



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

Kingdom Character - Pure in Heart

Matthew 5:8

Message #12 of 80 – S1041

Sermon given on April 16, 2023



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Kingdom Character - Pure in Heart

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Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 5**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- There are things about God that are mysterious.
- For example: What does God look like?
- Twice the Apostle John says **John 1:18; 1 John 4:12**

No one has seen God at any time.

- Kelly and I have been together for a long time and about a third of that time I was an unbeliever.
- She would regularly try to get me to see God.
- Kelly would point to something and say, ‘Look, that is God. Or That is God at work.’
- My usual response was skepticism.
- I didn’t believe in God and thought I could explain everything she was trying to show me using the natural things.
- No one has seen God, but in the sixth beatitude we are told that there is a way to see Him.
- This beatitude gives us the key to seeing God, to seeing Jesus.
- Let’s pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give us eyes to see God. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **Kingdom Character - Pure in Heart**
- We have been taking our time through the Beatitudes.
- After coming to Christ by faith – after being saved – these are the character traits believers ought to be developing.
- These eight beatitudes are what a Christian is.
- None of them stands apart from the rest.
- As an example, for me to be a Christian husband certain things must be true.
- I must be a male, and not just a male but an adult male.
- I must also be a Christian and I must be married to a woman.

- Take away any of those things and I am not a Christian husband.
- I don't do any of the things that a Christian husband should do perfectly.
- The same is true of the beatitudes – we will not manifest them perfectly, but they should be present.
- Let's review the previous beatitudes.
- **Matthew 5:3**
- 'Blessed, can be translated as 'happy but also has the idea of being approved of by God.
- To be 'poor in spirit' means that we acknowledge that spiritually we have nothing to bring to God, either to attain His approval, or to influence Him on our behalf.
- **Matthew 5:4**
- We 'mourn' because we know the only thing we can bring to God is our sin.
- We know that our sin offends God and that without His intervention, we would be lost for all eternity.
- **Matthew 5:5**
- The 'meek' are those who have a right view of themselves compared to God.
- Compared to God, we are absolutely nothing.
- **Matthew 5:6**
- To 'hunger and thirst for righteousness' is the never-ending desire to be more like God – to be like Christ in every way.
- **Matthew 5:7**
- As we grow in the other beatitudes, we have a deeper understanding of the mercy God has shown us even though we didn't deserve it, and we respond by being more willing to show mercy to others, even those who do not deserve it.
- That brings us to the sixth beatitude.
- **Matthew 5:8**
- To Jesus' original audience the word 'pure' had two senses which apply to us also.

- The first was a religious sense – to be pure meant that you were ritually clean or innocent.
- For the Jews that involved the ritual sacrifices which were preceded by ritual washing.
- Every time they wanted to approach God; they repeated the rituals.
- We, as believers in Christ, don't need rituals to approach God.
- We approach God based on the finished work of Jesus Christ which washes us clean of our sin.
- The other sense of the word 'pure' is unmixed or undivided.
- The meaning of that for them and us is found in the first of the Ten Commandments. **Exodus 20:3**

You shall have no other gods before Me.

- Almighty God is the only true God.
- God expects undivided devotion to Him and Him alone.
- Jesus spoke about that too. **Matthew 6:24**

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

- So, in summary, to be 'pure' means to be in a right relationship with God and Him alone.

- Jesus says that purity needs to be in our heart. **R. Kent Hughes**
"In the Bible, *heart* means more than just the mind; it also includes the emotions and the will. It is the totality of our ability to think, feel, and decide."

- God is calling us to a radical purity in the way we think, feel, and act.
- This is a real problem for us humans. **Jeremiah 17:9-10**

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?
¹⁰ **I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.**

- This beatitude focuses on the internal state of our heart.
- This was not a new concept; the Jews were familiar with the need for purity of heart (Psa. 24:3-4). Approach God with a pure heart.
- And then Ezekiel foresaw a time when God would replace our heart with one that could be pure (Eze. 36:25-26). God gives a new heart.
- And Jesus rebuked the religious leaders or hypocrisy in this matter (Matt. 23:25-28).

- The Pharisees were concerned about outward cleanliness – the proper practice of their religious duties without any attention to the purity of their hearts.
- Jesus is calling us to perfection (Matt. 5:48). Be perfect like God!
- Is this even possible? The answer is a resounding ‘No!’
- This should drive us in utter helplessness and desperation to God’s feet where we cast ourselves on the grace of God for His help.
- We must ask Him to work in us what is impossible for us. **R. Kent Hughes**

“God demands a humanly impossible character, and then gives us that character by His grace.”

- If we allow God the Holy Spirit to do that work of purifying our hearts, we are promised to ‘see God.’
- “shall see God” – This has both a present a future meaning.
- All believers will ‘see God’ in heaven.
- But there is also a present reality in the form of discernment.
- Because of the work of God in our hearts and the purifying work of the Holy Spirit through God’s Word, we can see God more clearly in the world and in our lives **2 Corinthians 3:18**.

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

- Through faith we see God in His Word.
- We see Him in nature – in His creation of the heavens and the earth.
- We see Him in the circumstances of our lives.
- We see His fingerprints on the experiences of our lives.
- God is everywhere and His people can see Him when they look for Him with a pure heart.
- Seeing more of God is a function of the purity of our heart.
- The less distracted and divided our heart becomes, the more we will see God.
- The more God’s Word is brought to life within our heart the better we see God.
- God is everywhere working, and His people will see Him more and more as their hearts become purer.

- We should live our lives with a growing desire to see Jesus face-to-face.
- How to improve your vision:
- First - **Be honest with God about the condition of your heart.**
- Is there sin you need to repent of? Is seeing God your highest desire? If it isn't, confess that to Him – He already knows it **James 4:8**.
Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
- Second - **Acknowledge that only God can make your heart pure.**
- It is not about doing more things for God – it is about God doing more things in you. Ask Him to do it, and let Him do it.
- Third - **Fill your heart with God's Word.**
- The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to purify us. But He will only do that if you are putting God's Word into your heart **John 15:3**.
You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.
- God's Word has a cleansing effect on the heart that is seeking to be pure.
- Fourth - **Think about heaven.**
- Someday we will see Jesus face-to-face. That hope should fill us with joy, anticipation, and wonder **1 John 3:2-3**.
Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.
- I don't know about you, but the idea of seeing Jesus becomes more important to me every day.
- I hope it is for you also.
- David is going to come up and lead us in a song.
- Please stay and with as undivided of a heart that you can muster, worship the God who loves you.
- As he is doing that some of the elders and their wives will be up here in front.
- One of the things the beatitudes have been teaching us is that we can't do these things on our own.
- We want to pray with you about what God is saying to you personally.
- It would mean a lot to us if you would let us pray with you.

- Maybe you are realizing that your heart is not pure – maybe a sin you are struggling to have victory over.
- Or maybe you know your heart has been divided – other things have been more important to you than seeing God.
- Or maybe you want to see God more in whatever circumstances you are going through.
- If you want to commit or recommit your life to Christ – come up and let us pray with you.
- God wants to meet with you, and he might want to do it right now, right up here.
- I am going to pray, but don't wait, come right now.
- Don't worry about what others might think – this is between you and God.
- Let's pray! **Amen!**