

Blessed Are the Pure in Heart

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes that a pure heart is essential for seeing God and cannot be achieved through external religious practices alone.

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, Jeremiah 17:9, Ezekiel 11:19, Matthew 5:8, Matthew 15:17, Matthew 23:25

Topics: "Heart Purity", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

Anton Bosch emphasizes the importance of having a pure heart to see God, contrasting it with mere external appearances of right living and doctrine. He explains that true Christianity requires a heart transformation by God, as human efforts to change the heart are futile. Only through God giving us a new heart can we truly walk in His ways and be His people. Bosch highlights the necessity of surrendering our old ways and desires to receive the new heart God offers, stressing that a pure heart is essential for both understanding spiritual truths in this life and seeing God in the life to come.

Transcript

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

Why did Jesus say "blessed are the pure in heart"? Why did He not say "blessed are the pure in mind", or "blessed are the pure in actions"? Surely, in these days of doctrinal apostasy, having the right theology, and believing the right doctrines are the most important things? And surely, equally important is the need for right living when cheap grace seems to declare all as saved, irrespective of their lifestyle?

Right doctrine and right living are absolutely essential expressions of genuine Christianity, but without a pure heart these things are but empty shells. The Pharisees emphasized "right" living and had developed an extensive code of rules to make sure that everyone did the right things and avoided the wrong, but their hearts were far from pure. He said to them: "Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. "These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man" (Matthew 15:17-20). He also said "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. "Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also." (Matthew 23:25-26).

It is relatively easy to change the way we appear on the outside without a real change of heart. Most of religion is about external appearances but only Christ can change the heart of man and purify it. Anything else is false religion and hypocrisy, even if it bears the name of Christianity. I have observed people who have gone to great lengths to change their behavior and who, even for years, seem to be genuinely changed people. But then, out of the blue, they revert to their old ways. Sometimes this reversion is just for a moment, but it is sufficient to lift the covers of a heart that remains unchanged. All the outward is simply a show of human will.

I have little doubt that these folk are sincere in their desire to please the Lord and that many of them really would like to be different. But the truth is that the cost of a pure heart is too high and they are not willing to pay that price.

So what do we need to do to get a pure heart? Surely it is just a matter of believing and confessing our sins and we are cleansed?

Here is the problem: The human heart cannot be changed, reformed, or improved. It is utterly corrupt and any attempt at "renovating" it is a waste of time. "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). "...the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

Man is able to be quite successful at cultivating a very spiritual and pious attitude. He can even change many of his habits and thought patterns to such an extent that he himself believes that he has changed. The bookstores are full of self-help books that claim to help people change. Every religion in the world is about people changing themselves. But the reality is that nothing can change the human heart.

The only way the heart of man can be changed is by the Lord giving him a new one! The old one has to be removed and a new heart must take its place, the old one cannot be reformed, converted or improved. Real change can only happen when the old heart is replaced with a brand new one.

God said: "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, "that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God" (Ezekiel 11:19-20).

Earlier I said that the cost of a pure heart is too high for many people. What I mean is that in order to receive a new heart we must allow the Lord to remove our old one in order to make room for the new one. That means we have to let go of our old habits, ways of thinking, passions and desires. That is what very few people are willing to do. They value their own personality, idiosyncrasies, and sin too high and are not willing to let go of those things in order that they may become like Jesus. That is so sad. It's like someone who is offered a new house in exchange for their old run-down and dilapidated one, but they choose to keep the old one because they have become comfortable with it.

The Lord wants to give us a new heart that is pure, but we need to submit to His loving hands to do the surgery. But we rather try to self-medicate, hoping that the problem will go away or that we can fix it ourselves. The problem is we cannot fix this problem ourselves. We need the new heart that He has promised.

We need a new, pure heart in order to see Him. With our old sinful heart, we will never see Him. Nicodemus thought he could see the Kingdom by his external religiosity, but Jesus told him that he must

be born again and that without being born again "he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). This is why many unbelievers and even some "Christians" do not see or understand spiritual things - they still have the old sinful heart, in spite of a lot of external religious works. God can only be seen by a pure heart in a new man.

Not only will those without a pure heart not see or understand spiritual things in this life, they will also not see Him or His kingdom in the life to come. A pure heart is not a nice extra we can choose or not choose to add to our religion. It is the core of it. Without it we are not Christians, no matter how long we have done the religious things and how successfully we have fooled every one around us that we are the real deal. The Pharisees were far more religious than most modern Christians and if they will not see the Lord or the Kingdom, then neither will we unless we have a pure heart.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10)

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