

Matthew
The Pure in Heart
Matthew 5:8
September 7, 2025
Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher
Countryside Bible Church, Southlake, Texas

Jesus tells us that we are to be pure or clean in heart. That concept really is rooted in the Old Testament. The Old Testament Law is filled with commands concerning that which is clean and that which is unclean. Some of those laws, as you know, deal with obviously moral issues, but many others address what we commonly refer to as ceremonial cleanness or uncleanness. In other words, it's not moral '*per se*,' it's rather a lesson of cleanness and uncleanness related to things that, in and of themselves, are not immoral. For example, the laws concerning touching a dead body, or the laws and guidelines concerning a woman relating to her period, having a skin disease, eating certain foods, none of those things is immoral. Instead, those laws that determine whether you were ceremonially clean or unclean served a very important purpose because they pictured a crucial spiritual reality, and it's this, "You can only enter God's presence if you are clean by His standard." That was the lesson behind all of those laws of cleanness and uncleanness.

Let me show you one powerful example, one you may not be familiar with. Turn back to Exodus, chapter 30; Exodus, chapter 30, this is really a shocking law from God, and it illustrates the point. Exodus 30, verse 17:

The LORD (Yahweh) spoke to Moses, saying, "You shall also make a laver of bronze (like a giant pool of bronze), with its base of bronze, for washing; and you shall put it between the tent of the meeting (the tabernacle) and the altar (where the animals were to be sacrificed), and you shall put water in it. Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it; (verse 20) when they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash

with water, so that they will not die (Wow! If that was the consequence for not washing your hands, I think you would remember.); or when they approached the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire *sacrifice* to the LORD (Yahweh). So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die; and it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations.

So, the priest had to become ceremonially clean by washing their hands and feet before they could enter the presence of God. And to fail to do so was to have God strike you dead! That's for the priests.

But even for the normal Israelite to be ceremonially unclean had profound consequences. If you were pronounced that way by the law, then you had to, in many cases, remain outside the camp, away from your family and friends, until you were ceremonially clean again. More importantly, you had to stay away from the tabernacle, and later the temple, where God physically manifested His presence. So, understand this, the ceremonial laws of cleanness and uncleanness, pictured in the end, one fundamental, profound spiritual lesson, and that is you can only enter God's presence if you are clean by the standard He sets.

Psalm 24, verse 3 says, “Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place?” It’s talking now about the earthly temple, “He who has clean hands and a pure heart.” Now, immediately when I say that, it presents for us an insurmountable problem because our hearts, by nature, are not pure. Job 25, verse 4, Job says, “How then can a man be just? Or how can he be clean who is born of a woman?” In other words, there are no humans that are clean before God. Proverbs 20, verse 9, “Who can say, ‘I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?’” The obvious answer is no one can say that.

Sadly, there are some in our world who deceive themselves and convince themselves that they're clean, but Proverbs 30, verse 12, describes them like this, "There is a kind of *man* (person) who is pure in his own eyes, yet is not washed from his filthiness." Jesus taught that what renders us unclean before God is not primarily what we do, but who we are. It's what's in our hearts. Mark 7:20-21, Jesus says, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart..." We'll look at that passage in just a moment. So, to enter God's presence then, you have to have a clean heart, and that is Jesus' point in the Beatitude that we come to today in our study of "The Sermon on the Mount."

Turn with me to Matthew, chapter 5, and look at verse 8, this is what we want to study together today. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Those who belong to Jesus' spiritual kingdom are always known for pure hearts. Let me say that again. Those who belong to Jesus' spiritual kingdom, that is those who really know Him, those who are truly His disciples, are known for having pure hearts. Now, again, in this brief statement that appears so simple on the surface, there is so much rich and profound truth. And in our time together this morning, I want us to consider several issues about what it means to have a pure heart.

The first issue we need to consider is this. Let's call it "The Seat of Purity," the seat of purity. Where exactly does purity reside? Verse 8, "Blessed are the pure in heart." Jesus here is not talking solely about external purity, mere external conformity, legalism. You know, there are always people who think like that. There are people in every religious setting who think that God is happy as long as they just do certain things externally and don't do other things externally. We can be guilty of mistaking this false kind of cleanness with true spiritual purity. In the end, this is really a reproach on God because it basically says, "God is not very smart, easily deceived, and easily satisfied." You know, it's the thing that I grew up with, the sort of,

you know, “God is happy with me if I don't smoke and I don't chew and I don't run with girls that do.” You know that whole external thing. A lot of people think like that. In Scripture, it is true that genuine purity does express itself externally. Psalm 24:4, the one who can enter God's presence “has clean hands,” meaning their behavior, what they do is right before God. But true purity doesn't start there; it doesn't start with behavior. It starts in the heart.

Turn over to Matthew, chapter 23. As Jesus addresses the scribes and Pharisees and denounces them, He makes this point crystal clear. Matthew 23, verse 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. You blind Pharisee, (Now listen to this,) first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.”

Do you see the order? Jesus says, listen, “The fix here is inside, and if you're going to fix your problem, you have to start, not with the external actions, but with the heart, the inside.”

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you're like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. (Now watch his diagnosis in verse 28.) So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Now, you need to understand if you're here this morning, and you live a life of externalism, you try to make the people in your home, maybe your parents, or maybe your friends, or maybe the people at church, you try to make them think that you're really a spiritual person when in your heart of hearts you know that isn't true. Listen, Jesus isn't fooled. He wasn't fooled by them, and

he's not fooled by you. He sees your heart. He knows who you are. He knows that inside your heart is dirty, and the heart is what has to be addressed. Turn over to Mark, chapter 7, I mentioned this passage a moment ago, Mark, chapter 7, verse 14, Jesus:

Called the crowd to Him again, He *began* saying to them, “Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him (He's talking about food, you know, the food laws.); but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.”

The disciples didn't understand, verse 17, and so He answers their question, verse 18:

“Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him (The foods you eat are not going to defile you morally before God.), because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?” (*Thus, He* declared all foods clean.) [By the way, let me just hit the pause button and say don't let any Christian on the internet convince you that you, as a New Testament believer, have to eat clean foods only and not unclean. He announced all foods were clean.] And He was saying (verse 20), “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within (here's the problem), out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, (and the other sins, verse 23)...All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

Jesus says our problem isn't outside influences—our problem is our heart, that's the problem.

That's why Jesus then says, “Blessed are the pure in heart.”

Now, our English word heart is used very differently than the Greek word. We often use our English word to speak solely of emotion. Around Valentine's Day, you know, there are hearts

everywhere talking about the feeling of love for someone. In American English, 'we think with the head and we feel with the heart.' But in Hebrew and Greek, the word 'heart' isn't like that. It refers to the center and source of your whole inner life. It's the real you. It includes your mind, your will, your disposition, your emotions, your desires, your affections. Again, it's the real you. It's where you think. It's where you make decisions. It's where you experience emotions. It's where you have desires. It's where you love. It's your entire inner self. That's your heart in biblical terms. The real you. Jesus says the one who belongs to His kingdom, who is spiritually whole, has a pure inner self. That's the seed of real purity, your entire inner self.

But what exactly is purity? Let's, secondly, examine "The Senses of Purity." That is, the different definitions for purity. Verse 8, He says, "Blessed are the pure," the pure. What's He talking about? Well, the Greek word is '*katharos*.' Several of our English words are simply transliterated into English from that Greek word. For example, the word 'catharsis' comes from this Greek word, and there are other words as well. But both this Greek word, in verse 8, and the corresponding Old Testament Hebrew word have two primary senses.

First of all, Jesus could have meant 'Pure' in the sense of, 'Not mixed.' In this sense, it means something without foreign particles or impurities, unadulterated, unmixed. For example, in Exodus 25, verse 11, it refers to pure gold, gold that's unmixed with and, therefore, untainted by other materials. Now, I don't think this is what Jesus means, and I'll tell you why in just a moment. But if this is what Jesus meant, then here's what he was saying. "Blessed are those whose heart for God is undivided, whose loyalty to God is unmixed with other things." Or we could say, "It's Single-minded." Now, again, that's possible, but I don't think it's likely because the second meaning of this Greek word and Hebrew word is the most commonly used in both Testaments.

This Greek word can also mean, secondly, 'Clean' in the sense of, 'Not dirty.' It refers to what is free from dirt and defilement. Now, in this way, in this sense, the word 'clean' is a good English equivalent, it's used three different ways in the Scriptures. First of all, it's used to refer to that which is "Physically Clean." We saw that just a moment ago in Matthew 23, where Jesus refers to a clean cup or a clean dish. Of course, He's using it metaphorically, but He's using a real dish and a real cup. And He's saying those can be physically dirty, and they can be clean. Later in Matthew 27:59, it speaks of "a clean linen cloth." So, it can be used to refer to that which is physically clean. This sense of the word can also be used to refer to that which is "Ceremonially Clean." In Leviticus 11, verses 33 and 36, it speaks of things that are ceremonially unclean because they've come in contact with a dead insect or a dead animal. They're not necessarily physically unclean, they're ceremonially unclean.

The third way this word clean is used in both Testaments is of that which is "Morally Clean." I think the best example of this is Habakkuk 1:13, where the prophet says of God, "*Your* eyes are too pure to approve evil." There's no dirt in You; there's nothing dirty; You are clean morally; You cannot look on wickedness with favor. Now, based on how Matthew uses this word and its primary meaning in Scripture, it's clear that Jesus intended this sense of the word, that which is clean, not dirty. And it's obvious that He didn't mean physically or ceremonially clean, because notice He says, "pure (or clean, What?) in heart." So He's talking about morally clean. Jesus was saying that those who are truly blessed, those who belong to His kingdom, are without the moral dirt or defilement of sin in their true inner selves; in their wills, in their emotions, in their thoughts, in their desires, in their affections. In other words, their hearts, their entire inner self is morally clean.

Now, before I go any further, let me stop here and clarify something, because in our generation, the word 'lean' has been redefined. If somebody's talking about a movie, and they say, "Well, it's clean." They don't mean that it's morally pure and morally right; they mean there are no explicit sexual acts. The movie, as a whole, might glorify all kinds of sin, premarital sex, adultery, homosexuality, but as long as there's no explicit sexual activity, people will say, "It's clean." That's not what the word clean means, and that's not what Jesus means. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, clean in this sense means, quote, 'free from spiritual or moral pollution; innocent.' That's what Jesus means, free of that which is morally or spiritually dirty in God's sight.

So, let's back up and make sure we understand Jesus' point. Here's what he's saying, "Only those who are truly spiritually clean in their entire inner self by God's standard will ever enter God's presence," that's what he's saying, "those who are clean in their thinking, their emotions, their desires, their decisions, their affections, their characters." Psalm 24, "He who has...a pure heart" is the one who can enter the Lord's presence. So, how does that happen? Where does such purity come from? Obviously, this is crucial to God. You don't see God without this.

So, we need to consider, thirdly, "The Steps to Purity." Only those with clean hearts can enter God's presence. But not one of us, by nature, is pure in heart. Origen, the church father, was right when he said, "Every sin stains the soul." Have you ever thought about that? Every sin you have ever committed has left a stain on your soul. I like fountain pens. In fact, I have one in my pocket right now. And when it comes to cleaning those pens, I can get a large container of pure, clean water. And if a single drop of ink falls in that water, what happens? Immediately, the entire picture is tainted with that one drop of ink. The same thing is true with our sin. It stains our souls.

Ivan Turganev, a 19th century Russian author, was right when he wrote this, “I do not know what the heart of a bad man is like, but I do know what the heart of a good man is like, and it is terrible.” Job 4:17, “Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?” Proverbs 20, verse 9, who can say, “I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?” Or in the words of Isaiah, chapter 64, verse 6, “All of us (without exception, everybody here, me, you, all of us, by nature, apart from Christ) have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds (the best things we've ever done) are like a filthy garment” in God's sight.

So how can you and I, who in God's eyes are not pure, become pure in heart? How can any of us become morally clean? Well, I studied the word group of this word ‘pure’ throughout the Scripture. As I prepared for this message, I looked at when it's used as an adjective, as it is here in our text. I looked at when it's used as a noun, when it's used as a verb. I traced the Old Testament Hebrew equivalent word. I traced this New Testament Greek word. And as a result of my study, I discovered that Scripture teaches there are three primary steps to moral or spiritual purity.

Number one, “In our regeneration, God initially cleanses the heart of the believing sinner from the guilt and stain of sin.” This is where it starts. How does a sinner who's impure before God, unclean before God, become clean? It starts at the moment of salvation in what Jesus calls “The new birth,” in regeneration. We read about this in Ezekiel. Go back to Ezekiel, chapter 36. The prophet, Ezekiel, describes this miracle that Jesus calls being born again; we call it regeneration. It's a radical change in us by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. And Ezekiel describes two kinds of cleansing in the new birth. Ezekiel 36, look at verse 25. Here's the first kind, in the promise of regeneration, God says this, “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.” This is the moment

of salvation. God gives our souls a bath. That's what He's talking about. He says, I'm going to bathe your soul, and I'm going to wash away all of the stains you have left on your soul through all of your life.

But then there's a second kind of cleansing in verses 26 and 27:

“Moreover, I will give you a new heart (I'm going to make you over again; I'm going to) and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone (I'm going to take out that fallen inner self, and I'm going to...) give you a heart of flesh (I'm going to give you a new heart.). I will put My Spirit within you and (I will) cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

So not only does God wash away the stain of sin from our lives and our hearts, but He recreates in us a new kind of life, a life marked now by love for God, love for His truth, and obedience to God.

This cleansing, this initial cleansing from sin and regeneration at the moment of salvation also appears in the New Testament. I love Acts 15:9, “He (God) is cleansing their (our) hearts by faith.” The moment you believed in Jesus Christ, God gave your soul a bath. 1 Peter 1, verse 22, “You have in obedience to the truth (That is, by responding to the gospel. You have...) purified your souls.” You see, a Christian is defined as one whose heart God has made pure in regeneration, in the new birth. “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean.”

According to 2 Timothy 2, verse 22, Christians, all Christians, are “those who call on the Lord from a pure heart,” a heart made pure in regeneration. How does God do that? How can God initially cleanse our hearts from sin? Biblically, there's only one way. It's through the death of an innocent substitute, someone who dies in our place. This was pictured in the Old Testament

through the sacrificial system. Leviticus 16:30 describes the day of atonement. It says this, “on this day (the day of atonement) that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the LORD.” In other words, that sacrifice on the day of atonement, those sacrifices, pictured the reality of cleansing that would come in the person of Jesus Christ. Turn over to Hebrews, chapter 9; the writer of Hebrews reminds us that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, but the blood of Christ could. Look at Hebrews, chapter 9, verse 11, “But when Christ appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come (that's the New Covenant), *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation.” In other words, He didn't offer His sacrifice in the earthly temple. “And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place (heaven itself) once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” Now watch verse 13:

For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled (who were unclean) sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh (their body), how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience (your heart, your soul) from dead works to serve the living God?

Friends, purity begins at the moment of salvation when we experience the new birth, and God gives our souls a bath.

A second step to purity of heart is “In our ongoing confession and repentance, God continually cleanses the hearts of believers,” He continually cleanses the hearts of believers. David, in Psalm 51, you remember what he prayed? In verse 2, “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity

and cleanse me from my sin.” Verse 10, “Create in me a clean heart (Recreate my heart again.), O God.” That's our prayer and that's exactly what God does in response to the prayer of those who know Him. 1 John 1, verse 7, “If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light (in other words, if we demonstrate the reality of our faith by living in patterns of obedience in our lives), (then) we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” And what's our responsibility in that? 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, (then) He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and (What?) to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” You see, believer, you were cleaned at the moment of salvation; your soul was bathed. But you need to, in an ongoing way, seek the forgiveness of God and in so doing, you are continually cleansed. Lloyd-Jones, I love what he says. He says, “Who are the pure in heart? They are those who are mourning about the impurity of their hearts; mourning by confessing, laying it before God.” You see, pure of heart doesn't mean you're perfect. Pure of heart means you've been regenerated, and in an ongoing way, you're laying your sin before God, asking for His cleansing. So, there is the initial cleansing of sin in regeneration, and there's the ongoing cleansing of sin as we continually confess and forsake our sin as believers. In other words, we need both the purity that results from regeneration, and we need the purity that results from ongoing sanctification.

By the way, you see both of those in John 13 in Jesus' foot washing. I wish I had time to take you there. But Jesus says, “Your salvation was like being bathed. And you don't need another bath.” Kids, don't listen to that part. He means spiritually. Once you've been bathed, once your soul has been bathed, you don't need another bath. “You just need your feet to be washed as you walk through the world” (Paraphrase). That's number one and number two here in my little list. Okay? Regeneration is the bath. Ongoing confession and repentance is having your feet washed.

A third step on the path to purity is this, “In our sanctification, God's Spirit continually cleanses our hearts from patterns of sin (and here's the key) as we strive to obey His Word.” By the way, if you're unclear on this point, go back and listen to the message I did recently on Romans, chapter 8, because I laid out the path of sanctification there. But this is just a summary of it.

Now, be careful. Remember, you can't make yourself clean in the ultimate sense. However, you can refuse to love and to tolerate that which is unclean, and you can actively pursue obedience to God's Word in your life, and you're commanded to do that. 2 Corinthians, chapter 7, verse 1, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” It doesn't mean you can ultimately make yourself clean. It means you have a responsibility. 1 John 3:3, “Everyone who has the hope *fixed* on Him (of seeing Jesus and being like Jesus) purifies himself, just as He (Jesus) is pure.” You see, to have a heart that is pure or clean morally, God must cleanse or wash your heart, but, listen carefully, God only cleans or purifies our hearts from patterns of sin as believers, as we understand, apply, and obey His Word. Let me say that again, “God only cleans our hearts from the patterns of sin that mark us as we understand, apply, and obey His Word.” John 15:3, Jesus says, “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”

Now, here's the encouraging part. Although, Christian, you will never be perfect in this life, if you've experienced the cleansing of regeneration, if you're not the person you once were, if you're a new creation in Christ, if you're continually confessing your sins and turning from those sins, and if you're seeking to cleanse your own heart by obeying the Word, and really allowing the Spirit to change you through that obedience, then (Guess what?) you are pure in heart. Pure isn't perfection; that will come someday, but you can be pure in heart right now if those three steps mark your life. To do so is to be pure.

I love what Thomas Watson, the English Puritan, writes about this. He says, “We must distinguish the various kinds of purity. First, there is a primitive purity which is in God originally and, essentially, as light is in the sun.” So, there's that purity. Then, he says, “Second, there is a created purity. Thus, holiness is in the angels and was once in Adam. Adam's heart did not have the least spot of impurity as he was originally created.” And then, third, he says, “This is us. There is an evangelical purity in which grace is mingled with some sin like gold in the ore. This mixture, God calls purity in a gospel sense.” And I love this analogy. He says:

As a face may be said to be fair which has some freckles. Where there is a study of purity (in other words, where there's a desire for, a commitment to purity), and a loathing of ourselves for our impurity, this is to be pure in heart. Not perfect; but you hate the impurity, and you're pursuing purity, that is to be pure in heart.

So, those are the steps to purity: Regeneration, ongoing confession and repentance, and sanctification.

Fourthly and finally, we need to consider one last issue in this Beatitude. And that is “The Satisfaction of Purity.” Look again at verse 8, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Listen, if you're a Christian, if there beats within you a heart for God, then, this is your desire, you want to see God, you want to be in His presence. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve saw and walked and talked with God in the cool of the day. After the fall, in his sinfulness, man could never see the face of God without being incinerated. Exodus 33:20, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” But the consistent desire of the saints has always been that, one day, we will see God. Job 19:26, “Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another.”

The pure in heart, Matthew 5, verse 8, will see God. 1 John 3:2, “We will see Him just as He is.” Revelation 22:4, the saints “will see His face.” This has forever been the hope of God's people. And, when the Holy Spirit completes our sanctification in glorification, and we are completely clean, then, Christian, you will see His face. The Bible promises that.

But what exactly does it mean to see God or to see the face of God? Well, you know this. The Bible teaches, our Lord taught in John 4:24, that God is an invisible spirit. So, when Scripture says that we will see God or we'll see God's face, it means two things. First of all, it means that we will see “The glorified body of the second person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

That's what all of those who witnessed Him after His resurrection saw, 1 Corinthians 15. That's what the disciples saw in Acts, chapter 1, as they watched Jesus ascend into heaven. In Revelation, chapter 1, that's what John saw on the Isle of Patmos. And, in Revelation 19, that's what the entire world will see at the second coming of Jesus Christ. But, for us who know Him (Have you ever thought about this?), this is what Jesus prays for you. John 17:24, “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory.” That's what Jesus wants for you. He wants you to see Him in all of His glory. So, that's what it means.

But, secondly, to see God also means that we will see “Whatever physical manifestation God chooses, likely blazing glorious light.” That's how God manifests Himself in Ezekiel, chapter 1. Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:16 that God “dwells in unapproachable light.” So, those are the two things that we will see when we see God, when we see the face of God. We will enjoy what theologians call the “Beatific Vision.” We will gaze on God, not in some vision, but physically, we will see God. And forever, friends, it will be a thrilling, captivating, compelling, life-changing vision, and we will worship Him forever. D.A. Carson writes, “The pure in heart will

see God; now, with the eyes of faith, and finally, in the dazzling brilliance of the Beatific Vision.” Wow! What a Beatitude!

How should you and I “Use this Beatitude?” I would suggest in three primary ways. First of all, as an examination, “As an examination of our claim to be a Christian.” You see, in the Beatitudes, remember all eight of these Beatitudes, to some extent, describe all true Christians, all of those who belong to His spiritual kingdom. So, let me ask you this. If you sit here this morning and say, “Tom, yes, I’m a Christian. I’m a follower of Jesus Christ.” Great! So, let me ask you this question, “Can you honestly say, in the sense we have just studied, you have a clean heart? Would God say, in the sense that we just studied, that you have a clean heart?” Or “Do you have a heart that is so dirty, you would never want another person to see it?” Listen, if that’s true of you, you’re not a follower of Jesus Christ. Even if you claim to be.

So, secondly, we should use this Beatitude “As an invitation.” If you say, “No, I have a dirty heart; I would hate for anyone to know what goes on in my heart.” Then this is an invitation, really, for you to come to Jesus. You see, only Jesus is pure by nature. He is pure. And He’s the only one that can give you a pure heart. He’s the only one who can change you. He’s the only one who can bathe your soul and do what we saw in Ezekiel 36, sprinkle clean water on you so that you truly are clean—only He can do that. You say, “Well, how do I respond to this invitation then?” Well, you have to cast yourself on the grace of God. You have to beg Him to change you. You have to repent of your sin and put your faith in Jesus Christ, the One who died as a substitute for all of those who would believe in Him to pay the penalty for their sin. God raised Him from the dead and all of that, so for those who trust in Him, God can clean their heart. That’s my prayer for you today.

A third use of this Beatitude is “As an Exhortation,” for all of us who are believers in Christ, to pursue greater purity of heart. Let me ask you, if you've been regenerated, if you have been made new, you need to daily repent of and confess your sin. You need to deal with your sin before God because that's how you experience continual cleansing. And you need to daily seek to put off patterns of sin in your life in obedience to the Word of God. You need to ask God to work these things in you and to give you a clean heart. Again, Thomas Watson, writing on this Beatitude says:

Pray for heart purity. Job propounds the question, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” His answer, “God can do it, out of an impure heart, He can produce grace.” Pray that prayer of David, “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” Oh, Christian, be earnest with God for a pure heart. Lay your heart before the Lord and say, “Lord, you gave me a heart, now give me a pure heart. My heart is good for nothing as it is. It defiles everything it touches. Lord, I'm not fit to live with this heart, for I can't honor You, nor am I fit to die with this heart, for I won't see you. Let Christ's blood be sprinkled upon me; let the Holy Spirit descend upon me; create in me a clean heart, O God. You who have commanded me to give You my heart. Lord, make my heart pure and you shall have it.”

Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Let's pray together. Father, we are painfully aware that by nature, by birth, not one of us here has a clean heart. But Father, we thank You, that for many of us, we have experienced the miracle of regeneration, the new birth where You have recreated us, and You have washed away the stains from our soul and Your sight. And because of Jesus, those sins that once appeared to

You as crimson, now appear white as snow. Father, we thank You and praise You. Help us to be serious about pursuing, in a greater way, purity of heart, to confess our sins regularly to You, to seek, by the power of Your Spirit and Your Word, to put off the sins in our lives that make us dirty. Lord, help us to live in obedience. Give us, “Create in us a clean heart, O God.”

Lord, I also pray for those here this morning who came in, maybe knowing they weren't Christians, or perhaps came in thinking they were, but as they've looked at themselves in the mirror of Your Word, they've realized they have a dirty heart, and they will never, in their current state, see You. Lord, may You draw them to Yourself today through the simple Gospel, that through the blood of Christ, through His sacrifice, You can clean the heart of those who trust in Him. And Lord, I pray You would work that in the hearts of some here even today for the glory of Your Son, in whose name we pray? Amen.