

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE

Matthew 5:8

Intro: I won't take the time to review the Beatitudes of our Lord up to this point, but I hope that we all see the progression that the Lord must have had in mind as He taught His disciples. He was not speaking randomly. The Lord never did that. His words always were reasonable to the person whose heart He had opened to the truth of God. But here the Lord was drawing a word picture of how to identify a child of God. He was doing here what the Apostle John did many years later when he wrote the first epistle that bears His Name. They want us to know that there is much more to being a Christian than just simply saying that you are. A child of God has certain characteristics. You will not find any of those characteristics are perfect in any of us. But they will be in us, and, as we walk in fellowship with the Lord, growing in Him, those characteristics will become more prominent. Because, except for places in the Beatitudes where we are confronted with our sin, the Beatitudes give us those characteristics that we will find in their perfection in Christ. We mourn over our sins, but our blessed Lord has no sins over which to mourn, but He mourns over our sins. They grieve Him infinitely more than they grieve us, but the more we walk with Him, and become like Him, the more our sins will grieve us.

Tonight we are going to look at the sixth Beatitude as our Lord gave them to His disciples so very long ago, and which the Holy Spirit caused Matthew to write down for us. As you can see in your Bible, Matthew 5:8 tells us, **“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”**

Anyone who reads the Bible will know that God has a lot to say in His Word about the heart. Here the Lord was not speaking about that physical organ in our bodies which is pumping to keep us alive, but it has to do with our nature, what we really are in the depth of our being. It has been described as the center and seat of spiritual life – the thoughts, the passions, the desires, affections, and purposes (see Thayer, p. 325). And the Bible makes it clear that in this sense we were all born with spiritual heart trouble, trouble for which there is no human remedy. The prophet Jeremiah expressed this long ago when he wrote in his prophecy, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9). He meant that our hearts not only make us deceitful in our dealings with others, *but that our hearts deceive our very own selves*. In all of the discussion you and I have heard over radio and TV about the

problems we face in our country, I haven't heard anybody say that we need to pay attention to our hearts.

Back in the OT where Moses in the book of Genesis was describing why the Lord destroyed everyone on the face of the earth except for Noah and his family, this is what we read:

5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart (Gen. 6:5-6).

This is what happened to man, to Adam and to Eve, when they sinned against the Lord. When God finished creating the heaven and the earth, we are told in the last verse of chapter 1 that "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31m). Now that included everything that He had made, even Adam and Eve. But that is the only time that God said that about His creation.

David in his prayer in which he confessed his sins, said, "Behold, I was shapen (or brought forth) in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51:5). He meant that he was born a sinner.

In both Psalm 14 and 53 you will find these words:

1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

2 The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one (Psa. 14:1-3).

What an indictment this is against the human race! There are no exceptions! Everyone is a sinner. And notice that verse 1 says that the fool says in his heart that there is no God. And when you put the verse from Jeremiah that I read to you a few moments ago, he said, speaking from God, that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, the person who denies that there is no God, no Creator, no one to whom he is responsible, he is showing that he is a fool. And there are a lot of people in this world, and always have been, who would not deny that there is a God, *but they live like there is no God! And that is a form of denial.*

The world's greatest problem is that we are sinners. By nature we don't

know God, and we don't want to know Him. And this is the problem that is the root of all of our other problems. Sin breeds more sin. And there is no human remedy for man's sin. Notice that I am saying, "no human remedy." But there is a remedy, and it comes from God!

The wages of sin is death, not just physical death (although sin is what is the cause of physical death), but spiritual death, eternal death. We are all faced with the same problem. But what is the remedy for our sin? It is in God. And it is clearly stated to us in a verse which many people who do not know much about the Bible, have heard this verse. And there are many verses in the Bible which give us the same message of hope. But the verse I am thinking about is John 3:16. Many adults are alive today who went to Sunday School as children, and this was probably one of the verses they learned:

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

I want to be clear on this point: *this is the only remedy for sin that there is in all the world. And the only remedy that there ever has been. When we trust in Christ Who by His death He atoned for all who ever have been saved, or ever will be saved, we have everlasting life. We are born again, and God gives us a new heart. We become new creatures so that we love God and want to live to please Him.*

This change of heart was the same in OT times that it is today. So we can take Ezekiel's words to Israel for a yet future time and apply them to ourselves today. Listen to the wonderful words we find in Ezekiel 36:26-27:

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

The Apostle Paul brought our hearts into the picture when he spoke of salvation in Romans 10:9-10:

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

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So to be a child of God He gives us a new heart, and we confess that Jesus is Lord, Who died for our sins, and rose again never to die again as evidence that God has accepted Christ's work on the Cross by which He purchased our salvation. It is not by our works that we earn salvation, but it is by faith that we believe that Christ died to redeem us from our sins. Now we still have the old heart, but we also have a new heart. This is another way of saying that we now want to please God, and do please Him, but it is still possible for us to sin, and so to grieve Him.

So the Lord Jesus said, speaking to believers, that we are blessed when our hearts are pure. A pure heart is a clean heart, morally and spiritually clean. Our hearts can be defiled, made dirty, by sin. And so when we sin, we don't lose our salvation. When we are saved, we are saved forever. But we are to confess our sins to God. And this is God's promise to us which is found in 1 John 1:9:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So we are responsible to God to make sure that our hearts are pure, clean, from the defilement of sin. We all need to seek forgiveness and cleansing every day, and, most of the time, many times a day. We can sin in thought, in speech, and in action, but since God has given us new hearts, sin bothers us, and causes us to seek restored fellowship with the Lord.

Let me give you some verses which have to do with having a clean heart or why we need to be careful about sin in any form.

King David gave us these words which you will find in Psalm 24:3-5:

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

(Comment.)

Another verse comes from Solomon in the book of Proverbs who asks this question for all of us to answer. You will find this question in Proverbs 20:9: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" The answer?

The Apostle Paul in his second letter to Timothy which is found in our Bibles, said,

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22).

The way to avoid sin is by following that which is pleasing to God.

The book of Hebrews gives us some good advice regarding how we are to keep our hearts pure from sin. See Hebrews 10:19-22:

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And having an high priest over the house of God;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

The water is the Word.

And then we have this word from the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 1:13-16:

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

To be holy is to have a pure heart, and to have a pure heart is to be like the Lord Jesus. And then in the same chapter, Peter added:

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:22-23).

By loving each other with a pure heart, we are contributing to making ourselves pure and holy.

So much more could be said about having a pure heart, but let me go on in

conclusion to the promise: **“for they shall see God.”**

In John 1:18 the Apostle John has told us that “no man hath seen God at any time.” This has to mean, as the latter part of that verse tells us, “the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him.” In fact, the Lord Jesus Himself said, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John 6:46). And so what did the Lord mean by this promise?

Of course, we can say that some day we will see the Father, and only the pure in heart will have that privilege because only the pure in heart will be in heaven. Is there any present fulfillment to this promise?

Well, we started out tonight by remembering that the Bible teaches us that there is no God. Here we have just the opposite. Those who are pure in heart shall see Him, and see Him now! What do I mean? Let me answer that question by giving you the words of a hymn which is not in our hymnal. Listen to these words. I am sure that some of you know them:

Loved with everlasting love, led by grace this love to know;
Spirit, breathing from above, Thou hast taught me it is so!
Oh, the full and perfect peace! Oh, this rapture all divine!
In a love which cannot cease, I am His, and He is mine.

Heav'n above is softer blue, earth around is sweeter green!
Something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen:
Birds with gladder songs o'er flow, flow'rs with deeper beauty shine.
Since I know, as now I know, I am His, and He is mine.

Things that once were wild alarms, cannot now disturb my rest;
Closed in everlasting arms, pillowed on the loving breast.
Oh, to lie forever here, doubt, and care and self resign,
While He whispers in my ear, I am His, and He is mine.

His forever, only His; Who the Lord and me shall part?
Ah, with what a rest of bliss Christ can fill the loving heart!
Heav'n and earth may fade and flee, first-born light in gloom decline;
But while God and I shall be, I am His, and He is mine.

Isn't this what the Apostle Paul was saying in Romans 1:18-25, 32.
When people come to the Lord and are saved, they see evidence of God

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everywhere! A person narrowly escapes death in an accident, the world calls it luck. A Christian praises God. The world talks about Mother Nature; a Christian sees God in storms and droughts and tsunamis and hurricanes. The Christian sees the hand of God in the politics of the world; the world looks upon it all as chance, or just the planning of men.

When people are saved, all of life is changed. The world says peace, peace, when there is no peace. The Christian knows that peace is a personal matter resulting from a right relationship with God. The world is blind to God and His sovereign power and wisdom. The Christian has eyes to see the unseen. And the purer our hearts are, the clearer our vision becomes. We see the evidence of God everywhere and in everything. And so it is eternally true – “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Once we were blind, but now we see!