

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 5:8 | Pure in Heart
August 21, 2022

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 5.
- Bibles in back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

It's been several weeks since we have been in Matthew's Gospel.

We have been studying the Sermon on the Mount, specifically looking at the first ten verses. *Called the Beatitudes.*

By the way, I didn't plan to preach a complete sermon on each Beatitude.

And I don't know about you, but I think that is cool.

I'm reminded of when the apostle Paul breaks out in song in Romans 11.

Romans 11:33— *Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments
and untraceable his ways!*

Romans 11:34— *For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?*

Romans 11:35— *And who has ever given to God,
that he should be repaid?*

Romans 11:36— *For from him and through him
and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever. Amen.*

That hymn of praise that the apostle Paul just proclaimed is why our mission here at RBC is to experience God verse by verse so that we can share Jesus day by day.

The more ^{we} you learn about Jesus, the more compelled we are—the more willing we are—to share Jesus with a broken world.

And even though I wasn't planning on preaching at this pace throughout the Beatitudes, God has the prerogative to change my preaching schedule.

And I am so glad. And I pray that you receive everything the Lord is teaching you.

Well, let me get us up to speed over the past month and review the first several Beatitudes:

+ **Matthew 5:3**—*Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.*

To be poor in spirit is to recognize your spiritual poverty apart from God.

Verse three is about seeing yourself as you truly are—the reality of being lost, broken, hopeless, helpless—apart from the cross of Jesus Christ.

Apart from Jesus— every single one of us is spiritually bankrupt—

Apart from Jesus we're all headed on the broad road to hell.

How do we get off that road?

How do find the exit that leads to the narrow road so we can turn around and repent?

Jesus said in Matthew 7:14 that few find it.

But Jesus also gave us specific directions how to find the narrow road within the Beatitudes.

Matthew 5:4—*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.*

In other words, Jesus is saying, "*Happy are those who are sad.*"

The poor in spirit in verse three become those who mourn in verse four.

Because spiritual poverty leads to spiritual sadness—and that's a very good thing.

There is a type of human sadness that leads to divine happiness.

Jesus taught us that if we want to travel the narrow road—we have to mourn over our personal sin.

We must understand that our sin has offended a holy God—and that offense has eternal consequences.

Our sin has broken the relationship that mankind had with God back in Genesis 2.—and that brokenness is a one ways street.

There is no way for us to right this wrong.

Only God can make it right.

So mourning our sin does something to our being—

It changes the very spiritual composition of who we are.

One of those changes is in verse five...

Matthew 5:5—*Blessed are the humble/meek/gentle, for they will inherit the earth.*

A meek person seeks the Glory of God above everyone and everything else.

A humble person has these priorities: God first, God second, and God third.

In other words, the child of God pursues meekness and strives for humility.

Meekness is the picture of someone getting low to lift another up.

Matthew 5:6—*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

Righteousness refers to a right thinking that leads to right actions.

We, as sinners, must conform to God's standard of what is morally right.

God's standard is the Bible.

We, as sinners, are either to the left of it or the right of it.

As children of God, we are to be conformed to the center over our lifetime.

And it's in the process of God conforming us to where we learn God's definition of happiness.

Matthew 5:7—*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

Mercy helps the helpless.

Mercy is compassion in action.


Mercy is both a gift to us (God's mercy) and a requirement from us (we are to give that mercy away.)

INTRODUCTION:

That brief review brings us to verse eight today.

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

This statement is one of the greatest promises— if not the greatest—from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus says, that if we are pure in heart, we will see God Himself. 

How is that possible?

When God showed up in the OT in a theophany—*Theo* meaning God and *phainein* (Fay-nin) “to appear.”

these moments were few and far between — But,
When God ~~showed up~~ did show up in the OT, everybody thought they would die.

In fact, that's what God tells Moses,

Exodus 33:20—“You cannot see my face, for humans (AKA Sinners) cannot see me and live.”

The same thing happened with angels—most of the time, when angels spoke to humans, the humans freaked out and thought they were dead.

The idea of seeing God was terrifying.

It meant instant death, especially to the Jews.

So how can Jesus make this kind of promise?

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

Well, let's find out!

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:8 CSB

Matthew 5:1— *When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.*

Matthew 5:2— *Then he began to teach them, saying:*

Matthew 5:3— *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

Matthew 5:4— *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

Matthew 5:5— *Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.*

Matthew 5:6— *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

Matthew 5:7— *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

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

Matthew 5:9— *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*

Matthew 5:10— *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.*

***This is the Word of the Lord for River Bible Church.*

EXEGESIS:

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

“Blessed” in Greek is *makários* (ma-car-e-ohs), which literally means “happy,” “blessed,” “carefree” and “fortunate”— all at the same time.

“Happy are the pure in heart,”

As a reminder, our definition of happiness differs from God’s, so we must adjust our worldly definition to His heavenly version.

“Blessed” implies an inward satisfaction ^{in my heart} that does not depend on outward circumstances for happiness.

As Christians, we are settled and secure in the blessings of God—why?

Because the one who is in you— is greater than the one who is in the world. (1 John 4:4).

Matthew 5:8— *Blessed are the pure...*

Pure is *katharos* (cath-r-ose) in the Greek.

We get our word, catharsis.

Catharsis is to purify our minds and emotions.

Cathartic medicine is used for purifying the body.

The Latin version of pure *castus*, is where we get “chaste” and “chastity.”

When we think of chastity, many of us see a picture of a beautiful bride in a white dress who is uncontaminated and undefiled.

To chasten, however, is to cleanse from inappropriate or sinful behavior.

Simple Definition: Purity means to purge from filth.

For something to be pure means that there are no containments in it.

There's nothing mixed into it.

For example:
Purity is the reason that premium gasoline is more expensive than 87 octane.

Purity is the reason you pay more for extra virgin olive oil.

When it comes to our spiritual life, purity emphasizes that the psycho babble, pop psychology, the ever-changing values on morality, and especially sexuality—don't get mixed into our theology.

Psalm 12:6—The words of the Lord are pure words,
like silver refined in an earthen furnace,
purified seven times.

Each time that metal is purified, the heat gets turned up, and the impurities rise to the top.

Those impurities are separated from the metal.

The longer we walk with the Lord, the more separated we become from the world.

The worldly things we used to tolerate become less and less tolerable over time.

We've all seen those bumper stickers that say "tolerance" spelled out with different religious symbols.

It's quite the clever worldly marketing scheme.

But as Christians, we will not tolerate lies and truth. Why?

Proverbs 3:5 says it well.

Proverbs 3:5—Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

Psalm 119:140—Your word is completely/exceedingly pure, and your servant loves it.

So the question now becomes, pure in what?

Matthew 5:8—Blessed are the pure in heart.

Heart translates kardia (card-dee-ah).

We get cardiac from it.

The physical heart is the source of life.

No heartbeat, big problem.

Nobody signs up for a cardiac arrest.

But Jesus is not talking about our physical hearts in verse eight.

He's talking about our spiritual life.

The heart is also known as the center of our emotions, feelings, motives, and attitudes.

In other words, the heart represents the inner person.

Jesus said...

Matthew 11:29—Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart...

Matthew 22:37—"Love the Lord your God with all your heart..."

Jesus also cautions us in this same sermon—the Sermon on the Mount...

Matthew 5:28—everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Matthew 6:21—For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Jesus tells the religious leaders...

Matthew ^{12:34}6:21—~~Brood of vipers!~~ How can you speak good things when you are evil? For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.

Matthew 15:8—This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Matthew 15:18—But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a person.

Matthew 15:19—For from the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, slander.

Time out!

Question: How do we deal with the purity of our heart when Jesus, in many other places throughout all four Gospels, tells us how wicked our hearts truly are?

How can Jesus tell us to be pure in heart when it's unfeasible, impractical and impossible?

Is Jesus contradicting Himself?

Did Matthew make an error writing this Gospel?

Well, let's take a deeper look.

Let's look at more Scripture because Scripture interrupts itself.

The wickedness of the human heart is nothing new.

From the very beginning of human history, we see the depravity of man's hearts.

+ **Genesis 6:5**—When the Lord saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, (Heart)

+ **Genesis 6:6**—the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved.

God is grieved because of the conditions of our hearts.

We see wickedness in the hearts of two brothers, Jacob and Esau.

+ **Genesis 27:41**—Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. And Esau determined in his heart, "I will kill my brother Jacob."

King Solomon writes...

Ecclesiastes 9:3— ...the hearts of people are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live; ~~after that they go to the dead.~~

The prophet Jeremiah writes...

Jeremiah 17:9—The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable—who can understand it?

wow...

It's good that we don't struggle with any heart issues in the 21st century.



That was then, and this is now.

We think we got it all figured out, don't we?

We don't have these same problems! Of course, we do.

The more things change..., the more they stay the same.

So how do we reconcile what Jesus is saying in this Beatitude compared to what He says later?

How are we to be pure in heart when Jesus knows that we can't, we're not, and we will never be in this life?

It's impossible.

Even though we try. —try to be a good person.

When is the last time you went to the self help section at the library or book store?

The answer is not in education, politics, or social reform.

The answer is in the Gospel—which is the saving salvific work of Jesus Christ.

God knows that we can't fix ourselves.

The answer to our depraved sin-stained hearts lies outside of us.

That's why God had to step down off his throne in Heaven to become a man to fix us.

The most famous Bible verse in Scripture is

John 3:16— For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:17— For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

How does Jesus save the world?

John 3:3— Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:6— Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. —that's why we can't fix ourself—

So having a pure heart begins with being born again.

Being born again consists of three things:

1. Repenting from your sin—meaning that you are turning from your sin and turning to God.
2. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord. *from 10:9*
3. Believing in your heart that Jesus was raised from the dead—proving that He is God.

And it's only when a person is born again that he can and will receive a new heart that prepares him for purity.

Ezekiel 36:26—I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

This passage from Ezekiel is a promise of regeneration.

Regeneration is the divine action when God transforms the life of a sinner into a saint.

Only when the unregenerate man is born again will he have a new heart and new spirit.

Back to our Beatitude...and we see the result of purity.

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

Seeing God is the supreme blessing for God's people.

From a church history standpoint, this is called the Beatific Vision.

Theologically it's the experience of *beholding the glory and perfections* of God.

Apostle Paul
2 Corinthians 3:18—We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

Seeing God will be a continuous reality if you're born again.

In other words, we will continue always seeing God.

A more literal translation is, “They shall be continuously seeing God for themselves.”

There is no greater reward for a child of God than to see God Himself.

And when I say God, I’m talking specifically about the second person of the Trinity— Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus said...

+ *John 14:9*—The one who has seen me has seen the Father.

God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are both spirits.

Jesus has a specific role within the trinity.

Jesus is the only one who relates to us face to face because He has a physical body.

+ *Matthew 5:8*—for they will see God.

It’s only those who are the pure in heart— who will see God.

This is one of the most profound statements to ever come from the mouth of Jesus.

To know and be comforted in knowing— that we will indeed see our Lord and Savior with our own eyes.

Can you imagine that moment? How awesome it will be?

The band wrote, Mercy Me, wrote a song about it called “I can only imagine.”

The lyrics go like this:

*"I can only imagine what my eyes will see
When Your face is before me*

*Surrounded by Your glory
What will my heart feel?
Will I dance for You, Jesus
Or in awe of You be still?*

*Will I stand in Your presence
Or to my knees will I fall?
Will I sing hallelujah?
Will I be able to speak at all?*

*I can only imagine when that day comes
And I find myself standing in the sun/son
I can only imagine when all I will do
Is forever—forever worship You.*

That moment will happen very soon in our lives.

But what about now?

It's difficult being a Christian because God is invisible.

We all struggle with this because "out of sight out of mind."

But have you ever wondered why you can't see God right now?

Some people argue that we have an ontological problem—

Ontology is the study of "being" —everything that is real (feel it touch it)

So they say the issue is that we are physical, and God is a spirit.

And they say that's the reason we can't see God.

Jesus said in John 4:24, "***God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth.***"

In other words, we, as God's creatures, don't have the capacity or ability to physically see the Creator.

Nor can we see the spiritual world at all.

However, the fact that we can't see God isn't only an ontological problem.

Meaning—we not only have a deficiency in our eyes but the deficiency is primarily our hearts.

The reason that God will not allow Himself to be physically seen by us is that our hearts are impure.

We are fallen sinful human beings and God is thrice holy.

His mercy prevents us from seeing Him because that's an instant death sentence for us.

Pause...wait a second, what about the theophanies in OT? Great question!

What those men saw in the OT was not God—but an outward manifestation of God.

It was a display/demonstration of God's holiness.

It was not the very essence of God Himself—and that's what Jesus is talking about here in this Beatitude—seeing God for who He truly is,

Peter, James, and John saw a glimpse of Jesus' essence, didn't they?

They saw Jesus on the Mount of transfiguration.

Matthew 17:2— *He was transfigured in front of them, and his face shone like the sun; his clothes became as white as the light.*

But that would have been a sight to see.
 What did those men do during the Transfiguration?

They hit the ground screaming like little girls!

Now think about this—If those men trembled before theophanies, or in that case, a Christophany, we can only imagine how terrifying it would be to see God face to face.

The apostle John contemplates this thought...

1 John 3:1— *See what great love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children—and we are!*

1 John 3:2— *Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he appears, we will be like him because we will see him as he is.*

Can you hear the astonishment of the apostle John in those verses?

John can't get over the fact that we are God's children, and someday very soon, we will all see Him not only face to face but as He truly is!

In other words, we will not only see God in a theophany—some outward display of God's character.

Somehow, someday we will be able to see the reality of the complete being of God Himself—which is the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus walked the Earth, He emptied Himself of His deity. (Philip 2:7)

In other words, when a born-again believer dies, his soul goes immediately into the presence of the Lord Jesus—seeing Jesus as He is—

Fully divine and fully human—truly divine and truly human.

At that moment, the sanctifying process is done, and we move to our glorified state and will be given new eternal bodies.

When we take our last breath here on Earth, we will be apart from this body and instantly in the presence of the Lord. (2 Cor. 5:8).

This means that when we look into the eyes of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

His presence instantly removes the remaining sin in our lives, and our hearts are immediately purified for the rest of eternity.

The last book of Scripture gives us a hint of what to look forward to:

Revelation 22:4—*They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

Revelation 22:5—*Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.*

PREACH:

I want to end today's sermon by applying this Beatitude in two ways.

There is first *positional purity* and secondly *practical purity*.

Positional purity comes from when you are born again.

God has chosen you. You, in return, have responded to His grace.

He has given you a new heart.

You have also been sealed with the Holy Spirit of God as a downpayment for eternity with God.

Your sins have been transferred and imputed to Christ's cross.

And His right standing with God has also been transferred and imputed to you.

In other words, your position with God the Father is the same as with God the Son.

Jesus' holiness, righteousness, and purity are now yours.

His perfect life is now yours positionally.

So from God's position, you are pure—because of the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

If you are born again—you are God's son or daughter and no one can take that away from you.

Secondly, there is *practical purity*.

This is where it gets tough.

Practical purity is where we live out who we are in position.

Yes, you are pure positionally, and at the same time, God sanctifies you practically.

The apostle John says it well...

1 John 3:3— And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure.

In other words, yes we are positionally pure and at the same time we want to strive for more purity in our personal lives.

And to do that is to join God and walk with God on a daily basis.

Psalm 24:3—Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?
Who may stand in his holy place?

Psalm 24:4—The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,

If you are born again, God has given you a pure heart.

And at the same time, you will spend the rest of ^{your} our lives cleaning ^{your} our hands of the impurities of this world.

Purity is not a popular topic today.

So let me share some ways for you to protect yourself and your purity.

Enemy #1: Synchronism

It is one of the biggest problems with Christianity today.

Synchronism is mixing in the impurities of the world, false religions, and our own false beliefs into the grace of God.

In our ^{CULTURE} world, it has never been easier to be a synchronistic Christian because of the technology available to us.

Everybody has a microphone and an opinion.

So be very careful who you are listening to.

It only takes a little leaven to leaven the whole batch.

Enemy #2: Entertainment

The more you are entertained by the world, the more you will look like the world.

Why? Because the world is feeding you.

You've heard the expression "*you are what you eat.*"

That's great advice from a nutritionist.

But it applies spiritually as well.

"You are what you think."

And dear friends, it's impossible to have a pure heart if you spend your time watching tv shows, listening to talk radio, watching movies, and on social media.

All these mediums are selling you a false narrative.

they are lying to you

Do you struggle with lust? Stop watching rated R movies or anything highly sexual.

Do you struggle with gossip? Stop watching soap operas or reality TV shows.

Do you struggle w/ coveting? Stop watching commercials.

Are you angry with the political situation in our country? Stop watching the news!

Are you fearful? Stop watching the news!

Here's the key to purifying your heart.

This key is super spiritual - profane!

Turn it off. The apostle Paul says this:



Galatians 5:16— Walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh.

How do we walk by the Spirit? By turning the world off.

Self control is a fruit of the Spirit. - GAL 5:23

The apostle James ^{is a little more direct} gets in our face and tells it like it is: ^{this is important}

James 4:4—You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God.

So let me give you two suggestions on how to pursue purity for your heart.

Ready? These are super spiritual:

1. Read your Bible. Stay in God's Word. *Read God's word consistently, preferably daily.*
2. Commit to God's Church.

Only two things are eternal—God's Word and God's people.

If you want a pure heart, know that you can't do it alone.

Dear friends, you were saved to serve.

And one of the synchronistic lies of this age is that you can serve apart from the Church. ^{not true.}

Lastly,

KEYPOINT:
There is no such thing as perfect practical purity.

Don't try so hard. God has chosen to love you. Enjoy the journey home.

PRAYER

BAPTISM:

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Tommy Nelson, Denton Bible Church. Matthew 5:1-12

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