

“Kingdom Come”

Sermon on the Mount Series: Sixth Lesson

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

Introduction

- Showing mercy (previous beatitude) needs a pure heart because it must be done altruistically.
- Although the merciful will be shown mercy, the reward is not something that a merciful person thinks about because they have a pure heart.
- The heart is at the core of who we are. “..the heart means the centre of the personality.” It is the mind, the will, the heart.
- The Bible calls us to purity because God is pure (**1 John 3:3**) & holy (**Hebrews 12:14**).
- Nothing impure will enter heaven (**Rev 21:27, 22:14**).
- This beatitude connects directly to the first great commandment to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.

1. What it means to be pure in heart

Defining the idea

- It is not
 - i. Dependant on circumstances
 - The heart is the source of our struggles with sin (**Jer 17:9, Mk 7:17-23**). It is not our environment.
 - This is why dealing with the heart is so important.
 - We may be able to change our circumstances, but the heart will not change because of that.
 - The Fall happened in paradise.
 - ii. A human endeavour
 - Only God can give us a pure heart (**Phil 2:13**).
 - iii. Perfect moral behaviour - the Pharisees strove for this, but missed the mark entirely by misunderstanding what purity of heart was all about, (**Lk 11:39, Matt 23:25-28**).
- It is
 - i. Sincerity: a mark of purity is total sincerity.
 - The JB Phillips translation has this as, “Happy are the utterly sincere, for they will see God!”
 - Public life and private life match up. No hypocrisy.
 - ii. Relational:
 - Rather than a moral purity perhaps it refers more to a relational purity.
 - The sort of thing we see in marriage and in covenants.
 - Old Testament covenants focussed on Israel having only one God.
 - Marriage is a relationship characterised by a commitment to one another exclusive of all other people. I have one wife and I have one God. I have a ‘purity’ of heart in this.
 - There must be no ‘mixing’ of my commitment to these relationships or else the relationships themselves will be compromised.

- iii. Heart-focussed:
 - ‘Pure’ silver is that which is not mixed with alloys. ‘Purity of heart’ means that I will not allow myself to be distracted and polluted by the world (**James 1:27**).
 - A person who is divided in his loyalties is not pure of heart (**Rom 7:22-23**).
- iv. Aimed at Christlikeness: Why bother with keeping a pure heart?
 - Because we will be like our Lord, who is pure of heart, in the next life (**1 John 3:2-3**).
 - A Christian strives to be as much like his or her Lord because he is our model and hope.
 - One who does this is displaying that, “His present efforts are consistent with his future hope.”

2. What it means to see God

Defining seeing God

- It is not literal
- It is
 - Seeing more clearly who God is
 - A bit like a child growing up and people saying he looks more and more like his father and mother, and also the child themselves comes to understand their parents better.
 - Others see more of God in us, but we also see more of God.
 - Some now
 - Some later
 - Some of this is fulfilled in eternity with God. For then we shall see him as he truly is. We shall see face to face (**1 Cor 13:12**).

3. How these truths affect the way we live

The healthy ‘purity’ to be cultivated

This means practically....

- a. Ask for a pure heart - David wanted a pure heart – **Ps 51:10**.
- b. Act to rid self of impurity: **James 4:8, Col 3:5ff, Rom 8:13**.
- c. Study scripture and ask God for wisdom to enable purity - a spiritually narrow focus in life (**Psalm 86:11**).
- d. Pray for an awareness of the way in which your circumstances trigger your temptations.
- e. But also pray that you would find the strength available from God to help you remain pure no matter what the circumstances may be.
- f. Pray for a tenderness towards purity. Ask God to reveal more of himself to you and in you.

In relation to these being the norms of the kingdom, this is a tough teaching but a logical one. We have one king – we must be loyal to him.

QUESTION: “What would your life look like with an on-going and growing purity of heart?”