

THE MAN WHO CAN SEE GOD.

A Soviet Cosmonaut ^{Matt. 5:8} several years ago boasted of how high he had soared without getting a glimpse of God - did NOT see God - He WAS IN THE HEAVENS -

Introduction:

This is one of the most profound utterances to be found anywhere in the Bible. Anyone who realizes anything at all about the meaning of the words, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," immediately recognizes his complete inadequacy.

Now the man who shall see God is here described in this text.

Remember this is the Sermon on the Mount and these Beatitudes are not select and random statements.

In fact, this statement tonight would regard as a summum by many people, bonum. As the ultimate goal of every endeavor. To see God is the whole purpose of our religion - from the beginning to the end, in the middle, and all the way through. It is concern with our great need, of seeing God.

We might begin by talking about the impurity of the heart. Because here is the seat of emotion, fear, love, courage, anger, joy, sorrow, hatred. The whole center of the moral and the Spiritual intellect of man is here in a man's heart and resides in this place. And this is the thing that makes the religion of Jesus Christ different from all other religions. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is concern about the heart. All its sympathies and emphasis is on the heart. And all the way through the life of Jesus talked about the heart.

I. First, let us explore the meaning of a pure heart.

Now Jesus was more concerned about the man's heart. Whereas men of that day were entirely taken up by the external things that concerned the law. They had very little love to God and neighbor. And Jesus says, congratulations, to the man who has a pure heart.

They used to say that a pure heart was a true sign of manhood and of good behavior.

Men have argued that this Beatitude is an (impossible one.) For they say, deep in the heart of man is concealed his sin. Man was conceived in sin, shaped in iniquity, and his whole life is filled with evil impulses.

Now when Jesus talked about the pure heart, he is not speaking about a man becoming sinless or a man reaching what we think of as perfection. I don't think Jesus was speaking of a man living in a straight jacket - that type of life. You will remember that he renounced the Pharisees, for their false concept of the pure heart. Woe, unto you Scribes and Pharisees, he said. Because they were like tombs. They were full of dead men's bones. The problem of the Pharisees was they were making a great deal about cleaning up the outside of the cup. They were giving attention to these things rather than to the inside.

The superficial religion was powerless to cleanse the heart.

And therefore, God looks a little deeper, he goes beyond the outside. And he says the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it.

You remember Jesus said, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts - adulterous, murder, thief, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. Mark 7:21-22.

He taught that man was far from God. His heart was darkened, unbelieving, blind, proud, rebellious.

Quite often we hear some person, some woman say about her son who has committed some tremendous crime - that he is a good boy. Now we fail to take and to realize that the root of the problem is the unregenerated heart. When we discover today that the peace treaties of this world that have been signed in the past few years and the past few weeks, they have not been kept. They have been broken time and time again. The reason, the impure heart.

Read The meaning of the pure heart is described in (Psalms 24:4)

Pure occurs 28 times in the New Testament. Now 10 times it is translated as clean. That is, it is used in terms of linen - white clean linen. Something that sparkles and is clean.

And it means a rightness of a man's mind - a singleness of motive. That is, you are right with God.

So in seeking the meaning of the pure heart, we hear people say it is inaccessible for man. And that the requirement is impossible. And that it is like saying to someone who does not have any legs, to get up and walk. Just an impossibility they say.

Do not forget that the real seat of all of our trouble is here in the heart. It is out of the heart that these things arise. And we must be aware that education will not make a good man. A man may be highly educated and yet may be utterly wicked. The problem is the center. It is not in the intellect. That development cannot put the heart right. The trouble is deep in the human heart.

AND in the light of that, we need to see that no man can make himself a Christian. You can only see God when you are pure in heart.

So the problem you have in defining this is, that you are further removed from God the more you sin.

II. How can the heart be made pure.

Now what the Gospel proposes to do is bring us out of a terrible pit. It is a super-natural job.

The key which unlocks all of this for us that makes it necessary or possible for us to get this link comes because of the blessings of God. Something has taken place and it has to happen before the heart can be made pure.

You remember that question can the Ethopian change his skin or the leopard his spots. No, you say. But God can change them. You have to vision this to discover God working in man. It is the old old story. That man's hope is not in his effort or his reformation or self-improvement.

Man's hope must begin with his consciousness of sin. And second, opening his heart to the reception of God's grace.

You do not take a basin and say that you will wash yourself of a few evil things and thus be pure. Purity in your heart is only possible as Jesus said to the leper, I will be thou clean and the miracle took place.

Even transforming you out of your environment as many have believed, will help clean up a man's heart. It is very much like an animal trainer taking a wild animal. Now to a certain degree, you can train this animal but the nature

is still there. There are individuals who can say, if I could somehow change my mental attitude, if I can just begin to think right - I'll be alright. If I can just think positive, everything is going to be very good. And what you are really saying is, that, you can do that thing and help yourself, and get the blessing that I want.

Now the miracle that Jesus is talking about here is something that is wrought by God. And it is described in one word in the Bible - rebirth. It is a miracle which takes place. And that which is born of the flesh is flesh. And that which is born of the spirit is spirit. You must be born by the will of God. When a person properly confesses and announces his sin by faith, that's more than an emotional experience.

You are united with him.

It farther means, that you have been cleansed and remember this, without defilement, you will not see that heavenly Jerusalem. Rev. 21:27. John says that there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles or worketh abomination.

Rev. 22:14 - Blessed are they that do this commandment. That they may have right to the tree of life and may enter the gates of that city. This is perfectly clean that the one to be made pure in heart and spotless inside, he must first come to that great commandment.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Do you have this new heart. Is it impossible for you to live the pure life. You cannot live without a pure heart. It is to put the cart before the horse. Are you wondering about all of the moral failures that have taken place in your life.

Pure hearts will be Christ-like. There will be no place for pride. It will be a humble heart, a loving heart.

Perhaps you sigh and say, well, that's a big order. It is! Paul said he couldn't do it in his own strength. But he says I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Christ provides the possibility, of this pure heart for you.

Here is the deepest longing for your soul. You have a desire to see God. You are very much like Phillip in the New Testament. Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough. He was voicing and saying what ever man has desired.

I am speaking to you tonight about your most supreme need. I know there is a people who have different burdens this hour. There are some perhaps who have come from the graveside of some loved one, some who have been separated by cause of death, some of you who have been slaves of sin and habit, that you do not seem to be able to break away from. And some of you tonight are giving and spending your life on the things that are second best. You are not getting out of life what you ought. What is the biggest need of every person who is listening tonight. The greatest need we have is a satisfying vision of God. Every man needs to see God. He needs holiness in his heart. He needs to be pure. And this is not just a matter of decency or some intellectual interest that I am talking to you about.

What is it to have a vision of God? What is meant by saying we shall see God. Is this a question of the naked eye of which he is speaking. Is this a question which we cannot find some reasonable answer too. Just why is it that you do not have a vision of God today and why is it that some of you will never have this vision of God.

How can our hearts become pure. Now there are some people who would tell us tonight there is only one thing to do. We must become monks and segregate ourselves from the world. This is a full-time job and if I am going to become pure in heart, I will not have time for anything else. I must go into seclusion and live alone this type of life.

Now let me warn you that I believe that this is unscriptural. This is not found in the New Testament.

I say this because the Bible says that all such efforts of self-cleansing are doom to failure. The way the Bible says it is, not all that you and I can do, because we do not really take note of the blackness of our hearts. They are by nature sinful. The Bible says the only way for a man to get a pure heart is for God to give it to him.

Listen to David's prayer "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

Now you can start trying to cleanse your heart and you can go into isolation, you can go to a desert, and spend your time in a holy shrine and stay there perhaps for years. Now your heart will still be black and perhaps will be blacker than at the beginning. It is God alone who can do it. Thank God, he promises to do it. The only way you can have a clean heart is for the

Holy Spirit to cleanse it by his indwelling work. And say I am in His hand and God is dealing with me and he will cleanse every spot and every wrinkle.

James says draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. And how do you do this. James tells you how. Cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your hearts you double-minded. That heart must be cleansed absolutely. You may walk in the gutters of life, but all you can do will not be enough. You must put to death the deeds of this body if you are going to see God. Do you not agree that this is one of the greatest ambitions of your heart to see God. You and I have not a whole lot of time left in preparation.

✓ III. Several things will be in evidence in the pure-hearted man.

Now this is a great possibility for every man and every person listening to me tonight. Those who have been debased, those who have been unclean, those who have defiled themselves through the tides of evil, those who have followed the powers of darkness.

Peter says as he worked with the Gentiles that God knoweth the heart. And faith cleanses the heart and brings the soul to the cross. And helps you to behold the dying Saviour and faith applies the precious blood of Christ that cleanses from all sin.

It is just as simple as this. (Germs and bacteria) cannot live in sun light. And the same is true of the impurities in your heart. When your life is filled with the presence of Christ, all of these impurities are going to leave. And certain things are going to be in evidence. There are several things that are going to happen.

✓ First, your body. When a man's heart is clean then something is going to take place with his physical body. His body will be an object that he will want to have clean. What I am saying is this, the Christian, the Kingdom man, will use plenty of (soap and water.) Now this may sound simple but I believe that this is a definite part of a person who has a pure heart.

That is why with the Hippie movement, dirty hair, the dirt and the grime cannot be associated with the life of our Lord because men cleaned up, they changed their garments. And I believe this will be in evidence when a man has experience a pure heart.

The ancient Jew made this a part of his business to be physically clean on religious grounds. In the Old Testament there were laws of purification. These were principles of physical cleanliness of the body. These things are still in force.

Even men in poverty can get some water and can wash. There is absolutely no excuse for Christians being unclean, unkept, and filthy in their dress. This is a disgrace to the Kingdom of God and is an indication that there is something wrong in a man's heart.

✓ Second, a man's mind is going to be pure. I think everything is going to be cleaned up. Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, think on these things. Phil. 4:8.

What I am saying is, that immorality is going out. The crimes we read about today in the newspapers and about certain human behavior which has degenerated to low morals are terrible.

Now God is not old-fashioned. People today are permitted immorality.
The Ten Commandments are still in force.

The Bible says that he that liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth.

In describing what happens to unpure hearts, Gen. 6:5 says, that the wicked men on the earth that day, their imaginations, the thoughts of their hearts, were evil continually.

Solomon said as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

These things that come to his mind will soon become acts in his life.
He will act upon them.

Now you let your mind dream of sin and imagine sin, and soon you will indulge in it. All transgressions begin with sinful thinking. Sometimes ludicrous pictures Satan puts on the screen of imagination. You get these from questionable books, certain kinds of entertainment - so soon he takes over.

A good man is going to have a clean mind.

His eye - I think his eye will be pure. The Bible says that the lust in the eye causes a lot of immorality. Just to look - the fleshly way in which people look.

You turn your eyes away from Jesus and you are going to have problems.

The tongue. I think here is another thing that will be very clean when

you have a pure heart. When it is impure - it is out of control. It says all sorts of things. My the awful words that some people use. The terrible language. You need to think about your mouth and you need to keep your talk pure as Christians. This too is an indication of a pure heart.

✓ Fourth, your dress. I think that this is in evidence and one of the tests that tells us whether or not you have a pure heart. Some people, I think, commit sin and immorality by the way they dress.

Now I could give you a lecture on the mini at this point. And there are many mini's - but as somebody has said - the mini is for the mini-minded. But there are those girls who would dress purposely to entice men to sin. Now if you dress this way, you are just as guilty as if you had committed the act.

I do not have time to go through the Bible and point out to you what we could emphasize on this point. But I believe this, that if the men and women would dress as though Jesus were going to be your escort - you would dress in modest, good-taste, good-fashion. And this Hollywood look would go out fast. I think it is a damnation to the country and to a lot of people today.

Sixth, the literature you read. I think here is an evidence of whether or not you have a pure heart. The kind of books you read. The kind of magazines you spend your time on. Now if you pick up all this trash off the newstands, these indecent things, and some people can read these things without even blushing. Thousands of people, millions of them, buying unclean literature and feeding their minds upon this lust. This is a sin against God. And the Bible teaches that sin leads to Hell.

Seventh, your conduct. It is going to be evident that when you have a pure heart, life is going to be different. In other words you are going to be careful about the kind of people you associate with. The Bible warns against these people, who corrupt good habits and we should separate from those things that are unclean. And this is going to control your conduct and your life. The woman who had broken all the commandments, Jesus forgave her, and met the need of her life. And that sinful woman went to sin no more. He did not condone her in her sin but he was willing to forgive her. And her whole conduct was changed. And I think you will be not uneasily yoked with unbelievers and that you will not be associated in social, or otherwise with unChristian principles and practices that govern these institutions.

The pure in heart will come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean things. 2 Cor. 6:17.

The Bible speaks to us about our conduct. And it will go in every direction. Our honesty, our integrity, and all that we deal with. We will not cheat people. We will not try to steal from individuals, but we'll try to be upright. The pure heart is going to be in evidence here.

✓ IV. The pure heart guarantees several things.

Now let me wind up and tie together all that we have been saying - into this guarantee which is going to come. Several things are going to take place. When you have a pure heart. Now remember this - there were multitudes that looked upon Jesus in His day and saw nothing of him that was good. He was just a root out of the dry ground. And yet there were others who saw him through different eyes. That he was the Son of God. He was the Christ.

Now if to see God is to realize him, and be sure of him. Now this is an experience that we have talked about will take place. And it is something that is a promise, not that we are talking about something that is going to happen tomorrow, Or happen a million years from now. Notice our text, congratulations on the pure of heart. For they shall see God. It is true, when we wait in his likeness on the other side, we are going to see God.

But the pure in heart do not have to wait until they get to Heaven. They see God in the here and the now. They have such wonderful fellowship with Him in this life.

The thing about it is, if you do not get acquainted with him in this present day, then you have no guarantee of seeing God in the future, Heaven beyond.

These blessings that are guaranteed here are going to come.

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First, when you see yourself. Now Job was a man who was afflicted in his body and had all the other problems of his friends coming to him telling him that his illness was because of his sin. Job denied all of this, but at last a great vision of God came to him. Here is what he said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eyes seeth thee, wherefore, I ~~showed~~ myself and repent in sackcloth and ashes".

Here is a guarantee. You must first see yourself.

Isaiah put it in another way in his day. When cleansing came to him, he had a personal experience. Isaiah could tell you the day it happened to him. "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord". Now, the outcome of that

vision brought about a pure heart. He said his lips were unclean - he as a man was unclean. He was in the midst of his people who were unclean.

You remember on the cross, one of the thieves said, dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation. The guarantee is you are going to be transformed when you see yourself. That always follows the conviction of sin. Wherever there is no sense of sin in a man, there is no vision of God.

It brought cleansing to Isaiah, he confessed his sin and became clean. And the thief on the cross had the wonderful words, today, thou shall be with me - how wonderful the transforming power of God is. And God can transform every man. Think how God transformed Jacob, he knew all the tricks of the trade - he tricked his brother, he tricked Laban, somebody said had Jacob been in the dry goods business - instead of handling live stock. He was confident that he would have had no less than a half a dozen successful fires.

But Jacob finally came to the place where he said, I've seen God, face to face.

What a guarantee! When this grips a man, something is going to happen to him. He is going to say - here am I. A man gets a pure heart, he is going to want to serve God. We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

The pure hearted man is one who wants to give. He tries to take care of human need. And he tries to expand the kingdom of God.

What I am saying is, here is a guarantee. First, that the pure heart will be controlled. The controlling factor in your life. Here is a guarantee

that your imagination will be under control. They will be buried. The evil fancy will not gain control in this unholy world. But these things will be under control.

It is just like a little plant - you plant it and the runners shoot out in all directions. And then as time goes along, you train these runners in the direction that you want them to go. You move them out of the wrong direction. And that is exactly what happens when you have a pure heart, it is going to control. It is going to control your imagination.

→ Second, it will give you a guarantee of good intentions. Whatever it cost, you will live within the limits. A man will ask if there is a God, I want to see him. Show him to me. The man of faith pointed to the mid-day sun - there is the sun. Look at it. He said, I cannot, it will blind me. And the Christian declared it would blind you also if you were to see God. Remember Moses just got a fleeting glimpse. Isaiah saw him on the throne. Saul was blinded by the light from Heaven.

X Dan Necker spent 8 years carving a marble statue of Christ. He called a little child and asked her - who is that. She looked, and said, it is the man who said suffer the little ones to come unto me. The man had built his whole life so very close to Christ. He had a vision of Christ and he transferred that to a block of marble. And that is the thing that happens when a man gets a pure heart. The impure things go out.

It is like James Reed said, an impure man is like a stained glass window - seen from the outside, but the pure man sees it from the inside.

The pure heart is to will one thing - to do one thing. Not a set of

rules - but the willingness to hand over your life, hand over yourself to Jesus Christ. This is what Job discovered. And this is the thing that you will discover.

The Methodist missionary, Stanley Jones, told of a man walking 800 miles to ask Gandhi two questions. How can I get rid of sin? How can I find God. Later the man came and ask Jones the same questions.

Before I answer you - would you mind telling me what the leader told you. He said, yes, I'll tell you. "He told me to sit down in one place and not roam about as the Sadhus, but stay in one place until I had conquered my sense and my passions and worn them out - then I might find release."

Was there no offer of immediate release. No, said the man. He said it would take a long, long time. He turned to the missionary and said, now what do you say.

The missionary said, my yearning was exactly like yours. I needed to know how to get rid of sin, I needed to know God but I did not need to stay in one place, until I had worn out my passions. I simply turned over my bankrupt soul to Jesus Christ. And I gave my all to Him and he gave me his all. It did not take ages. It took surrender. It did not take time - it took me.

That's the starting place if a man is going to travel and see God.

Col. 3:1 "you have been raised to life with Christ
set your hearts, then, on the things that are in heaven,
where Christ sits on his throne at the right hand of God -