

Matthew 5: 8d – “ Blessed are the Pure in Heart (Because His Seed Remains)”;
Sermon # 11 in a series entitled – “These Sayings of Mine”, Delivered
by Pastor Paul Rendall on February 23rd, 2020,
in the Morning Worship Service.

Today it is my hope that you will come to a better understanding of the New Person that you are in Christ, because you are pure in heart. A person who is pure in heart will be focusing on what their responsibilities are in terms of holiness. When you focus on these responsibilities, you will overcome the world, your own flesh, and the Devil, and thus become the holy person which God wants you to be, and which you want to become. So, 1st of all – I want to speak to you about practicing righteousness just as Christ is righteous. 2nd – I want to speak to you about cultivating the seed of righteousness, your new nature and your new identity in Christ. I pray that as I preach this message to you that you will be set free from all false and erroneous conceptions of what it means to be holy, and that you will truly glory in Christ and the New Life that He has given to you.

1st of all – Let me speak to you about practicing righteousness just as Christ is righteous.

Turn with me over to 1st John 3, and I will read to you verse 7. “Little children, let no one deceive you.” “He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.” So, we have here an exhortation from the apostle John telling us that we should not be deceived concerning this subject of righteousness. It is possible that we can be deceived by our own heart about righteousness. We can be deceived by the devil in regard to this subject of righteousness. And we can be deceived even by well-meaning fellow-Christians in regard to the subject of practicing righteousness. We must come to terms with what the term holiness means. Acts of righteousness come from a heart that wants to do God’s will. And doing God’s will from a sincere heart will lead bring to us a greater assurance of our salvation; both ourselves and others around us realizing that we are holy people of God. He who practices righteousness is righteous. The King James says – “He that doeth righteousness is righteous.”

What does it mean to practice righteousness according to the Bible? Well, we know from many places in the New Testament Scriptures that it does not mean that salvation is by your own works, in any sense. If you are honest about the state of your heart before God, you realize that you have broken God’s holy law at many points. You have not the righteousness which could merit salvation. Perfect righteousness is required to be accepted by God. Salvation, therefore, is by faith in Christ, and in what He alone has accomplished on your behalf; the fulfillment of the law, His keeping all the commandments of God perfectly on your behalf, and His suffering the punishment due to all of your sins that you commit during your whole life; past present and future. This means that if you have believed in Christ for imputed righteousness leading to justification, you will have also received imparted grace leading to holiness and purity of heart. Your heart has been purified by faith in initial sanctification by the Spirit, and you now begin to realize that you can, and you should, go about to do good works and to practice righteousness.

Practicing righteousness will mean that you will consciously try not to break God’s holy law; but that when you do, you will repent of that sin, or those sins. You will confess your sins to God through Christ, the One Mediator, and God will be faithful and just to forgive all of your sins, and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. You will have dealings with God, in your heart and mind, over your being able to forsake your besetting sins, and your sins of weakness; your secret sins, and your presumptuous sins. You will be praying regularly for the grace to be able to better keep God’s commandments by faith in Jesus Christ. All of the righteous things that you do as a

Christian will flow from your good relationship with Christ; of your being united to Him in His death and resurrection. Since your spirit has been united to Christ's Spirit by faith in Him, you then begin to do good works and practice righteousness, by means of love to Him.

Let's turn over to Romans Chapter 6, verses 5-11 in regard to this 1st point. "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." "For he who has died has been freed from sin." "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more." "Death no longer has dominion over Him." "For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God." "Likewise you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In regard to practicing righteousness and being pure of heart you must understand that as a Christian you have been united together with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. You have been united in terms of what His death did for you, the one believing in Him. Your Old Man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with. These terms need to be defined. The body of sin is the whole corpus of sin from beginning to end. It is the sinful nature, which each of us has, that nature inherited from our first forefather and federal head – Adam. It is also all the particular individual sins that you have committed in your lifetime. Christ died that the whole body of your sin might be done away with. Notice the wording – "might be done away with." It is not as though, that there is any uncertainty, that all and every sin, of one of God's elect people might not be atoned for; for they all were. And it is not that the sinful nature that we inherited from Adam will not be entirely eradicated someday. It will be when we die. The entire remains of our sinful nature will be eradicated from our spirit immediately at our death, and then in the resurrection we will be given a glorified perfect body.

But the "might" is put in here to show us that the removal of the body of sin, the sinful nature, the sinful flesh which produces the sinful motions in the heart, and the sinful acts in the life, will all be addressed by you and Christ together, over time. The motions of your heart which are sinful, the thoughts going through your mind in which you are tempted to commit sin, and perhaps these thoughts actually lead you into committing a sin, or sins. These are something which you will have dealings with God about. You will mourn over these sins in repentance and in the future you will take steps to cut off and mortify all the sinful impulses of your mind and heart which led you to that sin, or those sins. You should know that your sinful nature, your Old Man, the flesh, will, over the course of your Christian life, be weakened and restrained by the imparted grace of Christ bestowed upon you by the Spirit. And this will take place in relation to your obedience to the word of God. Greater holiness and righteousness will be seen in your life, as the result of your participation in this process of progressive sanctification.

We purify ourselves even as Christ is pure; so that the final result when Christ returns in His 2nd Coming, at the end of the world, will be that all of God's elect people, everyone who has savingly believed in Him and cultivated righteousness and holiness, will be completely freed from sin. They will be perfectly pure, perfectly righteous, and perfectly holy. As Christians, our responsibility then, is to work toward that time of complete perfection, even though it will not be fully attained until death and the resurrection. If you are a Christian, the Old Man is the person that you once were, in sin, before you were saved by faith in Christ, and before you were born again by the Spirit of God.

Whether you realized it or not, you were a slave of sin; you were foolish, disobedient, deceived. You were living in malice and envy, you were hateful and hating people around you, as it says in Titus 3, verse 3. That is the way that you were, but God gave you a New Nature when you were born again. Christ purchased this New Nature for you by His death to sin on

your behalf. When Christ was crucified a great thing took place there on the cross for all of God's elect people. Their Old Man was crucified with Him. Each and every believer in Jesus, died to sin spiritually with Him there. In their dying with Him, they were also then freed from sin; that is the bondage to sin; Christ having purchased that blessing for them by His suffering in their place, and then being raised from the dead for their justification, and for their justification of life; that is, their being given a New Nature.

Paul explains that the death that Christ died, He died to sin once for all; that is, on our behalf, for He had no sin of His own. And so, when we believed in Christ, we too then died to sin. We die to sin once for all, by the circumcision of our hearts. And the life that we then began to live, we live to God by our beginning to walk in the Spirit. We could do this now because of this New Nature, accompanied by the Spirit's working in our hearts. What is your responsibility then, whether you are a new Christian or an older Christian? Verses 12-14 – "Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

You will notice that Paul says that sin shall not have dominion over you. He does not say in any of his teaching, or in any of his explanation, that the Old Man or your Old nature will be eradicated from your being in this life. Or that you will somehow according to your own evaluation of yourself and your own heart, come to a place where you believe that you can receive full sanctification by an act of faith, like justification. But he does say in Romans 6: 22 – "But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. But what about the Old Man? What has happened to him now that we are saved?"

Well, you find the answer in two other letters of Paul. One is in Ephesians chapter 4, verses 17-20. The other one, in Colossians, I will go into in my next message. Ephesians chapter 4, verses 17-20 says – "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." "But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the New Man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."

Notice that Paul does not say that the Old Man is entirely gone. Rather he says that he is growing corrupt. But concerning your former conduct, he says, you have put him off. You have renounced your allegiance to him. You have repented of his deeds. Concerning your present conduct, you still do battle with him. You do this by putting on the New Man which was created by God in the perfection of true righteousness and holiness. You put him on. God created the New Man, but you are to put him on. This is an on-going act of obedience, leading to on-going works of righteousness and your becoming more holy.

2nd - I want to speak to you about the seed of righteousness, your new nature, and your new identity in Christ.

1st John 3: 8-10 – "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning." "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." "Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God." When it says that he who sins is of the devil, John is saying that those who are God's do not belong to the devil any longer, because they are no longer of a

like nature with the devil, refusing to hear God's word, refusing to do His will, and continuing on in their sin, like he has continually done from the beginning of creation, when he first sinned. In other words, a true Christian will not be continuing to practice sin, or to go about to do sin at all, because their heart has been changed forever in the New Birth. They cannot sin John says here, because they have been born of God.

Now what does this mean, that they cannot sin? It means that they cannot sin because when they were born again, a New Nature was given to their soul; a seed of righteousness was planted in the heart of the one whom God was saving. And that seed was as perfect as the One who gave it. Let us understand that in the New Birth, the seed which is planted is perfect. It is the perfect work of the Perfect God. And therefore whatever proceeds from that seed, that New Nature, is also pure and perfect. And so, through consistent watering of this seed with the precious influences of Christ grace, we as Christians grow up into trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified. (Isaiah 60, verse 3)

I believe that this is the proper understanding of these verses in 1st John 3 when it says the Christian cannot sin because he has been born of God. It is that every motion, every impulse, every thought and every deed proceeding unhindered and uncorrupted from the New Nature is perfect. However, anyone who is honest knows that these good thoughts and good motions will at times be hindered by the flesh, what remains of the Old Nature. This perfection of the New Nature does not mean that you the Christian are perfectly living out and responding perfectly to the righteous motions of your New Heart, or that you do not sin at all in your heart in relation you going about to keep the commandments of God. But what it does mean is that all of those good motions and thoughts are there because God the Holy Spirit has put them there, and He is there too.

Now, at this point, I want you to look over at Galatians chapter 2, verses 19-21 with me. I want to show you your New Identity as a Christian; an identity which goes along with this New Nature. "For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God." "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain." Paul is saying, using himself as an example of all believers, that he is a person who has been crucified spiritually with Christ, and it is no longer Paul who is living his life to himself, but it is Christ who is living His life in Paul. He is living in him in this seed form in Paul's New Nature and He is living in him by the presence of His Spirit, who leads him along in his heart, and providentially orders all things for good in his life, so that Paul pursues righteousness and holiness, and love for the brethren, and for all men in regard to gospel. It is no longer Paul who lives, but it is Christ who lives in Him.

The very same is true for every believer in Christ. This is the wonderful dynamic of the Christian life. You have a new Identity dear Christian! You live your life by faith in the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for you. It is no longer you who lives according to your fleshly strength; your own self-efforts, as though you did not need Christ at every moment. Christ says – "Without Me you can do nothing". And with me – "You can do all things". No, Paul says, I do not live my Christian life thinking that I can keep the law by my own efforts apart from Christ's grace. If I thought that way, I would be setting aside the grace of the God. To the degree which you incline your heart to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life, in connection with obeying the infallible truth of the word of God, to repent of all of your sins and to keep all of God's commandments, to that degree you will not sin, dear Christian. For you cannot sin if you are walking in the truth, and walking in the light, and walking in Spirit, and making no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts.

