

The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:1-16

The Character and Witness of the Citizens of the Kingdom

I. Vision – Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God (5:8)

A. In biblical imagery, the heart is the center of the entire personality

1. In this Beatitude, Jesus confers special blessings not on the intellectually keen not the emotionally pious, but the pure in heart.
2. Jesus describes the condition of the heart in rather graphic terms in Matthew 15:19 (See also Jer.17: 9; Romans 1:21: 2:5)
3. Despite this condition of our hearts, purity of heart is the indispensable prerequisite for fellowship with God – for “seeing” God (Psalm 24:3-4; 73:1; Hebrews 12:14)
4. Ultimately, when Jesus returns, we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2-3) and that is our long-range expectation, our hope
5. We purify ourselves now because that is what we will ultimately be – our present efforts are consistent with our future hope
6. As we look forward to the final perfection of the Kingdom, we are determined to be prepared for it
7. Knowing that we are in the Kingdom now, we are concerned with purity because we recognize that the King is pure and the Kingdom in its perfected form will admit only purity
8. Our perception of God, as well as His ways and our fellowship with Him, depends on the purity of our heart.

B. Purity of heart is different than outward conformity to rules

1. What do you think about when your mind goes into neutral?
2. How much sympathy do you have for deception, no matter how appealing?
3. What do you think of “off color humor: regardless how funny?
4. What do you want more than anything else?
5. To what do you give your allegiance?
6. What and whom do you love?

7. To what extent are your words and actions accurate reflections of what is in your heart?
8. To what extent do your words and actions constitute a cover-up for what is in your heart?

C. Progression of Scripture

1. Ezekiel 36:22-27 – God takes in the responsibility for us to become like Him
2. Col. 2:8-12 – Jesus cut away heart of sin within us
3. Romans 7:15-25 – inner person the same character as God; sin in members
4. Romans 8:19-22 – inner recreation prior to the final freeing of the world
5. Romans 6:12-23 – enjoy new freedom; part by part sanctification (set apart to be holy)
6. 1 John 3:1-3 – when we see Christ, we will be just like Him

Summary:

Everything we ever need to be, God has already made us in His Son. Now we work out that purity and freedom by His power within our earthly bodies and the world around us. God has set us apart (Sanctified) to be the vessels of His life in this world, and we participate with Him and set our bodies apart for the fulfillment of God's intended purpose for us in this world.