

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART I

Message 9

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11

INTRO: We come now to the sixth beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." D. Martyn Lloyd Jones says, "Anyone who realizes even something of the meaning of the words, 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God', can approach them only with a sense of awe and of complete inadequacy." Then he says, "This statement, of course, has engaged the attention of God's people ever since it was first uttered, and many great volumes have been written in an attempt to expound it."

John MacArthur says, "Here is one of those passages of Scripture whose depths are immeasurable and whose breadth is impossible to encompass. This incredible statement of Jesus is among the greatest utterances in all of the Bible." MacArthur, who calls this beatitude, Blessed are the holy, says further, "The subject of holiness, of purity of heart, can be traced from Genesis to Revelation. The theme is infinitely vast and touches on virtually every other biblical truth. It is impossible to exhaust its meaning or significance, and the discussion in this chapter is nothing more than introductory."

We see from the writings of those great men that what we have before us is no small subject and we are on very holy ground. I am not sure I would equate holiness and purity, as MacArthur does; rather I would say that purity encompasses a larger area than holiness and I do not say that to minimize holiness. And so, since the subject before us is so great, you will understand that we cannot cover it in one message.

Now, if this is such a huge subject, and it is so very important, why is it put here? Why not give it as the first or second beatitude? As I view these beatitudes, this is the last of the beatitudes that deals with these inner characteristics of the individual alone. It is the climax. The next beatitude now looks at the blessed man as he reaches out to others. And it is after that, that the blessed man has stepped fully into enemy territory, a territory where persecution is inevitable.

Now, depending if you see 10-12 as one or two beatitudes, they give us the response of the world to the blessed man. So, when the blessed man becomes pure in heart, this is the ultimate goal in inner character. He is becoming more and more like Jesus Christ, and now he will begin to face what Jesus Christ faced when He came to dwell among men.

So, when we come to our present beatitude, Lloyd Jones says, "Here, then, we are face to face with one of the most magnificent, and yet one of the most solemnizing and searching, statements which can be found anywhere in Scripture" (Kindle Locations 1554-1555).

In the messages on this beatitude we will seek to answer these questions: First, what is meant by *pure* in heart? Second, what is meant by the word *heart*? And third, how does one become pure in heart?

VI. BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

A. The Character Of The Pure In Heart

-What is meant by *pure* in heart?

Our first question then, has to do with purity. The beatitude before us says, "Blessed are the pure in heart." The original word for pure is 'katharos', from which we get the word *catharsis*. This word has the idea of cleansing, but is usually used of a cleansing of the emotions, though there seems to be a lot of confusion about its true meaning in the use of psychology. The basic idea of this word in Scripture, according to Vine's is, "free from impure admixture, without blemish, spotless." This word may speak of physical purity, as in say, clean or unclean hands or feet etc... But it is more often used of spiritual purity such as being free from guilt or evil desires or impure thoughts and so on.

The word 'katharos' has been translated in the KJV as *pure* 17 times; as *clean* 10 times; and as *clear* 1 time for a total of 28 uses in the NT. The negative of this word 'akatharsia', unclean, is used 10 times in the NT. Fallen angels, or demons, are called unclean spirits. They are polluting, adulterating, tainting and unwholesome, and

they have access to our hearts. But the man of this sixth beatitude is pure in heart!

So I ask, is it even possible in a fallen world filled with unclean spirits and every conceivable device for him to plant impurity into the heart? In a world of television; radio; internet and mass communication of all kinds; immoral advertisements of all kinds; is it possible to be pure in heart? The Online Bible says among other things that purity speaks of ethical purity. It says it is to be ethically clean or pure as in free from corrupt desire and from sin and guilt and from every admixture of what is false. This purity is sincere, genuine, blameless, innocent; unstained with the guilt of anything.

Wow! And that is possible? It is possible! I suppose by now we would all agree that these beatitudes get progressively more difficult as we go along. And yet, to become clean or pure inside, that is what true Christianity will bring about in people. Most certainly we would agree that nobody starts here. That is why this is not the first on the list. It is sixth and last with regard to those beatitudes that speak of inner character alone. I might mention that many Christians attain to greater purity of heart than others.

Let me give you an example of a heart that is not pure. At the time of Christ, Israel was in deplorable conditions economically, politically and spiritually. The greatest concern for the Lord Jesus, of course, was their spiritual condition. The Pharisees were the most prominent religious party and a casual reading of the Gospels shows just how bad their heart condition was. The impurities flowing through their hearts were horrifying; yet they thought themselves as the purest of all religions and the purist among the sects of Judaism. It is easy to see that one of their major problems was the importance they placed on how good they looked to others on the outside; but they gave very little attention to the inner heart condition. Look at Matthew 23 (read 23-30). There we get a glimpse at the real Pharisee.

But in our present beatitude the Lord Jesus scrutinizes the inner heart condition of the blessed man, and what He taught was in stark contrast to the hearts of the religious leaders of the day. Jesus is talking about the pure on the inside; not the pure on the outside.

Now let me mention that sincerity and purity are far from being the same thing. One can be yet so sincere, and ever so impure. But one cannot be ever so pure, and yet so insincere. Purity is cleanness. Someone has said that pure gold fears no fire. No matter how much you heat pure gold and how thin and runny it gets, no dross will rise to the top. That is a picture of a pure heart.

So let me give you a NT example of a man who was pure in heart. It is amazing that impurity of religion was the greatest at Jerusalem, the center of Judaism. Jesus spent most of His time as far away from Jerusalem as possible while staying within Israel. He spent most of His time in the Galilee region. And it is also here, not in Jerusalem, that He chose most of His disciples. When Jesus' ministry had just begun He went from where John the Baptist was baptizing into the Galilee region. Jesus had just called Philip to follow Him and when Philip got back to his home region he found Nathanael and he said, "Come, we have found the Messiah, the One about whom the prophets wrote!" And Nathanael said, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" And Philip said, "Well, come and check it out for yourself." And later, when Jesus saw Nathanael He said, "Well, wouldn't you just believe it. Here is an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." Philip was surprised that anything good could come from Nazareth. Jesus was surprised that anything good could come out of all of Israel! But here in Galilee, of all areas, Jesus found a man with a pure heart. It is possible to have a pure heart.

You see, a pure heart is a clear, clean heart. There is no guile. It is uncontaminated. There is nothing hidden. Jones says there are no folds. There is no place to open up where hidden things are kept. This heart is pure. It is

clean. There are no hidden agendas. All is open. That then, is something of what this word 'pure' speaks of.

-What is meant by the 'heart' in the phrase 'pure in heart'?

But before us lies a yet greater question: "What is meant by the word 'heart' in the phrase 'pure in heart'?" We will look at the heart in general first, and then at its parts. This beatitude has said blessed are the pure in heart. Well, let us take a look at the heart in general. We have said before that every beatitude becomes more difficult. There is none more challenging than this one. When once we understand what is meant by the word *heart* and then what is meant by *purity of heart*, we will readily agree that this exceeds all the others for difficulty. But if we become merciful, we will become more and more pure in heart.

Now, those who are called blessed in this beatitude are the pure in heart. It does not say they are pure in soul or they are pure in spirit. It says they are pure in heart. It is the heart that is key to purity in every other area. And so we must understand just what purity in heart means and why it is so very important, and to understand that we need to first understand just what the Bible is speaking about when it speaks about the heart.

DEFINITION OF HEART:

So, our first task is to define what the heart is. In brief then, as I understand it, the heart is that which we call the mind. I have mentioned before that in the original language of the OT and the NT, there is no such a word as 'mind'. I have concluded that when the Bible uses the word *heart* as in our present beatitude, that it is speaking of that which we call the mind. We often make the error of viewing the heart and the mind as two different things. We say there is 18 inches difference between the heart and the mind. But they are one and the same. The Bible says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." It very certain that the word heart there is not talking about the physical heart. It is talking about the vital

center of the soul, which it likens to the heart in the body.

It is interesting that when the Bible wants to describe the spiritual makeup of man, that is man in his non-material parts, the soul and the spirit, it uses concrete terms to help us understand just what it is talking about. So, when it speaks of the bowels in this sense, it is talking about the emotional area of man. Many wrongly connect the emotions to the heart, and that is what our English language does as well. We talked about that in a previous message. But understanding what the Bible speaks about when it speaks of the heart will help us understand its meaning in our passage.

When the Bible speaks of the kidneys, or reins, as the KJV translates the word for kidneys, it speaks of that cleansing agent in our souls. We may look at that in a later message. But when it speaks of the heart, it speaks of the area that has to do with that instrument that interprets and records all the data input and processes and stores all the data we experience in life. And the 'self', which is not the heart but is over the heart, makes all of life's decisions based on how that data is interpreted. The heart is the area where all thinking is done and it is also the area where all data that is learned in any way is stored. The heart is the vital center of the soul. In our English language, we have a word for that vital center of the soul, and it is the word 'mind'.

So, the heart is that which we call the mind. But now we have a much more difficult task on our hands. It is to answer this question: What is the mind? If you want a very interesting study, study what the secular world thinks the mind is. They do not have the divine word of God, and the answers from the Creator, so they have to do it on their own. Now, it does not take a rocket scientist to determine that the mind is not the physical heart, and it is not the brain. The secular world knows that. And once you are in the non-material realm, man is on his own, in determining such questions. Only the Bible believer has access to the

answers. And his answers come from the one who created man. So when the secular world defines the mind, they end up in philosophy. And just what is a philosophy? It is humanistic wisdom. I say philosophy is a very educated way of saying, "I don't know what I'm talking about, so I make it sound like I do." I have told you that L. E. Maxwell called it 'Foolosophy'.

I read part of an article called, "What is the Mind?" It is about none other than His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. The article is titled "Mind Science" in the November/December issue of "Mandala" by Daniel Goleman and Robert F. Thuman. It says, "There is little agreement among Western scientists about the nature and function of mind, consciousness—or even about whether such a thing exists. Buddhism's extensive explanations, however, stand firm after twenty-five centuries of philosophical debate and experiential validation. Here His Holiness the Dalai Lama explains the Buddhist concept of mind to the participants of a Mind Science symposium at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, MA, USA." And if you want to read something that is pure philosophy, the Dalai Lama does it up real good.

An article titled, "What is the difference between the mind and the brain", says, "OK. Now, define the mind. Not as easy, eh?! You may be surprised to find that there is no single, agreed upon definition of the mind. The psychiatric, mental health and medical professions each have their own functional definitions"

(<http://www.thebestbrainpossible.com/the-mind-and-the-brain-what-is-the-difference/>)

So, what is the mind, or the heart as the Bible calls it? It is the vital center of the soul. To help us understand this, the Bible uses a concrete term related to the body to help us understand what it is in the soul. That is the heart. God and Satan both go for the heart, or the mind. Whoever has our mind has us. The mind is the battle ground between God and Satan. Furthermore, the heart has parts, and we will look later at those parts.

Now, when Adam and Eve sinned, and man became sinful, it was the heart (or we would say the mind) that was affected. That makes sense if it is the vital part of the soul. The heart is, as Jones says, the seat of all our troubles. He says, "You remember how our Lord put it, 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies'" end quote (Kindle Locations 1580-1581, Kindle Edition). King David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:6). Proverbs 4:23 says, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life." Jeremiah 17:9-10 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins (kidneys), even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

So, the heart is the seat of man's problem. We are born with bad hearts. But the heart is also the place where God goes to work to purify us. God and the devil both go for the heart, or the mind. Whoever gets the heart, our mind, has us. So let me show you this modal of man once more (illustrate with box). Here we have the body. That is the physical part of man. Then inside that we have the spirit. Alongside the spirit we have the soul. Both the spirit and the soul are immaterial. I have been asked a number of times if man is a spirit. We had such teachers in our community. No, man is not a spirit. Jesus clearly said a spirit does not have flesh and bones. God is a Spirit. Angels are spirits. Man is a physical being.

Now let me show you how I see the interplay between body, soul and spirit. Here is the body. It sends data via the five senses to the heart which is situated in the soul. In the soul decisions are made on the basis of that data and how the self interprets it. On the other side is the spirit. Here spirits send data to the heart or mind, through the soul. The soul is the interface between body and spirit. The Holy Spirit and evil spirits communicate to us through the spirit. You can understand that when we give heed to unclean spirits, that we will have unclean hearts. If unclean spirits can get our attention and we

listen to them, we will be thinking unclean and we will not be pure in heart.

So, in my understanding of the nature of man, the soul is the interface between the spirit and the body. The body takes in information through the five senses and from there it enters the soul. Here that information goes to the heart, and the heart interprets that information, and presents the conclusions to the self. The self is the president of the whole of man and makes all the decisions based on the data the heart processes.

-IN PARTICULAR: The Phreen

Let us now begin to seek to answer the question: How does one become pure in heart? To answer this question it will be most helpful to take a look at the separate parts of the heart. The heart has very important parts to it. You see, we first took man apart in his three basic parts; body, soul and spirit. In my understanding of the biblical modal of man, the heart and the self are situated in the soul. And now we want to separate the heart, or what we call the mind, into its parts.

So, let us take the heart apart and see what purity of heart is as related to the parts. There is in the heart an area called, in the Greek of the NT, the phreen. Now the phreen is the thinking part of the heart. It is the data processor in computer language. Scripture says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Where does he think? In his heart. That is the mind. He thinks in that part of his mind called the phreen.

Now, numerous NT words have the word phreen as their root word. There is aphron, foolish thinking; aphrosyne, folly; phronew, to think; phroneema, a thought; phroneesis, thinking; and phronimos, thoughtful and so on.

Let me show you one such word that I did not list. Go to Philippians 2 (read 1-5). Now look at the words 'lowliness of mind'. Now the one Greek word translated 'lowliness of mind' is the word 'tapainophrosunee'. That is a long word for the Greek language. But the root word is phreen which

is the data processor of the heart. This word means literally, 'lowliness of thinking'. It is humble thinking, so it has been translated lowliness of mind.

Now look at verse 5 (read). It says, "Let this mind be in you..." The word translated 'mind' is the word 'phroneesthw'. Again, the root word is phreen. Our English translation has translated a verb as a noun. That is too bad. Translated literally it would read, "let *this thinking* be in you which was also in Christ." The instruction Paul is giving is this: Think, like Christ thought. Anyone who learns to think like Christ thought will become pure in heart. That does not mean he will not become angry, but he will become angry about the right things and do it in the right way. He will be Christ like because he thinks like Christ.

Now, when it says blessed are the pure in heart, here is the most important area of the heart. The thinking part. You see, when it says, "Blessed are the pure in heart..." it speaks at least in part of those who are pure in their thinking! I ask you, what kind of a task is that? But we have only spoken of one small aspect of the heart! To understand what purity of heart is we must look at other parts of the heart in another message.

CONCL: So, let us conclude on our first message of the sixth beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart." I have suggested to you that the term 'heart' as used in our passage, speaks of the vital center of the soul. And we have looked at what I think is the most important part of the heart as relates to purity of heart, and that is the data processor of the heart or mind. It is the thinking part of the mind. And Paul instructed the Philippians to think like Christ thought. When we come to where we think like He thought, we are pure in heart. Many of us will find ourselves thinking like He thought in some things, but we may struggle in other areas. But to come to think like He thought is to become pure in heart.

I would suggest that these beatitudes are cyclical. We may come to think like Christ thought in one area, only to begin to struggle in another. And once more we must become poor in spirit and go through the cycle until we become pure in heart. To be

truly pure in heart, in our thinking part alone is a huge task, but it is also the biggest. When that has happened, it will do wonders for the rest of our parts and for us as a whole.

It is a huge task for the Holy Spirit of God to reduce us until we are poor in spirit, and mourn our sinfulness. But to bring us all the way through until we are pure in heart, that is a much greater work for God the Holy Spirit. But it is possible. May that become our desire.