

“Presence for the Pure”

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8)

1. Discuss our modern concepts of purity.
 - a. What comes to mind when you think of purity in respect to daily routines.

 - b. What comes to mind when you think of purity in respect to morals or lifestyles?

2. Discuss the concept of purity from the Old Testament.
 - a. Read Genesis 7:1-3. How are the animals differentiated for Noah? Can you find other passages that speak of animals in this way?

 - b. Read Numbers 5:1-4. Who was to be sent out of the camp? How do you react to passages like this? Do you have any ideas about why this may have been commanded?

 - c. Read Exodus 30:18-19. What was commanded? Why do you think God commanded this?

 - d. Read Psalm 24:1-6.
 - i. What do these verses say about God?

 - ii. What do these verses say about people?

 - iii. Looking at verse four, how would you describe those who would be allowed to see God?

 - iv. How does this passage connect with Matthew 5:8?

3. Read Mark 7:1-8.
 - a. How were the Jews applying the purity rules of the Old Testament to their daily lives? How do you think they viewed themselves as a result?

 - b. What would life have been like for families, or the disabled, or the elderly were they to attempt to keep all of these rules?

 - c. What was Jesus’ assessment of these religious people?

 - d. What kinds of purity “rituals” do we practice in our culture? What about in our church cultures?

4. Read Matthew 5:8 again.
 - a. What kind of purity was Jesus speaking of?
 - b. What would this kind of purity look like (cf. Matt. 23:23)? Try to expand on the concepts Jesus highlights in verse 23 in specific, practical ways.
 - c. Looking at the context of the whole sermon on the mount, can you find examples of Jesus' teaching that take obedience beyond just external compliance? Why would this have seemed even more difficult to Jesus' hearers than simple adherence to purity rituals?

5. Read and meditate upon Titus 3:5
 - a. How does this passage relate to this Beatitude (5:8)?
 - b. What does this passage say about the work of salvation?
 - i. Whose work is it? How is this truth taught and emphasized in this passage?
 - ii. What was it that moved God to do this work? (How might this relate to Matt. 5:7?)
 - iii. How does this differ from what the Pharisees taught? How do you think they may have reacted to a message like this?
 - c. How does this passage give hope? How should it shape our attitudes toward God? Each other?

6. Take note that Jesus did not say the "pure" will see God but the pure "in heart".
 - a. What is the focal point of God's concern (cf. Matt. 15:18-19)?
 - b. How might this have given hope to those who were ritually unclean (cf. Numbers 5:1-2)?
 - c. How does 1 John 1:9 and 2:1-2 give you hope about the purity of your own heart?

7. There is a connection between our heart condition and the choices we make in life.
 - a. Can you identify choices that you are making that reveal your deeper heart condition?
 - i. Give examples that might demonstrate the new life (the clean heart) God has given you.
 - ii. Give examples that might demonstrate the left over corruption that is still there.
 - b. Think of the last time you experienced disordered emotions (e.g. anxiety, worry, anger, loneliness, etc.) and answer the following questions:
 - i. What were you wanting? What were your hopes? Expectations?
 - ii. What were you thinking when you didn't get what you wanted?
 - iii. What did you do or what did you feel as a result?
 - iv. In what ways does Jesus provide for these deeper desires of your heart?
[If you don't know how to answer this, talk with someone to get help.]