

Matthew 5:8

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/23/2009

How can we know if we are saved? Blessed are the clean in heart

Prayer

Oh Father, we just praise You that You are holy, that You're set apart from all things, that You are righteous and just and true, that there is no sin in You. And Father we praise You that You have called us to be holy, to be like You. And Father we praise You that the way we are made like You is through what Your Son has done for us. We praise You that You sent Your Son to die for our sins, to deliver us from death to life, to bring about the forgiveness of sins that we might stand in righteous standing before You. But yet also, Lord God, Your desire is for us to be holy, to walk in a manner worthy of this great calling. And Father I thank You that You use Your Word to work in our hearts to change us, to make us like Christ. And Father we thank You that You will complete the work that You have begun, and we look forward to that day when Your Son comes, or we pass away and come into His presence. Father thank You so much for this morning, may You be greatly glorified as Your Word goes out, and we pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Sermon

Well as I've been sharing through the last few weeks, there are many people who claim to be Christians. If I was to ask who in this church claims to be a Christian, I would probably think almost everyone would probably raise their hands. And in the day that the Lord God through His Son Jesus Christ brought about this teaching, which we'll look at today in the book of Matthew, as He came to His own nation, the Jews, everyone in the Jewish nation would claim to be God's people. And likewise, today many people claim to be the Lord's. Many people claim to have a relationship with the living God. And I praise God if you do have a relationship with the living God. But God is a gracious God that will not allow you to be self-deceived or allow any of us to think that we are His child, and not truly be His child. He is a gracious God who is doing this with the Jews, which we will see in Matthew chapter 5 today. That God was confronting the hearts of those who claimed to know the Lord by laying forth the picture of what someone who truly does know the Lord looks like. And in contrast, anyone who does not know the Lord would be convicted by the fact that they did not, and did not look like, and were not like what the Lord Jesus shared.

And today I believe we're going to continue to see that the Lord confronts those who claim to know Him, yet walk in darkness. And He encourages those of us who do know Him, by revealing what those who are truly blessed look like. So with this in mind, let's take a look. And if you'd turn in your Bibles with me to Matthew chapter 5, I believe we're going to continue to see from the Beatitudes how we can know that we are saved. Now as I've shared many times, the Beatitudes, which we'll talk about in a

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moment, Christ does not share the gospel. But we see a picture of what one is like who does know the living God, who is in His kingdom. So would you turn with me to the book of Matthew, and we're looking at chapter 5, and specifically, Lord willing, we'll get through verse 8 today. Now you think "I know that verse pretty well, I didn't need to bring my Bible." But we have a lot of Scripture to go through today, so hopefully you'll be ready to look at the passages as we look at this idea of "Have your hearts been cleansed?" And that's the real question. Has your heart been cleansed of sin?

Now I want to go through the context before we begin, but the context is getting briefer and briefer as we've gone through a lot concerning the Sermon on the Mount, and as we go through a lot concerning the Beatitudes. But what we call the Beatitudes is chapter 5 of Matthew, verses 3-10, it's one section of the Sermon on the Mount, which is chapters 5-7. And in these chapters, as I've shared in the last few weeks, I believe in the Sermon on the Mount, chapters 5-7, we see kingdom righteousness presented by King Jesus, which confronts phony righteousness, which is really lawlessness. The Lord Jesus presents kingdom righteousness, He's the King, and this kingdom righteousness confronts phony righteousness, which is really lawlessness. You see, the Jews and the Pharisees of that day had a phony righteousness; they had a righteousness based on their works, on the Law, not on faith in Jesus Christ.

And it's important to realize as I've shared each week that the gospel is not presented in the Sermon on the Mount. You cannot read chapters 5-7 and get saved. You can read chapters 5-7 and be convicted of your state before God, but the gospel concerning Jesus Christ who died for our sins according to the Scriptures, who was buried and raised according to the Scriptures, is not presented there. The way of salvation is not presented, but we see it clearly in the rest of Scripture.

Now remember, as we look at this that the context of the Sermon on the Mount is Jesus is coming to His own people, the Jews. God made a covenant with the Jews through the Law, but the Law was never intended to save. They were to love the Lord God with their heart, mind and soul. It was an internal change, rather than an external law, or law keeping. And the Lord Jesus shares through His Word, through Paul to the Galatians that the Law was a school master to bring the Jews to Christ. The Law would never bring about salvation, but brings the knowledge of sin. But these Jews should have recognized because they had enough Scripture at this time that they should have recognized and looked forward to the promise of redemption concerning the Messiah. They should have known from Old Testament Scripture that all of us like sheep have gone astray. They should have known that God would pour out His wrath on His servant Jesus, the one who would be born from a virgin, the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace, who would bear our sins, who would be pierced for our transgressions, they should have known that.

So then we have Jesus Christ coming to His own, the Jews who claimed a relationship with the living God. And if you would have asked any Jew from that day, "Is He your God? Are you His people?" They would say "Yes, we are His people." So then, the Lord Jesus mercifully comes to His people, to unveil and reveal where they really stand in relationship to Him. And as I've shared through the last few weeks, many of these kingdom principals which we see in the Sermon on the Mount show us what a really

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changed life looks like, and these principals are laid forth in other passages of Scripture, and they show us what a life looks like of one who is under the authority of the King, one who is in the kingdom.

Now what about the Beatitudes so far? Remember Jesus had the multitudes following Him. He called four fishermen to follow Him, and they dropped everything and followed Him. But then the multitudes, as Jesus was preaching and teaching and healing, the multitudes were following Him for the healings. And now in chapter 5, we have the Lord Jesus Christ going up to the mountain, and let's read back in chapter 5:1 of Matthew,

¹ And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. ² And opening His mouth He began to teach them, saying, ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵ "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (And that's our verse today) ⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [Matthew 5:1-8]

Now remember, we saw in the past few weeks what this idea of blessedness looks like in the context of Scripture. Man apart from God thinks of blessing as what happens to me, if I get something good, I'm good, if it's bad I'm not blessed. But blessing in Scripture is totally different. And we saw in Scripture as we've looked at blessing, is intricately tied to a right relationship with the living God through the Word of God. And I'm going to share a couple verses again concerning blessing as we look at these passages which speak of those who are blessed. Psalm 34:8, ***O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!*** The one who has a relationship with Him. Romans 4:7, ***Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven...*** Those who've been forgiven are blessed. Psalm 94:12, ***Blessed is the man whom Thou dost chasten, O LORD, And dost teach out of Thy law;*** Psalm 84:12, ***O LORD of hosts, How blessed is the man who trusts in Thee!*** Faith in the Lord. Psalm 112:1, ***Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments.*** Psalm 119:2, ***How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart.*** And then, as the Lord Jesus responds to a woman in Luke 11:28, ***"On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it."***

We see that blessing is intricately tied with a right relationship with Jesus Christ, a right relationship with God in whom one has been forgiven on their sins, fears the Lord Jesus Christ and walks with Him, and is chastened because he is a child of God. So here we see blessedness is not tied to circumstance in a biblical fashion, it is tied to a right relationship with the living God. And one other thing I need to point out concerning these Beatitudes, which we call them. They are the Beatitudes, not the Do-attitudes. God is not saying, "Do these things to be saved," He is saying the blessed are this way, this is what they are, they are the Beatitudes, not the Do-attitudes.

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Now these pronouncements of blessings describe who someone is. And now at this point Jesus begins to lay across the lives of these Jews what the truly blessed look like, so that they would see in their heart of hearts they are not like this, and God is gracious God. Let's review the first few Beatitudes. Verse 3,

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. [Matthew 5:3-4]

In the beginning of the Beatitudes we see the truly blessed are those who are spiritually bankrupt, they are spiritually poor, they have nothing to offer God. They don't come to God and say "I can do this for You. I've done that for You." They are totally empty, there is nothing they can offer. They are spiritually destitute. It is the spiritually destitute who are blessed, the poor in spirit, for theirs is, present tense, the kingdom of heaven. They are in a right relationship with the King, and thus with the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. We see one evidence of being in the kingdom of God, not all the evidences, but one is a spiritual destitution and poverty. There is no way to be saved apart from Christ, there is no way, we are absolutely destitute. And the Jews didn't believe this, the Jews thought it was what they did that made them right before God. They were not spiritually bankrupt in heart. They were prideful in heart. And I believe here we see that spiritual poverty leads to Godly sorrow. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. There is a Godly sorrow, 2 Corinthians 7, which leads to repentance, but there is a worldly sorrow which leads to death. Those who are bankrupt, recognizing their sinful condition before a holy God are going to be mourning over their sin. And God is a gracious God, for when He saves us He comforts us.

And then He goes on to share blessed characteristics of those who are in the kingdom. Verse 5,

⁵ "Blessed are the gentle, (or the meek) for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. . ⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. [Matthew 5:5-7]

And we've gone through each one of these, so far, so I'm just hitting very quick points on these. And as we've seen in the last three weeks in depth, these pronouncements of blessedness point to a life which truly reflects the life of Christ manifest, which truly reflects a right relationship with the living God. The blessed are gentle. We saw that term meekness spoke of an internal submission to God, with a gentleness manifested externally.

Blessed are the gentle. Some people are very gentle on the outside, but on the inside they are not submitting to God. But He says here (the Lord Jesus) "Blessed are the gentle." And the blessed are also hungry and thirsty for righteousness; they are desiring the righteousness of Christ in their lives manifest. Blessed are those who want to be holy because the Lord God is holy.

And we saw last week, blessed are the merciful. They exhibit the mercy of God. We looked in depth that God's mercy is exhibited in Christ coming and addressing the sinful state of mankind, man totally helpless. And God reaching out in mercy to helpless man, in man's sinful condition, and bringing

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salvation through Christ, that we have been born again through God's great mercy through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead according to His great mercy. What a wonderful passage in 1 Peter.

And now we come to another pronouncement of blessing today which describes one more aspect of life of one who is in the kingdom. And you can lay this across your life and say, "Does this describe me?" When the Lord Jesus says "Blessed is this", does this describe me? And I believe we're going to see today that the saved, that the blessed, will have a cleansed heart, a new heart. Verse 8,

⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. [Matthew 5:8]"

That's the Beatitude we're going to look at today. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. And obviously this statement is alluding to a saved state, a relationship with the living God. Now before we move on, I think we need to understand what this idea of the "heart" in Scripture really means; and then what this idea of being "pure in heart" means. So what is Jesus speaking of when He speaks of the heart? In the Old Testament the Hebrew word was *leb*, and in the New Testament the word translated heart is *kardia*. And it spoke of the inner man, the inner self. One lexicon states it this way, "It is the source, and it is the seat of the functions of the soul and spirit, in the emotional life, the volitional life and rational life." It's speaking of the inner man, the heart. Indeed we see in Scripture this term heart is actually used synonymously with mind and will. And I'll share a few passages here. First of all in Scripture we see that hearts and minds are used in parallel. And I'll read through these, Psalm 7:9,

⁹ O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; For the righteous God tries the hearts and minds. ¹⁰ My shield is with God, Who saves the upright in heart. [Psalm 7:9-10]"

Revelation 2:23, we saw this in our Wednesday night Bible study. As we're going through Revelation as the Lord Jesus addresses His churches and He is addressing Jezebel, this lady named Jezebel who was leading His bondservants astray. Revelation 2:23,

²³ And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. [Revelation 2:23]"

Philippians 4:6-7, what a wonderful passage concerning the command to not be anxious for the true believer,

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 4:6-7]"

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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." [Matthew 22:37]

We see this term being used in parallel in Scripture. But actually we see in Scripture that it's not only used in parallel, it's used synonymously. 2 Corinthians 3:14-16,

¹⁴ But their minds were hardened; (that's speaking of the Jews) for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant (that's the Law) the same veil remains unlifted, (they can't see, and he says) because it is removed in Christ. ¹⁵ But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; (so they had a veil over their minds, a veil over their hearts, it's synonymous) ¹⁶ but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. [2 Corinthians 3:14-16]

You are blind to know the Lord God. And these Jews had the Word of God, but they were blind, a veil was over their hearts and minds. But when a man turns to the Lord, the veil is lifted. We see in Hebrews 8, as the Lord God shares the new covenant which He would bring about. Hebrews 8:10,

¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, And I will write them upon their hearts. (We see heart and mind together) And I will be their God, And they shall be My people. [Hebrews 8:10]

Genesis 6:5, as the Lord was very grieved over the state of sinful mankind. Genesis 6:5,

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. [Genesis 6:5]

We see the thoughts, the mind, the will; we see this inner man, the heart. We see it's synonymously, the inner man as exhibited in the heart. And lastly, listen to what Paul says to the Ephesians in Ephesians 4. And you can actually skip up there a little bit in your Bibles to Ephesians 4, we're going to look at verse 17 to start for a moment. And you're going to see we have the terms mind and understanding and ignorance, ignorance of heart, all of these things synonymous with those who don't know Christ. Ephesians 4:17, Paul is speaking to those in Christ, those who've been saved by faith in Christ, those who've been saved by faith in Christ, Ephesians 2:8-9. Ephesians 4:17,

¹⁷ This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; [Ephesians 4:17-18]

You see all these terms pointing to the inner man, which is seated with our thinking and our minds. So I believe we see here that the way we think really will indicate who we are. Proverbs 23:7,⁷ **For as he thinks within himself, so he is.** What you are consists of what you think about; I'm not going to reduce it that much but our inner man, and our thinking, and our hearts are put together and synonymous in

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that sense. And also Scripture describes mankind based on a heart condition. God's Word speaks of a change of heart, being sad in heart, being glad in heart, being slow of heart to believe, uncircumcised hearts, hardness of heart, sincerity of heart, a heart of pride and arrogance, idols of the heart. Unbelievers are seen as having hearts of stone, and the redeemed are given new hearts, hearts of flesh. In Scripture we see God describes us by our heart conditions.

So then, I believe biblically speaking, the heart of man represents the inner man, just as our physical hearts are the center of our physical life. Our spiritual hearts are the hearts in the spiritual center of our souls, our spiritual lives. So as he thinks, so he is. Now back to our text,

⁸ ***"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. [Matthew 5:8]***

What does this term pure mean? We have an understanding hopefully about what the heart means. But what does this term pure mean? It modifies the term heart. The term here pure is a Greek term called *katharos*, which speaks of or means literally clean. It spoke of that literally which was free from dirt. Hopefully your kitchens are *katharos*, free from dirt, or your houses, or your cars. My car isn't, but *katharos*. And it was used to speak of the purity of metals that had been refined. It was used metaphorically to speak of an unadulterated mixture. It was used to speak of that which was pure. It was also used to speak of in a ritual sense of clean and unclean foods, of clean and unclean animals for sacrifice. And it is used metaphorically in Scripture to speak of a way of life, a morally and spiritually clean life that is pure from wrongdoing, without sin. And it's translated in Scripture pure, clear and more often than not, clean. Blessed are the clean in heart.

Without mixture, without dirt, without impurity. Not blessed are the almost pure, blessed are the pure in heart. And I believe Jesus is saying blessed are those who have cleansed hearts. The blessed are those whose hearts are clean. Blessed are those whose mind and thinking have been cleansed. Now I think we need to recognize everyone apart from God has an impure heart; a heart that has not been cleaned, and cleansed from sin. Now just because someone thinks their heart is clean doesn't mean their hearts are cleansed. Listen to Proverbs 20:9, ⁹ ***"Who can say, "I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin "?*** The issue of cleansed hearts has to do with sin. And notice, man apart from God often thinks that he is clean. Proverbs 16:2, ² ***All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives.*** You see when we have this veil over our eyes which we cannot see because we have not turned to Christ, we self-deceive ourselves to think we are clean.

We also see in Scripture that some people think that they are pure. Proverbs 30:12, ¹² ***There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, Yet is not washed from his filthiness.*** There may be some of you today that are pure in your own eyes, you think you are clean before the Lord. But God says, yet you are not washed from your filthiness. Blessed are the pure in heart. And I need to share with you, it is not your opinion that matters, it is not my opinion that matters, it is God's opinion of you that matters because He sees the heart. He does not look on the outside, as Samuel would say, but God looks in the heart. Jesus made it clear later on in Mark chapter 7 that it is in the heart where sin originates. Let's turn up a little bit to Mark chapter 7, verse 18. Now, we have the Pharisees who are questioning Him. Verse 18,

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¹⁸ **And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him; ¹⁹ because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?"** (He's talking about the fact that foods don't defile you, and then it says) **(Thus He declared all foods clean.)** (If you lean towards a demonic theology that certain foods are clean and unclean, they will make you better and more holy to God, He says here He declared all foods clean) ²⁰ **And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. ²¹ "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²² deeds of coveting** (that's just wanting other people's stuff) **and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. ²³ "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." [Mark 7:18-23]**

They proceed from the heart, all these things. And they defile us. Man apart from God is not pure in heart. And we need to acknowledge our need of cleansing, man has a defiled deceitful sinful heart which separates him from a holy God. We saw earlier in Romans 3, there are none righteous, not even one. And Jeremiah makes it clear to the Jews in Jerusalem who thought their hearts were right, but they were on the road to judgment. Jeremiah makes it clear in Jeremiah 17:9,

⁹ **"The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?** (If you don't know Christ, you have a desperately sick heart. It is not functioning right, desperately sick. And he goes on) ¹⁰ **"I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind,** (again that parallelism there) **Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds. [Jeremiah 17:9-10]**

Folks, there are none righteous, not even one. All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death. We all have corrupted minds and thinking. We all have sinned before the Lord God, none of us apart from God have pure hearts. And folks, our hearts are laid before God and He sees everything. Proverbs 21:2, ² **Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts.** Proverbs 17:3, ³ **The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the LORD tests hearts.** Proverbs 15:11, ¹¹ **Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD, How much more the hearts of men!** Your heart is way open before the Lord. Proverbs 24:12,

¹² **If you say, "See, we did not know this," Does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul? And will He not render to man according to his work? [Proverbs 24:12]**

God sees your heart. You may have come here with whatever motives, God knows your motives this morning, He knows your hearts. And Jesus made it clear that what comes from our hearts, manifests whether we are truly God or evil, and there will be a judgment day. Matthew 12:34, Jesus speaking to those Pharisees who looked good on the outside,

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³⁴ "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. ³⁵ "The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil. ³⁶ "And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. ³⁷ "For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned." [Matthew 12:34-37]

Because the words come from our heart, they represent where our hearts are at. And I want to ask you, has your heart been cleansed? Has your heart been cleansed? Friend, because of sin, our minds are defiled. Titus 1:15,

¹⁵ To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. [Titus 1:15]

Now some of you might think you are pure because of what you do. And the Jews of this day thought they were pure because of what they did. But Jesus graciously addresses them, and He shares that only the pure of heart, the cleansed of heart are blessed. For example, the Pharisees were clean on the outside. Maybe some of you are very clean on the outside, someone would look at your life and say "Wow, what an incredible life!" But Jesus, who sees the heart, shared that their insides need cleansing. Matthew 23:25-28, Jesus says,

²⁵ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. (Just self-seeking). ²⁶ "You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. ²⁷ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ "Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. [Matthew 23:25-28]

God sees your heart. Your religion does not make you right. He says, clean the inside of the cup first! And God is a gracious God to declare this before judgment day, that our hearts are not right. That there are none righteous, not even one. Take for instance God's gracious words to Israel before they were brought into disciplinary judgment. You can turn there, Isaiah 1; God's gracious analysis. He says in Isaiah 1:10, He's speaking to Israel here who thought they were righteous, they thought they were right before the Lord. And He's going to use some strong words,

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah. (He's not talking about Sodom and Gomorrah, He's saying you guys are like that) ¹¹ "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, And the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. ¹² "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? ¹³ "Bring your worthless

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offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. ¹⁴ "I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me. I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you, Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. ¹⁶ "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷ Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless; Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow. (And here's how it's done, here's how we get washed) ¹⁸ "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool [Isaiah 1:10-18]

We see later on, it is the suffering servant, Jesus Christ, who was pierced for their transgressions in the same book we see. It was through Christ that was brought about the forgiveness of sins. Now some of you here today, maybe you look good on the outside, but your hearts are not cleansed. Your minds are defiled with sin. You don't live to serve Christ, you are not hungry and thirsty for His righteousness in your life, you do not exhibit His mercy, you do not exhibit a submission to Him, manifest in gentleness. You do not believe that you are spiritually bankrupt. You don't mourn over your own sin. And maybe you're coming here today to feel better about yourself, but all you're doing is cleaning the outside and not the inside of the cup. Don't be a hypocrite, you need a heart change. Nothing you can do can change your heart. Jeremiah 13:23, and this idea of Israel thinking they could change themselves. The Lord God says "Can the Ethiopian change His skin? Or the leopard change his spots?" You can't do it. You need a heart change. Your heart is hard towards God, hard towards His Word. And God is gracious to show you that you are not blessed if your heart is not cleansed.

And I believe we will see we need to recognize and accept His provision of cleansing in Christ, repenting of our sin and trusting in Christ. You see folks, you can have a clean heart today, a heart that is cleansed of sin. And it is only through Jesus Christ, the Son of God that we have the cleansing of sin. Hebrews 1

³ And He is the radiance of His glory (speaking of Christ) **and the exact representation of His nature,** (speaking of Christ) **and upholds all things by the word of His power** (speaking of Christ). **When He had made purification (katharimos, cleansing) of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; [Hebrews 1:3]**

Jesus Christ is the one who brings cleansing for sins. Only God incarnate could forgive you of your sins. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word came and dwelt among us, took on flesh and dwelt among us. And if you're still unclear who brings cleansing, turn with me to Titus 2. We went through Titus a few months ago. Titus 2, wonderful, wonderful statement. The beginning of Titus 2, Paul gives sound doctrine to Titus, how we are to live, who we are to be, old men, young men, old women, young women, who we are to be. And then he shows us how we are to be this way in Titus 2:11.

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¹¹ **For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,** (God's grace, His favor towards you that you do not deserve came and appeared in Christ) ¹² **instructing us** (right now His grace is instructing us through Christ) **to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,** ¹³ **looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;** (who is the God and Savior? Here it is Christ Jesus Scripture says) ¹⁴ **who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed** (that's to buy us back from all of our sin, and here we are) **and purify** (*katharidzo*, clean) **for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.** ¹⁵ **These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you. [Titus 2:11]**

Christ wants to clean us and purify us that we would be His own possession. And it is through the sacrifice of Christ that we were washed, and we were renewed. A little farther on, Titus 3:3,

³ **For we also once were foolish ourselves,** (this is the way we were, there's that old song "The way we were", this is it) **disobedient, deceived,** (we were deceived) **enslaved to various lusts and pleasures,** (if you don't know Christ, you are a slave to your desires, you can't get free from your own desires, and he says here) **spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.** ⁴ **But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,** ⁵ **He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness,** (no righteous deeds save you) **but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,** ⁶ **whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, [Titus 3:3-6]**

Notice it says, God our Savior in verse four and Jesus Christ our Savior in verse six. The washing and regeneration. When you place your faith in Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God cleanses you from your sin, He unites you to Christ, the work of Christ is applied to your life and your sins are forgiven. And you are cleansed. Blessed are the cleansed in heart.

Now when we were saved, our bodies weren't redeemed, but they will be. Our inner man was redeemed. Our souls were saved, our minds were cleansed. The veil was lifted. And in the book of Acts chapter 15 we see the apostle Paul before the council making it clear that both Jews and Greeks had had their hearts cleansed by faith. Acts 15, and I'll read a little bit here. Acts 15:7, this is the beginning of the church where they were transitioning and Gentiles were being saved and they were wondering about this.

⁷ **And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.** ⁸ **"And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit,** (there you go, it was a witness that the gentiles had been saved, a very special time in Acts) **just as He also did to us;** ⁹

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**and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.
[Acts 15:7-9]**

When you trust in Jesus Christ your heart is cleansed. You're not saved through an experience. You're not saved through what you do. If you have not heard the gospel and believe the gospel you are not saved. It is through the gospel that we are saved, it is the power of God unto salvation, and the gospel is the good news that God incarnate took on human flesh and died for our sins and was buried and rose from the dead. And if you call out to Jesus Christ for salvation to save you, you will have a purified heart. Peter talks about this in 2 Peter, us believers, if we're not functioning right, if we're not living right it's probably because we've forgotten our former purification of sin. 2 Peter 1 talks about having forgotten our former purification, cleansing, same word. You forgot you were cleansed. You forgot what Christ did for you.

But for some of you, you see, our hearts were dirty and defiled by sin, corrupted consciences. Our thoughts are not right before Christ. We are hardened towards God. We are rebellious. So much so we think we can be saved in other ways. Experience or religion or whatever it might be, we are hardened by the true living God. And if you think you don't have sin you're deceiving yourself. All the ways of a man are clean in his own site. There is a kind who pure in his own eyes yet is not washed from his filthiness. Who can say "I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?" I often talk to people and I say "What would you say if you were to die today and stand before the living God and He were to say 'Why should I let you into my heaven?'" And always I'll hear, if they're not saved, an answer such that "I have done this, I am good, I have...". No! Who can say they have purified their own hearts? Only Christ cleanses the heart.

Leprosy in Scripture is a picture of sin. And we see a leper who came to Jesus for cleansing. He understood he could not cleanse himself, same word, katharos. And He said to Jesus "You can make me clean." Some of you today need to come before the Lord and say "You can make me clean. I believe you died for my sins, you can make me clean." Are you willing to cry out to Jesus for salvation? Are you willing to call upon His name? For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

A wonderful truth, when you trust in Christ alone apart from your own works, the true Christ of the Bible, not a Christ of our own imagination. Jesus who is the living God in human flesh. When you trust in Him He cleanses you of your sin. You are cleansed. He takes the veil away and you can see and understand now and know the living God. Listen to Ezekiel 36, it is a portion in which we see the future salvation of Israel, but in this portion we see what God does in our salvation. Ezekiel 36, speaking of what He's going to do to Israel, verse 25,

²⁵ "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. (And

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this is for Israel) ²⁸ "And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. [Ezekiel 36:25-28]

Do you have a cleansed heart? Blessed are the clean in heart. Christ has done all the work. If you are thirsty, come and drink from the water of life with no cost. If you recognize you have a heart that is dirty, Christ will save you. All you who are weary and heavy laden, you're working for your salvation, it's hard work and it doesn't get you there. Jesus will give you rest for your souls. Oh, but I must warn you, if you reject so great a salvation, if you trample underfoot the blood of Christ there is nothing left but a terrifying expectation of judgment. Hebrews 10:26,

²⁶ For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, (I know the truth) there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. [Hebrews 10:26-27]

If you reject the gospel that Christ alone cleanses your hearts through faith in Him, there is nothing left but a certain tarrying expectation of judgment. If you reject God the Son who came, took on flesh, humbled Himself, He became poor that we may become rich, if you reject that, there's nothing left but judgment. It is a terrifying thing the writer writes, to fall into the hands of the living God.

Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are those of a cleansed heart. The Lord God was gracious; Jesus was gracious to share with these Jews who thought they were clean. They thought they were God's people, "We got a ticket to heaven." He was gracious to show them who is truly blessed. And you've heard it today, and you're responsible. And I pray that you've truly trusted in Christ, repenting of your sin and trusting in Him. Blessed are those who have cleansed hearts.

Paul understood that he had a pure heart. 1 Timothy 1:5, ***⁵ But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure (kathoros) heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*** 2 Timothy 1:3, ***³ I thank God, whom I serve with a clear (or kathoros, cleansed) conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day.*** 2 Timothy 2:22, ***²² Now flee from youthful lusts (Paul tells Timothy), and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure (cleansed) heart.*** Don't be hanging out religiously with anybody who doesn't have a cleansed heart. Blessed are the pure in heart.

Do you have a cleansed conscience? Now does this cleansing stop at the cross? Is the work done when we believe? Scripture is clear that we were saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, Ephesians 2:8-9. That we are being saved, presently, 1 Corinthians 1:18. And that we will be saved, Romans 13:11, salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. God cleanses us from sin when we are saved, giving us new hearts, His Spirit cleansing our hearts. But soon after we are saved, we realize that we begin to think the way we used to think don't we? That our hearts get corrupted by thoughts that are not Godly, that we get conformed to the world. Yes we have pure hearts in position in Christ; they've been cleansed from our sins. But we get dirty again. And Jesus gives a wonderful example of this in John 13, which is so misunderstood. And let's turn there together, John 13. Those who are devoid of the Spirit of

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God, those who do not handle the Word accurately to their own shame, those who twist and distort the Scriptures, who take this passage and see it only in its physical sphere. John 13, let's take a look at this for a moment. John 13, let's go to verse 3.

³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. ⁵ Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. (So the Lord Jesus takes on the lowest of jobs, of a servant, washing the feet of the disciples. Then look what happens) ⁶ And so He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter." (It's absolutely crucial for understanding the passage that the obvious foot washing is not the point here. "What I do you do not realize." Now, Peter realized it was about foot washing physically, but He says is "What I do, you do not realize".) ⁸ Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." ("Give me a bath!" He's saying, and what was Jesus' answer? Don't miss this, it points to the spiritual reality behind what he's trying to say) ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed (that's *louo*) needs only to wash (that's *nipto*) his feet, but is completely clean; (Aha! There's our word *kathoros*. *He who has bathed is completely clean*) and you are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹ For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean." [John 13:3-11]

The disciples were clean, they had been washed; they were cleansed. Judas wasn't clean. And He's pointing out here that cleansing came with salvation, as we'll see. Then look at verse 12....

¹² And so when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? (It's not what it seems. What is He getting at? It's not about foot washing, which we had a church here that would go do foot washing. It's not about foot washing, it's about the fact that those who are clean are completely clean, cleansed of sin. But yet they get dirty. We get dirty don't we? We get dirty with sin, those who are completely clean don't we? We need to have our feet washed. We need other brothers and sisters to come alongside and wash our feet. We need them to do that. He says here) ¹³ "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. [John 13:12-15]

And I believe he's not talking about foot washing, "What I do, you do not realize now, but you shall understand here after". And brothers and sisters, in marvelous fashion, the disciples did not run out cleaning everyone's feet all the time. But they brought the Word of God to bear upon people's lives, to cleanse them.

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You can be completely clean in Christ, but we get stained with sin. But God is gracious to continually cleanse our hearts. Blessed are the cleansed of heart. Now folks, how is it that God cleanses it initially? It is through the gospel, the power of God unto salvation. John 15, a little farther on, Jesus makes it clear how they got cleansed,

² "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. ³ "You are already clean (you're kathoros) because of the word which I have spoken to you. [John 15:2-3]

God speaks His Word of truth, He opens the heart, we believe and we are cleansed. But how does God cleanse those who are already clean? How does He cleanse us when we get dirty, brothers and sisters? We see it's through the confession of sin and the blood of Christ that we are cleansed. 1 John 1:6,

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to (kathoros) cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1 John 1:6-9]

But how do we keep ourselves pure? Brother and sister, how do we stay clean? We're not going to be perfectly clean, but how do we walk in a manner worthy? Psalm 119:9,

⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word. ¹⁰ With all my heart I have sought Thee; Do not let me wander from Thy commandments. (He's humble before the Lord, "I will wander unless You take hold of me) ¹¹ Thy word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against Thee. ¹² Blessed art Thou, O LORD; Teach me Thy statutes. [Psalm 119:9-12]

And it is through the Word of God that we grow in respect to salvation that we are cleansed. Now the applications are obvious, we need to be in the Word of God, we need to confess sin, we need to not forget our former purification from sins. We ought to be coming alongside believers, those who are pure in heart, those who are clean, coming alongside when they get dirty with sin, we ought to wash their feet with the water of the Word. Ephesians 5,

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; ²⁶ that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. [Ephesians 5:25-27]

Are your feet dirty with sin brother and sister? Have you been conformed to the world? We need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Have you washed someone's feet lately? I had a wonderful example of this yesterday. A brother came to me and washed my feet. Did he come and bring a bowl to

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wash my feet? He came to me and said "You know, a couple weeks ago you said something concerning another brother that wasn't Godly." He came and washed my feet, and I needed to confess that sin, Lord God, I sinned, I was wrong. Have you graciously and humbly washed someones feet lately? Are you willing to let someone come alongside you and do so? You've got to admit they're dirty first. We're clean brothers and sisters, but we get dirty. Husbands, are you washing your wives feet, literally and spiritually? I'm not talking about nagging or being the sin police. Graciously pointing out when we are stained by sin. Are you willing to wash your husband's feet women? Parents, your children's feet? Christ uses His Word to cleanse us. Blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the cleansed in heart.

And what's the wonderful, wonderful result? We see the blessed will be eternally cleansed. Turn with me to 1 John 3, and we'll finish up here. 1 John 3, and boy did the disciples cleanse believers' feet and still do through the words of Scripture. Isn't that wonderful? 1 John 3:1,

¹ See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. (Good stuff coming brothers and sisters...) We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. [1 John 3:1-3]

We are going to be pure, a different word here, but used synonymously. The glorious day when Christ comes, where we meet Him either through death or His coming. We will be made completely like Him. And this should motivate us to purity right now. Blessed are the pure in heart.

And lastly, we see the result. Blessed, back in Matthew, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the pure in heart. Why are they blessed? For they shall literally see God. What an amazing statement. We do not see Christ right now. We do not see God right now. Don't believe anybody that says they've seen Jesus. He's at the right hand of the Father. Peter says, "And though you have seen Him, you love Him, though you do not see Him now.

We don't physically see Jesus, but the promise is blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. When we see Him, we will be just like He is. Not that we are God, but we are cleansed and pure like Christ is pure. And in closing, we see in Revelations, seeing Him is totally tied up to being with Him. Revelation 21, let's turn there, and we'll finish up. Chapter 21, wonderful, wonderful passage that the eternal results after God had taken back what was rightfully His through Christ, after all have been judged, sin has been removed forever. Revelation 21:3,

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, ⁴ and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵ And He who sits on the throne said,

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"Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." ⁶ And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. (It costs nothing to be saved) ⁷ "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. ⁸ "But for the cowardly and unbelieving (if you don't believe, here's your place) and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, (ever told a lie?) their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." [Revelation 21:3-8]

If you go farther on, chapter 22:1,

¹ And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, ² in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; ⁴ and they shall see His face, [Revelation 22:1-4]

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Prayer

Father, thank you for Your Word. I thank you so much for your faithfulness. I thank You that You will not allow anyone to think they are Yours and truly not be saved. Father, I thank You that Your Son declared those who are blessed, in a right relationship with You, have cleansed hearts. I pray for anyone here whose heart has not been cleansed. I pray they would be convicted of their sin, their impure thoughts, their wicked ways, the things they have thought which are evil and wrong. I pray they would confess their sin and cry out to Christ to save them. For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. Father, I pray You would save them. And Father, for those of us who believe, who have been purified from our former sins, oh Lord, may we continue to walk in purity. May we allow Your Word to cleanse us, to change our minds from the sinful thinking that we act upon. May we be willing to wash other's feet. May we be able to come alongside them and wash their feet, sharing Your Word. And Lord God, I do pray that we would be thankful, that we would look forward to being in Your presence, where we will see Your Son. You've said in Your Word, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see You. Thank You so much for Your Word, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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