

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."
Matthew 5:8

Inside Out

Beatitudes – Blessed are the pure in heart – Matthew 5:8

Coffee can leave stains.

Have you ever been given a coffee cup that looked clean on the outside, but when you looked inside it was stained and nasty? Maybe you have pulled a dish out of the cabinet, but had to stick in the sink because the inside was still dirty with crusted food.

On Fridays, my family has family, Friday, fun night. We make homemade pizza and play games and just have a fun time. My wife makes homemade dough and when I get home I begin to slice up the fresh vegetables to put on the pizza. Sometimes it is fresh pineapple, ham, and bacon or maybe a deluxe pizza with fresh toppings. We layer it and top it off with cheese. Sound good?

There has been an occasion where I would find a jar of pizza sauce in the fridge. It looked good from the outside, but when I opened the lid, the smell alone let me know what was in it. Is pizza sauce supposed to be fuzzy?

People can be like the sauce jar or the dirty dish. We look good on the outside, but the inside is nasty.

What is your response when you find out someone is not who they make themselves out to be?

Often times I am in shock wondering why they are so different. Jesus explains that "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Jesus was addressing the issue of hypocrisy. Pharisees and spiritual leaders prided themselves on showing others how "religious" they were. In fact, later in his sermon, Jesus talks about the hypocrites who pray in public just so that they can be seen by others. Hypocrisy is an epidemic that is sweeping the globe. They are everywhere:

Doctors who smoke cigarettes, referees who take bribes, clergy who commit adultery, tax accountants who cheat on taxes, politicians who say they tell the truth, pastors who view porn, etc.

Jesus was addressing these people by explaining that the road to happiness can only be walked by those with a pure heart. Man has a tendency to measure himself by his fellow man. If I can find someone else who is worse than me then I am in good shape. We seek to justify our less than pure actions by finding someone else who is worse.

What was the last time you justified your actions by comparing them to someone else?

*"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."
Luke 6:45*

1 Peter 1:16 gives us the standard we are to follow – holy. Jesus gave this same standard later on in his sermon. He said, "Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Using this standard, with 10 being perfect, how would you rate your purity? _____

Before you start to melt away into discouragement, let's look at what Jesus means by the pure of heart. To be pure is to be free from filth and sin or to have a heart of single devotion. Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart." The purity is not an outside matter, but an inside issue.

Remember the jar of sauce? That jar can be as clean or pure as possible, but it will not amount to much if the inside is full of fuzz. The heart is seen as the inner man. It is more than just the seat of emotions. It is the control tower of the individual. Proverbs 4:23 tells us that above all other things we need to guard our hearts. The real person is the one that exists in the heart no matter what is on the outside (Matthew 5:18-19, Luke 6:45).

The heart is the control tower.

When things do not go your way or a crisis hits you, how do you respond?

Some people would challenge this and say that pressures bring out the worst in us, but the truth still remains that the worst was in us to begin with. Sometimes we will respond to something in a way that shocks us. We ask, "Where did that come from?" It came from within.

Have you ever caught yourself wondering where a response came from? What made you respond that way?

So if you want to change what comes out, you need to change what is inside.

I have always said that the Bible is God's instruction book for life. This is true in regards to the pathway to purity. Here is how it runs:

- Step One: Recognize your spiritual poverty.
- Step Two: Become broken over your sin.
- Step Three: Become meek and Spirit controlled.
- Step Four: Become hungry and addicted to righteous living.
- Step Five: Practice mercy in the lives of others.

It is a five step process, and if you missed it, it is the first five points of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Each builds on top of the other. Jesus tells us in John 15:3 that it is the Word that cleanses us and makes us pure. We cannot purify ourselves any more than that jar of pizza sauce can become less fuzzy (Proverbs 20:9).

*"Who can say, 'I have
cleansed my heart, I
am pure from my
sin'?"
Proverbs 20:9*

Oswald Chambers says that "purity is the outcome of sustained spiritual symphony with God."¹

A pure heart comes from spending time in the Word of God and allowing the truth to expose sin and cleanse us, and as a result the pure in heart will see God. In the Greek this is understood as a continuous, reflective action. It could be read as "they shall continually see God for themselves."

It is a pure heart that separates those who see the church and think "What a great church!" from those who see the Savior and think "What a great Christ!"

What do you see?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?



¹ Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost For His Highest*, Barbour Books, OH, March 26th
by Rob Jackson and Kevin Conner