

HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT TO SEE GOD?
MATTHEW 5:8

INTRO.:

1. **ILLUST.:** Two young adults were involved in a fender bender and at first they were very angry with one another and accused the other person of being at fault.
 - a. Finally, calmer heads prevailed and they decided to call the police and let the officials settle the matter.
 - b. As they waited for the police to arrive they got involved in a conversation and discovered that both of them were single, and that they had a lot in common, and the chemistry began to flow between the two.
 - c. Finally the young woman said, "You know, maybe it was God's will that we had this accident and we got to meet one another."
 - d. And the young man, who was really attracted to the young woman said, "I think you are absolutely right!"
 - e. And then the young woman said, "It is silly for us to stand out here in the cold. Let's get inside my car and sit where it will be a little warmer." And the young man agreed.
 - f. As they sat talking in the car the young woman said, "You know, I just happened to be at the store and I bought a bottle of wine and I have some paper cups. How about if we have a toast to this chance meeting."
 - (1) The young man thought that was a great idea.
 - (2) They made their toast; he gulped down his wine and then noticed she had not drunk her toast.
 - (3) So he asked her, "Aren't you going to drink yours?"
 - (4) She said, "NO, I think I'll just wait for the police to arrive to assess the damages."
2. We can quickly see what motivated the young girl's actions, but what about you?
 - a. What motivates you and your actions?
 - b. Are you kind to people in order to help them or to manipulate them?
 - c. In fact, why are you here this morning? Is it because you genuinely love God or is it because of what you were programmed to do early in your childhood?
 - d. And why do you seek to live a good, moral life? Is it because you want to please God, or is it because of some personal advantage you seek?
3. The point is that it is not enough just to do the right thing; we must do the right thing for the right motive.
 - a. It is not what is on the outside that matters the most, but what is on the inside.
 - b. God is more concerned about the type of heart we have than He is with what type of clothes we wear..
4. This is why Jesus said what He did in Matt. 5:8: "*Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God?*"
5. In this beatitude Jesus deals with what should be the desire of every religious person – to see God.
 - a. But at the same time He also makes it clear that only those who are "*pure in heart*" will realize this goal.
 - b. Only those who have the right type of heart will ever see God.
6. In this beatitude Christ is challenging us by asking:
 - a. How much do you really want to see God?
 - b. Is your desire so great that you are willing to open your inner most thoughts, hidden desires, and secret aspirations for His inspection?
 - c. Are you willing to so live that at any moment you could lay your heart open before God without shame?
 - d. And are you willing to pay the price to enter into His eternal home?
7. In this Beatitude Christ deals with the real problem we all face, which is merely having an external religion.
 - a. A person may go to church, smile, and do a few good deeds for others; and then feel they are O.K. in God's sight.
 - (1) But if we praise God with our lips on Sunday morning and our hearts are far from Him on Monday, the Bible says that we are hypocrites and our praising Him is in vain.
 - (2) Or if we pray piously in our Bible Study Group, but then we find ourselves cursing continually on the golf course, our prayers are in vain.

- b. The point is that God is not concerned with the outward appearance or actions; rather He is concerned with what is on the inside.
 - c. 1 Sam. 16:7: *"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*
8. NOTICE:
- a. We may see a person going to church ever week; but God sees why they are going (attitude, reason, where their heart is).
--This is what concerns Him.
 - b. We may see a man carrying a Bible around with him and expounding on it and eloquently giving his convictions on a certain doctrine or teaching; but God sees beyond this to why this person does it.
--Is it from a pure heart, or is there some other motive?
 - c. Again, as you sit here this AM you may have devoted a great deal of time to your outward appearance; but when God looks down on you from heaven all He sees is your heart.
 - (1) God does not see how much time you spent fixing your hair, etc.
 - (2) Rather He looks to see how much time you spent fixing your heart.
 - (3) He is looking to see how clean your shoes are; He is looking to see how clean your heart is.
9. Thus, this beatitude causes us to ask, "How pure is my heart?"
--Since only the pure in heart will see God – How pure is your heart?
10. And since our salvation depends on how pure or impure our heart is, this beatitude demands our careful and serious study.

LESSON:

- I. What did Jesus mean when he said, "*Pure in heart*?"
- A. To begin to answer this question, we must first see how the Bible defines the term "*heart*."
- 1. When we use the word "*heart*" we generally think of that organ in our body which pumps our blood.
 - a. This is regarded as the single most important organ of our body, for when it stops the body dies.
 - b. But this is not the normal definition of "*heart*" as it is used in the scriptures.
 - 2. When the word "*heart*" is used in the Bible it refers to the spiritual, rather than the physical side of man.
 - 3. It is used to refer to our total personality or character; all that makes us a distinct individual.
 - 4. In the Bible our heart involves our:
 - a. Intellect:
 - (1) It thinks: Prov. 23:7: *"For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you."*
 - (2) It understands: Matt. 13:15: *"For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes Lest they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I should heal them."*
 - (3) It believes: Rom. 10:10: *"For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."*
 - b. Emotions:
 - (1) It desires: Rom. 10:1: *"Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation."*
 - (2) It loves: Matt. 22:37: *"And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."*
 - (3) It trusts: Prov. 3:5: *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding."*

- c. Will:
- (1) It purposes: 2 Cor. 9:7: “*Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.*”
 - (2) It determines: 1 Cor. 7:37: “*But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, he will do well.*”
 - (3) It obeys: Rom. 6:17: “*But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.*”
5. In Matt. 15:19 Christ summed these verses up when He said: “*For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.*”
- a. Simply, the heart is the master control center of our lives.
 - b. Any trait, whether good or bad, first originates in our heart.
 - (1) A bad word does not just “slip out.”
 - (2) It comes from a heart that is either pure or impure.
6. Thus, when Christ was talking about our heart in Matt. 5:8, He was talking about our inner being.
7. If our heart is pure then our inner being will be pure also; but if our heart is defiled then we will be impure in God’s sight.
- B. Seeing what the “*heart*” is, our next question is, “Why is it so important that we have a pure heart? Why does the Bible put such an emphasis on our having a pure heart?”
1. 1st: As Christ points out in this beatitude God is more concerned about the condition of our hearts than anything else.
 - a. God knows that what is on the inside, will determine what we do on the outside.
 - b. He knows that where our heart is, will be the direction our life will go.
 - c. He knows that what we think determines how we live (Prov. 4:23).
 - d. Thus, He is concerned that our hearts are in the right place.
 2. 2nd: As the Bible teaches, the heart is always at the root of man’s problems.
 - a. In our society there are many who say that a man’s problems are caused by the environment he is in, and that if we can change his environment we can change the man.
 - (1) While there is some truth to this, we find that the real problem is not our environment; but rather our heart.
 - (2) NOTE: When God created Adam & Eve He placed them in a perfect environment, but they still sinned.
 - (a) Why?
 - (b) They had a heart problem!
 - b. The root of all problems is the heart:
 - (1) Jere. 17:9: “*The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?*”
 - (2) In Matt. 15:15-20 Christ tells us what Jeremiah meant: (Read).
 - c. NOTICE: So often when we sin we are tempted to blame it on our situation.
 - (1) I was tired.
 - (2) If it had not been for so-&-so, and what they did to me, I would never have done it.
 - (3) I was under such pressure (peer, etc.).
 - d. Simply, what we are saying is that, “The problem is out there. It is with them. It is not with me.”
 - e. To this Christ says, “The real problem is not with them, the real problem is me. It comes from my own evil heart.”
 - f. God’s word will not allow us to blame our sins on:
 - (1) Having a bad day.
 - (2) Our father, mother, or the way we were raised.
 - (3) Or even on our mate and what they said or did.
 - g. I must take responsibility for my own sins because they come from my own heart.

- h. NOTE:
 - (1) The situation I am in is not the problem.
 - (2) The people I live with and work with are not the problem.
 - (3) It is my own heart that is the problem.
- i. This is why Christ said, "*The pure in heart will see God.*"
- j. In their lives they have allowed God to deal with the real problem – their hearts.

II. Seeing how important it is that we purify our hearts; the next question is, "How can this be done?"

- A. 1st: Recognize that we all have an impure heart and need God's help to clean it up.
 - 1. According to Rom. 3:10-12, 23 we have all sinned and thus we all have impure hearts.
 - 2. And the only way to purify our heart is to bring it to God, and turn it over to His care.
 - 3. REMEMBER: God is on our side.
 - a. Being pure of heart is not something God commands and then leaves us to figure out how to do it on our own.
 - b. God wants and desires to help us.
 - c. Psa. 51:3-4, 9-10, 17: David knew he could not do it on his own: (Read).
 - d. We need Gods help.
- B. 2nd: Once we have brought our hearts to God and allowed Him to purify them; then we have the responsibility to keep them pure.
 - 1. A pure heart is much like a clean house – it requires constant maintenance.
 - 2. ILLUST.:
 - a. A woman cannot clean her house just once and then say, "That takes care of it, now I can spend the rest of my life doing what I want to do."
 - ESP. if you have children.
 - b. Our grandchildren would clean up their room and 1 hour later it looked like a tornado had hit.
 - 3. NOTE: To keep a house clean requires continuous maintenance, because there are other things always coming in, tracking in and dust settling.
 - 4. And this is the way it is with our heart.
 - a. I cannot purify my heart once and say, "That is all I need to do."
 - b. We live in and evil world which daily tracks through our lives and pollute them with sin.
 - c. Thus to keep our hearts pure it will require a continuous, daily process of cleaning.
- C. The book of Hebrews was written to a group of Christians who had a heart problem.
 - 1. On 3 different occasions in chap. 3-4 the writer pointed out where they had a bad, impure heart.
 - 2. Thus in these 2 chapters we find several warnings on how to guard our hearts and keep them pure.
 - a. Heb. 4:12: (Read).
 - (1) To keep pure we must stay in God's word.
 - (2) We must read it, study it, and daily let it guide our life while convicting us of any sin.
 - b. Heb. 3:12: (Read).
 - (1) Here the writer warns that it is possible for us to develop a sinful heart.
 - (2) In vs. 13 he gave the remedy: (Read).
 - (3) The remedy for an impure heart is daily fellowship and daily encouragement from our Bro./Sis. In the church.
 - (4) This is God's plan for keeping our hearts from being hardened by sin.
 - (5) NOTE: This passage teaches us a great principle.
 - (a) Without exception, every time one begins to become sporadic in attendance, certain sins will begin to crop up in their life.
 - (b) And the longer that they forsake the fellowship and encouragement of the body, the worse their heart will get.
 - (c) Until finally, their heart becomes so hard that they cannot be won back, no matter what we do.
 - (d) This is why attendance is so important.

- (6) NOTE: This passage also teaches a second great principle.
- (a) Which heart in this building this morning am I to be concerned with? -- Just mine?
-- NO!!
 - (b) I must be concerned about every single heart here.
 - (c) I must get involved in every one of your lives and encourage you; just as you must do for me.
 - (d) For it is in this way that we can keep our hearts where they need to be.
- c. Heb. 3:7-8: (Read).
- (1) The importance of this verse is seen in the fact that the writer used the same OT quote 3 times in this context (3:7-8; 3:15; 4:7).
 - (2) He was warning us that it is entirely possible for us to have a hardened heart.
 - (3) It helps for us to stop and examine our life once in a while to see where our heart really is.
 - (4) QUESTION: When you are reading God's word, is your heart open to its message?
 - (a) Do you really get excited about doing God's will?
 - (b) Or do you find yourself unwilling to obey Him?
 - (5) If the latter is the case, then your heart is in trouble.
 - (6) When you can hear God's word and then refuse to obey it, your heart is getting hard; and you had better do something about it before it is too late.

III. Finally, this AM, let us notice the blessings that await those who are "*Pure in heart*" – "*They shall see God.*"

--A number of interpretations have been given, but I want us to notice what I feel are the 2 most important:

A. 1st: The pure in heart will see God eternally.

1. When we really love someone, we want to see them, and be with them.
2. ILLUST.: Carol & I.
--Sometimes the phone call is just not enough.
3. Here Christ said that those who are pure in heart will have their heart's desire fulfilled – we will see God.
4. In fact, according to 1 Cor. 2:9, it will be more than just our wildest dreams: (Read).
 - a. I could try to describe how great it will be to be with God forever; but as Paul said here, we cannot conceive of it all.
 - b. I do not know what our first impressions or words will be when we see God; but I am sure it will be more loving, warm, tender, and peaceful than we can even imagine.
5. And all this is reserved for those who are pure in heart.

B. 2nd: The pure in heart will see God right now.

1. I do not mean we will see Him face to face; but rather we will see Him working both in our life and in the world around us.
2. We can see Him teaching us what real love is.
3. We can see Him giving us new power to overcome sin and temptation in our life.
4. SONG: "How Great Thou Art."

CONC.:

1. This beatitude tells us very pointedly that God is concerned about me and especially about the condition of my heart.
2. God wants me to live eternally with Him; thus He wants me to have a pure heart.
 - a. This AM God is pleading with you to open your heart and examine it.
 - b. Is your heart where it needs to be?
 - c. Is your heart right with God?
3. If not, go back to the first beatitude and begin to change your life: Poor in spirit – Mourn – Meek (teachable) – H & Thirst – Merciful (Help others).
4. Then allow God's word to permeate your heart making it pure.