

## Matthew 5:8

**Todd Fletcher** [00:00:03] Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. He opened his mouth and taught them, saying; Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Thus reads the words of the Lord, you may be seated.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:00:59] So as we come to this passage, what we see is a promise. That. We shall see. God. That directly employs our vision. Our eyes. Eyes are very important. There's a little song, an old song. Young is for kids. It's. Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see. Turn to Matthew, Chapter six, verse 22. Again, Everything is connected in the Sermon on the Mount. Our mat. Our king, our master, is truly a master teacher. I'm always amazed when I study Jesus how brilliant he is. Jesus never stops to befuddle me as I wrestle with his text, as I wrestle with his word, as I wrestle with this sermon. I'm amazed at truly how impactful his words are, even the smallest words.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:01:52] It's interesting because I get time every week to just be in the word. And it's interesting, it's been said of preachers who preach on a regular basis is that we get to go to the land of the Trinity. We get to go into the courts of God on a regular basis as we study the depths of His word, and then we get to bring back the riches of His kingdom on a Sunday morning for His people. And that's truly what's happened in this passage for me, just being able to wrestle with some of these words that I'm about to share with you, seeing the depths here. But this is directly correlated with what Jesus says in Matthew 6, verse 22, "the eye is the lamp of the body. So. If your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" Notice that phrase, "the eye is the lamp of the body." It's important this morning as we talk about those who are pure in heart shall see God to take an accounting of our eyes. What is it our eyes look at? If you have a cell phone or an iPad or anything like that, you can oftentimes find something called screen time, which is a very depressing thing sometimes. Is you look at what you've been looking at, it tells you exactly how long you've been spending on certain apps or on certain things, how long you've been looking at a screen.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:03:17] And oftentimes, I think we're surprised at how much we look at screens nowadays. And maybe you don't look at screens as much as some, but maybe you look at other things, such as finances. You wake up in the morning thinking of finances, you go to sleep, thinking of finances. Or for success, or accomplishment, or for being known, being famous as far as even being admired. There's all sorts of things that we can set our eyes upon, things that we can look at. And Jesus says, be careful with your eyes what you see. Also not to speak of just the sins that our eyes may behold, the things on the Internet or the things around us that we shouldn't be looking at. As Job once said, I have made a covenant with my eyes that I may not behold a virgin. See are we making covenants with our eyes? Are we watching what our eyes are actually looking at? Because the eyes reveal what? The heart. Because our heart directs our eyes. And so as we think

about that, I just want you this morning to maybe just take a day and write out what are your eyes looking at? And then take that back to what we're going to be talking about today in Matthew chapter 5, verse 8 is, are your eyes looking for God? Are your eyes searching to and fro to see where God is working in your life. When you wake up in the morning, you're excited to look into His word, to behold the revelation of Scripture. And to go to your God in prayer, behold the throne of grace that you can enter into His courts with boldness. That you can come to church on Sunday and be with His saints. What an amazing thing to be able to be here this morning and be able to sing to our God, Sola Deo Gloria. As the body of Jesus Christ, you know how privileged we are to be able to do that? Don't ever take Sunday for granted.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:05:06] It's an amazing thing when you look at the persecuted church around the world. There are many in persecuted areas that can't even imagine the types of freedoms that we have on a Sunday morning in the church. That we can advertise Scripture on the road with our sign. That on our website you have access to teaching that stands in direct opposition to what the world is preaching today and that I'm not in prison. You know how amazing that is? Let's never take for granted the blessed word, or the blessing of God's Word. As we come to this passage, as we think about the eye being the lamp of the body, what we're going to see here is that ultimately our eyes, if you're in Christ, will behold Christ and you will be transformed into Christ image perfectly at that time. Let's turn to first John, chapter 3. This is called, by many theologians, the beatific vision. This is the hope of the believer 100%. Let's look at verses 1 through 2. So first, John, chapter 3 verses 1 and 2, John writes, "see what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him." Verse 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" underline it, "see him as he is." That's the beatific vision. When we see Jesus as He truly is, we shall be conformed exactly into His image. All sin will be removed, we will be fully glorified at that moment.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:06:52] First Thessalonians 4 refers to the rapture when we will meet Jesus in the air. And then we also see at the resurrection, which is also in first Thessalonians 4, that when whether your resurrected or raptured, the second you see Jesus, you will be exactly as He is. That's the beatific vision. So this is what Jesus is calling us to, is to set our eyes on God. So in Matthew chapter 5, looking at verse 8 specifically, we're looking at the sixth Beatitude. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." So this is the outline for today's sermon, which is number one is we're going to look at how this relates to the other beatitudes. And as we go through these Beatitudes, what I want you to see is, I want you to solidify this in your mind the structure of the Beatitudes and the correlation between the Beatitudes. Because the Beatitudes are the gateway to the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. And in fact, Jesus is just expounding on each Beatitude as He goes through the Sermon on the Mount. And in James, we're going to look at James briefly today. James is a sermon series based on what his half brother Jesus taught on the Sermon on the Mount. And so these Beatitudes are significant. This is a massive area of importance for the believer, especially even your understanding of the gospel. So that's the first point, is we're going to look at the sixth Beatitude in relation to the other Beatitudes. The second point is what does it mean to be pure in heart? Purity of heart is very important because those who are pure in heart will see God. You see the promise there? That if you have a pure heart, you will see God that's the promise.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:08:26] And that's the third point, is seeing God. What does it mean to see God? So again, today's focus is on our eyes, because the eyes are the lamp of the body that reflect the heart as Jesus teaches in Matthew 6:22. So the point here being is that the eye that is set upon God will lead to a heart that is shaped or transformed by God. That if your eyes are seeking God, your heart will be transformed by that seeking. Isn't that interesting? So as we look to the first point here, this statement that I'm about to read is somewhat surprising. It was one that I had to wrestle with, it was one that I wasn't quite sure I agreed with because I had never heard it before. But then I read it in commentary after commentary, pastor after pastor repeated this statement. You've heard me quote Martin Lloyd-Jones many times because his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount is one of the preeminent commentaries. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was an amazing preacher. He had a massive impact on John MacArthur and on others, R.C. Sproul, Piper, all these guys have been massively influenced by Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was transformed by the Sermon on the Mount, and he says this, in his commentary, this is verse eight, chapter 5, verse 8. He says, "this is the greatest utterance in Scripture." Is that hyperbolic? Now, I know us pastors, we tend to say things like my favorite verse in the Bible is, and you hear that every Sunday and it's always a different verse. I'm guilty of that. And it's because when you spend a week with a verse, it becomes your favorite verse that week, and then you're on to the next verse. Steve Lawson, in teaching a group of pastors, he says, never cheat on your verse, meaning this is your gal for this week.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:10:11] Spend time with her, love her, get to know her. And then go to the next verse, no I just kidding. All analogies break down at some point. So he goes on to say this, "to see God is the whole purpose of every religion." And when he uses the word religion, we need to recognize that the Puritans and Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who was heavily influenced by the Puritans, didn't see religion as a bad thing. Religion need to be defined. Religion essentially was to be faithful to God, to, you know, even the Bible says that pure religion is to care for the widow and the orphan. So when he says to see God is the whole purpose of every religion, the whole point of spirituality is to see God clearly. And other religions purport to show a different God and so which religion is correct? Which God is correct? Obviously, we believe that there's one God, His name is Yahweh. He's three persons, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, one essence. He's revealed in the Scriptures alone. That is, other than the natural revelation, general revelation. There's only one book that He's inspired, the 66 books of the Bible, 39 Old Testament, 27 New Testament. This is the Word of God. This is the revelation of God. That's why we submit to the first sola of the Reformation, which is Sola Scriptura. Is that Scripture alone that we're submitted to, it's the only rule of faith and obedience. And so when Martyn Lloyd-Jones says this is the greatest utterance of Scripture, that's a big statement, isn't it? What does he mean by that? Well, one we see this as an inexhaustible mine. You could not spend, you could not spend enough time in this verse to exhaust it, even if you spent the rest of your life studying this verse. You could not exhaust its inexhaustible.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:11:57] It's also the ultimate goal of everything. It's the ultimate goal of every endeavor is this verse. And again, as I wrestled with this and wrestled with the truth of that statement, it's the greatest utterance in Scripture, I actually have come to agree with him. Because as I've wrestled with this, I've never seen the depths of this passage until this week of study. And it's honestly life changing if you understand the key here that unlocks everything. So in looking at this, let's put this Beatitude in context with the other Beatitudes. Again, I want you to know these Beatitudes backwards and forwards. I want them to be locked in your mind the rest of your life. That when someone mentions the Beatitudes, you say, Oh, I know the Beatitudes. I heard a good sermon series. It was the best sermon series that's ever been preached on the Beatitudes, I'm just kidding. Might be

a little pride, selfish envy, I have to deal with that before the Lord. Anyways, looking at the first beatitude, blessed are the poor in spirit. That's funny, that's coming right after I said that. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. So this first beatitude is the first step. It's the first step that you take into the Kingdom of God, which is recognizing your bankruptcy, your spiritual bankruptcy, that you have nothing to bring to God that merits His favor. Remember you don't merit grace. Grace by definition, is unmerited favor. Mercy, which we talked about last week. Mercy is not receiving what you deserve. What do we deserve? You know, if you think you can merit God's grace, what that actually is, is a wage. But what does the Bible say about the wages that were due? All have sinned, the wages of sin is death. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

**Todd Fletcher [00:13:39]** So if you want your wage, if you want what's due, if you want what's fair, be very careful because there is no access for those into the kingdom of God. You want God's grace and you want God's mercy. So the first step is recognizing our spiritual bankruptcy. Now that correlates with the fifth Beatitude. This is really interesting, "blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." So when you recognize your spiritual bankruptcy, you recognize that you don't deserve God's forgiveness. Then you are going to be one who is quick to forgive because you recognize all that you've been forgiven, you're going to be merciful. See when you recognize your poverty, your spiritual bankruptcy inside, and you recognize you don't deserve God's favor, then you are going to be a person of forgiveness. You're going to be a merciful person because you see the mercy you've received. And that's why Jesus says, after the Lord's Prayer, when He explains that if you withhold forgiveness from others, then God will withhold forgiveness from you. Because if you recognize your poverty, then you're going to recognize how everyone else around you is in equal need of God's grace and God's mercy. The second Beatitude correlates with the Beatitude we're going through today. Verse 4, "blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." So if you mourn, you're mourning over your sin. Remember, it's not just enough to recognize that you are fallen, to recognize that you've offended a holy God, to recognize that sin and death hang over your heads, that's not enough. Satan recognizes all those things. Demons know they're fallen, demons know they've offended a holy God. What is it that demons haven't done? They haven't bowed to God's holiness.

**Todd Fletcher [00:15:22]** They haven't submitted to His righteousness and they haven't repented over their sins. So this is a key aspect of the gospel that's sadly forgotten in most presentations today. Is that a key to the gospel is repentance. It's confessing our sins. And He is faithful and just forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, right. So this is the first step, what you recognize your spiritual bankruptcy and then you repent of your spiritual bankruptcy and you mourn over your sin. And He promises that you'll be comforted, that you'll receive forgiveness. And that correlates with the Beatitude we're talking about today in verse 8, "blessed are the pure in heart." So if you mourn over your sin and you repent of your sin, then your heart is being circumcised. Your heart is actually going through the crucible and the impurities are rising to the top and the dross is being removed. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." They'll be comforted, those who mourn. And for those who are pursuing purity, those who are setting their eyes on Jesus, they will see God. That's the greatest blessing that the Bible offers to us, is that we will behold God face to face, and that when we stand in His righteous, holy presence, we will be righteous as He is righteous. That's the beatific vision. The third Beatitude correlates with the seventh Beatitude. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." While meek person recognizes their absolute deadness and death itself, the fact that they've been crucified with Christ, as Romans five says. That we've been crucified with Christ, that our old man, our old woman is buried with Christ. And so when you

recognize it's not about you, you're dead to self, all your power, all your ability, all your skill is brought under divine control, that's what meek means.

**Todd Fletcher [00:17:10]** Doesn't mean weak. Meek doesn't mean weak. Meek means that all of, that everything you are is under the divine control of God. And again, the best analogy for that is a warhorse, a war horse that is power under control. It's under complete control of its rider. Every ability, every skill set, every strength that it has is at the beck and call of the rider who rides it. And so that's how we want to be. We want to be broken in by the Holy Spirit. And if you are dead to self, if you are under complete control of the Master, then look at this, you'll be a peacemaker. Because if you recognize that you have nothing to offer except a sin that required Jesus's death on the cross. And that you are broken over your sins, you've been sorrowful, you've mourned over your sins, then you'll recognize that there's nothing in you that needs to be kept alive, everything needs to be lost for the sake of Christ. He says, for those who would seek to save their lives, they'll lose it. But those who lose their lives, for my sake, they'll keep it. Jesus is saying it's all or nothing. And when you come to the end of yourself and you submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, then you are going to be a peacemaker. You're going to be one that pursues peace, because that's what Jesus was, He is a man of peace. He's the Prince of peace, correct? And then fourth, the fourth Beatitude correlates with the eight. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." They'll be satisfied.

**Todd Fletcher [00:18:36]** You see, when you've gone through this process of brokenness and death yourself, then the only desire you have is God's righteousness. Now we all know, there's the elephant in the room, as we all struggle with the flesh. That's why Paul says he makes it his endeavor to beat the flesh into submission so that he might not be disqualified. He battles the flesh every single day. Romans 7, he cries out, "Who will set me free from this body of sin and death?" See we're in this already, but not yet phase, whereas believers, if you're if you're born again, if you're in Christ Jesus, you have a new nature. Your old nature was crucified with Christ. You have a new nature, your new creation, a new creature. And you have new desires. But we all know that there's a battle every day with the flesh, the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life. You know, when you think about Eve and Satan tempting her in Genesis chapter 3, her eyes, her stomach and her pride is what Satan uses. She gets, she focuses on things she shouldn't be focusing on. She looks at fruit that is forbidden. Then pride starts to well up in her that she could be like God. Right, it looks good for food. All these things, these battles with the flesh. And so when we hunger and thirst for righteousness, our desires change. Here is the great promise, you will be persecuted, for Christ's sake. Look at verse 11, "blessed are you and others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad." Now, it was interesting, Anduin and I were hanging out yesterday, and as we're talking, a dairy salesman came from Royal Crest Farms and it was an amazing divine appointment in so many ways because we got to talk to the guy about the gospel and he got to sell some milk and we got some free milk for our kids.

**Todd Fletcher [00:20:33]** We had eight kids, I've got four and four between us, so eight kids. So they got chocolate milk and tangerine juice, it was amazing so it was worth it. But, you know, it's interesting. When a salesperson comes to your door, they're trying to sell you something and they're going to tell you all the things that you want to hear. He said when he started drinking chocolate milk, he lost 60 pounds because this Royal Crest chocolate milk is organic and it's better than organic because it's straight from the farm. He also told us that we'll never go back to normal eggs again or bacon. And me, who doesn't do the food shopping, looked at the price and I was like, that's really reasonable. Well these are great prices. And I go into my house and I show Glory the pamphlet, and she's

like, those are, that's double the cost of everything that we buy. So I felt bad. But anyways, the point being is a salesperson tries to sell something in a way that it's going to change your life for the better. Listen to this sales pitch by Jesus, "for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, rejoice for you will be persecuted for my sake. People will hate you and they'll revile you." See, this is Jesus is so amazing, isn't He? As the Pharisee says, He doesn't care about anyone's opinion. I just, I'm always amazed at who our King is. So Martyn Lloyd-Jones says that not only do these first four parallel the second four. He also said there's another way you can look at these Beatitudes, which I think is really helpful. He says the first three Beatitudes one, two, and three, are concerned with our need. These are things internally that we need to wrestle with.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:22:08] Spiritual bankruptcy, repentance, mourning over our sin and being truly dead to self. That's the first three. But then he says, the second three, the second triplets, which he's talking about, not four, I'll get to this in a second. He's talking about five, six and seven, those are the results of an inner need that is met. These are how the first three worked themselves out into our lives, into the second three. So what about four and five? He says the fourth is the summit, "hungering and thirsting for righteousness, for you will be satisfied." That is the summit. So when you think of a mountain, think of the first three as taking you to the summit. And the summit is the fourth, and then the final three are on the descent, and then the eighth is life in the Valley. So just to put this clearly, he says this, "now the first three Beatitudes were concerned with our need, our consciousness of need, poor in spirit, mourning because of our sinfulness. Meek as the result of true understanding of our nature of self and its great egocentricity. That terrible thing that has ruined the whole of life. The three emphasized the vital importance of a deep awareness of need. Then comes the great statement of the satisfactions of those needs that God provides for, blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." See, the need is met in our hunger and thirst for righteousness. God will provide the righteousness that we desire, and it's only available in Christ. "Having realized the need we hunger and thirst. And then God comes with this wondrous answer that we shall be filled, fully satisfied. From thereon we are looking at the result of that satisfaction, the results of being filled. We become merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers. After that, there's the outcome of all of this persecuted for righteousness sake that I suggest, is the way to approach this passage. It leads up to the central statement about hungry and thirsting, and then describes the results that follow. In the first three we are going up one side of the mountain, as it were, and we reach the summit in the fourth and then we come down the other side.".

**Todd Fletcher** [00:24:05] Isn't that such an amazing way to look at these Beatitudes? Internal needs met. Changing of our desires that God will satisfy. And then we live in such a way that we live for God and for others. Jesus says the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And the second is like it to love your neighbor as yourself. You see, once you're dead to self and alive to God, it's very easy to love God and love others because you're no longer loving yourself. Right? Love others as you love yourself. You already love yourself. The problem is, is you don't love others the way you love yourself. And that's what Jesus is trying to get us to, that's what the Beatitudes, they're just meant to break us down in a good way. So coming back to the eyes, don't we need an eye exam? It's funny because I have glasses, but sometimes I can't see and I think maybe I need two pairs of glasses. I don't know if that would help. But you see, sometimes we need to go back and get an eye check, an eye exam. And I would submit that as Christians, we need to do an eye exam every day. And I'd say even twice a day. David said that in the morning he would meditate on God's Word and in the evening. As he would rise from his pillow, as his head would hit the pillow, he

would meditate on God's Word. And have you ever experienced a time where when you opened up God's Word and you started reading God's Word, all of a sudden God corrects you? Because you realize you were either misinformed or you misunderstood or you forgot. See, we're creatures that easily forgets what God has said. That's why we have to memorize, that's why we have to meditate. That's why we need to spend every day in His word.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:25:40] At men's group we were going through Romans and I taught in one day on Romans one through six. And someone asked me, how did you do that? And the answer is, I know Romans. I've spent so much time, I spent two and a half years in Romans going verse by verse through Romans. I love Romans. It's one of my favorite books. And it's funny because even as I was reteaching Romans, there were things popping up that I hadn't noticed before. Also, God does this amazing thing where He ties dots together. Have you ever had that experience? Where you're reading one passage and all of a sudden God connects it with another passage in a totally different area? See this is amazing the more you read your Bible, the more you go back and forth and back and forth, the more you meditate on it, memorize it, pray through it, God just changes lives. Your eyes are opened, you begin to see clearly. And that's the eye exam that Jesus is talking about, is where do we find the righteous commands of God? In the Scriptures. And sin is lawlessness. Sin is rejecting or being disobedient towards God's word. And Jesus lived in light of God's Word to perfection. In fact, He says all Scripture points to Him. And so He is the example of the Beatitudes. This is Jesus to perfection is these eight Beatitudes, and we're called to be like that. So I encourage you to fix your vision on Jesus, fix your vision on His word.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:27:04] So let's talk about purity in heart and seeing God. So the Jews believe they were pure didn't they? The midrash they have a whole section on ceremonial cleanliness laws. Let's turn to Mark chapter 7 verses 1 through 13. Here we see our King talking to the Pharisees about their purity laws. Mark 7, verse 1. "now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed." Gasp, huh? "(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, Why do your disciples not walk according to the traditions of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" How dare you. How dare you not follow our traditions? How dare you not do what we tell you to do to be pure. Can you imagine Jesus in this moment? "And he said to them, well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, these people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men. And he said to them, you have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!" Those are cutting words, aren't they?

**Todd Fletcher** [00:29:07] "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandments of God in order to establish your tradition!" May we never be those who reject the commandments of God for traditions sake. This is where Sola Deo Gloria, this is where Sola Scriptura, semper reformanda, which means always reforming, always being reformed by the words of God that no pope, no council, no creed stands over the authority of God's word, because those are the traditions of men. Now, many of those reflect the accurate teachings of Scripture and are very valuable. But you see, we never want to hold to tradition and

authority of men over the authority of God. He goes on to say, "for Moses said, honor your father and mother, and, whoever reviles father or mother must surely die. But you say, if a man tells his father or his mother, whatever you would have gained from me is Corban (that is, given to God), then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.' Now, what's so bad with this? So these Pharisees and scribes, they get their money from the temple, from synagogues. That's where their income comes in. And these Pharisees and scribes are tithing back to the temples and the synagogue saying, this is Corbin, this is all dedicated to God. Sorry, Mom, sorry, Dad I can't afford to care for you.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:30:43] I can't afford to step in and perform the roles that God has called me to perform, where I'm commanded to honor my father or mother, because I've got to give that money to the temple, which, by the way, ends up back in my pocket. You see how evil that is? So Jesus is looking at their loopholes, how they're giving back to themselves and rejecting the command to care for their mothers and fathers. He's looking to the heart and he's saying, by your laws, by your traditions, you are actually violating the very word of God. Do you think Jesus is happy at this moment? Jesus is fed up with this religious system that is a burden on the people. That is actually leading people to hell. That's why John the Baptist who comes forward before Jesus, when he sees the Pharisees and scribes, he sees the Sanhedrin come to him as he's baptizing, he says, You brood of vipers. You are children of Satan. They thought they were clean. They thought they were pure. But in fact, they were inside dead man's bones. They looked like a nice, clean, whitewashed tomb on the outside. But inside they were dead. When we think of purity, what do we think of? You know, we have modern day purity laws in the church today, especially if you've been raised kind of on the Baptist side of things. You know, Christians don't dance. You know, Christians don't drink, Christians don't smile, Christians don't ever laugh. What you're doing right now is very un-Christian. You see, like we come up with our own purity laws. That are not in the scriptures. Jesus turned water into wine. Is that a sin? So we need to be really careful with these things that we make up.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:32:29] Now s drunkenness a sin? Yes, the Bible says it. We need to be very careful that we're not adding burdens to people that are not based in Scripture or else will be just like them. So when it comes to the pure in heart, first I'm going to preach a mini sermon on the word blessed. Because I've said this multiple times, "blessed" is having a state, it's a state of divine favor. You're only blessed if you have God's divine favor, which is only available by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. So you cannot even begin to understand what a pure heart means unless you've been born again now. Remember you got to go back to the beginning. You got to go back to the first Beatitude if you haven't been born again. Because no unregenerate person on this entire planet has a pure heart that is acceptable to God unless God has done heart surgery on them. Remember Ezekiel says that our heart is like a stone cold heart, it must be removed and replaced with the heart of flesh. So only a true heart that has been put there by God in the act of regeneration, that has been circumcised by God in the power of the Holy Spirit is able to be pure and heart. That's why he says, if you are pure in heart, you will see God. You've been born again. So we can't look at a nonbeliever and say, well they have a pure heart. No, they don't. Jeremiah says the heart is deceitful above all things. Who can know it? Right, the heart is very deceptive. That's why we have to check our hearts on a regular basis with Scripture, because our hearts can lie to us. I can't tell you how many times I've been in counseling where someone says, I just feel like this is the right decision to make.



**Todd Fletcher** [00:34:04] And it's like, do you really trust your feelings? I don't trust my feelings. Sometimes I feel like I really want that Rivian truck that's out there that everyone's driving. And I go to my wife and I say, the Lord told me today that, no I'm just kidding. My heart is deceitful above all things right? I need to be very careful with my heart. That's why David says, to search my heart and know me God, if there's any unclean way in me, remove it. See, David recognizes his heart is deceitful. David recognizes that he needs God's work on his heart before he can see clearly. And so when we're talking about blessedness, the very first act here is that you need to be saved, if you're not saved. But if you are saved, listen to the ramifications of salvation. This word "pure" means to be single minded, have no mixing in your thoughts. In the English pure means having a homogenous or unified composition not mixed. Lexicon says this, it's free from moral guilt, your heart is free from moral guilt. The Greek understood this word as in reference to metals that had gone through the crucible. Metals that had gone through the process of purification where impurities were removed. Now, when we think about a crucible, turn to Proverbs chapter 17, verse 3. Proverbs 17, verse 3. As you're turning there, I'm going to turn red Job 23:10 real quick. Job 23:10 says this, "but he who knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Did Job go through the crucible? Yeah. Like if anyone in the Bible went through the crucible besides Jesus, it was Job. Job went through the crucible, and he says that God is removing the dross from his life and that he'll come forth as gold.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:36:02] Now you guys are all there, let me turn to Proverbs 17, verse 3. And when you get to this passage, Proverbs 17, verse 3, I think Jesus is thinking of this passage as He's teaching the Beatitudes, because this is everything that He's saying in verse 8. He says, "the crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the Lord tests hearts." So if again, if you've seen a crucible, you picture that cup that's glowing reddish yellow that has metal inside, that when you look in, looks incredibly hot. And as it cools, all that dross comes to the top and that those impurities are removed. And so when God puts our hearts through the crucible, is that comfortable? Many of us have gone through this process and we're still going through this process. In fact, all of us are going through this process, where God is always removing dross and impurities from our heart. It's amazing with Job, as he goes through this whole process, he loses everything and then God, just for good measure, blesses him with double at the end of his life. But you see that process through the crucible, the reason Job is in the Bible, in fact many believe that Job was the very first book written. The reason Job is in the Bible, and God may have had that be the first book written, is because God is testing us and He's purifying us. We need to be a pure people. So what is the heart? We need to find hearts of purity is singleness. What is the heart? Leon Morris, says this, "this is the one place in the New Testament where purity is predicted of the heart with us heart is used for physical, the physical organ, and as a way of referring to the emotions. But we must not read that way of understanding of the term back into the Scripture."

**Todd Fletcher** [00:37:56] So when we say heart, we think emotions. I love you with all my heart, my emotions love you. That's not how the Bible refers to his heart. "There it stands for the whole of our inner state thought and will as well as emotions in a psychological sense the seed of man's collective energies, the focus of personal life, the seat of rationality, as well as the emotional and volitional elements of the human life. Hence that wherein lines the moral and religious conditions of man." Simply put, and I've heard this is the best definition of the heart as far as the modern vernacular, the word I. When you say I, when you say me, that's you, isn't it? It's hard to define I. That's the heart. I love you with all my heart. In a biblical sense means I love you with everything I am. That's why Jesus says, love the Lord your God with all your heart, everything you are. And the next three

phrases characterize or demonstrate what is with the heart. Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your mind, with all your soul, and all your strength. That is the representative of who you are. So when we come to the section and he says that the pure and heart are those who shall see God, we need to recognize that God is doing work on our hearts on a regular basis, and He's trying to save us from being double minded. Now, does the Scripture speak kindly to double mindedness? And we might even call those who are double minded lukewarm, they're riding the fence.

**Todd Fletcher [00:39:30]** On Sundays they're Christians, until football starts. They're Sunday, they're Christians on Sundays, maybe Wednesdays, because we have Wednesday night. But you know, they're not the rest of the week they don't even think about God. And they go back into their lifestyles that are godless. Those are double minded people. Proverbs 23:7 says this, "for as a man thinks in his heart, so he is." You see, the heart and the mind are connected. If your mind is set on other things, that means your heart is set on other things. If your mind is distracted, if your eyes are distracted, your heart is distracted. Now God looks to the heart. Remember when Samuel goes and he anoints the next king and he's standing before the sons of Jesse, and they march all in front of him and they're amazingly fit, athletic young men who all look fit to be king. He's like, surely the king of Israel must be here among these men. Well, he wasn't, was he? He goes through each one and he looks on the outside of a man, he's very impressed by what he sees. And then God, says Samuel, I don't look at the outside, I look at the heart. And this man is not here. He's out there, he's in the fields. He's a shepherd. That's what God is looking for, His eyes are searching to and fro across the world, looking for those whose hearts are after him. Let's turn to James for a second, James chapter 1, verse 5. Again, this is the half brother of our Lord. And the reason I always mention that is because James is one of the greatest examples of a life changed. He's one of the greatest kind of proofs of the resurrection. Why is it that James believed in the Lord Jesus and he was even willing to be killed for his half brother? When throughout Jesus's life, James is shown as a leader that's opposed to Jesus, and then after the resurrection, it specifically, Paul specifically mentions that Jesus appeared to James, the brother of Jesus.

**Todd Fletcher [00:41:37]** And James, the whole book of James, many have said, is simply a sermon on the Sermon on the Mount. There are many parallel examples. There are many parallel issues and topics that James is dealing with. And when James preaches, he just gets into it. There's really no introductions like welcome Church, now, you know, it's like verse 2, "count it all joy my brother's when you meet trials of various kinds," like he didn't even kind of prepare us for that. He just begins with, "James, the servant of God, Lord Jesus, to the 12 tribes of dispersion. Count it all joy is my brother." You talk about a serious preacher, and he gets into this double mindedness. So he just ramps it up to 100 in this message. Verse 5, "If any one of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable and all his ways." What is promised to a double minded person? Nothing. Did you notice that? "Do not let him suppose he'll receive anything from the Lord." James then drills even further. Turn to James chapter 4, verse 8. This is fantastic. When I saw this in my studies, I was amazed at just God connecting dots. James chapter 4 verse 8, "draw near to God as He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands you sinners, and purify your hearts, eat double minded." Cleanse your hands, you sinners, purify your hearts, you double minded.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:43:27] See God does not take kindly to those who are mixed in their affections. Those who serve them one day and then serve the devil the other day. Now, again, I say this every time I mention these types of things, is no one does this perfectly and the battles in the flesh. We have new natures, we've been born again. Our desires are changing. We hunger and thirst for righteousness. Our hearts are being purified by God is taking us to the crucible, the battle is in the body. Paul says, who will set us free from this body of sin and death? Christ Jesus is He. So there's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, Romans 8, verse 1. So we recognize we're in a battle, but the reality is, is we cannot be double minded. That is a poisonous pill for believers is to have a mind that split, eyes that are looking both ways. They're like an unstable man tossed on the sea in the midst of a storm. So what does it mean to see God? To see is to perceive by the eye. To see takes responsibility in a commitment to focus your eyes on something. When you're using your eyes and you're looking at stuff, you're doing that by volition. You're looking at something specifically. I think about my children when I give them the eye, right. They know what the eye means. I'm looking at them and they're reading behind what I'm saying because I'm taking responsibility and I'm letting them know that something's going to happen because of the way that I'm looking at you. See, eyes communicate a lot. If you've ever taken a communication class, where is most of the communication happening? It's nonverbal.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:45:00] Someone's eyes tell a lot when they're saying something, but they're not looking at you or they're looking up and they roll their eyes. My children have never rolled their eyes at me, just kidding. I don't care what they're saying at that point, if they roll their eyes. I know what they're really saying. So eyes matter what you're looking at, how you're looking matters. He says, in Hebrews 12:14, "strive for peace with everyone, and for holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." You see, it takes a pure heart to see God. Holiness is key. R.C. Sproul once said this, this has always stuck with me. In his book Holiness, as he wrestles with the holiness of God, it was the holiness of God that captured RC. And he said, If any of us could just get a further glimpse, a greater glimpse into God's holiness, it would have a dramatic impact on our sanctification. Meaning that if we just saw God even ever so slightly more clearly, it would have a dramatic impact on the way we live. So we're going to end with First John again, turn back to First John, chapter 3. This is such an amazing key. And I believe this is why Martyn Lloyd-Jones said that this is the greatest utterance in all of Scripture, because this is truly the key to everything. We're going to read First John, chapter 3 again, verses 1 through 3 this time. So we're going to add a verse. "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared. We shall be like him because we shall," what? "See him as he is."

**Todd Fletcher** [00:46:50] Now verse 3, "and everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." See, when your hope is in the beatific vision. When your hope is seeing God absolutely as He is, not in a mirror dimly. First Corinthians 13, right now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. See, this is what God is promising us is the level of our vision of God will impact the level of our holiness. The more clearly you see God, the more holy you will become. Isn't that amazing? So the more time you spend looking at His word, the more time you spend before the throne of grace in prayer. The more time you spend among His body, the more clearly you'll see God and the more sanctified you will become because you'll have clear vision. So we can't afford single mind or double mindedness, can we? We must be pure in heart. We must be single minded. Jesus says again in Matthew 6, verse 22, "the eye is the lamp of the body." Where do you

eyes look? As you came in here today, if you were to do a screen time, check on your eyes, where have your eyes been focused over the last week? For some of us we have been doing our devotions, we have been spending time with the Lord, but we all know we can grow in those areas. And what I want us to know this, this is not a do better sermon. Because none of us can purify our hearts, can we? God says He's the One, by the Holy Spirit, who circumcise our hearts.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:48:23] But we are responsible to set our eyes on Him. We're responsible to set our eyes on the Scriptures, to be disciplined in our time with the Lord. If we spend all of our time watching TV or looking at the news, we're going to start looking like the TV and looking like the news. We see this even with tick tock, Right. Why is it that the most people that are prone to transgenderism are 12 to 14 year olds? Because they look at tick tock all day and they're influenced by the people they're looking at. So if we set our eyes on the Scriptures and we're looking at Christ, we're going to become like Christ, I want to follow Christ not ticktock, right? We want to be followers that look at Jesus every single day. What an amazing thing to commit today that we're going to focus our eyes on Christ. Let's turn to Psalm 139. And again, I know I'm a good preacher. I said we would end with First John 3, but I'm saying let's turn to Psalm 139. Well, let's turn to Psalm 139 real quick. Psalm 139 verses 23 and 24. Psalm 139 is such a precious Psalm, it's one of my favorite Psalms. Psalm 139, verse 23 and 24, "search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" That should be our prayer shouldn't it church? Search me God, know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And if there is any grievous way in me, remove it. What an important prayer. And we're going to end with a hymn. As I was studying this, I just kept thinking of the hymn "Fix Your Eyes upon Jesus." Fix your eyes upon Jesus.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:50:12] Here's the hymn, would you lose your load of sin? Fix your eyes upon Jesus. Would you know God's peace within? Fix your eyes upon Jesus. Jesus who on the cross did die. Jesus who lives and reigns on high. He alone can justify, Fix your eyes upon Jesus. Would you calmly walk the wave? Fix your eyes upon Jesus. Would you know his power to save? Fix your eyes upon Jesus. Would you have your cares grow light? Fix your eyes upon Jesus. Would you sleep in the night. Fix your eyes upon Jesus. Grieving would you comfort know, fix your eyes upon Jesus. Humble be when blessings flow. Fix your eyes upon Jesus. Would you strength and weakness have? Fix your eyes upon Jesus. See a light beyond the grave. Fix your eyes upon Jesus.

**Todd Fletcher** [00:51:18] Let's pray. Father, may we fix our eyes upon Jesus. May all these distractions and worries in this life be cast aside. May we be a single minded people that are pure in heart. For those of us who are pure in heart, we will see Jesus face to face. We will behold the triune God in Your fullness. Father, I pray that we would be serious about our eyes. For the eye is the lamp of the whole body. Lord, I pray for any of us that are not yet saved, that today would be the day of salvation, and that we would allow our old man and our old woman to be crucified on the cross with Christ, to be buried with Christ, and to be risen as new creatures, with new natures. Lord, for those of us who have been born again, I pray that we would walk consistently in what Jesus has called us to that when we call Him Lord, we would do what He says, that we would be those who are faithful to our King. Lord, we're all in and He is our King. We pray this in His name. Amen.