**Sermon on the Mount, Session 6**

**Blessed are the pure in heart. For they shall see God.**

**1a) Introduction**

The first four Beatitudes are about the internal attitudes that will draw us closer to God; Being Poor in spirit. Mourning. Being Meek and Hungering and thirsting for righteousness. When you have more of God in your life through nurturing the right internal attitudes, there will be an external outflow that will touch those around. The next three beatitudes cover the external outflow that comes from being right with God; Showing mercy, Living a holy life and being a peacemaker. The last beatitude tells how others will respond when you live that life. You will be persecuted.

**2) The pure in heart are happy people**

2a) Most believers find it hard to identify with being “Pure of heart” because we feel that we are quite a long way away from there. We all have things that we feel guilty about; bad habits, compromise or even sin in our lives that we are unwilling or unable to turn away from.

As most of us think that we haven’t “seen God”, that seems to confirm our thinking that we aren’t pure enough in heart to be able to attain to that level.

2b) Those who are pure of heart are truly blessed. The Greek word for “Blessed” is “Makarios” which means “Fortunate” or “happy”. Holiness isn’t something that is boring, to be avoided. On the contrary, those who are pure in heart are the most happy people, because they don't hold in their hearts anything bad or negative that would make them unhappy.

If your heart is full of ingratitude, cynicism, negativity, bitterness, jealousy, selfish plans, impure or unkind thoughts about others, you don’t have a happy heart that it full of peace. Whereas if your heart is full of wholesome thoughts, of thankfulness and kind thoughts towards others, such a heart tends to be bright, cheerful and at peace.

2c) The strange thing is that even though we know that a heart full of good leads to a happy life, very few people actively seek after holiness. If you were to ask a room full of believers which spiritual gifts would they like you to pray for, probably no-one would ask for prayer for purity of heart or holiness, even though it is probably the key that unlocks some of the most powerful spiritual experiences.

**3) Who are those who come closest to God?**

1. Those that you might think woulod be the closest to God are often not close at all, according to Jesus. Having a large or prominent ministry doesn’t bring you close to God.

In Jesus day, people would have thought of the high priest as being the person who would come the closest to God, as he would enter behind the veil into the Holy place once each year. In our time we would often think of conference speakers or the pastors of some of the large and famous churches as being the ones who “See God” the most.

3b) However Jesus says;“ Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ (Matt 7, 22-23).

3c) Jesus doesn’t welcome people into His presence because of the size or impact of their ministry. But rather because of the depth of their personal relationship with him.

3d) The East African revivalist Andrew Murray used to say; “What a man is on his knees alone with God, that he is and nothing more”.

**4) The Jewish understanding of being “Pure”**

a) When Jesus talked about being “pure in heart”, the word that He used for “pure” was a Greek word “Catharos” which literally means “Clean”. Literally “Blessed are the clean in heart”.

b) Being “Clean” was a very big deal for the Israelites, because if they became unclean, they had to stay away from their friends and family and they couldn’t come into the presence of God at the temple until they became clean again. One of the most important job of the priests was to help people to understand what was clean and unclean (Lev. 10, 10).

c) There is a whole book of the Bible whose main subject is teaching the Israelites what is clean and unclean, and how they can stay clean or become clean if they contaminate themselves. It’s the book of Leviticus. In that book there are 165 different references to things that would make someone clean or unclean.

d) There were certain foods that were clean and unclean, If someone touched a dead body or the carcass of a dead animal, they would become unclean. A woman in her monthly period was considered unclean. Certain skin diseases made someone unclean, if there was mould in a house or on fabric it became unclean etc.

e) The Jews of Jesus’ day would have had the importance of keeping clean ingrained into them since childhood. They all conformed certain rituals in order to stay clean.

**5) Jesus turned the Jewish understanding of “Clean” upside down**

a) Jesus turned all of that teaching about being “clean” upside down. He taught that all the cleansing rituals and the different laws about clean and unclean didn’t actually do anything to make a person clean before God. Instead cleanness was an issue of the heart. We can easily miss what a big deal that was for his hearers.

b) “Cleanness” comes from the inside not the ouside. “Nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them. For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” …. Jesus went on to say; “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person.” (Mark 7, 18-23)

**6) Guard your heart**

a) “Above all else guard your heart for everything you do flows from it” (Prov. 4, 23). …for it is the well spring of life”. (RSV. Translation)

b) When temptation to think, say or do the wrong things comes along, do you resist it or entertain it?

c) If you resist the wrong thought, it can’t get inside your mind or heart. If you pick up that thought and dwell on it, it starts to take up a place in your mind.

d) “Do not give the devil a foothold” (Eph. 4, 27). If you don’t tackle the devil’s “footholds”, he keeps on strengthening them until they become “strongholds”.

**7) To get a pure heart, we need to remove that which is wrong**

a) One of the best ways to develop a pure heart is compare all our thoughts and attitudes with the teachings of scripture. Any that we see to be different, we need to remove them from our heart.

b) “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.” (Psalm 119, 9).

c) Reading the scriptures is like looking into a mirror (James 1, 23-25). Or using a plumb-line (Amos 7, 7). It shows us the areas of our life that need cleaning up or

bringing back into the right line.

d) We need to work with God’s help to remove all that is unbiblical from our hearts. “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.” (Col. 3 5).

e) Common areas that stop us from having a pure heart are;

i) Worldly temptations. Unholy Pleasures, Impure thoughts.

ii) Critical, Jealous or negative attitudes towards others

iii) Self in the centre; Selfishness. Self pity. Self righteousness/pride

iv) Anxiety. Fear.

v) Unforgiveness. Pain. Hurt.

vi) Wrong thoughts about God. Unbelief. Wrong pictures of God, “God is angry with me”. Lack of fear of the Lord.

vii) A divided heart. What Jesus called “The worries of this life” (Matt. 13, 22)

**8) Fill your heart with that which is good**

a) It’s easier to turn on the light than to empty out the darkness. Unless you fill a room with light, it will be full of darkness

b) The more time you spend with God, the less place evil will have in your life.

c) As regards to “seeing God”, the more room you give God in your life, the more you encounter Him and the more you see God intervening in your life.

d) To be pure in heart means to have nothing in your life except God. To let God fill your thoughts, your mind, whatever you are doing.

e) When your life is full of God, you “see God” not only through frequent revelations but also in the ways that He works in your life.

f) The example of Heidi Baker; Heidi is someone who unashamedly seeks to fill her life with God. The result is that she lives a miraculous lifestyle. For example she speaks 7 languages frequently, even though she only learned 2 of them!

**9) What does it mean to see God?**

a) The best example in scripture of someone often seeing God is Moses. Moses talked with God face to face. He also saw God do amazing things through him.

“Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the “tent of meeting.” … As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses. … The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend”. (Exod. 33, 7-10)

b) By saying that the pure in heart will see God, it doesn’t necessarily mean that everyone will have frequent dreams or visions of God.

c) “To see” means to come into someone’s presence, eg. “I saw the doctor”. The emphasis is not on what your eyes were looking at but on the fact that you came into the same space as the doctor and interacted with each other.

d) “Seeing God” includes inner spiritual enlightenment. Paul prays that “the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you” (Eph. 1, 18). Just like you can learn about something physical by seeing it with your physical eyes, you can learn about spiritual things by “seeing them with the eyes of your heart”. We call that revelation.

e) Many of the characters in the Bible talked about “seeing God” when they were describing their inner spiritual experiences. For example, David wrote; “to gaze on the beauty of the Lord…” (Ps. 27, 4), and. “They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.” (Ps. 36. 8-9).

e) Those who’s heart is full of God will frequently encounter God in places and situations where others experience nothing. In creation. In a worship service. Through a passage of scripture. In a conversation. Etc. For those with eyes to see it, “The whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6,3).