

Blessed Are The Pure In Heart

by Tim Conway

This sermon delves into the importance of purity of heart as highlighted in Matthew 5:8. It emphasizes the distinction between outward appearances and inward purity, urging listeners to seek a singular devotion to God. The sermon explores the cleansing power of faith, the impact of idols on the heart, and the need to purify oneself in anticipation of seeing God face to face in eternity.

Scripture: Matthew 5:8, James 4:8, Hebrews 10:22, Job 19:26, 1 John 3:2, Psalms 24:3, Isaiah 6:5, Psalms 86:11, John 15:3, Ephesians 5:26

Topics: "Purity of Heart", "Devotion to God"

Description

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Transcript

We are dealing today with just the short passage, Matthew chapter 5, verse 8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed, now think with me, you know as soon as we look at this beatitude, blessed are the pure, but it goes further. It's kind of like, blessed are the poor, it didn't just stop there.

It was a qualifier. Blessed are the poor in spirit. I mean, I think the question is, what was Jesus wanting to distinguish that from? Poor in spirit, He was distinguishing from other types of poverty, obviously.

Well, you know, the same thing is happening here. Blessed are the pure, not just the pure. Blessed are the pure in heart.

What do you think He maybe wants to distinguish that from? Perhaps there's other kinds of purity. Maybe there's other kinds of purity that He wants us to recognize He's not talking about. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you cleanse.

Catharizo. Now, you know what that word cleanse, it's the same word group as our word purify. Purify.

Pure. And so basically what He's saying to the scribes and Pharisees is this, you purify the outside of the cup and dish, but inside. See, that's the comparison.

But inside. See, when we talk pure of heart, blessed are the pure in heart, He's distinguishing that from that which is outward and surface. They, on the inside, were full of extortion and self-indulgence.

Now, think about pure. I'm trying to think. What do we think of as being pure? I don't even know where it comes from, but pure is the driven snow.

Do you say that here? Something like that? No? Anyway, that may be just a saying in the U.S. Or maybe it's just a saying of my own imagination, I don't know. I think of pure gold. Or oftentimes we think of even, you think about a virgin maiden getting married on her wedding day and putting on a white wedding dress.

What is purity? I find it very interesting. Daniel. Do you know as Daniel is wrapping up what God has given him to say, chapter 12 of Daniel, Daniel gets this prophetic vision of our day.

And here's what he sees Christians. He sees us, those of us that are saved. Listen to what he says.

Many shall be purified, made white, and refined. But the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. Now here's what I want you to see.

Three very closely related ideas. Purity, made white, and refined. Now think with me about what it means to be refined.

You know when I think of refining, my mind goes to Malachi. Anybody else's mind go there? Anybody think about a passage from Malachi that deals with being refined? He, Christ, shall refine who? The sons of Levi. Now look, if we have eyes to see, who does Peter tell us the true priesthood is? Us.

We are the royal priesthood. We are the holy priesthood. And so what you get is these Old Testament prophets, they're looking at a purging that's going to be done.

Daniel is given this sight of, you come into the later days, and there are going to be many that are going to be coming into the kingdom. And what's going to be true of them? Purity, made white, and refined. Now you know what it is to refine? You put precious metals through a refinery process.

And what's happening? You put silver in it, you put gold in it, and you heat it up, you heat it up until the point where it's liquid. And what happens? You basically slag impurities. You know what slag is? You know what an impurity is? When you're refining gold, it's anything that's not gold.

That's what makes for an impurity. That's exactly what we're talking about. Refining is a process by which impurities are removed.

And the thing is, you have pure gold when all you have is gold and nothing else. Listen, what we need to recognize is this. Get this.

Purity corresponds to singleness. And you can see it with the refining process. See, you're refined.

All the impurities have been removed when you only have one substance. Singleness and purity correspond to each other. I have a glass of water.

It's pure if it's singularly water. But if I throw mud in it, you don't want to drink it. And you would not say it's pure.

And you're right, because what did we just do? We added impurities. In other words, we added something that's not water. Now when you look at the picture, you don't just have water.

You have water and other things. That's what makes for impurity. A virgin.

Think about a virgin. We just talked about a virgin who's coming to get married and she wears a white dress. You know what? We consider that virgin to be pure.

Not just because she has a white dress on, but because she's actually a virgin. But you know what? When she goes and gets married, and now the marriage has been consummated, and she's walking day in and day out with a husband, we still count her pure. As long as she's devoted to one husband.

It's when she becomes given to other men that we count her impure. You see, as long as there's singleness, there's purity. They go hand in hand with each other.

That's the idea. When the snow is white, it's viewed as pure. You can splash mud on it.

You've seen that? I grew up in the north. We get these wonderful snow storms and everything's white. But you see, snow doesn't last long around here.

So you don't really see this happen. But in Michigan, we get snow that would basically last for months. And then what happens is when it first falls, it's beautiful.

But then in spring, when it's melting, it's just dirty. You probably saw that in Poland. Yeah, slush and just dirty.

So you wipe a dirty rag on a white wedding dress, and the purity's lost. We think purity, whiteness, refined, clean, immaculate. We're talking about the freedom from anything that pollutes, the freedom from anything that contaminates.

Now, listen to this. The lexicons, Bauer, Denker, Art, Gingrich, they say this. It's being clean or free of adulterating matter.

Thayer's Greek lexicon says this. Free from the admixture or adhesion of anything that soils, adulterates, or corrupts. Now, I find that very interesting.

Both of these lexicons use the term adulterate. That is very interesting. Listen to this.

Listen to James. Adulterers and adulteresses. Do you not know? See, as soon as you hear that, you can say, well, you know, these people being unfaithful to their wives and their husbands.

No, no, no, no, no. That's not what we're talking about. Listen to this.

Adulterers and adulteresses. Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? You see that? Friendship with the world, whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world, makes himself an enemy of God. Now, listen.

You go down just a few verses, and here's what's being said. Draw near to God. He will draw near to you.

Cleanse. Cleanse. Purify your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Now see, that's not what we would expect. Purify your hearts because you're filthy. No.

Purify your hearts because you're not singular. You're double. See, double-minded has everything to do with impurity.

Obviously, James is implying double-mindedness is to be filthy. It's to be dirty. It's to be impure.

That's the idea here. A pure heart is a single heart. A pure heart is single-minded.

What we're talking about is a pure, unadulterated heart of devotion to God. You see, if you go after the world, you're an adulterer. You're adulterated.

Because now there's an admixture. Now there's a contaminant. Your heart is double-minded.

You see, what James is imagining is the guy that's trying to partly give himself to God, but partly give himself to something else. And he says you're an adulterer, an adulteress. That's what he's dealing with there.

Purity of heart is to will one thing. No mixture. No divided affections.

No impurities. Purity. You want to think of two things.

That which is free from what adulterates. You want to think of singular in devotion. Listen to what Peter says.

Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. That means, sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. Set God aside.

God is the one preeminent. He's holy. He's set aside in your heart.

That's purity of heart. Purity. And we see this.

It's this divided loyalties. You've got lots of people. There's probably some sitting here.

You know what happens? You fear hell. Who wants to go to hell? The idea of hell. The idea of torment that's unbearable.

The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. It's a place of damnation. A place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And I'll tell you, as Spurgeon says, over every door in hell is written hopelessness. There is utter hopelessness. The first moment you're there, you are overwhelmed with the reality that this is beyond anything you can bear and it is forever.

And it is never going away and God is not going to show you mercy. And see, when you hear that, and that is justice for your sin. That is not God just being mean.

That is you getting what your sins deserve. It is justice. And you know what? There's this tension.

People want to serve God because they fear that. They want to be religious. Men are trying to be religious.

But what James sees is what is often very much the case. People walk out the door and then they want to live a different life. See, it's divided.

They want to play two parts. It's not singular. It's not this devotion to God, whether they're here, whether they're in private, whether they're here, whether they're at home in their apartment, whether they're here, whether they're in the workplace.

That's the issue. Divided loyalties. Constantly.

I would challenge you to do something. We don't like this word. I don't know how it bounces off your ears here in the UK.

But you know almost 20 times in the book of Hosea, you get the word whore. Whoredom. We don't like that word.

But you know what? I think that's what God calls people that are trying to live this divided thing. You're just kind of trying to serve Him. You're trying to do something else.

God is very dogmatic about sharing His people. If you've never read, God is a jealous God. He does not want divided affections.

Blessed are the pure in heart. And they're going to see God. See, He's going to welcome them close, face to face.

But purity. You know who He's going to bring close to Him? The people who want Him with undivided affection. Now look, I know in this world there are things we have to fight.

But you know what? The fight shows it. Like we were driving here today, and my wife is saying that she has this fear that God might give us a certain thing because, well, I'll tell you what it is. It's grandchildren.

And you know what made me think? It made me think, what she was saying was she had this fear she didn't want to love them too much. She was saying that her sister had that fear. She didn't want to love her grandchildren too much.

I remember getting married. I remember when I met Ruby. Suddenly, my affections were being challenged in a way that they had never been challenged since I'd been a Christian.

And it caused me concern. I think Ruby told me she felt that too. But I know there's a tension.

I know there are things that tend to vie at our affections. But the very fact that there is a battle, the very fact there is a concern, the very fact we fight and resist those things, the very fact that that happens, that there is a battle in that manner, is actually a very good indication of purity. It's somebody that's longing for that purity.

They want it. They don't want their affections for God challenged or turned away in any way. Listen to David pray.

Psalms 86 Teach me Your way, O Lord. I will walk in Your truth. Unite my heart to fear Your name.

Have you ever thought about... I don't know. We used to sing that. I believe we sang that at Community.

I don't know. I don't know if we did. But somewhere along the line, that verse came across my attention and it stuck with me.

Unite my heart. We don't pray that way. Unite my heart to fear Your name.

Why would David pray that? You know why? Why does somebody pray that? What don't they want? They don't want a divided heart. And why would he pray that? Because he feels it. This is not the prayer of a man who's walking through life and never feeling that there's some challenge to his affection for God.

Prone to wander. Lord, we feel it. Lord, unite my heart.

There's a place of crying. Create in me a clean heart. I mean, David was crying out for this.

He felt this. He wanted this. This is something that we should all be crying out for.

Now, make it one. Make it single. Make it whole.

Let it be entirely free of hypocrisy. Now listen, do you know what you find in Hosea? From chapter 1 through chapter 9, you find 19 times Israel has this word, whore, thrown in their face. And you know after God says that, He says this, their heart is divided.

In Hosea 10 too. After 19 times of having this terminology thrown at them. You see where it comes? A divided heart is not a small thing.

It is to be a spiritual whore. You see, these are strong terms. But you know what? I want them to be strong.

I want to speak strong today. Because I want you to hear, this is God's Word. I'm not quoting from some smutty magazine here.

I'm quoting from God's Word. He uses His terminology. We need to feel this.

Because this is what God wants from His people. One part of them acts as if they want to know God. They want to worship God.

They want to please God. But what happens? Another part of them is going in a different direction. They want something else.

Listen to one of the promises of the New Covenant. I will give them one heart. You see, you can read that, and it almost doesn't make any sense at times.

But in this context, it makes lots of sense. I'm going to give them one heart. Wow.

That's the essence of purity. One substance. Single.

United. Not divided. Not double-minded.

A heart devoid of pollution. No contaminants. Nothing that adulterates.

That's the issue. No impurity. So let's think about the heart.

What is the heart? And sometimes people say, well, you know, it's the seed of affection. Heart, I mean, that's... Boy, that is a word like soul or spirit. The uses are broad.

Listen, when we're talking the heart, you don't want to just think affections. The heart is you. The heart is your inner man.

It's the center of your being. It's the center of your personality. It's who you are.

Scripture says the heart... What do you know about the Proverbs? What does the Proverbs say about the heart? Right. I mean, you want to keep the heart with all diligence. Why? It's the source.

Because everything you are, everything you do, everything you say, flows out of this. It's your inner man. It's who you are at the deepest level.

Jesus says this from women. Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, that's covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within.

See, that's it. Where's the heart? It's that which is inside. It's where your thoughts are.

It's where your feelings are. It's the heart of the total man. It's the center of your being.

It's the spring head. It's the fountain. Keep it with diligence, because everything springs from it.

Everything you are, what comes out of you, comes from that source. Source of every activity. And you know what's amazing? Blessed are the pure in heart.

What's Jesus saying? Remember, He's been talking about people in His kingdom. I'll tell you one thing this says to us. This is no mere religion.

Christianity goes deep. Christianity goes after a man at the deepest level. That's what we're talking about when we talk about the Gospel.

We're talking about changing a man, changing a woman, right down to the depths. Blessed are the pure in heart. Not just external.

Not just a whitewashed job. Not a whited sepulcher. Not that kind of thing.

Now listen. God's people are, A-R-E, in all caps, pure in heart. That needs to be said.

I've been a Christian a little over 30 years. I have found that it is common in especially reformed circles to love to quote Jeremiah 17.9 and I get a very uncomfortable feeling that it is used way too often to describe Christians. That is just simply not true.

If you don't know the verse I'm talking about, somebody quote it. Yeah, we're basically talking that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? And I hear reformed preachers use that almost universally of mankind.

And it's like, brethren, I recognize, do we feel a battle? Yes. Can we feel soiled? Yes. Can we feel filthy? Yes.

Can we feel like we need to fall down on our face and repent and confess our sins before God? Yes. But let me tell you something. Jesus is saying there really are people that are pure of heart and they're the ones that are blessed and they're the ones that are going to see God.

Remember something about Jeremiah. Do you know that Jeremiah says that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? But do you know if you look in the context there, do you know who he's describing? He's actually describing the cursed man who puts his trust in man. It's very interesting.

That's the cursed man. Jesus tells us who the blessed man is. Jeremiah's telling us who the cursed man is.

And you know what as you go through Jeremiah? You know what you find? You find that Jeremiah gets to the point where he wants to now tell us about the new covenant and he wants to tell us how God intervenes and changes a man's heart. And what does he say? I will give them a heart to know Me. They shall return to Me with their whole heart.

That's Jeremiah 24. And last week we looked at these promises. Jeremiah 32, I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear Me forever.

I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. You see, Scripture assumes that there are people whose hearts are no longer desperately wicked. Have you ever read this? A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, what does he do? He brings forth good things.

And then you have wicked people. Where is this? This is Matthew 12, verse 35. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things.

An evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. Or you get this, Psalm 73 says, Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart. That is interesting.

You know what defines true Israelite? Purity of heart. That's precisely what it is. And we could make a case from Romans 2 that that's exactly what a true Jew is as well.

If you look at the context there. See, purity of heart makes the true Jew. Or you get this, I... Well, let me move on.

I think when we're talking about purity, what we have to do is we have to be honest. And we have to ask ourselves some questions. Because he's talking about at the heart level.

And so, what we have to ask ourselves is to what extent what people see. See, we each see each other. We see certain things.

I see certain actions on your part. I see how you hold yourself. I see how you conduct yourself.

We each see each other. There's that which is true on the external. See, that's what it's described in Pharisees.

Outwardly, they were one way. Inwardly, they were a different way. You know what's true of the pure of heart? Well, it's kind of like this guy we just heard about.

From Matthew, a good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things. You see, there are people who have evil hearts and they put on an act on the outside. And then there are people with pure hearts that are striving to have word and deed that correspond with what's on the inside.

And what we really have to ask is to what extent are our actions and our words an accurate reflection of what's inside? I have to ask myself that. What do you think about? What do you love? What's in there? What do you want? To what extent do your words and actions constitute a cover-up where you know somebody's watching? And the truth is if they weren't watching, you'd act different. And to some degree, we all brush our hair before we see one another, unless you're the prime minister of this country.

Do you think about how much am I acting? How much is this put on? And I recognize this too. I come here. I stand up in front of you.

I speak. I say things. How much... Like I can tell you, in all honesty, I can tell you, when we took the Lord's Supper and we were looking at Hebrews, my heart is just jumping inside of me.

I love that! The reality is, few there be that find it. Few there be that find life. And so if we put the end of the Sermon on the Mount together with the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus at the end is saying, few there be that find it, and in the beginning He's saying that it's only the pure in heart that are going to see God, you know what we can basically conclude? There are few in the world that really are living that life which they actually are at the heart level.

How few of us live one life and live it in the open? Live it in here and it comes out to the outside? You know, men are liars. And hypocrisy is a form of lies. Because you're basically trying to demonstrate something that's not true.

You want people to think something that's not true. Men are hypocrites. And I'll tell you this, false religion, as we were driving here today, we were talking about legalism.

You know, it's very interesting, you can find different men, very legalistic, they had these standards, they had these rules and laws that you need to live the Christian life by, and how many of these people ended up turning out to be some kind of sexual perverts or some kind of skeletons in the closet have come out? It's like, false religion is hypocrisy. It is that. I mean, it's built on that.

You have people who, yeah, they're afraid of hell, I recognize. They realize they need to tip their hat to God. And they want to appear a certain way.

And you know the thing is, we tend to know what's acceptable in any given environment. We know the rules. You know, what's going to make me acceptable if I go in this environment, or in that one? Or when I show up at church? You know, look, if you got into a horrible fight with your spouse, and then you show up at church and you're all smiles, I mean, see, you know, what's happening there? And Jesus is talking about pure in heart.

We have to examine ourselves on this level. Look, I would confess before you, am I aware when people are watching me? Yes, I'm aware when people are watching. Do you purposely want to be a good example in that environment? Yeah.

I mean, there are socially acceptable things that we probably don't do in front of other people, because we know socially speaking that's just awkward, that's not right, you don't do that. We teach our children that. Don't pick your nose in front of people.

In other words, it's okay to pick your nose when they're at home. I mean, the reality is we don't. But brethren, we're talking at a spiritual level, at a godly level, at a purity level.

When it comes to our devotion to God, are we appearing externally like we're God lovers? See, that's the real issue. It's like these scribes and Pharisees. Oh yeah, God is our God.

God is our Father. And Jesus is saying, no He's not. If He was from the heart level, you would love Me, because I came from Him.

You see, this is the real issue. This divided affections. It's what's real.

What's not real. Pure in heart. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You're like whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside you're full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

You see, we know. The thing is we know. Jesus says, John the Baptist, John the Baptist.

Where did he come from? The scribes and the Pharisees, these guys are thinking, well, you know, if we say this, He's going to say that. If we say this, He's going to say that. You see what they were doing? No interest in what's true.

Just how it affects them. No interest whatsoever. It was all put on.

It was all a show. You know, I have often wondered why anybody would want to play that game in the church. I've wondered that.

Because you of all people are most miserable. Why? You're playing a lie? In the end, you're going to miss heaven. And you know what? Paul said, if the dead aren't raised, we Christians of all people are most miserable.

But you know what? Christ did rise. And so are we. So we're not.

We of all people are the most blessed. You want to be in our shoes when judgment comes. But you know who the most miserable people are in the world? The people that put on the outward beauty, but inside it's dead men's bones.

Why? Because you know what? When they come in the church, God's discerning people smell the death. They smell the bones. You know what I'm talking about.

You get to people that you're concerned. You're just concerned. Because something seems off.

And you know what? They're not totally accepted by the world either because they're trying to play the religious game. Oh, you go to church on Sundays. Yeah.

So you're not exactly like the world and you're not exactly like the church. You're just kind of trying to play the middle. And you of all people... You know what Paul said.

We might as well eat and drink for tomorrow we die. I often wondered, you know, when God truly saved me, well, yeah, I want to be among God's people. But when He didn't save me, this is the last place I wanted to be.

It's like the Laodiceans. Be hot or be cold. I mean, if you want your sin, go after it.

Why play the game? Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Not the game players. Brethren, this is the root of the matter.

They shall see God. Do you recognize that that is really what the whole object of Christianity is all about? It's to bring us to this vision of God. To see God.

To behold Him. So the question is this, what then is needed before I can see God? Well, that's what we're dealing with. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Or this, you know this text. Holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. Are you holy? But you see, holiness is right there with purity.

Why? Purity has to do with singleness. Holiness has to do with being set apart for God. Again, it's that singleness.

It's that idea. Holiness, it's this unmixed condition of being. Nothing less than the whole person is involved.

It's devoted. It's singular. It's purity.

One substance. No mixture. Simple.

Often times the word simple goes with purity. Why? You know what simple means? Not complex. The most simple you can have is one.

And that's the idea that we're after here. It's a single bent for God. A desire to know Him and love Him, serve Him, obey Him.

Remember what Peter said, sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. And our Lord says that only such people as are like this are actually going to see God. You think about this.

I think about this. What is the greatest reality? I mean, I can hear John Piper preaching about these kinds of things. It's like God is the greatest reality imaginable.

Not at all. He is the great I Am. You think about that.

I Am that I Am. God is. If there is any reality, it is that God is.

He upholds everything. He knows everything. He's everywhere.

You know what Psalm 139 says. You've searched Me. You've known Me.

Sitting down, My uprising. You understand My thoughts afar off. You comprehend My path, My lying down, acquainted with all My ways.

There's not a word in My tongue. Behold, O Lord, You know it all together. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You're there.

If I make bed in hell, You're there. I take the wings of the morning, dwell in the outermost parts of the sea. Even there, Your hand is going to lead Me.

Indeed, the darkness that can't hide Me from You. Night shines as day. The darkness and the light are both a light to You.

God is the truest. God is the most real, most magnificent reality of all. And yet we have to ask this, where is He? Isn't that what the atheist is saying? It's like He's here.

He fills every place. We can gaze out into the universe, and He's there. You go down into the depths of the sea, and He's there.

And not only is He there, He upholds it all. There's nothing more real than God, and yet we say, where is He? Where? Listen to these verses. God says in Deuteronomy 32.20, I will hide My face from them.

I will see what their end will be for their perverse generation children in whom is no faith. Or Isaiah 59.2, Your sins have hidden His face from you. Ezekiel 39.24, according to their uncleanness, according to their transgression, I have dealt with them and hidden My face from them.

Do you know why we can't see God? Our sin. And you know what happens when a person gets saved? They begin to see God again. That's precisely what the promise of the Gospel is.

Listen to this. Ezekiel 39, and I will not hide My face from them anymore. Don't we read in Scripture, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

You see, in Scripture, the New Testament uses visual terminology. Why? Because you know, there's a very close relationship between knowledge and seeing. And what happens is, suddenly a person gets saved and they begin to know God.

They begin to see. They begin to feel. Jesus promised to manifest Himself.

We begin to have a sense of His presence. And even though Paul says, we behold like through a glass, through a mirror, darkly, still we behold. Isn't that what it says? Beholding the glory of the Lord.

In 2 Corinthians. You see, this sight begins to break in upon us. Of Moses, it said there in Hebrews 11, He endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

Don't you love that? See, here, we begin to see what's invisible. And we feel Him. We know He's there.

He speaks to us. Christian people begin to have the spiritual sight that the truth is others simply don't have. An unbeliever, he can sit there and say to me, show me proof.

It's like you know exactly what it's like. It's like a blind man saying to a man that can see, show me proof that there's really a sunset. It's like I'm looking at it, but he can't see it.

And so he thinks I'm a fool for thinking the sun is up. You see, God reveals Himself to us. That's what's happening.

Does not Scripture say draw near to God? Where is He? You see, the assumption is He's there and He can be drawn close to. We have a sense of knowing Him. There's a sense of His presence.

There's a sense of reality. We talk about the smile of God. We talk about God withdrawing.

We suddenly have these sensitivities to God being closer, God being far, God smiling upon us, God showing Himself to us. There's a nearness. And the thing is, how do we get near to Him? How do we see Him? Blessed are the pure in heart.

Listen to this, draw near to God, purify your hearts. It's in the same verse. There in James 4. Draw near to God, purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Or in Hebrews 10.22, let us draw near with a true heart. Or how about this? Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who is it? Clean hands and a pure heart. Brethren, I'll tell you this, there's no sense being fake.

If you know you're the hypocrite, take it to the Lord, confess it to Him. If you know you're not pure in heart, you're not real, cry out to Him to save you from that pitiful position. You don't want to be there.

You don't want to be there at all. Listen, there's got to be reality. Because the reality in Christianity is God.

The reality in Christianity is finding God. He is what makes Christianity. The triune God is what you want to find.

He is the treasure of this. Brethren, do you recognize? He created us to be worshipers. And man is determined to worship.

And brethren, when we worship that which we were designed to worship, when we behold the Lord, there's nothing more glorious. Absolutely nothing. The only reason that anybody thinks that their sin is more glorious than God is because they're blind.

They're deceived. And the devil has successfully just deceived that individual. And here's the thing, God is light.

And so here's one of the things that happens, that as we draw near to the light, isn't it interesting? Scripture actually says it's unapproachable light whom no man has seen or can see. So we're told, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. In fact, we look through this glass kind of dimly or darkly right now, but then face to face, and yet no man has seen Him or can see Him.

Unapproachable light, and yet we're told to approach. I know there's a tension in Scripture. We feel it.

And yet, it comes down to this. Seeing has to do face to face. When you see somebody face to face, it's like Paul says, that we will know as we are known.

It's got to do with revelation. There's a certain... This is what makes glory so glorious. This idea that heaven is like some stagnant thing where you boringly sit on a cloud and play a harp, nobody wants that.

That would be torment. The beauty about glory is this, that there is always more of God to see. That no matter how much we take in, there is going to be more.

And so the last thing of all that heaven is, is static. It's like God is never going to show us all of Him. We're never going to see Him fully.

It is always going to be like Moses, where Moses, you can't see the whole thing. You can't see the whole deal or you die. And yet, somehow in a glorified state, we are going to be enabled to take in a revelation of God that is just absolutely impossible here.

But the beauty is that God is going to constantly be revealing Himself more and more. We can't even comprehend. We just get these little statements that through all the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness.

It's like, what is that? I mean, there's no definition. It's just this broad statement that is so glorious that we can't hardly comprehend it. But here's what happens.

As you draw close to this unapproachable light, and you actually try to approach it, well, what happens? God is light. And so it's much like, have you ever been in a room like here? You know, you get a gloomy day, and all of a sudden, I don't know, it takes just the right setting, but all of a sudden the sun comes out from behind the clouds and the ray comes through the window. Have you ever seen all the little things floating in the air? Well, they were there before, but you didn't see them.

It's kind of like us as we draw close to this light. One of the things that happens is we feel all the more the impurity. And you see it happen in Isaiah, right? The classic text, Isaiah chapter 6. I mean, here's probably the holiest man in the land, Isaiah, the prophet.

And he comes to the temple and he comes in before the Lord, and suddenly he's recognizing he's a man of unclean lips and he dwells among a people of unclean lips. And that's what happens. Peter, we see the same thing.

Depart from me, Lord. You know, this place we're staying in here, it doesn't have mirrors like we're used to at home, or lights. And so, you know, we were here for the first, or last year, and then we go back to the U.S., and you go in our bathroom there, and we've got like these super bright LED lights, and a mirror that's like this big, and poof! And suddenly you realize, oh, I kind of look really ugly.

I've got all these blemishes. Oh, look at these hairs and these things. I couldn't see them over there.

And that's what happens. You come close to the light, and suddenly you begin to recognize. And brethren, oftentimes it's the people that come closest to see most of God that become very aware of their own blemishes.

Now, hear me on this. When we're talking about purity, obviously, this has everything to do with idols in our life. Because that's where we end up divided.

God says this. This is a New Covenant promise. I'm going to sprinkle clean.

See, clean, it purifies. I'm going to sprinkle clean water, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse.

This is all in that purify category of words. I'm going to cleanse you from all your filthiness. See, filthy, contaminants.

And from your idols. And if we're honest, those idols that are most difficult in our lives, that beloved thing, it has roots that go down into our heart, and it never comes out painlessly. That tough old miser which is your flesh, you know this.

Since when is the flesh just prone to lie down and roll over at our command? That's not what happens. Fact is, idols which it loves, which is endeared to the flesh, it's like... I'm kind of an outdoors guy, kind of like gardening, like having a nice lawn. You know, I've come to recognize.

I borrowed a friend's bulldozer to clear some of my land back in the States. There's two prominent types of trees on that property that I had to remove. One, the roots were shallow.

They were big trees, but I went up and hit them with the dozer and they'd fall over. A much smaller tree. These hickories, they had a taproot that went so deep.

And idols are like that. It's like pulling out a weed that has roots that go way down, and they go into the heart. This is what idols are like.

So that if you try to tear them out, you feel like you're tearing out part of yourself. And we don't like to be honest about what those things are. Oh, I could give that thing.

You ever hear people that smoke, I could give this up anytime. Well, why don't you? Well, I don't want to. Yeah, exactly.

That's exactly the issue. You see, the I don't want to behind the idols. And they go down there.

And I'll tell you this, God says it's whoredom. When you've got these things in your life that you depend upon that are going to bring you happiness, and you just think you cannot live without this thing, there's this tough, fibrous root within the human heart whose nature is to possess. And you know it.

How often do you use those words? Me. Mine. That's mine.

You see, on paper, you can write those words down. We can put them over here on the screen. They seem relatively harmless, right? Me.

Mine. Mine. Mine.

Yeah, but I'll tell you what, they reveal something. The truth is they're verbal symptoms of something that goes deep within us that's wrong with us, a deep disease. The roots of our hearts have grown down into things.

And you start doing an inventory. You start... and you know, this happens. Ruby and I moving over here, you really start to do inventory on things.

Why? Because you pretty much have to leave everything behind except what you can fit in a few suitcases. And we do this inventory. What is it that really has us? The roots of our hearts, they grow down deep.

And we dare not pull those things up lest we die. And that's exactly what Christ says you better do. You better die.

And you better die daily. And you better die to self. And you see, what happens is God's gifts take the place of God Himself.

And as soon as that happens, that is a divided heart. And God is not at all pleased with that. And brethren, He tests us just like with Abraham.

He tests us on what truly has our affections and whether it's truly Him. God will test you. Go sell all that you have and give to the poor.

Yeah, that was a test for Him, but I'll guarantee you this, you can say, well, He didn't say that to me. Yeah, but I'll tell you this, He will say something to you. And He'll test you and He'll test your idols because He wants this purity of a heart.

God's gifts take the place of God Himself. And I'll tell you this, it is a monstrous substitution. It turns everything upside down in the reasons behind why God made us.

God made us to worship Him and to love Him. Listen, He made us to find our greatest delight in Him, our greatest satisfaction, our greatest fulfillment. These idols, they're an impurity that plagues us.

It plagues us as a race. We have a natural bent to this and you know it. And this is where the whoredom comes in.

Have you ever wondered? Like I've wondered this, why would Israel trade their God for one of these false gods who's simply an idol? Can you imagine it? See, we can pretty much look at this and say, that is so foolish. And yet, we're just like them. I mean, it's a statue.

Yeah, look at it, they carved it out of rock, chiseled it, carved it out of wood. They burnt half of it in the fire, made a meal. See, we can look at that and we can say, how could they ever go after that? How could that get their heart? Well, you see it.

You see exactly how they can. You know what they said? They said, you know what? Since we worship the Queen of Heaven, everything goes good. When we stopped worshiping the Queen of Heaven, things went bad.

You see, what it really comes down to is this. They said, our crops did well when we started worshiping the Queen of Heaven. You know, this is what that group said that went down to Egypt, and they took Jeremiah with them.

That's where it is. You start thinking, well, things go good. You see, there's things we long after rather than having God Himself.

The man who has God for his treasure. See, that's the thing. We have it all in one.

No, there's no need to be divided. Do you recognize the insult it is to God when He is who He is and can satisfy as He can satisfy? And it's the treasure that Scripture says He is when you say, I want that thing instead. And it is a little trivial money or little trifling pleasure.

Unity of heart, oneness of heart. That's what God's after, not divided. And you know, many ordinary treasures, we can be denied them, and it's okay.

And even though God may give us some of them, still, we don't want those things to be allowed to basically control us. And they're never necessary for our happiness. And you know this, the deepest rooted idol is that old miser, self.

That's, you know it. Self is what is most responsible for causing us to have a divided heart. Those self sins, you know what they are? Self dependence, self confidence, self righteousness, self aggrandizement, self exaltation, self, self, self, sufficiency, self, love.

And you know what happens? See, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. If you really want to be honest with something, I'll tell you this. Self is the greatest veil to seeing God.

And I feel it. It's that surrender to the will of God that takes the veil away. Self, self will.

Singleness is found in bringing all those self sins to the cross for judgment. But really, seeing God is bound up in the death of self. If you've heard me quote this before, hear me again, because this is well worth hearing.

Edward Payson, they call him Praying Payson of Portland, Maine. Long since gone to be with the Lord, been to his graveside there in Maine. Listen to what he said.

He's dying. He's on his deathbed. Oh, what a blessed thing it is to lose one's will.

Since I've lost my will, I've found happiness. There can be no such thing as disappointment to me, for I have no desires, but that God's will may be accomplished. Christians might avoid much trouble and inconvenience if they would only believe what they profess, that God is able to make them happy without anything else.

Christians imagine that if such a dear friend were to die, or such and such blessings were to be removed, then they'd be miserable. But the truth is, God can make them a thousand times happier without those things. To mention my own case, God has been depriving me of one blessing after another.

But as every one was removed, God Himself has come in and filled up its place. And now, when I'm a cripple and not able to move, I'm happier than ever I was in my life before, or ever expected to be. And if I had not believed, or if I had believed this 20 years ago, I might have spared myself much anxiety.

Now, think about this. This is another aspect. God, you remember, this is Peter after the ordeal at Cornelius' house.

And he's talking to these leaders in Jerusalem. Listen to what he says. God made no distinction between us, Jews, and them, Gentiles, purifying their hearts by faith.

Now, that's a thought. Think about this. What is faith? I mean, we talk about self-sins.

Loving self and loving stuff that God has created instead of loving Him, like we are. If overvaluing self and overvaluing God's created stuff tend to be our chief idolatries that tend to adulterate the heart, cause us to be divided, what is the effect of justifying faith? Where you come to recognize all my sins are forgiven because of that one sacrifice of Christ. What's the effect of that? I mean, what's the prime object of faith? You see, our eyes turn away from self, and it turns away from everything else, and suddenly your eyes are upon the Lord Christ.

I mean, what happens in my heart when a sinner comes to realize that Christ did that for me? He took that upon Himself for me? I mean, you see what happens? Suddenly all my bent towards wanting to worship myself, it's like He's the one that's worthy. The life of faith is the death of pride. And you know what it does too? It takes the shine off the things in the world.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. And there is truth to that. Now look, like I said before, I'm not ashamed of using this language because I'm wanting to drive home a point.

And this is one of your own Englishmen. This is an English Christian, so if you want to blame anybody, you blame him. The old English Anglican Bible commentator, John Trapp.

I've got Trapp's five volumes. I gave it to Joshua when I moved here. Way too heavy.

Pulling over here. Listen to what he said. Faith, as a neat housewife, that's what he likens faith to, a neat housewife, sweeps clean and suffers never a slut's corner in the soul.

Don't you love it? I mean, that's like the whoredom language. Faith does not tolerate the slut's corner. The adulterated, faith doesn't do that.

It is ever purging upon corruption and lets out the lifeblood of it, for it shows a man a better project than to lie sucking at the botches of carnal pleasures. You gotta love that language. Sucking at the botches of carnal pleasures or to be basely affixed to earthly profits.

Every true believer, his faith consecrates his heart and makes it God's enclosure. Or there's this, John 15, three. You're already clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

Sanctify them by thy truth. Your word is truth. Or you remember, Paul says, Christ loved the church and gave himself for her that he might sanctify and cleanse her with washing of water by the word.

See, these disciples, he said, you're already clean because of the word. Do you recognize what that's saying? If you sit at the feet of Christ and listen to him teach and you actually heed what he says, that's purifying. Do you realize this book? Brethren, this is no empty task for you to rise up every day and take this book and open it up and prayerfully begin to read in it.

Because I'll tell you what, empowered by the Spirit of God, it washes where you can't wash. Brethren, do you realize, Christian, do you realize this about yourself? You and I are being prepared to stand in the very presence of the King of Kings. Christian, you're going to see God face to face.

That's what we're promised. I mean, would you not agree? This is the most momentous, the most stupendous, the most amazing. Job says, after my skin is destroyed, this I know, in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself.

Don't you love that? I'm going to see him for myself. I'm not going to be like the blind guy that's got a seeing guy that's leading me about and telling me about something. It's like the Samaritans.

Remember the Samaritans? Well, at first, we believed what we believed because you, the adulterous lady that had had five husbands, came and told us. But now, it's not because you told us, it's because we've seen for ourselves. That's basically what Job is saying.

And my eyes shall behold, and not another, how my heart yearns within me. Oh, I hope that's what makes your Christianity altogether glorious, is you've got this expectation. You're moving towards that.

That's the hope that we have. There shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face.

And Isaiah says, your eyes will see the King and His beauty. Now, I just leave you with this. Because John says this.

He said, you know what's going to happen? We're going to see Christ. When we see Him, we're going to be made like Him. And he says this, everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as Christ is pure.

When the kingdom is consummated, new heaven, the new earth, and Christ stands there. There are people in this room, and we are going to be shoulder to shoulder. I think the only reason we will look at each other, you know how the song says it, the bride does not eye her dress, but the bridegroom.

I don't think we're going to have much cause to look at each other other than just the disbelief of His beauty and glory. And we will look at each other like, can you believe this? You see, the expectation and the hope is that we're going to see Him, we're going to be like Him. And John argues that everyone who has that hope, they will purify themselves.

According to John, this is what he says, the Christian purifies himself now because the Christian has a hope as to what he's ultimately going to see and ultimately going to be. And his present, look, Brethren, what John is telling us is our present efforts to purify ourselves are consistent with that future hope that we have. The disciple of Christ who looks forward to this is already determined to be preparing for it.

We're going to have an audience with the King. I mean, look, what an incentive to purity. And there's the end.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Let's pray. Father, we would ask You to quicken each one of us to live in light of this hope and this expectation and lay hold on eternal things.

We ask You, Lord, to open our eyes. Lord, help each one of us to feel even right now in this world at this time, the sight and the vision and the closeness that we may be forfeiting simply because we're allowing such impurities, dividedness, double-mindedness, double-heartedness to creep in, to veil our eyes from seeing more of the glory. I pray, Father, that You would grip us with such an anticipation so strong that it leads us to endeavor right here in this life right now to pursue purity.

Father, I pray that You'd make heaven more pure, more real to us. Father, we admit it. So often, sin clouds our vision.

It clouds what we see of You. It makes it impossible for us to only, makes it impossible for us to see as we would like to see. And it's, Lord, we recognize that there's still a reason even now why we can only see but dimly.

We know that You are purer eyes. Sin just cannot dwell with You. Lord, if we're honest, we have so cheaply at times sold out to idolatry.

We allow those roots to continue down into our hearts. And it's true, Lord, we feel it. To uproot certain things, we feel like it kills us, takes part of us out.

We would ask You, just like David did long ago, please, Lord, create in us a clean heart. We pray for this inward purity that the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking about so that we may gaze upon You. Lord, I look forward to it.

I want that day to come where with these brethren, we will behold the King in all of His beauty. I look so forward to falling on my face next to these faithful brethren who have striven after purity of heart, us together, to fall down on our faces, overwhelmed by the absolute glory in that day. That is my hope, that is my expectation.

And I pray, Lord, that You would cause such hope and expectation to just well up and well over into a real earnestness on the part of all of us here to pursue purity in a way that we never have before. I pray all of this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

You are dismissed.

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