

# The Beatitudes the Sixth Beatitude

by A.W. Pink

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*The sixth Beatitude, 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' refers to the internal cleansing that accompanies and follows the new birth, and is characterized by freedom from defilement and divided affections.*

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 16:7, Psalm 51:6, Ezekiel 36:26, Matthew 5:8, Acts 15:9, Romans 5:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Titus 3:5, 1 John 1:7-8

**Topics:** "Purity of Heart", "Spiritual Discernment"

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## Description

A.W. Pink expounds on the sixth Beatitude, 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God,' emphasizing that true purity of heart is not about sinlessness but about a sincere and genuine relationship with God. He critiques the false notion of complete eradication of sin in believers, pointing out that even the greatest saints struggled with sin. Pink explains that purity involves a transformation of character through regeneration, leading to a heart aligned with God's will. The promise of seeing God is both a present spiritual discernment and a future hope of intimate communion with Him. Ultimately, the pure in heart are those whose affections are set on God, leading to a deeper understanding and fellowship with Him.

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## Transcript

THE BEATITUDES

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"

Matthew 5:8

is another of the Beatitudes that has been grossly perverted by the enemies of the Lord, enemies who have, like their predecessors the Pharisees, posed as the champions of the truth and boasted of a sanctity superior to that which the true people of God would dare to claim. All through this Christian era, also, there have been poor, deluded souls who have claimed an entire purification of the old man. Others have insisted that God has so completely renewed them that the carnal nature has been eradicated, so that they not only commit no sins but have no sinful desires or thoughts.

But the Spirit-inspired Apostle John declares, "If we say that we have [present tense] no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Of course, such people appeal to the Scriptures in

support of their vain delusion, applying to experience verses that describe the legal benefits of the Atonement. The words "and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7) do not mean that our hearts have been washed from every trace of the corrupting defilements of evil, but primarily teach that the sacrifice of Christ has availed for the judicial blotting out of sins.

When the Apostle Paul, describing the man who is a new creature in Christ, says that "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17), he is speaking of the new disposition of the Christian's heart, which is wholly unlike his inner disposition prior to the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration. That purity of heart does not mean sinlessness of life is clear from the inspired record of the history of God's saints. Noah got drunk; Abraham equivocated; Moses disobeyed God; Job cursed the day of his birth; Elijah fled in terror from Jezebel; Peter denied Christ.

"Yes," perhaps someone will exclaim, "but all these things transpired before Christianity was established!" True, but it has also been the same since then. Where shall we go to find a Christian of superior attainments to those of the Apostle Paul? And what was his experience? Read Romans 7 and see. When he would do good, evil was present with him (v. 21). There was a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin that was in his members (v. 23).

He did, with the mind, serve the Law of God; nevertheless, with the flesh he served the law of sin (v. 25). The truth is that one of the most conclusive evidences that we do possess a pure heart is the discovery and consciousness of the remaining impurity that continues to plague our hearts. But let us come closer to our text. "Blessed are the pure in heart." In seeking an interpretation to any part of this Sermon on the Mount, the first thing to bear in mind is that those whom our Lord was addressing had been reared in Judaism.

As one said who was deeply taught of the Spirit, I cannot help thinking that our Lord, in using the terms before us, had a tacit reference to that character of external sanctity or purity which belonged to the Jewish people, and to that privilege of intercourse with God which was connected with that character. They were a people separated from the nations polluted with idolatry; set apart as holy to Jehovah; and, as a holy people, they were permitted to draw near to their God, the only living and true God, in the ordinances of His worship.

On the possession of this character, and on the enjoyment of this privilege, the Jewish people plumed themselves. A higher character, however, and a higher privilege, belonged to those who should be the subjects of the Messiah's reign. They should not only be externally holy, but "pure in heart"; and they should not merely be allowed to approach towards the holy place, where God's honour dwelt, but they should "see God," be introduced into the most intimate intercourse with Him.

Thus viewed, as a description of the spiritual character and privileges of the subjects of the Messiah in contrast with the external character and privileges of the Jewish people, the passage before us is full of the most important and interesting truth (Dr. John Brown). "Blessed are the pure in heart." Opinion is divided as to whether these words of Christ refer to the new heart received at regeneration or to that moral transformation of character that results from a Divine work of grace having been wrought in the soul.

Probably both aspects of the truth are combined here. In view of the late place that this Beatitude occupies in the series, it would appear that the purity of heart upon which our Savior pronounced His blessing is that internal cleansing that both accompanies and follows the new birth. Thus, inasmuch as no inward purity exists in the natural man, that purity attributed by Christ to the godly man must be traced back, as to its

beginnings, to the Spirit's sovereign work of regeneration.

The Psalmist said, "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Ps. 51:6). This spiritual purity that God demands penetrates far beyond the mere outward renovations and reformations that comprise such a large part of the efforts now being put forth in Christendom! Much that we see around us is a hand religion--seeking salvation by works--or a head religion that rests satisfied with an orthodox creed. But God "looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7), that is, He looks upon the whole inner being, including the understanding, the affections, and the will.

It is because God looks within that He must give a "new heart" (Ezek. 36:26) to His own people and blessed indeed are they who have received such, for it is a pure heart that is acceptable to the Giver. As intimated above, we believe that this sixth Beatitude contemplates both the new heart received at regeneration and the transformation of character that follows God's work of grace in the soul. First, there is a "washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5), by which we understand a cleansing of the affections, which are now subsequently set upon things above, instead of things below.

This is closely linked with that change that follows upon the heels of regeneration, in which all believers undergo a "purifying [of] their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9). Accompanying this is the cleaning of the conscience (Heb. 10:22), which refers to the removal of the burden of conscious guilt. This results in the inward realization that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). But the purity of heart commended here by Christ goes further than this.

What is purity? It is freedom from defilement and divided affections; it is sincerity, genuineness, and singleness of heart. As a quality of Christian character, we would define it as godly simplicity. It is the opposite of subtlety and duplicity. Genuine Christianity lays aside not only malice, but guile and hypocrisy also. It is not enough to be pure in words and in outward deportment. Purity of desires, motives, and intents is what should (and does in the main) characterize the child of God.

Here, then, is a most important test for every professing Christian to apply to himself. Are my affections set upon things above? Are my motives pure? Why do I assemble with the Lord's people? Is it to be seen of men, or is it to meet with the Lord and to enjoy sweet communion with Him and His people? "For they shall see God." Once more we would point out that the promises attached to these Beatitudes have both a present and a future fulfillment. The pure in heart possess spiritual discernment, and with the eyes of their understanding they obtain clear views of the Divine character and perceive the excellency of His attributes.

When the eye is single the whole body is full of light. In the truth, the faith of which purifies the heart, they "see God"; for what is that truth, but a manifestation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ [2 Cor. 4:6]--an illustrious display of the combined radiance of Divine holiness and Divine benignity! . . . And he [who is pure in heart] not only obtains clear and satisfactory views of the Divine character, but he enjoys intimate and delightful communion with God.

He is brought very near God: God's mind becomes his mind; God's will becomes his will; and his fellowship is truly with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. They who are pure in heart "see God" in this way, even in the present world; and in the future state their knowledge of God will become far more extensive and their fellowship with Him far more intimate; for though, when compared with the privileges of a former dispensation, even now as with open face we behold the glory of the Lord [2 Cor. 3:18], yet, in reference to the privileges of a higher economy, we yet see but through a glass darkly--we know but in

part, we enjoy but in part.

But that which is in part shall be done away, and that which is perfect shall come. We shall yet see face to face and know even as we are known (1 Cor. 13:9-12); or to borrow the words of the Psalmist, we shall behold His face in righteousness, and shall be satisfied when we awake in His likeness (Ps. 17:15). Then, and not till then, will the full meaning of these words be understood, that the pure in heart shall see God (Dr. John Brown).

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