

**Lesson 7: Having a Pure Heart**

***Lesson Notes:***

Welcome back! I pray you are enjoying this study of Jesus’ Beatitudes as much as I am. Talk about relevant! Ouch.

This week we dive into the deep waters of Matthew 5:8 - *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

***Questions:***

1. Spend a few minutes talking about the word *pure*. What comes to mind when you hear of something that’s pure? Think about pure gold or pure spring water? What does that mean?
Do you know any pure people? What does it mean for a person to be pure?

Now add the phrase *in heart* to your concept of *pure*. What might it mean for a person to be *pure in heart*? Talk about that.

1. The word Jesus used for *pure* is the Greek word *katharos*. Say the word out loud: *ka-thar-os.* Do you hear any familiarity to any English words in the pronunciation of *katharos*?

Our English word *cathartic* is a derivative of *katharos*. Something that is cathartic brings healing or relief through a purifying or cleansing process.

Our word *cauterize* also derives from *katharos*. What does it mean to cauterize a wound?

In John 15:3, Jesus said, “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.” The word *clean* is *katharos*.

So, you’re getting a bit of an idea of what *katharos* means. Try defining it now in your own words.

1. OK, let’s thicken the plot: Remember that the final four Beatitudes deal with our relationships with other people, not our relationship with God. Also remember that the purity of heart described in verse 8 is the result of the giving and receiving mercy Jesus' described in verse 7. Purity is the fruit of mercy.

With those two facts in mind, what does it mean for us to have pure hearts? What does it mean to have a pure heart for others? How might that show up in our daily lives? In our motives, our conversations, our prayers, and our behaviors?

What’s the relationship between being mercy and purity? How can one lead to the other?

Isn’t it interesting how personal these Beatitudes have become? Jesus is basically saying that as we get right in our standing before God and in our view of God (verses 3-6), we will inevitably get right with others (verses 7-10). In other words, if our discipleship isn’t impacting how we treat people, we need to examine whether we are really disciples at all.

1. Now to the promise: *The pure in heart see God*. Wow.

Obviously, we can interpret this to mean that we will see God in Heaven. That’s certainly true here. Because God is pure and he has purified us, we’re qualified by Jesus' blood to know him eternally and we will see him in all his full glory in Heaven.

However, the promise of every previous Beatitude includes an immediate, present-day fulfillment. God offers us a Kingdom reality now as the result of our getting 'right' before him.

For instance, the comfort offered to those who mourn in verse 4 isn’t just the comfort we receive in Heaven. It’s comfort for today - comfort in the nitty gritty here and now through God’s Spirit and by his people.

That being the case, it is fair to assume that the “they will see God” promise of verse 8 has some type of current meaning and fulfillment for us now. So, what is it?

What did Jesus mean when he promised that the pure in heart would see God? What do you think?

1. Read Hebrews 12:14. You might want to read a few different translations to get a better view of the full meaning.

Isn’t it interesting how the biblical writer connects living at peace with others with holiness and seeing God?

Now Read Psalm 11:7. There’s the same message again - those who are upright, those who live rightly and justly - will see the face of God.

1. Here is the application: those who have pure hearts toward others will have an intimacy and closeness with God that can best be described as seeing his face. Seeing God’s face, although a reality in Heaven, is a metaphor for the sweetness and intimacy that those who walk closely with God, here on earth experience.

Do you know that sweetness? Do you feel like sometimes you’ve seen the face of God?
2. The Bible teaches us that sin hinders our relationship with God. It kills intimacy. And specifically in the context of this Beatitude, relational sin is what hinders our relationship with God.

Read Ephesians 4:29-32. Verse 30 is a well-known and oft-quoted verse. “Do not grieve God’s Holy Spirit” is a command given to every believer. To wound God’s Spirit is to cause him grief or injury. Even typing those words here makes me sad. None of us would ever want to cause the Spirit of God pain, even though I’m not completely sure what that looks like.

Look at the context (the verses immediately before and immediately after) of verse 30. What is Paul talking about? He isn’t talking about how we treat God; he’s talking about how we treat others. And, in the middle of Paul’s discussion of how we should treat others, he warns us not to grieve God’s Spirit.

Thus, we can conclude that we grieve the Spirit of God in other Christians when we are not pure in heart towards them. When we have impure thoughts or motives toward others or say harmful and hurtful words to or about them, we basically call the Spirit of God in them a liar, because he is saying just the opposite to and about them.

And when you grieve God’s Spirit, you stop seeing his face. You lose intimacy with him.

Does that make sense? Do you now see the relationship between purity of heart toward others and enjoying intimacy with God? Can you describe it in your own words? What is the relationship between how we see others and how much we enjoy seeing God? What happens when we have impure thoughts toward others? How does that impact our relationship with God?

1. Now for the hard questions. You may need to think and pray about these for a bit.

What relationships do you have where your heart and/or words are not pure?

Whom do you judge or disapprove of?

Whom might you hold hatred toward or wish ill will for?

Who is that person you just can’t stand to be around and how do you feel about him or her in your heart?

What about business competitors, nosey neighbors, bullies, bad employers or employees, or political leaders? Is your heart pure towards them?

Where might your impure thoughts toward others be hurting and hindering your relationship with God? What blessing, favor or answers might he be withholding from you until you deal with an impure heart toward another? Maybe you should ask him.

Finally, how do you bring correction to an impure heart toward another? What steps might God have you take to get your heart right toward them?

As a group, discuss these things and then pray for each other.

See you next week.