

Title: **“BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART”**
Text: Matthew 5:8
Subject: *Heart Purity — What is it?*
Date: Sunday Morning — May 30, 2004
Tape # Y-24a
Reading: *Psalm 57:1-11*

Psalm 57

*To the chief Musician,
Altaschith, Michtam of David,
when he fled from Saul in the cave.*

1. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until *these* calamities be overpast.
2. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth *all things* for me.
3. He shall send from heaven, and save me *from* the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.
4. My soul *is* among lions: *and* I lie *even among* them that are set on fire, *even* the sons of men, whose teeth *are* spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.
5. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; *let* thy glory *be* above all the earth.
6. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen *themselves*. Selah.
7. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.
8. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I *myself* will awake early.
9. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.
10. For thy mercy *is* great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.
11. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: *let* thy glory *be* above all the earth.

INTRODUCTION:

“BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART”

Turn with me to Matthew chapter five. I want us to look at a statement that fell from the lips of our Savior as he began his Sermon on the Mount. Our text and subject today will be **Matthew 5:8**. — *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”*

This statement has been on my heart and mind, almost incessantly for the past two weeks. I have awakened with it pressing hard upon my soul every morning, gone to bed with it laying heavy on my heart every night, and awoken many times through the nights of these past two weeks with this cry in my heart. — “O Spirit of God, teach me the meaning of these words. Lord Jesus, what is your doctrine in this passage?” — *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”*

I have read literally everything I have in my library on this text and everything I could find on the Internet — all very with little profit or satisfaction. Consequently, I have been shut up to God the Holy Spirit and this blessed Book he has given us to find the meaning of our Lord’s words in this text. — *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”*

DO WE QUALIFY?

Remember, if we would claim this promise, we must meet the character of the one to whom the promise is made. Do we qualify? Do we meet the character of the one to whom the promise is made?

Is there any such thing as a man, woman, or child anywhere in this world of whom it can be said, “Here is one who is pure in heart”? Is there one of us here that dares to imagine himself or herself to be pure in heart? Is there anyone who is so pure that he is fit and able to see God, who has declared, *“my face shall not be seen”* (Ex. 33:23)? Is there anyone here so pure as to be pure in heart and thereby able to look upon the invisible God and see him *“Who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see”* (1 Tim. 6:16)?

Does our Lord here make a requirement that is impossible? Does he promise that which cannot be? Is he here mocking us with demands that cannot be satisfied and dangle before us hopes that can never be realized?

Such thoughts are absurd. The Son of God does not tease us with promises that can never be obtained and requirements that can never be satisfied. Yet,

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that is exactly what self-righteous, religious moralists and legalists make of this text. — *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”*

HORRIBLE MOCKERY

Would it not be utter mockery and cruelty for someone to say to a man lying on a battlefield, severely wounded, and with both legs shot off, “If you will just get up and run over there, you will be safe, everything will be okay, and all your wounds will be completely healed”?

Horrible as that mockery would be, this is worse. Almost everything I have read or heard by theologians, preachers, teachers and religious leaders on Matthew 5:8 runs in this vain: — “If you will make your heart pure, you shall see God in heaven.” Very few leave out God’s work altogether. Most try to make their doctrine of works appear to be the doctrine of grace. They tell us, of course that God must first make your heart new in regeneration; but you must make your heart pure by the discipline of grace in self-denial and the mortification of your sins in sanctification.”

I ask you who follow such counsel — Have you succeeded? Have you made yourself pure in heart? — So pure that you can now, by reason of your heart purity, confidently hope to see God himself face to face in heaven’s glory?

If you and I have even a shred of honesty in us, we must hang our heads with shame and confess — No! What, then, does this mean? — *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”*

BLESSED PROMISE

These words, lofty and remote as they seem, are in fact among the most hopeful, comforting, and radiant that ever came from our Master’s lips. They proclaim the certain, sure realization of something that seems impossible. They promise the possession of an apparently impossible vision. And they soothe our corrupt, sinful hearts, so sinful that we most naturally shrink from and tremble at the thought of seeing God in all the splendor of his radiant glory, assuring us that seeing God shall be our highest, ultimate blessedness.

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Divisions: As we look at this text, I want us to consider the three things mentioned here by our Redeemer, and seek to know what he tells us in his Holy Word about them. — *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”*

1. Our Hearts
2. The Pure in Heart
3. The Blessedness Promised

OUR HEARTS

I. *First, I want to show you what this Book has to say about our hearts.*

“Blessed are the pure in heart.” — That which is of primary importance in all true religion, that which is essential to true godliness is a heart that is right with God (1 Sam. 16:7).

(1 Samuel 16:7) “But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”

Peter said to Simon Magus, — *“Thou has neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God”* (Acts 8:21). **It is written**, — *“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness”* (Rom. 10:10). **The Lord God requires**, — *“Apply thine heart to understanding”* (Pro. 2:2). — *“Let thine heart keep my commandments”* (Pro. 3:1). — *“Write mercy and truth upon the table of thine heart”* (Pro. 3:3). — *“Let thine heart retain my words”* (Pro. 4:4). — *“Keep thy heart with all diligence”* (Pro. 4:23). — *“My son, Give me thine heart”* (Pro. 23:26). **All true religion is a matter of the heart.**

- Faith is a heart work.
- Repentance is a heart work.
- The confession of sin is a heart work.
- Prayer is a heart work.
- Worship is a heart work.

Our Lord declares in Matthew 5:8 that the pure in heart shall see God, and no one else. **And that’s the rub, isn’t it? Our hearts are anything but**

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pure! Honesty compels us to acknowledge that fact. And it is a fact plainly, constantly revealed in Holy Scripture.

BIBLE DESCRIPTIONS

Hear what the Book of God has to say about the human heart. When the Word of God speaks about the heart, it is not talking about that organ in the middle of your chest that pumps blood through your body. The heart in the Bible is your inmost being, your inner self, what you really are, the seat of your affections, your emotions, your understanding, and your will.

- In **Genesis 6:5** we read *“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*
- In **Psalms 12:2** the Lord God describes **all the sons of Adam** this way. — *“With flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.”*
- In **Psalms 101:4** we read of *“a froward heart.”*
- **Isaiah 44:20** tells us that man *“feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside.”*
- Listen! *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?”* (Jer. 17:9).
- The Lord God tells us, in Hosea 7:11, **Ephraim** is *“like a silly dove without heart”* —that is, without understanding, knowledge, or desire after God; but seeking for pleasure and enjoyment where God had never promised either.
- Listen to **the words of the Son of God** in Mark 7:20-23.

(Mark 7:20-23) *“And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. (21) For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, (22) Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: (23) All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”*

- **Listen to this promise of free grace** (Ezek. 36:26). — *“I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.”*

Do you see this? Has God taught you the evil, the horrid corruption of your

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hard, cold, dead, unfeeling, unmoved, heart of stone? Well may we look within and sigh,

“The rocks can rend, the earth can quake,
The seas can roar, the mountains shake;
Of feeling all things show some sign,
But this unfeeling heart of mine.”

CANNOT SEE GOD

If this is the state of my heart, if this is the condition of every man, woman, and child by nature, how can we ever hope to know the blessedness of which the Son of God speaks, when he declares, “*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God*”? Such hearts cannot see God. Such hearts can never see God! Indeed, such hearts as these, the heart of man, cannot see the things of God, much less God himself! Did not the Lord Jesus say to Nicodemus, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*” (John 3:3)? The natural man simply cannot see God, cannot see Christ, and cannot see the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14).

(1 Corinthians 2:14) “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”

THE PURE IN HEART

II. That is the state and condition of every man’s heart by nature. It is anything but pure. Yet, our Lord speaks of “*the pure in heart*.” So, the *second* thing I want to do is **show you from the Scriptures what is meant by “the pure in heart.”**

“*Blessed are the pure in heart*.” — This purity of heart is, not the external varnish of a Pharisee, or the boasted perfection of a hypocrite, or the empty dream of the carnally secure. **They are pure in their own eyes; but they are not pure** (Pro. 30:12).

(Proverbs 30:12) “*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*”

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The pure in heart are not those vain, religious fools who convince themselves that they are pure. They shall never see God. They are an irksome smoke in his nose (Isa. 65:5; Jude 16-19).

(Isaiah 65:5) “Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These *are* a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.”

(Jude 1:16-19) “These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage. (17) But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; (18) How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. (19) These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”

NOT SINLESSNESS

Purity of heart certainly does not imply sinlessness of heart. Those who think that they have no sin are yet dead in sin (1 John 1:7-10).

(1 John 1:7-10) “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

NOT SELF-SANCTIFICATION

Heart purity is not accomplished by the imaginary self-sanctification of those multitudes who delude themselves into thinking they make themselves pure by their slight, occasional (rare) conformity to selected points of the law in their outward behavior (Isa. 66:16-17).

(Isaiah 66:16-17) “For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. (17) They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one *tree* in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.”

“BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART”**NOT A CHANGED HEART**

And that which our Lord speaks of as a pure heart is not a changed heart. When I was a young man, before God saved me, people would often ask me to give my heart to the Lord. Even then, in my utter ignorance, I thought, “What on earth would God want with that filthy thing?” Salvation is not you giving God your old, wretched heart. Salvation is God giving you a new heart (Jer. 32:37-40; Ezek. 36:26).

(Jeremiah 32:37-40) “Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: (38) And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: (39) And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: (40) And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.”

(Ezekiel 36:26) “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

There are multitudes who talk about conversion as “a change of heart.” Nothing could be further from the truth. Salvation is God giving us a new heart.

BLOOD SPRINKLED HEART

This purity of heart stands in having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience by the sprinkling of Christ’s precious blood (Heb. 9:11-14).

(Hebrews 9:11-14) “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; (12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. (13) For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: (14) How much more shall the blood of Christ, who

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through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

THE WORD “PURE”

Let me take a minute to talk to you about this word “*pure*.” What is its meaning? There are three words translated “pure” in the New Testament. The word used here, “*kayaros*” (katharos), is the word from which we get the name “Katherine.” It is also the word from which we get the term used in psychology, “catharsis,” which means “the purging of emotions, the release of pent up emotions, and the relief of guilt.” Actually, that is pretty close to the meaning of the word “*pure*” in our text. The word means...

- Purified by fire.
- Purified as a vine that is pruned and made fit to bear fruit.
- Free from corruption, sin, and guilt.
- Blameless, innocent.
- Unstained with the guilt of anything.
- Transparent, undiluted.

When our Lord speaks of those who are “*pure in heart*,” he is talking about a people who have in their hearts an honest, transparent consciousness of perfection, righteousness, innocence, sinlessness, and stainlessness before God, without pretense or hypocrisy. Let me just show you two other passages in which this same word is used (Tit. 2:14; Acts 15:9).

In **Titus 2:14** the Holy Spirit tells us that it was the intention, design, and purpose of Christ in his death to make us pure before God.

(Titus 2:14) “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

BELIEVING HEART

In Acts 15:8-9 we are told that God the Holy Spirit purifies the hearts of chosen, redeemed sinners by the blessed gift of faith in Christ.

(Acts 15:8-9) “And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us; (9) And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”

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When Christ is revealed and the sinner looks to him alone for complete atonement, for all righteousness, for acceptance with God, looking on Christ, his heart is sprinkle with the blood of Christ and his conscience is purged of all guilt before God.

“Men who are destitute of this faith, and who never received this atonement, are as destitute of internal purity as the prince of devils. *‘Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.’* The man whose sins are forgiven him, and whose conscience is purged from guilt and dead works, who is renewed by the Spirit, who is a believer in Jesus, and holds fast the truth of the gospel as it is in Christ, is the man that holds the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. These are the people to whom the Lord turns a pure language, and such bring to the Lord a pure offering.”

(William Huntington)

CONVINCED HEART

The pure in heart are those who, looking to Christ, are convinced of God the Holy Spirit concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-11).

(John 16:7-11) “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (8) And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: (9) Of sin, because they believe not on me; (10) Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; (11) Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

CONFESSING HEART

The pure in heart are those who openly, frankly, honestly confess their sin to God, trusting Christ alone for the forgiveness of sin (1 John 1:9; Ps. 51:1-10).

(1 John 1:9) “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

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(Psalms 51:1-10) To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. — “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies **blot out** my transgressions. (2) **Wash me** thoroughly from mine iniquity, and **cleanse me** from my sin. (3) For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. (4) **Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil** (*Not this evil, but evil, nothing but evil*) **in thy sight**: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest. (5) Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (6) Behold, **thou desirest truth in the inward parts**: and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom. (7) **Purge me** with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (8) Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice. (9) **Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.** (10) **Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.**”

THE BLESSEDNESS PROMISED

III. **Now, let me briefly talk to you about the blessedness promised to the pure in heart.** — “*They shall see God!*”

“*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God!*” — Has the Lord God given you a pure heart? Has he given you a tender, feeling heart? — A broken and contrite heart? — A heart that is crushed under the awareness of your utter sin and depravity? — A heart that mourns over sin and hungers and thirsts for righteousness? — A heart that looks for grace, righteousness, merit before God, and eternal life altogether outside yourself? — A heart that pours out the painful, bitter confession of sin before God, acknowledging that there is nothing you want more than purity and that there is in you no purity at all? If he has given you such a heart, this is the blessedness that is yours. — “*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God!*”

“*They shall see God.*” — “*God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*”

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This is nothing less than **seeing him who is invisible**. It is seeing him as he is, in his true character, as he reveals himself to your soul in Christ, and seeing him forever!

The promise is that **you shall never be separated or banished from God and his presence**. You shall see him with acceptance, and with approbation, as your dear and everlasting Father. You shall see his face without a cloud, and hear his voice without a proverb.

The promise of this blessed text is that **you shall have an eternal abiding with him**, in whose favor is life, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.

This is **the promise of complete salvation in Christ** in the glorious liberty of the sons of God in heaven, when “*the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,*” forever and ever. We shall then see as we are seen, and know as we are known (1 John 3:1-2; Rev. 22:3-5).

(1 John 3:1-2) “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

(Revelation 22:3-5) “And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: (4) And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. (5) And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!”

Amen.