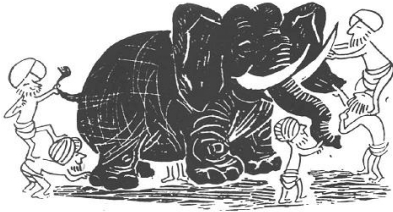


Keep a Clean House

Topic: Purity/holiness

Text: [Matthew 5:3-8 HCSB](#) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, because they will be comforted. 5 Blessed are the gentle, because they will inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, because they will be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, because they will be shown mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, because they will see God."

Introduction:



There is an old fable about six men blind from birth who lived in India. One day they decided to visit a nearby palace. When they arrived, there was an elephant standing in the courtyard. The first blind man touched the side of the elephant and said, "An elephant is like a wall." The second blind man touched the trunk and said, "An elephant is like a snake." The third blind man touched the tusk and said, "An elephant is like a spear."

The fourth blind man touched the leg and said, "An elephant is like a tree." The fifth blind man touched the ear and said, "An elephant is like a fan." The sixth blind man touched the tail and said, "An elephant is like a rope." Because each blind man touched only one part of the elephant, none of them could agree on what an elephant is really like.

Bringing that analogy into the spiritual realm, many people have misconceptions or an inaccurate picture about what God is really like. Believing the wrong thing about God is a serious matter because it is idolatry. Does that surprise you?

Contrary to popular belief, idolatry is more than bowing down to a small figure or worshiping in a pagan temple. According to the Bible, it is thinking anything about God that isn't true or attempting to transform Him into something He isn't.



God Himself pointed out the fallacy of idolatry, saying of man,

- [Psalms 50:21 HCSB](#) You have done these things, and I kept silent; you thought I was just like you. But I will rebuke you and lay out the case before you.

We must be careful not to think of God in our terms. It is essential that our picture of God is accurate as He truly is – holy, awesome, sovereign, righteous, and full of love and goodness. Instead we often put God in a box—and our box is incredibly small! Whenever, we lose a right view of God, everything else gets out of perspective. Sad to say, we are suffering from a low-view of God – a god made in our image. In Matthew 5:8, Jesus calls us to a life of purity, and as a reward "we will see God."

In the Beatitudes, Jesus is dealing with principles which impact every area of our lives. This simple sentence, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" becomes a powerful road map that will lead us to the promised fulfillment of a personal encounter with God. It is a call to heart-purity. Jesus is saying that the condition of our heart before God is of first importance. Indeed, it seems to me that our priority as believers is to maintain a right heart attitude toward God.

In 1 Samuel 16:7 we read,

- [1 Samuel 16:7 HCSB](#) But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or his stature, because I have rejected him. Man does not see what the LORD sees, for man sees what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart."

It is clear that God looks past outward behavior and outward appearance to the real issue - the condition of our hearts.

We read in Proverbs 21:2,

- [Proverbs 21:2 HCSB](#) All the ways of a man seem right to him, but the LORD evaluates the motives.

Even in the Old Testament we see that God has always been after hearts which are right toward Him. When David prayed for his son Solomon, he said in 1 Chronicles 29:19,

- [1 Chronicles 29:19 HCSB 19](#) Give my son Solomon a whole heart to keep and to carry out all Your commandments, Your decrees, and Your statutes, and to build the temple for which I have made provision."

David prayed for Solomon to have "a perfect heart." On the other hand, it was said of King Rehoboam when he began to reign, that

- [2 Chronicles 12:14 HCSB 14](#) Rehoboam did what was evil, because he did not determine in his heart to seek the LORD.

The heart determines our standing before God. So what did Jesus mean when He spoke of pure in heart? What does pure really mean? Does it mean perfect? Does it mean sinless? If it does, then we are all in deep trouble.

καθαρος The Greek word which is translated pure is katharos. If it sounds like the word catharsis, it is because catharsis comes from this Greek word. It simply means to make pure by cleansing. It is used in psychology and counseling to refer to a cleansing of the mind or emotions.

The heart in Scripture refers to both the mind, will and emotions. It refers to the control center of the will. The writer of Proverbs counseled,

- [Proverbs 4:23 HCSB](#) Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life.

In Matthew 15:19, Jesus said,

- [Matthew 15:19 HCSB](#) For from the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies.

The heart encompasses both mind and will. The heart determines behavior. So when Jesus speaks of the pure in heart He is talking about a heart that is of pure motive. Our hearts should be characterized by single-mindedness and undivided devotion. The call of Christ is clear. We are to be devoted to Him. How about you? Is your heart single in its devotion to God?

The reason we must become pure in heart is that only those who **are** shall see God. God reserves His most intimate fellowship to those whose hearts are devoted to Him.

The Beatitude's sublime benefit is a vision of God himself. Here, as in the preceding Beatitudes, the word "they" is emphatic: "for they [they alone] will see God." What this means

is that it is possible to actually see God in this life — now.



I think this is what blind and deaf Helen Keller meant when someone bluntly said to her, “Isn’t it terrible to be blind?” To which she responded, “Better to be blind and see with your heart, than to have two good eyes and see nothing.”

The sixth Beatitude tells us that the purer our hearts become, the more we will see of God in this life. The more our hearts are focused on God, absorbed with him, concentrated on his being, freed from distractions, sincere — single, the more we will see him.

As our hearts become purer, the more the Word lives and the more creation speaks. Even the adverse circumstances of life seem to sharpen our vision of God. Seeing God in this life is the highest good, because those who see him become more and more like him.

- [2 Corinthians 3:18 HCSB](#) 18 We all, with unveiled faces, are reflecting the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.

But there is even more to seeing God, for the “pure in heart” will one day see him face to face. As we have said, in that split second of recognition believers will experience more joy than the sum total of accumulated joys of a long life. They will behold the dazzling blaze of his being that has been, and will always be, the abiding fascination of angels.

Scripture and reason demand that we understand that it will be the greatest event of our eternal existence — the “visio Dei”, the vision of God. We need to believe it! We need the faith and vision of Job who said,

- [Job 19:25-27 HCSB](#) But I know my living Redeemer, and He will stand on the dust at last. 26 Even after my skin has been destroyed, yet I will see God in my flesh. 27 I will see Him myself; my eyes will look at *Him*, and not as a stranger. My heart longs within me.

Yearning hearts should be our reaction at the prospect of the vision of God. Now think of the complete Beatitude: “Blessed [approved of God] are the pure in heart [those with a clean, unmixed heart for God] for they will [continuously] see God [in life and in eternity].”

Conclusion:

The pure in heart are a rare breed in our society today. They are even rare in our churches today. But I believe God is calling us back to that single-minded, unmixed devotion to Him which characterizes those upon whom He pours out His Spirit. But, in the Kingdom of God, which is sometimes referred to as “the Way” - the way up is always down. We must fall on our knees in repentance before we can look up to catch a glimpse of His glory. O God, purify our hearts that we may see Jesus!

- [Psalms 51:10 HCSB](#) God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me.