

May 24, 2020
The Sermon on the Mount (7)
The State of the Heart
Matthew 5:8
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This morning we are going to focus on Matthew 5:8 in which Jesus said, *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”* The heart is a very powerful organ in our body. Scientists tell us that in one hour it produces enough energy to lift a 150-pound man to the top of a 3 -story building and in 12 hours the heart produces enough energy to lift a 65-ton tank off the ground 1 foot. They tell us again that in 70 years, the energy that the heart produces is enough to lift the world’s biggest battleship right out of the ocean. But in today’s text Jesus doesn’t refer to our physical heart. He refers to a greater heart – a heart that is greater than our physical heart with all the things that it can do. Jesus referred to the heart frequently in His ministry. In Matthew 6:21 He said, *“where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”* In Matthew 12:34-35 Jesus tells us that this true center of our being reveals who we really are. He said, *“For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.”* So the heart is the center of our being.

Scripture tells us that the human heart is wicked. In Jeremiah 17:9-10, God says, *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.”* Billy Graham once said, *“We’re suffering from only one disease in the world. Our basic problem is not a race problem. Our basic problem is not a poverty problem. Our basic problem is not a war problem. Our basic problem is a heart problem.”* The state of our heart is the most important thing in our life. Everything is built on “heart health.” So the state of our heart, the state of our inner being, is more important than the state of our marriage, of our business, of our country, or of anything else.

Max Lucado suggests some great heart examination questions: When someone barks at you, do you bark back or bite your tongue? When your schedule is too tight or your to-do list too long, do you lose your cool or keep it? When you are offered a morsel of gossip marinated in slander, do you turn it down or pass it on? When you make a mistake in life, do you accept fault or do you blame others? When a cashier gives you back too much change, do you keep it or do you gently point out her error and give her the money back. When your wife asks for some quality time with you, do you arrange your work schedule to meet her need or do you criticize her for not understanding the demands of your career? Your response to each of these scenarios depends on the state of your heart. How are you doing? What do you see with your heart? The state of our heart dictates whether we harbor a grudge or give grace, seek self-pity or seek Christ, drink human misery or taste God’s mercy. All this has to do with our heart because the heart is the center of the spiritual life.

Helen Keller was blind and also deaf. When she was asked if it is terrible to be blind, she answered, *“It’s better to be blind and see with our heart, than have two eyes and see nothing.”* Do you see the purity of Christ, the righteousness of Christ in your heart? We can see God in His total being, everything that He is, in the Lord Jesus Christ. We can see Him by faith in His Son, and by faith within the word of God. We can see Him in His world. We can see Him, if we’re saved in our very lives!

How do we make ourselves to be pure in heart? First of all, you need to be honest with God about your heart. You need to acknowledge to God that only He can make it pure, and you need to fill yourself with God's word, for He has said that it’s through His word that He has made us clean. You need to think of your eternity, the hope that is within us that keeps us alive, that keeps us going, and that one day we will see Him and we will be

like Him. In Jeremiah, God refers to this heart cleansing treatment, saying *"I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord."* (Jeremiah 24:7) Our hearts are made pure when we admit our sin to God and believe in faith that Jesus died for us, claiming the forgiveness and cleansing that is only possible through His blood.

We need God's power. We need to pray as David did, confessing his sin and saying, *"Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit in me."* (Psalm 51:10) We need God to give us regular heart checkups. It is time to pray, *"Search me and know my heart. See if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."* (Psalm 139) Time with God in prayer and time with God in His Word is like putting our lives through a refinery. It cleanses our thoughts and attitudes helping us to stay pure and single-minded. This morning Jesus asks us to have a pure heart. Let us ask God and pray to God to have a pure heart. *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."*

What is Jesus talking about when He says the pure in heart will "see God?" In verse 8 Jesus promises that when our pure and absolutely sincere desire is to know God, we will know God. Throughout scripture the metaphor of blindness is used to describe those who are lost and sight is used to describe spiritual life, that which is given to us at salvation. The blessing here is this: as the person who is pure in heart allows their life to be lost in Jesus and allows Jesus to live through them, their understanding, their perception, their discernment of who God is, of His ways, of His will, of His heart and of His hand will grow. Whereas those who do not know God are alienated from the life of God because of the darkness that is within them and because of the blindness of their hearts. Ephesians 4:17-18 says, *"the pure in heart have had their eyes opened, they can walk in the light as He is in the light and have fellowship with God and with one another."*

When we are able to see God, we can see His Spirit moving in the circumstances of our lives. We see His will being unfolded in our lives. We see His hand of provision in our everyday experience. We are perceptive to His ways. We are discerning of His heart and understanding when it comes to His word. We are able to see God because He lives in us through His Spirit and He reveals Himself to us in new ways every day. We see God as He lives His life through us. The pure in heart will see God because they are living life filled with His Holy Spirit. If we have been washed in the blood of Jesus, if we have been made new in Him, if we are living our lives under His lordship, filled with the Holy Spirit, we will invariably and inevitably see God.

Job said, *"My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you."* (Job 42:5) Have you seen God lately? Have you seen God at all? The ultimate event of all eternity will be when we see Him, and when we see Him, we will praise God and we will be like Him. In all his pain Job says, *"I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"* (19:25-27) Psalm 139:23-24 says, *"Search me O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."* God made us and He alone knows us. It is with the blood of His Son Jesus that He can cleanse us. When we allow Him to search us and know us and cleanse us, then and then alone can we address this issue of purity. This morning Jesus says to us, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."* (5:8)