

The Spirit of Jesus 4: Purity in Heart and Peacemakers

I. QUICK OVERVIEW

A. Poverty of Spirit

“1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt. 5:1-3)

B. Mourning and Meekness

“4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Mt. 5:4-5)

C. Righteousness and Mercy

“6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” (Mt. 5:6-7)

II. PURITY IN HEART

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Mt. 5:8)

A. There are three key words in this verse that when they are defined, they give us a fuller understanding of what this verse is saying. The word that is used for “pure” in the Greek can also be translated to mean **clean from guilt, innocent, sincere, upright, virtuous, and void of evil**. The word for “heart” can also mean the **seat of feeling, impulse, affection, desire, the inner and mental frame, and the conscience**. Lastly, the word for “see” can be translated to mean **to behold, to look, to visit, to be admitted into the more immediate presence of God, and to attain a true knowledge of God**.

B. Jesus alone is the one who makes us pure in heart, it is not something that we can achieve by good works or by our own strength. His blood is the only thing that can wash us clean of all guilt and bring us to a place of purity and holiness.

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:22)

“9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.” (Psalm 51:9-12)

- C. In order to walk in purity, we have to actively flee anything that is defiling or impure. It is not enough to just resist temptation or tolerate evil without engaging in it, we have to actively flee from every passion and desire that is not of Jesus. The only way that we are able to resist temptation and pursue righteousness is by submitting ourselves to God and drawing near to Him.

“7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:7-8)

“22 So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.” (2 Timothy 2:22-23)

- D. We were once far off from God, separated from Him by our sin, evil, and impurity, but through Jesus we have been reconciled to Him, so that we may be holy and pure as we stand before Him. But once we are made pure, we have a responsibility to continue in our faith and remain steadfast.

“21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.” (Colossians 1:21-23)

- E. There are three main areas that we daily battle against as we seek to live with a pure heart. The only way to overcome each of this is by full dependence on the Holy Spirit, for He is our Helper.

1. The Flesh (Sin)

The nature of our flesh is contrary to the nature of God. There will always be temptation, but the Holy Spirit helps us in the midst of temptation to be able to overcome and remain in step with Him. It is not possible to walk by the Spirit and continue to gratify the desires of the flesh at the same time.

“16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:16-25)

“4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.” (1 John 3:4-6)

“Sin, when in the body, cannot stay put. It’s not a guest that stays in one room, making sure not to disturb the others. It is a tenant that lives in everything and goes everywhere. It can bleed into every part, choking out anything holy. The glass shattered and broke when it moved in. Adam and Eve, God’s first image-bearers, made to love and reflect God in creation, had now become the world’s first sinners.

Everyone born after Adam inherited it. And, just like Eve, I from birth, would experience the remnants of her dealings with the serpent. Being born human meant that I had the capacity for affection and logic. Being born sinful meant that both were inherently broken.” -Jackie Hill Perry

2. The Demonic (Spiritual Warfare)

There is a spiritual battle that we are all a part of, and the enemy will do whatever he can to keep us from living in a way that is pleasing to God. There is a spiritual battle for your purity, and God is the only one who can deliver us from the attacks of the enemy and any strongholds he may have in your life.

“7 So Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” (Jn. 10:7-10)

“3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, 6 being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

“10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.” (Eph. 6:10-18a)

3. Our Mind and Thought Life

When our mind is not set on God, it is easy for our thoughts to spiral out of control and lead us to a dark place. In order to prepare our minds for action, we have to set our hope and our attention on Jesus. We have to daily take every thought captive and submit it back to the Lord and test it with the Word.

“13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:13-16).

“1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2)

- F. As we allow the Lord to cleanse our hearts so that we may see Him rightly, we will begin to see a change in the way that we live our lives. We start to live in a way that is a reflection of Jesus and His character. Our lives display the fruit of His righteousness and our sincere love for one another grows abundantly. As our hearts are purified, we not only see ourselves differently, but the way that we see those around us begins to change as well.

“22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.” (1 Peter 1:22-23)

“9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” (Phil. 1:9-11)

“12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 13 so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.” (1 Thess. 3:12-13)

- G. Since we are God’s children and we have been cleansed by His blood, we are purified and made like Him, so that we may see Him as He is and be pure and blameless before Him. To have clean hands and a pure heart means that we have a heart that is fully set on Christ alone. There is nothing besides Him that we desire or seek after.

“3 Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. 5 He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. 6 Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah.” (Psalm 24:3-6)

“2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.” (1 John 3:2-3)

III. PEACEMAKERS

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Mt. 5:9)

- A. The first thing that I noticed as I began studying this verse is that peacemaking is tied to our identity as sons and daughters of God. As we engage in the activity of peacemaking and it becomes part of who we are, we become more deeply rooted in our identity as sons and daughters.

“43 You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Mt. 5:43-48)

“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.” (Lk. 6:35)

- B. We are able to live as peacemakers because Jesus is the ultimate peacemaker, He is the Prince of Peace. We follow the example that Jesus set for us, while also relying on the Holy Spirit as our Helper. He gave us His peace, and He Himself is our peace.

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (Jn. 14:27)

“13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.” (Eph. 2:13-17)

- C. We are called to be those who cultivate peace in the midst of chaos, which means we must be imitators of Christ and be led by His peace. Peacemaking is both inward and outward. If we don't first have peace within ourselves, it is impossible for us to go out and make peace within our communities and relationships.

“The wisdom that comes from God is first utterly pure, then peace-loving, gentle, approachable, full of tolerant thoughts and kindly actions, with no breath of favoritism or hint of hypocrisy. And the wise are peace-makers who go on quietly sowing for a harvest of righteousness—in other people and in themselves.” (James 3:17-18)

“17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. (Romans 14:17-19)”

- D. We cannot be peacemakers if we are holding offense or unforgiveness towards someone. We have to allow the Lord to deal with the roots of bitterness, unforgiveness, and offense in our hearts and wash us clean, so that we can live and walk as peacemakers. When the peace of Christ rules in our hearts, we are able to love the people around us with a sincere love that binds everything together.

“12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col. 3:12-17)

“Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.” (2 Cor. 13:11)

IV. CALL TO ACTION

- A. To be pure in heart is to allow the Lord to cleanse us of all unrighteousness, so that we may see Him and enter into the fullness of His presence, that we may draw near. Purity of heart is an inward cleansing that leads to an outward change in action. As we see Him and know Him more fully, we encounter His heart for us and we are made to be more like Him.

As our hearts are cleansed from all unrighteousness and we behold the face of our Father, we not only see Him more clearly, but we see the world around us more clearly. We are able to see ourselves as sons and daughters of the Father, and we desire to live in a way that is a reflection of the identity He has given us. Therefore, we live as peacemakers, because that is the life that He has called us to in Him.

“Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14)

“23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23-24)

