

Matthew 5:8
Blessed Are The Pure In Heart

I. Intro

If you could have anything you wanted in this life what would it be?

I would like to argue today, that the greatest, most enjoyable, most satisfying answer to that question is God!

No matter how you answered that question, I believe that each one of us has this desire, but we fail to recognize that desire for what it is. We fail to see it.

I think I can prove to you that deep within you have a desire for God...

Let me ask you another question - **Have you ever been disappointed?**

Disappoint is the tell-tale sign that there is something else, there is something more. Let me tease this out...

Do you remember when you received the gift you had been longing for? And how amazing it was when you received it, and the anticipation of what it would mean? And what happened - that gift faded, and you wanted another. (I finally got the Nintendo)

Do you remember when you got the job you were longing for? The job of being a parent, or being a teacher, or being a doctor, or being a pastor? And how amazing it was when you achieved it, and the anticipation of what your life would be? And what happened - that job faded, and you wanted something different. (I finally was a pastor)

Do you remember the first time you feel in love? And how amazing that was, and the anticipation of what things could be? And what happened - that love, or your spouse, didn't love up to your hopes. (I finally was married)

In our culture we even have language to express disappointment, 'The honeymoon is over'. Have you ever said that?

Friends, does anything in this life provide the joy it promises?

All of those longings, all of our disappointments, they point to something greater, to a greater joy, to a greater satisfaction, they expose in us a desire to know God.

And this morning, I would like to give you the greatest news possible: You can know God!

Jesus declares: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Matthew 5:8

That word 'see' means experience. To be intimately connected. You can know God.

Now... I know what some of you are thinking... 'Brian, Jesus said the pure in heart, the pure in heart, they will see God. That makes seeing God for me a long shot!'

Well, I'm glad you said that... because understanding what Jesus means here could revolutionize your life this morning.

We are in the middle of a series looking at the beatitudes. Eight statements Jesus made about being a part of His kingdom. And they are not if/then statements. So it is not if you are pure in heart, then you will see God.

They are reality-based statements... the pure in heart, shall see God. OR those who see God are pure in heart.

If you want to see God this morning, if you want to know Him, we must unpack what it is to be pure in heart.

So here is what we are going to do. We are going to unpack three thoughts:

To see God... I must have a pure heart.

To see God... I must embrace that my heart is pure.

To see God... I must live in purity.

II. To see God... I must have a pure heart.

(Two glasses - one with pure water/one with dirty water)

Which one of these is a picture of your heart?

Is it like this Fiji water? The purest water on the planet?!

Or is it like this dirty water? So stained you can't see through it?

I love what's happening right now... because there is a tension in many of you.

You are like... Brian, I'm for sure the dirty water! For sure! But I know you are about to tell me I'm the clean one!

Listen, there is a truth that you must come to understand today...

When we are born, we are broken people. Our hearts are wicked and deceitful. There is a nature within us that makes it impossible to do anything with pure motives. We are selfish, evil-minded, wicked people.

And when you come to that place, when you realize that your hearts are like this (dirty water), you start to wonder if there is any way you can be clean.

Friends, do you want to be clean today?

Ezekiel 11:19-20 (NIV)

¹⁹ I will give them an undivided (pure) heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. ²⁰ Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

The work of Jesus Christ has done many profound things. And we put our faith in Him, in his perfect life and in His perfect death, one of the most radical things that happens is that there is a surgery that takes place... a heart surgery! A surgery in which God makes your heart pure.

Colossians 1:21-22

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.

Friends, when you put your faith in Christ, this (clean water) is your new heart.

Do you believe that? In order to see God, to have all your satisfactions met, you must have a pure heart.

And the work of Jesus, has done the surgery to make that happen.

But you are saying... That's hard to believe... because if you really knew what was going on in my heart today... I know, that's why...

III. To see God... I must embrace that my heart is pure.

If you don't embrace this, you will always be striving to earn God's presence.

But if you embrace what Christ has done to your heart, that He has made it pure, you will find rest in his presence.

Let me illustrate this.

Have you ever been caught doing something you weren't supposed to be doing? Maybe it's easier to say, have you ever caught someone doing something they weren't supposed to be doing? There is a reaction that people have, it's an instinct... It's so instinctual even non-humans have it.

Hang with me... so we have a 2 year old dog... Sasha is her name. We love her. She is perfect for our family. We don't feed her human food, but she desperately wants human food. One night a few months ago Dondra had made Chicken tetrazzini. It's a favorite meal in our family. We enjoyed it deeply, and then after dinner we all went our separate ways. I had to go make a phone call, so I asked the girls to put up the tetrazzini. But they didn't. So what happened... Sasha got up on the table and started devouring it. Now, when I came out from the call... I caught her, and what happened... immediately she does what... head down... no eye contact! So I poured justice out on her and then I went down stairs where the girls were and said - Sasha got into the tetrazzini! I thought you guys were going to put it up?!?!? And what happened... immediately they do what... heads down... no eye contact!

Now... if we constantly believe that our hearts are dirty, and we will never live up to God's expectations we will always be looking to the ground, and not making eye contact!

But what happens physically when you know that you are accepted?!
When you discover you are pleasing, your eyes come up to meet God and see Him.
When I don't feel pleasing everything gets turned inward and I don't see God in my chaos or my suffering.

Will you embrace this today?! Will you embrace the reality that the work of Christ has given you a pure heart and you can see God eye to eye!?

Let me offer I suggestion for how to do that...
Yesterday I was talking with Dondra, my wife, about this sermon, and she said to me... when have you seen God? And I kind of blew her off, because I was like... all the time... but I was driving later that night, and I really started to think about it, and I did this exercise that really impacted me... It helped me embrace this truth and reminded me how often I've seen God. I started to really think about times I had seen God... and I started saying...

Because Jesus gave me a pure heart I saw God in college when I was leading worship, and His presence was so real and profound I didn't want to leave.

Because Jesus gave me a pure heart I saw God one night at Mattingly's, when a friend came up and asked me to pray for his niece, and I experienced God's presence in a place I didn't expect.

Because Jesus gave me a pure heart I saw God on the night we closed the doors to Redeemer Church and He comforted me in loss.

Because Jesus gave me a pure heart I saw God at the funeral of a 10-year-old girl and He revealed His sadness.

Because Jesus gave me a pure heart I saw God on Wednesday night when Sydney ended up in the ER because she hit her head hard in a basketball game. I saw God in His sovereignty by providing me a friend in Mark Halstead to walk Dondra and I through what to do, and then having the doctor on call that night in the ER be a neurologist.

Maybe this week you could join me in this exercise. To embrace the heart Jesus has given you...

Now, I know what you're thinking? BUT what happens when I *DO* leave the tetrizzini out?

Well, this leads to the third point...

IV. To See God... I must live in purity.

There is an already not yet aspect of this. I am already pure, but not yet totally pure.

Or to say it another way, a positional verses practical aspect. I am positionally pure, but not yet practically pure.

Yes, we are pure before God. Period. He has given me a new heart. Period.

But there are still times when I revert back to the old water. When I don't live in purity.

What happens when I leave out the tetrizzini?

Now... we have to very careful here! Because if you start listening to this sermon right here... you are going to get the order wrong. And frankly many of us do. Many of us think, I must live purely, and then I will see God. I know that's true of most of us and that's why when I asked you which water yours is, you thought the dirty one.

There is a lie that has snuck into our thinking, and that is the lie of moral striving. It says that in order for me to have a pure heart, I must be morally pure. Listen, moral striving is not a Christian context! Striving to gain a pure heart so that you can see God is a lie from the pit of hell.

This beatitude of Jesus is not if you have a pure heart, then you will see God.

It's blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

It's a reality of a Christian. It's who we are.

So the more I live in the reality of my pure heart, the more I will see God. And the more I see God, the more purity will be a reality of my life!

And so what happens when I leave out tetrizzini? I realize that I must live from the new heart Christ has given me and not the old one He took out. And the way that I do that is through repentance and faith.

You see the way that I received Christ's surgery was I repented of my old heart, I acknowledged it, and I put my faith in the work of Christ to give me a new heart. And now the same way that I gained a new heart is the same way I maintain a new heart. I walk in repentance and faith!

Can I pastor some of you for a moment this morning. Some of you haven't see God in a long time... Some of you haven't heard from God in years. It's because you are hanging on to a sin or living in a sin and some of you are starting to even wonder if God is real. And there is a cloud between you and God. You can't see Him right now. Can I encourage you today? If you have put your faith in Jesus He has given you a new heart, and He wants you to live in that reality... so walk in repentance today, not because you are in trouble, but because the greatest desires of your heart can be met in seeing God!

V. Conclusion

If you could have anything you wanted in this life what would it be?

Seeing God face to face is the answer to that question... and the profound truth today, is that you can have Him. You can see His face. There's not some crazy thing you need to do or change, or some formula you need to see Him. God wants to be known, and He wants you to know Him. Let's embrace the work Jesus has done in our lives so we can rest in the presence of our creator.

For Jesus said...

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.