

Refine Women's Ministry
The Beatitudes: Matthew 5:1-12
Beatitude #6: Happy Are the Pure in Heart
October 25, 2017 by Kim Peelen

"Purity of heart is a theme that runs from beginning of the Bible to the end." John MacArthur

Jesus's masterful teaching called The Beatitudes is not a random list of 'to do's' for the Christian. Rather each statement is critical, forming a magnificent sequence in the perfect order with each being an essential a part of one great reality. The Beatitudes can be arranged in three patterns. There is a sequential pattern whereby one builds upon the next. Understanding my total inadequacy as a spiritually bankrupt beggar I reach out to God, then as I mourn over my wretched sinfulness that completely separates me from God, I become gentle and lowly before God's absolute holiness. In humility I hunger and thirst for God's righteousness that I cannot attain apart from Him. As I cry to be filled with His character, He gives me mercy that I share with others. As I experience His mercy, I desire to be pure in heart, forsaking hollow religious rituals as well as desiring to make peace with others. As I become more God-honoring and obedient, the world is offended and I will be persecuted and slandered; yet God promises joy and reward as I fulfill the Beatitudes.

Secondly, they form a flowing pattern. The first three - a Beggarly Spirit Mourns over sin that makes me Meek before God as I Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness. Then the last three flow from becoming more like Him: my God-satisfied soul pours out Mercy to others, my Pure Heart sees more of God giving me the ability to make Peace with others. Lastly, the Beatitudes form a matching pattern. The poor in spirit (1) realize everything is a gift of mercy, so they are merciful to others (5). Those who mourn over sin (2) will have a pure heart (6) because one's heart cannot be cleansed apart from mourning over his sin. It is the meek (3) who are peacemakers (7) for unless you are humble you cannot be a peacemaker.

The Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12 [NASB]

- 1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.
- 2 He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,
- 3 "Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 "Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they shall be comforted.
- 5 "Blessed are the **gentle [meek]**, for they shall inherit the earth.
- 6 "Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they shall be satisfied.
- 7 "Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall receive mercy.
- 8 "Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they shall see God.
- 9 "Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God.
- 10 "Blessed are those who have been **persecuted for the sake of righteousness**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
- 12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Blessed are the Pure in Heart

The Meaning of Heart

Greek word *kardia*, from which we get cardiac. In Scripture, the heart always refers to the internal part of man, seat of his personality, his thinking process.

In contrast, the bowels refer to man's emotions, feelings in the midsection. Even the liver is an organ of emotion (Lam. 2:11). Jewish writers expressed such emotions like love and hate by the effect produced in the abdominal area.

Proverbs 23:7: As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

If my mind is committed, it directs my will, which in turn affects my emotions. A person pure in heart has a pure mind that controls his emotions.

The Meaning of Pure

Greek word *katharos* a noun form of the verb *katharizo* meaning '**to cleanse**'. The Latin form is *castus*, which is the root for *chaste* in the English. In the moral sense, it speaks of being **free from the filth of sin**. Here Jesus refers to a cleansed heart.

Katharos can also refer to something **unmixed, unadulterated, and unalloyed**. In mining or metallurgy the mixing of metals makes a new substance e.g. bronze [alloy of copper and tin] or brass [alloy of copper and zinc]. In Matthew 5:8 it refers to a heart with unmixed devotion and motives - or spiritual integrity and singleness of heart. It is also translated **clear**, as in a clear conscience (2 Tim. 1:3).

God's Word Is Pure

Psalm 19:8, 9 *The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.*

1 Timothy 1:5 *But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

The Opposite of Pure is Double-mindedness or Defilement

Titus 1:15 *To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.*

James 4:8-10 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the LORD, and He will exalt you.

The remedy for defilement or being double-minded is to be cleansed by the renewing of my mind through God's Holy Scriptures. The Word is sufficient to clean me up!

Results of Purity

In the Greek, *katharos* is more than just motive; a pure heart has **a motive that produces holy deeds**. If a person's deeds do not align with or obey God's Word, his heart is NOT focused on God and therefore is not a pure heart. Rather, it is an adulterated heart - it is alloyed or mixed with something else.

Again James speaks of this: *This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world (1:27).*

1 Peter 1:22, 23 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

How can I evaluate if I possess a pure heart and not an adulterated one? I inspect my actions: do I have a sincere love for other believers that acts in their best interest? Do I obey God's laws? Are my motives God-centered or man-centered?

For They Shall See God

The Greek rendering: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they, and they alone, shall be continually seeing God for themselves (John MacArthur, p. 164).*

How can sinful man see God - isn't that impossible?

In Exodus 33 Moses asks God "show me Thy glory!" To which He answers, *"I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."* But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" God chooses to reveal SOME of Himself: goodness, grace, and compassion to mankind. But His face shall not be seen...yet.

God Selectively Reveals Himself to Man at His Discretion

An interesting episode in Exodus 24:9-11: *Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they beheld God, and they ate and drank.* God allows this group to experience a portion of Himself, admitting they saw God, but were not destroyed.

Through God's Word: Job 42:5 *"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees Thee; Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes."*

Through Creation: Romans 1:20 *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being*

understood through what has been made, so that they [those who reject God] are without excuse.

In Our Future Glory We Will See God Just as He Is

1 John 3:2 *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.*

Revelation 22:3-6 *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. God shields His face, even from His children, until His time.*

For Discussion: Seeing God in the Present World Through a Pure Heart

*O LORD, who may abide in Thy tent? Who may dwell on Thy holy hill?
He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness,
and speaks truth in his heart.*

*He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor,
nor takes up a reproach against his friend;*

*In whose eyes a reprobate [vile person] is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; he swears to his own hurt, and does not change [keeps his promises];
he does not put out his money at interest,
nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.*

*He who does these things **will never be shaken.** Psalm 15*

1. What positive actions do the dwellers in God's house practice?

2. What do they NOT practice?

3. What blessing does the obedient citizen of God receive? What does 'being shaken' look like?

*The earth is the LORD's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.
For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers.*

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart,

who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, and has not sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive a blessing from the LORD and

righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Thy face -even Jacob. Selah. Psalm 24: 1-6

3. Describe the people who stand in God's holy place – what do they possess, practice, or refuse to participate in?

4. What does this citizen of heaven receive by doing this?

Matthew 5:13-20 – These are Jesus's words immediately following the Beatitudes: **You are the salt of the earth**; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. **You are the light of the world**. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify you Father who is in heaven.

*Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; **I did not come to abolish but to fulfill**. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be **called least in the kingdom of heaven**; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be **called great in the kingdom of heaven**.*

5. What two illustrations does Jesus use to describe his disciples?

6. What is the point of Jesus's two illustrations – what are they to do and why?

7. In the second part, what does Jesus say He will do and will NOT do?

8. What warning does Jesus give to the disciples? Discuss how one could annul a command of God. Do you do this?

Summary:

Job asks, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" The Jews gathered to hear Jesus preach His great sermon were asking the same thing, "How can I enter God's Kingdom when I cannot obey God's Laws?" They were frustrated by the religious system they could not keep, yet their hearts were breaking for forgiveness, for the reality of salvation, for a sense of tranquility for their aching souls. This is the question Jesus answers in the Beatitudes, and most specifically this one, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". Not the ones who perform external washing, attend religious ceremonies, or achieve human

achievement. Who is fit to enter God's presence and enjoy His Kingdom and true blessedness? Only those who are pure in their hearts – God is after a changed heart. Who can change my polluted heart to a pure one? Only God – He does through the precious provision of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. When I confess and believe in Jesus Christ, God imputes His Righteousness into my life, washing away my pollution and replacing with His purity, FOREVER. This is positional purity that never fades because it does not depend upon anything I do or say or think. It is based on the pure work of salvation of Jesus Christ.

However, just like my sanctification is both positional and experiential, so is my purity. Someday God will grant every believer complete purity forever. This is in future glory, not as we live here on earth in our physical bodies. For this journey however, we strive to match our position in Jesus with our practice of purity, which sadly can falter and even fail at times. But, we are commanded to pursue purity: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor 7:1. And those who pursue God with pure motive and actions by learning His Word and praying for His Help will see God. They will comprehend Him, experience His presence, and intimately know Him because purity of heart cleanses the eyes of my soul to make God visible. This is true happiness!

RESOURCES:

Precept Upon Precept: Sermon On The Mount, How Can I Be Blessed?, 2014
The Beatitudes: The Only Way to Happiness, by John MacArthur, 1998.
The Beatitudes: John MacArthur's Bible Studies by John F. MacArthur, Jr. 1990
Vines Expository Dictionary

Homework

After Jesus states the Beatitudes, He illustrates how a disciple could annul or teach others how to not follow God's Law by listing five well-known commands in Matthew 5:21,27,33, 38, and 43. We will look at two of them.

1. Read Matthew 5:20 – 26: 'You shall not commit murder' is the Law Jesus wants to further explain. Record the different levels of murder Jesus describes. What seems to be the motive behind murder based on verse 26 (what causes the angry outbursts in verses 22-25)?
2. How could having a pure heart (pure motives) help a believer follow this Law? What do you need to change in your heart attitudes and actions to control anger?
3. Read Matthew 5:33-37: 'You shall not make false vows'. List the examples Jesus gives for breaking this law. What solutions does Jesus give to obey this law?
4. What pure heart attitude will protect you from breaking this law regarding spoken words?

5. Read and write out Matthew 5:1-12 to further put into your memory.