



**Authentic to be Accepted**  
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**The Crossing Church**  
**Las Vegas, Nevada**

## **OPENING**

This week we are continuing our study called **Different Than Last Time**. We are walking through the most counterintuitive statements of all time: **The Beatitudes**. They are not the philosophy for a good life – they are the values of this new Kingdom Jesus is bringing. They come at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' most famous teaching, and each Beatitude begins with the word “**BLESSED**” (happy or fortunate). Here we see the portrait of a Christian disciple pleasing to God and we are challenged by the words and wisdom of Jesus. This week we are studying the Beatitude describing **Purity**.

## **SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>**

**Matthew 5:8** Blessed are *the pure in heart* for they will see God.

**Psalms 24:3-4a** Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart.

**Matthew 6:1** Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in Heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then, your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

**Matthew 6:16-18** When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

**Proverbs 4:23** Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

**2 Timothy 2:22** Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

**James 5:16a** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

## **OBSERVATION**

What Jesus is saying in the Sermon on the Mount is, “I am the King and I’m bringing a different Kingdom. I want to show you the characteristics of the people who are aligned with Me.” He is talking to a culture that is

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture referenced here is NIV

obsessed with ceremonial cleanness – being clean on the outside – looking good on the outside – while the inside doesn't matter. He called the religious leaders "white-washed tombs that look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are dead men's bones." So, maybe we need to determine what purity of heart means. King David, in **Psalm 24** isn't talking about washing our hands. He is talking about the totality of being clean before God. Clean hands – we don't put our hand to anything evil; pure heart -- to be clean from the inside out. David surely knew a lot about sin. His effort to embrace confession his own heart is **Psalm 51**.

**QUESTION: Upon reading David's heartfelt confession in Psalm 51 to God for purification of his heart, what is your reaction to your own sin?**

Ken Bailey in his book, Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes, "Modern Western culture limits heart to the feeling. But the heart in the Hebrew mind included the entire interior life of the person. The feelings, the mind and the will were all a part of 'the heart.' "We tend to gravitate toward just one such as a pure mind, but Jesus is speaking of all of us – and this makes a radical reorientation of our intentions necessary. His priorities are a change in our entire lives including feelings, will minds, sincerity where there is no hidden darkness within us. In Jesus' day the context was that religion was all about appearances and keeping the letter of the law, but Jesus added another level to our understanding: "You shall not commit adultery, but I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Being pure in heart is about the complete, authentic, sincerity of our faith.

**QUESTION: When have you asked yourself, "Why does it matter what is inside my heart, as long as I don't act on it?" What did you answer?**

**QUESTION: What is "purity of heart?"**

**QUESTION: How do you cultivate a pure heart?**

## **APPLICATION**

Over the past five weeks we have journeyed the road of brokenness in spirit; mourning; meekness, righteousness and mercy. As we continue on this path, we don't want to lose sight of those verses which are so interconnected and relevant today. They come in nine types and we can listen to any one at any time that relates to any particular circumstance we are experiencing.

**QUESTION: Which of the Beatitudes we've studied so far have convicted your heart? In what ways?**

We all have made ourselves seem like someone we aren't for the purpose of impressing them, right? Maybe we've changed the TV channel just as someone comes into the room; or we have said how much we enjoyed a book we've never read. Trying to look better than we really are happens all the time – even in church – and this beatitude, Purity, has the spotlight this week – it is just one of the upside-down values in Jesus' Kingdom – MODGNIK. Jesus illustrates the motives of our hearts by talking about three spiritual practices or disciplines because, if we aren't careful, these spiritual practices can all be about being seen by others – inauthentic. If we are more interested in what other people think, then their applause and attention become our reward – we shouldn't expect anything more from our Father. It isn't just what we do – it is the heart behind what we do. **1) Jesus speaks of alms giving** or donations above and beyond our determined tithe. We can also give publicly as an encouragement to others; **2) We can pray publicly** because Jesus did that, but this can be a heart issue of wanting to be noticed while praying so that everyone will say we are "so spiritual." We should pray on all occasions so, because this is true, we need to be concerned about the motivation of our prayers, not privacy; **3) When we fast do it without public mourning.** In the sincerity of our faith and life, only the purity of our feelings, minds and wills count. Jesus tells us, "There is nothing that impacts your life and the lives of those around us more than the content of our hearts."

**QUESTION: In which of those three areas do you have an issue with your behavior? Why?**

Cultivating pure hearts needs to be a determined effort. **1) We need to guard them** for everything flows from them. **2) We need to run away from sin** and its tempter and not ponder the possibility of it in our hearts. Moral clarity leads to spiritual clarity. **3) We need to embrace confession;** **4) We need to be baptized.** This process tells the world that we have been cleansed and purified by Christ.

**QUESTION: What does it mean to embrace anything? How can we relate this definition to confession of sin?**

**QUESTION: What efforts are you making today to ensure the purity of your heart?**

**QUESTION: Where are you in your search for moral clarity? What moral decisions do you still have to make?**

Dallas Willard writes, "It's as if Jesus is saying, "Repent for the kingdom has now come near enough for you to live in it; here are the house rules."

**QUESTION: When will you be ready to submit to God's Kingdom rules?**

#### **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, we seek after purity of heart, but it seems so elusive. Send us Your Holy Spirit, Lord, to train us up to embrace purity. In Jesus' name. Amen.

#### **QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION: Upon reading David's heartfelt confession in Psalm 51 to God for purification of his heart, what is your reaction to your own sin?**

**QUESTION: When have you asked yourself, "Why does it matter what is inside my heart, as long as I don't act on it?" What did you answer?**

**QUESTION: What is "purity of heart?"**

**QUESTION: How do you cultivate a pure heart?**

**QUESTION: Which of the Beatitudes we've studied so far have convicted your heart? In what ways?**

**QUESTION: In which of those three areas do you have an issue with your behavior? Why?**

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