

# Matthew 5:8

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're in the middle of a series on the Beatitudes. I'm looking really at what Jesus means by happiness.

! His definition is pretty different from the worlds around us.! And tonight we come to number six in the Beatitudes. We're really looking at the Beatitudes as a grid to view the Christian life. And so tonight it is, blessed are they and only they, blessed are the pure in heart. For they shall see God. There's three boys talking together and arguing about their fathers. First boy said, my dad is a teacher. And so he makes me clever for nothing. Second boy said, my dad is a doctor. And so he makes me healthy for nothing. Third boy said, my dad's a minister. He makes me good for nothing. Terrible joke. You're very kind to laugh.

[ 1 : 07 ] Third boy got it right, didn't he? We've seen that in Romans. Those dark passages in Romans. There's none righteous. No, not one.

No one understands. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they become worthless. No one does good, not even for one. Not even one. That's God's view.

Jesus said, didn't he? Out of the heart, out of your heart and out of my heart. Out of the heart of man comes all the things that spoil our lives and ruin our relationships.

Evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander, blasphemy. Where do those things come from? Jesus says those things which we find so difficult, they don't come from our background or our upbringing.

They don't come from our environment, but from our hearts. And so we know that a person's background or a person's environment or their circumstances, it might act as a magnet to draw out those things.

[ 2 : 17 ] But if they weren't in our hearts already, they wouldn't come out. And of course, Jesus is the great example of that, isn't he? He's the proof of that. He came from a pretty bad background.

He came from a pretty tough environment. Our people used to say, can anything good come out of Nazareth? It wasn't a salubrious place to live. Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

And so out of Nazareth comes the sinless, spotless son of God. And so it's a Christian cliché, isn't it? But the heart of your problem and my problem is the problem of our hearts.

The heart of our problem is the problem of our hearts. And you and I, unlike Jesus, do not have a heart for God. You and I naturally have hearts that are divided and defiled.

And that is why we don't know God and we don't see him. And Jesus says, can you see it? Blessed are the pure in heart, for they are the ones who see God. They and they alone will see God, the pure in heart.

[ 3 : 29 ] And so that's what I want to kind of think around tonight and kind of view the Christian life through. Only two points. First of all, this. A pure heart is a clean heart. A pure heart is a clean heart.

Let me illustrate what I mean. If you go to Exodus 15, you'll see there's a little incident there in the history of God's people. And it's an illustration, I think, of the state of your heart and my heart by nature.

So let me read to you Acts 15, verse 23. They came to Marah and they couldn't drink the water because the waters were bitter. It was bitter. That's why it was called Marah. And the people grumbled against Moses saying, what should we drink?

He cried to the Lord and the Lord showed him a log, a tree. And Moses threw it into the water and the water became sweet. It's a really strange incident.

I'm not completely sure what the significance of the incident is in the context of Exodus. But I think it helps us as an illustration of what our hearts are like.

[ 4 : 33 ] By nature, they are like Marah. They are bitter. They're like a stagnant pond. That's the way our hearts are naturally.

Romans teaches us that, doesn't it? Bitter, poisonous, polluted. But in Exodus, there is a tree, isn't there? There is a log that is thrown into the water and it is made sweet. There's a certain tree that can sweeten the waters of Marah.

The great news of the Bible is that there is a certain tree that can purify your heart. And my heart. It's the tree upon which Jesus died.

It's the tree on which Jesus bore away the sins of the world. It's the cross. Of course, a pure heart is not a perfect heart. Don't think of that.

You will never get a perfect heart, will you, until you get to heaven? A pure heart is not a perfect heart. But a pure heart is one that has the cross at the center of it.

[ 5 : 36 ] A pure heart, to quote the hymn writer, is one that always feels the blood so freely shared for me. It's a heart that's looking to Jesus for cleansing from sin and defilement.

Do you remember how the apostle John puts it in chapter 1, verse 7? You know this verse. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all unrighteousness. The death of Jesus upon the cross. The blood being shed by the Lord Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for sins. That is what cleanses our heart. And so John goes on and says, If you will confess your sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

Notice that. He's faithful and just. We would automatically put, wouldn't we, he's loving and merciful. That's what we naturally put. He's loving and merciful to forgive our sins. But that isn't what John puts there.

He says God is faithful and just. Because of the cross, God cannot do anything other than forgive those who come to him, confessing their sins.

[ 6 : 48 ] He's faithful and he's just. And so tonight, if you will come and confess your sin to God, he will cleanse you from all unrighteousness. He's faithful and just to what his son has done.

And so he is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And so let me ask you, is there a tree in your heart? Do you know what it is to confess your sin?

To trust in a savior who has been slain for you? It's a young lad who's brought up in a Christian home. He'd known the truths of Christianity ever since he could remember.

He understood the gospel, but he had real difficulty in making it his own. He'd been brought up since his early day, earliest days.

He believed every bit of it. But he couldn't believe that it was true for him. Maybe that's where some of you are tonight. You've been brought up in this church. You've been baptized. You know the gospel.

[ 7 : 52 ] You can recite it. You can even maybe explain it to someone else. But you don't know, is it for me? Has it got anything much to do with me? Well, that's to say it this young man is in.

And this is what he did about it. One day he wrote down on a piece of paper all the sins that he was conscious of. He wrote them all down. Every sin that he was aware of.

He wrote it all down on a piece of paper. And as he wrote those sins down on a piece of paper, he confessed them to God. And he confessed them all to the Lord. And then he took out a box of matches.

Never play with matches. But he took out a box of matches. And he set fire to the paper. And as the paper burned in front of him, he said, Christ died for my sins.

And as the breeze blew the ashes into the air, he added, and he's carried my sins far away. You see, that lad had understood the significance of the tree.

[ 8 : 57 ] He'd understood the significance of Calvary. He'd understood why Jesus had died upon the cross. He could say, Jesus was slain for me at Calvary. Pardoned is all my sin.

At Calvary. Cleansed is my heart within at Calvary. You see, a pure heart is a clean heart. What can clean your heart?

What can cleanse me of my sin? And so if I was to say to you, what can wash away my sin? You would say to me, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

The second thing I want to say to you is that purity of heart is not only a matter of cleanliness, but a matter of commitment. A matter of commitment.

A pure heart is an undivided heart. Let's change the picture for a moment. Instead of thinking of that stagnant pool in the waters of Mara. Instead of thinking like that, it's defiled.

[10:02] Let's think of a lump of metal. A lump of metal. So what makes metal impure? What makes metal impure? Well, it's when other things are mixed into it.

And that's what our hearts are like. Our hearts are not only defiled. They're not only like those bitter waters. Our hearts are divided. And so Psalm 86 has a great prayer in it, doesn't it?

Doesn't it? It says this. Give me an undivided heart to fear your name. It's a great prayer for us this week as a church family. Give me an undivided heart to fear your name.

And so I think as we read this verse, blessed are the pure in heart, one of the problems that I have is my heart is divided. And our hearts have divided loyalties.

A pure heart is not a sinless heart. But it is a heart that is united, that is undivided upon God.

James, in his letter, in James 4, verse 8, we often quote this verse.

[11:11] He says, draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Do you notice that? What does it mean to have a pure heart? James says, purify your hearts. What does he mean? In what way am I to purify my heart? What is an impure heart?

It is to be, double-minded is, to be two-faced when it comes to God. Purify your hearts, you double-minded, says James. Stop being two-faced with God.

It is as simple as that. Stop being a person that faces both ways. You know what happens when a person faces both ways. He trips over himself. And so James says, the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

And so do we know what it is to have that integrity of heart? To be single-minded in our Christianity, to be devoted to God, to have your heart set upon him.

[12:15] Jesus said, blessed are the pure in heart, for they and they only will see God. A woman was once exercised about this.

She was concerned about it. Whether or not she had a pure heart or not. She was concerned, am I really a Christian or not?

She was concerned whether or not the Lord was actually Lord of her life. She wondered whether or not there were other Lords, other loyalties. And so she was concerned.

She went to see a minister. And the minister took her to Acts 10. Where Peter says, there's extraordinary words in Acts 10. He says, no, Lord.

It's one of the stupidest things you can say, isn't it? Say, no, Lord. So this preacher says to this woman, well, you can say no, and you can say Lord, but it's impossible to say no, Lord.

[13:25] I'm going to leave you with your Bible and I'm going to give you a pen. And I want you to cross out either no or Lord. Whichever you really mean.

Minister leaves the room, gives her a few moments to think about it. And when he comes back, he finds out that she has crossed out the word no. And weeping, she was saying over and over and over again to herself, Lord, yes, Lord, yes, Lord.

And it's very simple tonight. Have you said that? Is Jesus Lord of your life? Because if he is not Lord of all, he is not Lord at all.

And if he's not Lord of all your life, he's not Lord at all in your life. Because you cannot serve him with a divided heart.

Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are those who are single-minded in their devotion. They are the ones who will see God and no one else will see God.

[14:37] And so putting it all together, what does it mean to be pure in heart? It means to know, isn't it, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus Christ as your Lord and as your Savior. It means having a heart that has been made clean and a heart that is committed to the Lord Jesus.

And Jesus says, it is they and they alone shall see God. And of course, that ultimately will be true when Jesus comes again.

John tells us in his epistle, we shall see him as he is and everyone that has that hope of seeing Jesus as he is purifies themselves.

even as he is purer. It says to the Christian, doesn't it, we have got something wonderful to look forward to, that Jesus is coming back and when he comes back we will see him as he is.

Not as it were through a glass darkly. Not with sunglasses on. We won't see him through the means of grace. We won't see him then through the preaching of the word or not through the Lord's table,

not through the means of grace, but we will see him as he is in his glory when he returns.

[15:51] That's something to look forward to. The psalmist says in Psalm 17, as for me, I will see your face in righteousness.

I will be satisfied when I awake in your likeness. And he compares himself to the men of the world and in Psalm 17, verse 14, he says, they are men of the world whose portion is in this life.

And so, the person of this world, they are satisfied with the things of this world in this life with the things that they can see and touch around them. But as for me, he says, I will be satisfied when I awake in your likeness when I see your face.

and that's the Christian. And so, a Christian is a person in whom there's been awakened a desire that nothing less than a sight of the glory of God will satisfy.

That nothing less than the sight of God in glory will satisfy the longings of your heart. The psalmist says, as for me, that is what is going to satisfy me.

[17:05] And nothing else will satisfy me. Robert Murray McShane looks forward to that day and he says, when I see thee as thou art, love thee with unsinning heart.

And that ultimately is the Lord's fulfillment of these words, aren't they? Isn't it? One day, the pure in heart will see God.

But I also want to say to you, it's true now. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are those whose hearts are cleansed by the blood of Jesus. And blessed are those who are committed to the lordship of Jesus, that's the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Ultimately, they'll see him face to face. But it's also true now. It's true now. Let me try and show you that. Moses saw God. We're told in Hebrews chapter 11. In fact, the author of the Hebrews says that's the only explanation of how Moses lived.

Of his life and his career. He endured as seeing him who is invisible. Moses saw the invisible God in this life.

[18:15] Now, how is such a thing possible? You can't see the wind, can you? We can't see the wind because the wind is invisible. But you can see the effects of the wind, can't you, if you're standing in the right place and looking in the right direction.

You can feel its force. You can see its effects. And in the same way, right here, right now, we cannot see God with these eyes. God is invisible to us.

But if our heart is fixed in the right place and set in the right direction, you will see God. Jesus saw God when a sparrow fell to the ground.

He saw the providence of God, didn't he? The person who's not a Christian doesn't see that. The person who's not a Christian doesn't even notice if a sparrow falls to the ground. So what?

But when Jesus saw a tiny little bird fall to the ground, he saw in it the providence of God and the plan of God. Jesus saw the lily, the flower, the beauty of the lily and in it, he saw the generosity of God.

[19:26] Jesus, when he got up first thing in the morning before it was light and he sees the sun rising in the sky, he saw the grace of God. He saw the God who causes that sun to shine upon evil and good alike.

Jesus saw God everywhere. Because his heart was pure and clean and undivided. David in the Old Testament, David didn't have a sinless heart. But he did have a single heart.

He was a man after God's own heart. And there's a lovely description in Psalm 29. Come with me to Psalm 29 if you're still awake. Come with me to Psalm 29 and let me read to you some verses.

They're amazing verses. Psalm 29. And so look at verse 3. It's a description of a storm.

And so David is looking at a storm. And he says this, the voice of the Lord is over the waters. The God of glory thunders. The Lord over many waters.

[20:33] The voice of the Lord is powerful. The voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars. That's huge trees.

The Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf and Syrian like a wild ox. The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

Can't you see it? The trees snapping in the storm. The bows breaking off. The lightning flashing in the sky.

The gigantic waves. Can't you hear the voice of God in that? That's how David sees it. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness. The Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth and strips the forest bare and in his temple all cry glory. The Lord sits enthroned over the flood and the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.

[ 21 : 32 ] May the Lord give strength to his people. May the Lord bless his people with peace. He's watching a storm and as it swept over the mountains he didn't simply see a storm he saw God.

He saw the thunder as the voice of the Lord. The rushing waters were the throne of the Lord and instead of showing fear as he saw the trees breaking in the wind and the rivers rising David shouts with confidence the Lord sits upon the flood.

He is king forever. And blessed are the poor for they shall see God. And so you think I think this beatitude changes life doesn't it?

Changes tomorrow. Changes tonight. It changes how you view the world. Because moment by moment as we live consciously dependent upon God by his Holy Spirit cleansed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ committed to his lordship it's very exciting.

It's very very exciting isn't it when you see God like that. Something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen and so for the Christian our eyes are open so we see this is God's world.

[ 23 : 06 ] And life is very exciting when you see God like that in creation in your own home in your own family and wherever you look life is exciting when you see God the invisible God I had a story this week of a little boy said to his mother is God everywhere I'm excited that he'd asked that and said yes of course is God in this home I said well yes God is in this home God in this kitchen I said well God is everywhere he's only present he's in this kitchen he's God in the fridge it's difficult isn't it well God is everywhere present God is in the fridge little boy goes in the fridge gets the marmalade jar opens the marmalade jar is God in the marmalade jar yes little boy puts the lid on says got him it's a ridiculous story isn't it it's a daft story there's something in that isn't there of actually living consciously knowing that the invisible

God this is his world you can know him do you know God have you found God side where will you find God the only place you can find God is Jesus Christ there's no other place Jesus said I am the true and the living way no one comes to the father except through me so if you want to know God Jesus says you've got to come through me there is no other way have you found God in Jesus Christ that's where he used to be found there's nowhere else you find him God it's not restricting at all it's absolutely marvelous that there is one place and there is only one place that you can find God it's like when you lose something it's now I'm forever losing my keys you lose your keys and you think where have I left them and you trace your steps and you go back over things and I think oh right I know they're in my study I know they were there in my pocket when

I went to the study and they weren't there when I came back in and what happens you go into the study and you tear up the sofa you look everywhere and you don't leave the study until you found the keys and you don't give up until you found them because you know that they're there and you can know for certain tonight that God can be found in Jesus Christ and that's where he is for you tonight in Jesus Christ and God says to you through Jeremiah you will seek for me and you will find me when you seek for me with all your heart and so let me urge you tonight to come looking for God in Jesus Christ with an undivided heart with a heart that trusts in a saviour slain for you Bible talks about the Lord Jesus Christ as an indescribable gift Jesus is God's unspeakable gift and so if I come to you tonight and I offer you something indescribably valuable as a gift and I've got something in my hand and

I want to give it to you what have you got to do well you've got to put down what's in your hands in order to receive that gift if you've got any sense to receive this indescribable gift you'll put down what's in your hands in order to receive that gift and if you had any sense you would put down what's in your hands to receive the free gift of God in Jesus Christ and whatever is in your hands you let it go because what God offers you in Jesus Christ is of infinite value and so tonight whatever you know in your life is wrong whatever you know in your life is not pure whatever it is that is in your life that's on your conscience put it down let it go and receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and your Savior let's pray