

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

Message 11

Scripture: Matthew 22:34-40

INTRO: We are in the sixth beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." We are dealing with this question: How does one become pure in heart? I probably do not need to tell you that New Year's resolutions are not the solution. And I need not tell you that the methods of the Catholic church and monasticism are not the way to become pure in heart. For example Paul the simple prayed 300 times a day, moving stones from one pocket to another to keep count. Anthony, the founder of the hermit life, ate only salt and bread and never washed or cut his hair. Symeon lived for 20 years on a 60 foot pillar 3 feet in diameter and never once came down. Paul of Thebes lived in solitude for 90 years. Pachomius slept on a rock for 15 years. St. Paula renounced wealth and became a nun. She was described as "always crying, fasting, and filthy." Benedict controlled his lustful nature by rolling himself naked in a briar patch." But none of these will ultimately work.

So, how does one then become pure in heart? Before there can be hope of becoming pure in heart, one must become poor in spirit and mourn one's sins. Our sins must be dealt with by repentance and confession. Repentance and confession will bring about meekness and causes one to hunger and thirst for righteousness, which once experienced causes one to become merciful with godly mercy. And then one begins to become pure in heart. So, that is the beginning of how one becomes pure in heart. But, one may wander in the wilderness for some time, before beginning to become pure in heart. This wandering is described in Romans 7. Paul describes that experience like this, "The good I want to do I don't do; and that which I don't want to do I do."

But victory is possible, and that is described in Romans 8. Being victorious does not mean being sinless. Those who gain the victory will learn to deal with sin quickly and thoroughly and they will learn to live righteously. They will hunger and thirst for righteousness over and over again. They will not be content with positional righteousness, but will only rest when they have come to practical righteousness. Theirs is a life of obedience

to the Lord. In Romans 8 they are described as those who live according to the spirit, and not according to the flesh. They fulfill the righteous requirements of the moral law.

So, in answering the question, how do we become pure in heart we have looked at the phreen. And we are in the process of looking at the nous. With regard to the phreen, we learn to think right. With regard to the nous, we learn to repent and to store good information and keep bad information out. Here we learn the principle of GIGO, that is, if you put garbage in you will get garbage out. But the pure in heart practice BIBO, Bible in, Bible out.

A. The Character Of The Pure In Heart

We are presently considering the character of the pure in heart, and we are not done with the nous part of our hearts. So, let us begin with another passage that I think combines the actions of the phreen with the nous. Go to Matthew 22 (read 34-37). There are 3 important words here with regard to our subject. They are the *soul*, the *heart* and the *mind*. Now the soul is one of those three major components of man's basic makeup. The heart is only one part within the soul. But as I see it, it is the sum total of that area where data is processed and where all the data is stored. The NT word for heart is the word 'kardia' from which we get such medical terms as 'cardiac'.

Now, the word translated 'mind' here is the word 'dianoia.' This word also comes from the nous part of the mind. When the preposition 'dia' is fixed to the word 'nous' it becomes the word dianoia, and there we have the word of our text. I understand it to be a thinking through of information that is already stored in the nous. As I see it, it is not thinking new things into the storage part, but rethinking things already stored there.

For example, at our prayer meetings, we are trying to learn to sing by reading notes. So we are learning the language of music on the page of the hymnbook. We are going to seek to learn how to make the sounds with our voice that the notes tell us to make. We are thinking into our minds, what to most of us is new information. But this

word in our passage speaks, I think, of information we are rethinking. In another message we looked at the word 'noeema' as found in the text that says we are to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. There is the individual thought. In the word dianoia, in my understanding, is the prolonged thinking through of many such thoughts.

So in my understanding, when Jesus said in Matthew 22:37 that we are to love the Lord our God with all our mind, it is not talking about when we think new things into our mind. It is talking about when we rehash things already stored in the mind. I would translate this verse like this, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your thinking through." So, let me give you an assignment for this coming week. Try to pay attention to when you are thinking new things, or when you are rethink something that is already stored in your mind and you will be amazed at how crucial this part of our lives is.

Now, I suspect that probably one of the greatest dangers we face in our minds, is when our minds are otherwise unoccupied, and we rethink what is already stored there. I suppose that what we think of when our mind is idle, is a very good indication of how pure our hearts are. What is in view in Matthew 22:37, in my view is our thought life. You see, when our mind is not occupied with doing other things, it will rehash what is already stored in the nous. If you think about it this week, check this week where your mind is when it is otherwise idle. And what we are instructed to by the Lord is to love God with all our thinking through. If anyone is truly pure in heart, he will have to be pure in heart here!

According to Luke 1:15, when God wants to foil the plans of the proud, He does so in their dianoia. Go to Ephesians 1 (read 15-18). Here Paul prayed that God would give to the Ephesian Christians, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. And as I interpret the passage, when God gives those things to a believer, the eyes of his 'understanding' dianoia, are opened and he

will behold wonderful things in God's Word! Here is the order. We must gain the knowledge of God. Then God must give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in that knowledge. And when God does that, the eyes of our dianoia, are opened, and we feed on the wonderful truths of God's Word. Verses 18-19 show us what those wonderful truths are.

Since we are in Ephesians, go to 2:1-3 (read). This tells us that before we were believers, we fulfilled the desires of the flesh and of the dianoia, the thoughts we rethink and feed on. Look at Ephesians 4 (read 17-19). Now note in verse 17 he speaks of the fact that the unsaved walk in the futility of the 'mind'. That word is *nous*. How do you walk in the futility of the mind? Notice in verse 18 it says, "having their understanding (dianoia) darkened, being alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart..." When it speaks of a darkened understanding, it is a darkened dianoia. And why is that? Because of their ignorance. And what is that? It is a word describing their lack of knowledge. And where is knowledge stored? In the nous! And why is their dianoia darkened? Because of hard hearts! Their whole heart, not just their nous and phreen is hard.

Our text is, "Blessed are the pure in heart." The heart is where all the data processing or the thoughts take place. It is the thinker. We often distinguish between the word 'heart' and our word 'mind'. We say it is 18 inches from the mind to the heart. But truly, the heart means the mind. There is no word for *mind* in either the Hebrew of the OT or the Greek of the NT. It is referred to as the heart. As the heart is the vital center of man's physical being, so the mind is the vital center of man's spiritual nature. Our brain is not the mind either. Our brain is the physical part that our spiritual part uses for the spiritual heart to function.

And so, in conclusion to this word dianoia, we are to love God with all our time we spend thinking through stored information. We may rightfully spend time thinking about

our work and many other things, but when we spend an exorbitant amount of time there, we are not loving God there. If we spend very little time pondering Scripture, we are not loving God in our thoughts as we should. If we spend all our time on thinking about fishing and hunting and so on, again we do not love God with that part of our heart as we should.

CONSCIENCE

There is another area vital to having a pure heart. It is that which we call the conscience. Now one may differ with my conclusions that the conscience is part of the whole area called the heart, but it is still appropriate to deal with the subject of the conscience here. It is not possible to be pure in heart when we have a defiled conscience. The word conscience in the NT is the word *suneideesis*. It means a co-knowledge. It is a *with knowledge*. It is a knowledge with or alongside our knowledge.

I believe the conscience is a basic knowledge given by God to all mankind. It is a knowledge we come pre programmed with when we are born. Go to John 1 for a look at a very difficult verse (read 8-9). It is my view that the Lord Jesus gives to each man a conscience. He gives this light to every man who is born. And this conscience is faithful. It works in every person except those who have violated it to such an extent it refuses to work any more. That is to be given over to a reprobate mind, of which Paul speaks in Romans 1.

A writer by name of O. Halesby has said of the conscience that the conscience cannot act. It only passes judgment. He gives the following seven descriptions of the judgment of the conscience. First, it is final. Try to win an argument with the conscience. You can't. It is final. Second, it is unbiased. It doesn't say, "Oh, I didn't know it was you. In that case what you did is fine." It says, "I don't care who you are, you are wrong." And third, it is irrefutable. Try to refute the conscience and it refuses to be refuted. Fourth, it is absolute. You can't

make any deals with the conscience. It is absolute. Then fifth, it is unappealable. Try appealing to the conscience. We might appeal to someone who has set out a judgment against us, but you cannot appeal to the conscience. And sixth, it is uncategorical. It gives no explanation for its judgment. It just makes the judgment and it refuses to budge. And last, it is individual. It bothers us sometimes that our conscience bothers us about some things that others seem to have no problem with. But in some respects the conscience is individual. We have not time to deal with Romans 14, but, for the most part we must not let someone else's conscience be our guide.

Now, there is one way to destroy the conscience and that is by searing it. We sear it when we refuse to obey it. Searing our conscience is more dangerous than burning out our sense of smell or ruining our sense of touch. To sear our conscience is to disable the mechanism that allows us to hear the voice of God. It is to become reprobate and to be damned forever.

According to the Wikipedia, the [United States Department of the Treasury](#) has set up a fund called the *Conscience Fund*. It is one of three gift funds maintained and used for voluntary contributions from people who have stolen from or defrauded the [United States Government](#). The fund was created in 1811 and received \$5.00 during its first year and over \$5.7 million dollars during its first 175 years. The fund's name comes from a letter sent with a \$1500.00 check for previously misappropriated funds. So the government said, "Suppose we call this a contribution to the conscience fund and get it announced in the newspapers, and perhaps we will get some more".

Now, our subject is the pure in heart. Listen to these Scriptures. 1 Timothy 1:5, "Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith." 1 Timothy 3:9 says, "...holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience." 2 Timothy 1:3. "I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience..." 2 Timothy 2:22, "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love,

peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Titus 1:15, "To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled." And last, Hebrews 10:22, "...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

So, our beatitude says, "Blessed are the pure in heart." I believe that one cannot have a pure heart without having a pure conscience.

THE MEMORY

Well, I have one more point to make on the heart. We have looked at three major areas of the heart, as I see the heart. Others may not see it like that. But I cannot find any good writers who have dealt much with this subject from a biblical point of view.

There is a part of the heart we call memory. In the NT is called the mneemee. I view the mneemee as that part of the heart that recalls data from the nous into the phreen. Let me give you an example of that. How many of you remember your birth date? When I asked you that question, your retrieval system went to work and put that data in your phreen.

There are also a number of words used in the NT that have this same root word. For example a tomb or sepulcher is called a mneema. It is called that because it causes one to remember the person who is buried there.

I have recommended in my notes on the nature of man, that memory may also refer to the area where thoughts are held while the phreen is working on other data. Some of us have a larger better or larger memory than others. For some of us, the memory is slowly wearing out. For some of us, our memory will only retain things for a very short time before the data is replaced into the nous.

You may wish to study the Scriptures to see what we are instructed to remember. You see, we have a communion service from time to time to remember Christ's death. Our

memory banks can only hold so much and then they store things back in the nous. And there are some things we need to be reminded of again and again. When we remember, we pull things out of our nous and rethink them.

The antonym of *to remember* is *to forget*. There are times when we need to overrule our memory and not allow it to dwell on certain things. When you come through a very difficult church situation like we have experienced, there are many times when you have to take control of what you allow your mind to dwell on.

There are also things we have been forgiven for in the past that want to come to our minds involuntarily. I think the devil has a way of bringing memories to our attention, and then he sits back to seek if they will destroy us. Now let me say this about forgetting. You cannot erase things from the nous by forgetting. That is not what forgetting is. Even forgiven things are not erased, they are still there in our data storage.

Go to Philippians 3:13 (read). Paul says that he is forgetting those things that are behind. If we want to have a pure heart, there are some things we will need to learn to forget. I want to make a very important note here. When Paul says he is forgetting those things which are behind, no doubt he is talking about those things the devil would use to destroy him, like talking part in the stoning of Stephen or apprehending Christians. But the word 'forgetting' is in the present tense. It means that these things come to him again and again, and he refuses to dwell on them. He puts them away. This is taking every thought captive. You see, there are some memories that we must voluntarily override.

I was asked a while ago that if repentance gets rid of the sins stored in our mind, why do we still remember those things? Why is the memory still there? I should have clarified. Repentance does not remove the memory of our sins from our minds, it removes the purple or the stain of sin in our hearts. God will never bring up again that which He has forgiven. But He does not remove it from our minds. If He did, we would not learn from our sins and we

would continually repeat them. The only reason why we quit certain sins is because we remember the past and what it did to us. If I lie to someone and truly repent and confess, it will want to cure me of lying. But if I have totally forgotten what that sin did to me, I am likely to repeat it.

My uncle George, who was in the Care Home here for a number of years, went through some very difficult things. He got MS and over a number of years became immobile. And when he was immobile, his wife left him and life was a mess for him. But you can talk with the nurses who took care of him about his manner of life. People who went to encourage him came away encouraged. And one day I said, "Uncle George, if you could give one thing that has helped you to live in victory, and that you would advise to others, what would that be?" Now he was a Christian and loved the Lord, and he said, "Don't dwell on the past." The pure in heart will have to learn to forget some things.

I want to just briefly mention one more important word which relates to having a pure heart. In the Hebrew of the OT it is the word *kilya*. In the Greek of the NT, it is the word *nephros*. Those trained in the medical sciences would know that the word 'nephros' relates to the kidneys of the body. When the translators come to this word, they have a very hard time knowing how to translate it when it is used in connection to the immaterial soul. It has been translated as reins, souls, inmost thoughts, hearts and simply thoughts.

The KJV translates it as *reins*. That is an old English word for *kidneys*, and kidneys is what the words *kilya* or *nephros* actually mean. It is interesting that when the kidneys are used figuratively they are often paired with heart, i.e., hearts and kidneys. Look at Psalm 7:9 (read). You may wish to jot down Psalm 26:2; Jer. 11:20, 17:10, 20:12; Rev. 2:23;. Not only are the kidneys paired with the heart but when so paired another aspect present is that of testing (Note grieved or pierced in the kidneys, Ps. 73:21).

What is the connection between the heart and the kidneys in the physical world of man? The connection can be easily made, for the connection is the blood. The heart takes in and pumps out blood thus circulating it. Encyclopedia Britannica says, "Each kidney contains 1,000,000 to 1,250,000 nephrons that filter the entire five quart water content of the blood every 45 minutes-an equivalent of 160 quarts a day. Of this only 1 1/2 quarts are excreted; the remainder is reabsorbed by the nephrons."

What is the function of the kidneys? To quote Britannica again, "The more advanced kidney...is a paired compact organ whose functional units filter initial urine from the blood, reabsorb water and nutrients, and secrete wastes, producing the final urine which is expelled", end quote. The urine which is removed by the kidneys is waste and not fit for use by the body. That which is fit for use goes back into the bloodstream, therein lies the connection to the heart.

You see, it is blood that the heart pumps. The blood goes in and out and in and out. And the kidneys strain out all the bad things before the blood goes back into the heart. And the heart of the soul or the mind as we call it pumps what? Thoughts! Scripture tells us that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. What makes the heart wicked? It is the thoughts that flow through it (Matt. 15:19). And how does God clean up our hearts? By teaching us to strain out bad thoughts and pump good thoughts.

God promises on a number of occasions that He will give a new heart to those who come to Him. How does He give man a new heart? By changing man's belief thus changing his thoughts. This change is called repentance (change of mind). When I change my mind about things the old is expelled by the kidneys of the soul, and when I believe the Word of God, that which is good is retained in the bloodstream. So, God says, "For God so love the world that whosoever believeth in Him..." It is here where our belief becomes vital.

But when we become Christians we have a lot of bad material to take care of in our hearts. So Paul speaks

about the renewing of the mind in Romans 12. How is this done? By repenting or changing my mind about wrong things and putting in truth. All bad or poor or useless thinking should be strained out by the kidneys. You see the kidneys are a way of getting bad stuff out of the blood and recycling good stuff.

-----If Time

Turn to Psalm 7:9 (read). The KJV says, "hearts and reins". The NKJV says, "hearts and minds." The Hebrew says hearts and kidneys. You might jot down 26:2; Jer. 11:20. It is not that God did not know in these cases what was in their heart. But I may not know what my heart is like until I am tested. Then I find out what my heart is really like.

Now let me just say this. When we have such biblical terms, it is neither Hebrew nor Greek thinking. This is the divine word of God! Now go back to Jeremiah 17:10 (read). Here, once more we have man's heart, and the kidneys. I propose that as the kidneys cleanse the blood, so what we allow into our thought processes can cleanse our heart.

So, Philippians 2:3 encourages us to lowliness of thinking and to esteem others better than ourselves. Verse 5 instructs us to let that kind of thinking be in us which was in Christ Jesus. You see, there we have being poor in spirit. I believe that we must let the Word of God, the truth, speak to our hearts, which, when we accept the truth of it, it will cause us to mourn our condition which will bring us all the way through to being pure in heart. And we will be purified again and again. Just as the kidneys cleans the blood and expel the waste, and our blood is purified, so the Word of God will do to our thoughts when we think them. So we are to love the Lord our God with all our soul, with all our heart and with all our thinking through!

CONCL: Well, let us conclude the third and last message on the words, "Blessed are the pure in heart." We began with these quotes. D. Martyn Lloyd Jones says, "Anyone who realizes even

something of the meaning of the words, 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God', can approach them only with a sense of awe and of complete inadequacy." Then he says, "This statement, of course, has engaged the attention of God's people ever since it was first uttered, and many great volumes have been written in an attempt to expound it."

John MacArthur says, "Here is one of those passages of Scripture whose depths are immeasurable and whose breadth is impossible to encompass. This incredible statement of Jesus is among the greatest utterances in all of the Bible."

We have looked at what it means to be PURE in heart. Then we have looked at what it means to be pure in HEART. We looked at some of the words related to the heart and how we become pure in heart. I don't have time to recap on all those, but if these things were new to you, it would be worth going over these messages again.

Before us now lie these difficult words, "For they shall see God."