or knows this side of heaven. That's a pure heart. That's what Christ deserves and calls us to. That's simple enough conceptually, isn't it? You know, this is a heart that seeks to grow in understanding what pleases God and says, "That's the only thing I want in life. That's all I want is to please him." Pure heart without which no one will see the Lord. That's simple but, beloved, here's the problem you and I have: who is actually like that? Who is actually like that? Those of you that have been Christians the longest in the room are probably going to be the slowest to even think about raising your hand and saying, "I am," because you've grown enough in Christ to know, "You know, I sin every day. I have my struggles and my desires are, they're mixed," if you're honest with yourself.

Proverbs 20:9 almost seems to highlight the impossibility of what we're called to when it asks this question rhetorically, Proverbs 20:9, "Who can say, "I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin?" The implied answer to that question is no one can say that truthfully, and so we are in the midst of a glorious impossibility. Beloved, we're in the midst of a glorious impossibility here in our own strength where God says this is what's required and the truth of the matter of our hearts is that we don't meet it. What's going to become of us in light of that?

You see, this beatitude sets forth the aspiration, sets forth the goal, and yet, what does it do? It circles us back to verse 3, where we realize, "I'm bankrupt. I don't have this. I don't have what he requires." This beatitude simultaneously brings us back to our poverty of spirit. What's required is something that is beyond me. For someone who is not a Christian, this shows clearly the reality that you must be born again because there is nothing that you can do to formulate this in your own heart. Your spiritual life is already shattered. It's like taking a grade A egg and just throwing it on the floor and it splatters everywhere, there's no putting that back together again. That's your heart. That's your spiritual life. You can't fix it on your own and so that's why Jesus says you must be born again to enter into the kingdom of heaven, John 3.

Now, bringing it inside the hall here tonight, even as Christians, we realize, if we're honest, we realize that in one sense, our affections are still divided, aren't they? Our hearts betray us with their doubt, their sin, their lusts, their bitterness, their greed, their entitlement, their envy, their covetousness. If we're honest, we know that's the case and so we realize, even as we're here professing Christ and being profoundly challenged by what we're hearing, that this is completely humbling and more than a little bit frightening if this was all there was for us to see about it. This, look, beloved, I've taught on the fear of God. I probably don't emphasize it enough as I should, but these realities that we're talking about should make us fear God and realize that what God requires, I tremble before what God requires because I know in the practicalities of my day-to-day life, I still fall short. In Romans 3:23, which you all know, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, that's in the context of talking about Christians. It's in the context of talking about justification by faith. The letter of James says we all stumble in many ways. And so, again, we're in the midst of this glorious impossibility. We realize that our hearts are still divided to some extent. Our hearts betray us, wander, "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. There's something in me, O God, that is not welcome but is there and, God, all I can do is humble myself before you in light of it." Here's the question for tonight then: does that reality that we all painfully know too well, does that reality mean that none of us are pure in heart as Jesus means it here? Does that reality mean that none of us will ever see God because of what we have bubbling within us? It doesn't mean that. Jesus wouldn't mock us with teaching there was an utter impossibility. It is impossible in our own ability, our own strength. No, but what it does, beloved, seeing what pure in heart means, seeing the unmixed nature of the heart that God requires, seeing that we still have mixtures within us in this life, those realities do this for us, like the wave of the ocean, it casts us back onto the shore of grace, of undeserved favor.

It calls us to go back to grace and here I want to turn your attention to Psalm 51. Psalm 51. As you're turning to Psalm 51, I would just mention in passing that we do have a podcast called "Through the Psalms," which takes on about a three-year basis, takes the person through every single Psalm in sequence and you can find the download for the podcast on that on our website, truthcommunitychurch.org, "Through the Psalms."

In Psalm 51, we read this. This, of course, David's confession of sin after his adultery with Bathsheba, impregnating her and then murdering her husband, and this is David's confession and we do well to start at the beginning of it in verse 1 as David, a believer, as he writes this, but a believer coming after some 18-month period of gross iniquity and rebellion and hard-heartedness, which maybe that's an encouragement for someone hearing me today that after all of your hard-heartedness, after all of your rebellion, after all of your sexual sin, after all of the way that you've strayed into such deep darkness having once professed Christ, to realize that David was a man in that position and came to God and found grace, and that that same grace can be extended to you if you come with that same repentant heart that David expresses here. David opens in verse 1 of Psalm 51, saying, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions." He's not protesting his righteousness here. He knows he has none. He knows his heart has been divided and so he opens appealing to the character of God, his perfection of mercy, his perfection of compassion upon sinners. "God, because you're like that, I'm asking you to be like you are to me. I'm only asking you, God, to be like you are with reference to me and blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Now, that's the introduction to what we're wanting to emphasize here tonight about a pure heart and the recognition that we still have indwelling sin. Now look at verses 6 through 10. "Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart." See, he's coming back to his inner man. He recognizes his sin, he knows what God requires, and he asks for mercy on him, on his soul. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities." And here it is in verse 10, I love this, God "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "God, give me the clean heart that you require. In your mercy, by your grace, bestow on my inner man that which I desire and that which you require. It's what I desire. It's what you require. God, by mercy, give it to me."

What is this pure heart of which we speak in light of the remnants of indwelling sin within us? Here you go. the one who has a pure heart of which Jesus describes as understood by the testimony of the fullness of Scripture is this, you, this is the full count pitch with the bases loaded in the bottom of the ninth inning, you need to knock this one out of the park because everything's on the line in understanding what we're about to say

with a pure heart. The pure heart of which Jesus speaks is not something that we attain in this life to perfection never to be slipped from, the pure heart is this, you freely acknowledge your sin before God and you appeal to him for cleansing. "God, I have this basic, fundamental, controlling desire and passion for your glory. I want nothing greater than that. Not my will but thine be done, O God. I submit to you completely and yet there are these clinging remnants to me that I don't accept but that pollute things so that it's not the fullness of the purity that I would have it to be. God, I freely admit that, and I ask you to be merciful to me."

And so, beloved, pulling all of this together on the meaning of a pure heart, it's this, it is not the complete absence of sin in this life of which Jesus speaks. If that's what he meant, none of us have a pure heart. A complete absence of sin is not that of which he speaks here, rather, rather, it is a heart that has a fundamental desire to honor Christ, to glorify him no matter what, and has a settled refusal to harbor unconfessed sin. There is this fundamental controlling desire to glorify Christ. There is a fundamental refusal to harbor unconfessed sin. And in the midst of that, woven in that, is a trusting of Christ for cleansing that only he can give. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. God, I know I haven't attained what you want. I'm broken before you." This is poverty of spirit. You see, that's why it's so important to know the context of the Beatitudes; the controlling entryway, the pillars through which you enter into the Beatitudes is through poverty of spirit. So it's never a profession of perfection at all. It begins with a recognition that we fall short of him. So the purity of heart that he requires is not me boasting in perfection. It's not the absence of sin. It's a refusal to sign a peace treaty with sin, to accept it, to excuse it, to justify it, to traffic in false doctrine in order to keep it. You can tell when a pastor will ultimately stray. It's when he starts telling you that Christians don't have any responsibility to the moral law of God. Some have gone so far as to say you don't even have to confess your sin as a Christian. Pastors who talk that way, beloved, they're going to disqualify themselves eventually if the Lord doesn't intervene first. It's not the absence of sin, it's a refusal to harbor unconfessed sin and to trust Christ for cleansing. "God, I'm a sworn enemy of indwelling sin within me. Please help me. I want so much to be free from this. I know that I'm not. Create in me a clean heart. Give me what you require." That's the pure heart. "I own no other Master but Christ," the pure heart says. And when I stumble, I don't accept it. I don't justify it. I confess it and I ask Christ to cleanse me anew and that pattern repeats itself until you enter into glory. That's the meaning of a pure heart.

Now, point number 3. We've had the profoundly convicting and challenging aspects of this Psalm, now aren't you glad that there is something profoundly encouraging waiting for us as we consider the remainder of this Beatitude? I am. Go back to Matthew 5:8. Our point here, point number 3, the reward for a pure heart, why is this person blessed? The person that God has done a work in their heart, made them a new creature in Christ, and they pursue this pure heart during the course, whatever life and days the Lord gives to them between their conversion to their departure for glory, why is that person blessed? Verse 8, once again, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for," there's a reward, "they shall see God." They shall see God. Let's just kind of build up to the climax here, beloved. The verb to see is a verb that we use the word see in a similar way. We use see for physical

sight and we also use it in a mental way. So that you could say, "Oh, I see that mountain out in the distance," physical sight. You can say, "Ah, I see it. I see the answer to that math problem. I understand it. I have diagnosed it, and I grasp it." I grasp it mentally. You can see a mountain. You can see the answer to a math problem, right? So it is with this promise to see God. There is a sense in which a diminished, not really the best word, there's an aspect of seeing God in creation. We see the reflection of him. We see the manifestation of him. Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." I look up into the galaxies and I recognize there's a God that must have put them there. I can see with my eyes a reflection of the Creator. In a mental way, you see him in Scripture. John 5:39, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me."

I see Christ in the Scriptures. I see him spiritually in the Scriptures and so there's this, you know, there's this multifaceted sense in which we see, in which we see God here and now. "Heaven above a softer blue, earth around a sweeter green, something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen." I see things differently since my conversion, right? If that was all that there was to the meaning of what Jesus says and what Scripture teaches about seeing God, it would be far more than we deserve because we're enriched, we're enthralled when Scripture comes alive to us, those that have an eye for nature rejoice and are stimulated by that and give glory to God as a result of it but, beloved, that's barely...how can you even say this? How can you compare these things? Here's how you say it: the blessing and the glory of seeing God in the way that we see him now in this life, in his word, in his creation, in Christ, the glory of that is going to be explosively overwhelmed by a greater glory to come. The ultimate fulfillment of this promise of Jesus to the pure in heart is still completely future to us and the Apostle John wrote of this in his gospel, in his letters, and in the Apocalypse, and I want to turn you to passages in each one.

The ultimate fulfillment is yet to come in glory. John 17. Turn there with me, please. John 17. You will see as we look at these three texts that Christ, when he talks about seeing God, is talking about something that we have not yet experienced in this life as believers. In John 17:24, Jesus prays to the Father and if anyone's prayers ever get answered, my friends, it's Jesus Christ. His prayers are answered without fail and this is what he prays as he prays for his disciples, which include you and me. "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world." "Father, my prayer is that all that belong to me would see my glory in heaven.

1 John 3:2. 1 John 3:2. After Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter, you come to 1 John. 1 John 3:2. People have given me gifts with this verse on it because they know how precious it is to me. 1 John 3:2, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared." What's to come hasn't been manifested yet, something better awaits us that we haven't yet entered into, he says, "but we know that when he appears," when Christ appears, "we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." With physical sight, we will see the glory of the resurrected Christ. And when we see it, it will change us. We're going to see something that in this life no one has ever witnessed.

Go to the last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22:3 through 5, as it speaks about the eternal state that awaits all of the redeemed. Revelation 22:3, "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."

Jesus prays in John 17, "Father, I want them to see my glory." The Apostle John says, 1 John 3, "we will be like him because we will see him just as he is." The Bible closes with this climax in the final chapter of 1,189 chapters in our English Bibles, it closes on this theme that God has a destiny for his redeemed, that they will see him when it's all said and done. Beloved, fellow brother in Christ, sister in Christ, you and I, you know what's going to happen to us? We're going to see God. You and I, these creatures of clay as we are, imperfect even as believers, struggling, doubting, sinning, stumbling, and yet kept by the gracious hand of our loving Lord, we're going to see God. What does that mean? What will that be like? Beloved, I have no idea. I have no idea. How can the finite see the infinite? What is it like to see inexpressible resurrected glory, undiminished by sin, undiminished by this curtain of flesh in a spiritual realm where we ourselves have been made perfect, our hearts thoroughly cleansed, we've been perfected, we've been glorified, and somehow we are equipped to be able to comprehend in some measure, the vast glory of God undiminished, and our faith has become sight? What's it like to do that? I have no idea. We are in a staggering realm in Scripture here that is far beyond earth. This is a realm that is reserved for the children of God alone. The wicked will not see this. False Christians will not see this. Hypocrites will not see this. But those of pure heart, devoted to the glory of God as a fruit of their redemption, those devoted to the glory of God and wanting nothing else in life, even though our flesh pulls us down, this is for us and for us alone. Jesus Christ is going to appear in the world one day with great power and glory. We don't know when, but we know that he is coming, and when he comes, we will see him, and when we see him, we will be transformed into his likeness to share his holiness and the perfection of his resurrected glory and, beloved, you will belong there because Christ redeemed you for that purpose to be with him forever, sharing and seeing his glory.

Dear believer in Christ, this is your destiny. God has decreed this for you before the foundation of the world so it will certainly come to pass, and all of the heartache and sorrow and conflict and resentments of this life will dissipate like a vapor in the wind as we enter into this glorious state that God has promised for us. May I suggest what I think you should take away from that, whatever it means? Jesus calls you and me to deny ourselves, to take up our cross and follow him, to be disciples, to follow him in his persecutions, to trust him in the midst of our adversities, knowing that in this world you will have tribulation. And that's not easy. We go through those seasons, don't we, where everything seems difficult in life. Maybe some of you are in those right now, just like I'm trying to run in waste deep mud. Everything is slow and difficult, and it's not easy. And I get that. But, beloved, this beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God," this Beatitude promises you on the authority of Jesus Christ that it will be worth it

and that it is worth it. It is worth it to live for him. It is worth it to fight the battle against sin. It is worth it to persevere in the midst of affliction. It is worth it to set your desire on him because the outcome is so great and glorious that no one under the sound of my voice should dare the possibility of missing it. To see the glorified Christ in person? To see his face? To fall at his feet and kiss his feet, or whatever means of affection were given to express imperfected glory, I don't want to miss that! Do you? I don't want to miss that! That is the most perfect thing ever and it's what's given to us in our salvation. We measly creatures of sinful clay and flesh are going to see Christ really and truly and in person very, very soon. And when he looks on us, it will not be a look of disdain. It will not be a look of, "What are you doing here? How did you get in here?" He's going to look on us with a face that radiates his love for us. It's going to be a face that radiates, "Yes, this is what I did for you. You are home. And no one can take this away from you. Welcome to my kingdom. We have an eternity to share together."

It's worth it. Everyone that shed blood for Christ, worth it. Slandered for his sake, it's worth it. Struggling, being faithful, persevering in the midst of a difficult marriage, it's worth it, done for Christ because we know what's coming. We know what the outcome is. 2 Corinthians 5:5 says this, "He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away," here it is again, beloved, the principle of a pure heart in just different words, "whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him."

Who are the pure in heart? They're those with a controlling ambition, a pure ambition to please Christ, unmixed. What will happen to them? They will receive an unspeakably great and eternal reward. Only one question matters in light of that, beloved: will you be there?

Let's pray.

Father, may it be that everyone under the sound of my voice would be there and would not miss this transgalactic glory of seeing Christ face-to-face. Create within us a clean heart and renew a steadfast spirit within us that we might grow in this purity of heart which inherits the promise they will see God. We long for that day, Lord. I long for that day, Lord. Bring it to pass in your time and in your way, and the glory we give you now here on earth in broken clay vessels, one day we'll gladly render to you in glorified bodies with the saints of all of the ages, with the holy angels resounding, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty." And at the pinnacle, our Lord Jesus, having been rejected by men, crucified, buried, now eternally exalted to be loved and adored by his redeemed forever and ever. Hasten that day. Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.

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