

Consecration & Surrender

Matthew 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

Context

As Jesus is beginning His ministry in Matthew, He goes up on a mountain side to preach to His followers. We call this “The Sermon on the Mount.” This sermon lasts for many chapters and many hours. But, at the very beginning, Jesus lays out for his followers and disciples the qualities of people that seek the Lord, we call these “The Beatitudes.” These are not answers to some sort of personality test, but the blessings that the Lord gives His people, when they surrender to the Holy Spirit.

All of the Beatitudes are full of rich meaning, but this week we will look at one in particular, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Jesus is straight forward here. The Greek shows that “pure” means “clean” or “guiltless.” In English, we would say the phrase means the same thing. However, when we look at the word “heart” we need more context. It is not the language that is misunderstood, but the **cultural context** that is misunderstood. The people of the Bible would hear the word “heart” and it would mean something different to them than it does to us.

Cultural Context:

We all have beliefs, values, standards, ethics, histories, and understandings that make up our beliefs.

People in the Bible have different ones that we have today.

When we take in the cultural context of the people in scripture we are putting ourselves “in their shoes.”

Koine Greek: the common Greek that Jesus spoke. Today, He would say “cringe” or “yeet.”

When we hear the word “heart” we think of an organ in our body, or we think of emotions and feelings. But when Jesus’ followers heard Him say “heart.” They would have understood that He was not only talking about their feelings and motivations, but a place where they regularly made decisions from, at the center of their body, including their mind and will (Strong’s 2588). They knew the proverb: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart...”

No matter how hard we try, we cannot clean our hearts on our own. We cannot be pure on our own. We need the Lord to clean our hearts, and our homes. Over and over in Scripture, the Lord shows us that we will not see God without clean hands and a pure heart. We must have the single-minded devotion that the Bible shows us here.

God’s plan is that we would see Him, that we would know Him intimately, that we would have a full experiential knowledge of who He is and what He is about. How do we get there? If we cannot clean ourselves, then what do we do?

We surrender, we say yes to the Lord, knowing that His plan will happen, and we want to be a part of it. And we have to live in a heart-posture of surrender, where we “keep coming back.” I borrowed that phrase from Celebrate Recovery. We keep coming back to the Lord because we have a relationship with Him. He wants to be our God, and He loves us with an everlasting love. He does not shame us when we do something wrong, but His Spirit and goodness correct us. He wants to be our friend. So we keep coming back and saying “Yes” to what He wants to do because we are His friend and loved one.

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did Jesus come to earth? • What might a day on a mountain look like or feel like? Put yourself in their shoes. • What is the difference between a pure heart, discussed here, and being good? • The people in the crowd were used to following a set of rules (The Law), but Jesus teaches something different than what they have heard before. How do you think they would have reacted to this change? • What do you think keeps you from “coming back” and being made clean by the Holy Spirit?
Prayer	<p>Everyone get a piece of paper. Write a list of things, people, or situations that need to be surrendered or consecrated to the Lord. They may be things holding you back from the true freedom you have in Christ (i.e. pride, selfishness, doubt, lies of the enemy, etc.). Pray this prayer, or something like it:</p> <p>Lord, I repent of _____. You have changed my heart and mind. Clean _____ out of me by the blood of Jesus. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and Presence. Tune me to Your will. It is for freedom that You have set me free. Amen (Gal 5:1).</p>
Activity	<p>Now that we are pure in heart, it is time to see how God is moving in our families. Each person grab a sheet of paper and write your name at the top. Pass the paper to the left. Think about God, and think about the person written on the paper. How do you see Jesus in that person? Write it down, and then pass the paper to the left again. Repeat it until you have written on everyone's paper. Read the things that others wrote down about you, and thank the Lord for His goodness in your life. You are His loved child, and you look like Him too.</p>
Resources	<p>I did this study through the BibleHub app. It has many easy-to-use resources all in one place, and I recommend it if you want to look at different versions, commentaries, concordance references and original language interpretations.</p>
Cross References	<p>These Scriptures are other verses on being “pure.” They would make good verses to read and discuss if you wish to do daily devotions with your family.</p> <p>Psalm 24, 1 John 3:2-3, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 Corinthians 13:12, 2 Corinthians 7:1</p>
Deeper Prayer	<p>Perhaps the Lord is calling you in this time, not only to surrender and consecrate your life to make it pure, but also your possessions, property, opportunities, or other things outside yourself. Take some time to consecrate your belongings, house, and future opportunities to the Lord. Let's see what He will do together.</p>

***Consecration/Sanctification:** Consecration or Sanctification are big words that mean “dedicated to the Lord's use” and “the process of being made Holy.” They are sometimes used interchangeably in the Nazarene church.*