

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – MATTHEW 5-7

The Fifth Beatitude: Blessed Are the Pure in Heart - Matthew 5:8

Faith Church of Linden

By Daniel Patz on May 3, 2026

SERMON AIM: The pure in heart are those who, by God's grace, have given their whole heart to Christ alone — undivided and wholly committed. The pure in heart are clean on the inside and single-minded. As Kierkegaard said: "*Purity of heart is to will one thing.*" Christ is that one thing. The call of this Beatitude: ***Seek an undivided heart toward God and Christ — for only the pure in heart truly see Him, and it is in seeing Him that He purifies us. Help you to look fully to Christ to purify our hearts and open our eyes to see Him more now and forever.***

INTRODUCTION

We have been making our way carefully through the Beatitudes — that stunning opening of Jesus' greatest sermon. We have seen the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and the merciful. Now we arrive at the sixth Beatitude. In many ways it is the peek — the very center of the sermon's inner vision:

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

Of all the Beatitudes, this one reaches the highest summit and probes the deepest. And like the other beatitudes it asks not merely what we *do* but what we *are* — at the very center of our being. And it promises the greatest reward imaginable: to see God.

But it also confronts us. Only the pure in heart shall see God. How can a holy God be seen? Not the religiously busy. Not the outwardly respectable. Not the theologically sophisticated. The *pure in heart*.

What does that mean? And how do any of us qualify?

Three movements this morning: the **centrality** of the heart, the **purity** of the heart, and the **consequence** of the heart.

1. THE CENTRALITY OF THE HEART

Why the heart is the core issue of all of life

When Jesus says "pure in heart," He is not speaking of the organ in your chest. In both Old and New Testaments, the heart is the center of the whole person. The seat of intellect, will, emotion, and desire. The heart is what you are when no one is watching. It is the engine beneath every word, action, and motive.

Proverbs 4:23 puts it plainly:

"Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."

Every spring of life flows from the heart. Jesus drives this home in Matthew 15:

"What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander." — Matthew 15:18–19

Notice what Jesus is doing. The Pharisees were focused on external ceremonial purity — washing hands, keeping traditions. Jesus cuts to the source. Defilement is a heart problem. "Your hearts are not clean"

The entire Sermon on the Mount probes your motives, your desires, your inner world:

- It's not enough to not murder — what about the *contempt* in your heart? (5:21–22)
- It's not enough to not commit adultery — what about the *lust* in your heart? (5:27–28)
- It's not enough to give to the poor — *why* are you doing it? (6:1)
- Where is your treasure? Because your heart follows it. (6:21)

Ask yourself honestly: When you do the good you do — serving, giving, showing up — what is actually driving it? Love for God (and neighbor), or something else?

The great commandment is a heart commandment:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." — Matthew 22:37

All. Undivided. The whole person. This is what God has always been after. Even the Old Testament prophets saw it coming in the new covenant:

"I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts." — Jeremiah 31:33

"I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." — Ezekiel 36:26

The new covenant is a heart covenant. This Beatitude is not a new legal demand layered on top of the old. It is an invitation into the life God has always intended for His people.

2. THE PURITY OF THE HEART

What it means to be pure in heart — and what its opposite looks like

The word “pure” means *clean* in the sense of unstained — but equally, and this is crucial, it means *unmixed, undiluted*. Like pure gold with no alloy. Water with no contamination. A *pure* heart is not just morally clean. It is **singularly devoted**. Undivided. Wholly committed to one master.

This is why the theologian Kierkegaard's phrase is so exactly right: ***purity of heart is to will one thing***. The pure in heart will God – He is our all and all.

Consider Psalm 24, which speaks directly to who may stand in God's presence:

"Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully." — Psalm 24:3–4

Notice: a pure heart does not lift up its soul to what is *false*. The opposite of purity here is not merely sexual immorality. It is **divided loyalty** — a soul pulled between God and something else.

James names this directly: *"Purify your hearts, you double-minded."* — James 4:8

Double-minded. That is the precise opposite of pure in heart. A double-minded person is trying to look two ways at once — one eye on Christ, one eye on the world. And Jesus says plainly: *"No one can serve two masters."* (Matthew 6:24)

Here is a line worth writing down: **The divided heart does not get less of both — it gets neither.** The man who tries to love God and love the world with equal devotion does not end up with a full measure of each. He ends up with a distorted vision of both. He cannot see God clearly because the world is in the way. And he cannot enjoy the world rightly because God is in the way. Or, He can't enjoy the world because the world can only be rightly enjoyed with Christ as our ALL IN ALL. The divided heart is impoverished, not enriched, by its division.

The Marriage Analogy

God does not share His glory or demand exclusive allegiance arbitrarily — no more than a spouse should share with another person what is uniquely to be given to her husband. The marriage covenant is built on exclusive devotion. What makes it beautiful is precisely that it is *not* divided. When a husband gives his heart wholly to his wife — his attention, his loyalty, his delight — it creates something that divided affection can never produce.

God is not being territorial when He demands the whole heart. He is being a faithful covenant God who knows that divided devotion destroys the relationship it claims to maintain. You cannot have intimacy with God at arm's length. You cannot see Him clearly through the fog of competing loves.

Ask yourself: Is there something in your life that you have never fully surrendered to God — a relationship, an ambition, a financial decision, a habit — that you know you are keeping out of His reach? That is the precise location of your divided heart.

Two Portraits: Pure and Impure

The pure heart is not a *perfect* heart — not yet. Think of David — called a man after God's own heart, yet guilty of catastrophic sin. What made him a man after God's heart was not sinlessness. It was that when he fell, he ran *back* to God. His fundamental orientation, his ruling desire, was toward God. Psalm 51 is the prayer of a pure-hearted man who had sinned deeply — and knew exactly where to go with it.

The pure heart is **committed**. In thoughts, words, and actions, it wills one thing — Christ. His honor, His will, His glory. Not perfectly, not without struggle, but *decisively*. There is a settled direction to the life.

What does that committed heart actually look like? A pure heart **honors** Christ — treating Him as supreme not just on Sunday but in every room of life, every conversation, every decision. It **obeys** — not to earn standing before God, but from standing with Him, because love always produces obedience. It **trusts** — choosing God's word over its own anxiety, even when the path is dark and the outcome is unclear. It **delights** — finding in Christ a satisfaction deep enough that the world's competing offerings lose their grip. And it **sacrifices** — presenting itself daily, as Paul says, as a living sacrifice, because it has settled the question of who it belongs to.

This is the one-thing heart. Not sinless — but settled. Not perfect — but pointed.

The impure heart is most clearly portrayed in Matthew 23:

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence... You are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness." — Matthew 23:25–27

The Pharisees had extraordinary external religion. They tithed to the last herb in the garden. They fasted, prayed, gave. But inside? Greed. Pride. Self-indulgence. Their religion was *performance* — not devotion to God, but management of reputation before men.

The Pharisee is not ancient history. He lives in our churches — and in our own hearts — every week.

The man who serves faithfully on the deacon board but speaks critically of the pastor in the parking lot afterward. The outside of the cup is polished at the meeting. The inside reveals where his true loyalty lies — to his own opinion, his own influence.

The woman who posts Scripture on social media every morning but has not opened her Bible in private for weeks. The outside is visible and impressive. The inside has grown dry and cold.

The teenager who behaves impeccably at church and lives a completely different life Monday through Friday — not because he is young and struggling with genuine temptation, but because the church life is a performance for parents, and the rest is the real life. Two masters. Two hearts trying to occupy one chest.

Ask yourself: Is your private life consistent with your public life? Not "are you sinless in private?" — none of us are. But is there a fundamental *integrity* between who you are when the lights are on and who you are in the dark? Where is the gap?

The Danger of the Digital Age

We live in an age that is specifically designed to divide our hearts. Every generation has them — but this right now is uniquely deadly to a pure heart. Social media does not merely offer distraction — it actively forms us. It trains our attention to be shallow, our emotions reactive, our loyalty to drift constantly. And critically, it rewards us for *performing* our lives rather than *living* them. It is, in that sense, a factory for producing whitewashed tombs — carefully curated outsides with unexamined insides.

Ask yourself: Is my heart being formed toward singleness and depth — toward Christ — or toward division and performance? What habits of attention are pulling your gaze away from Christ and training you to look two ways at once?

The pure heart is formed in the quiet. In the Word. In unhurried prayer. In sustained, undistracted attention to Christ. These have never been more countercultural — or more necessary.

3. THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE HEART

"For they shall see God"

The promise attached to this Beatitude is the most magnificent in the entire list: **they shall see God.**

"Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall see him as he is." — 1 John 3:2

"They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads." — Revelation 22:4

There is a day coming when the veil will be fully lifted. Those who are in Christ will stand in the blazing fullness of God's presence — not consumed but *completed*. Fully known. Fully seeing.

They See God Now

The promise has a present dimension as well. The pure in heart do not simply wait to see God at the last day. They see Him *now* — not perfectly, but truly. Through His Word and Spirit, they perceive His hand in creation, His character in Christ, His will in Scripture. They see Him more clearly than the double-minded, precisely because they are not looking two ways at once.

This is the tragedy of the divided heart. Spurgeon said it this way: when covetousness (love of money) gets into the heart, it makes the eye dim or blind. The man who holds a gold coin over each eye cannot even see the sun. **The divided heart does not get less of both — it gets neither.** Not the satisfaction of the world. Not the clarity of God. Just the fog of an unresolved loyalty.

The pure heart, willing one thing, has clear vision. One master. One treasure. One love. And therefore — one clear line of sight to the God who is there.

Seeing God Purifies Us

Here is the beautiful paradox at the center of this Beatitude: to see God, you need a pure heart. But to gain a pure heart, you need to look at God. It works in both directions.

When we fix our eyes on Christ — in His Word, in worship, in prayer — He purifies us. He draws our wandering affections back. He exposes the idols we have been chasing. He reorders our desires around Himself.

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another." — 2 Corinthians 3:18

"And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." — 1 John 3:3

We are purified by *hoping in Him* — by gazing at Him. The purification is not manufactured by willpower. It is the fruit of sustained attention to Christ.

Ask yourself: When did you last sit quietly in the presence of God — without a device, without an agenda — and simply looked at Him in His Word? Not to check off a devotional box. But to actually see Him. That sustained, undistracted gaze is where purity is formed.

THE GOSPEL: HOW ANY OF US CAN BE PURE IN HEART

At this point we must stop and ask honestly: who among us qualifies? Can you claim a completely pure heart?

None of us can. We are all — to some degree — double-minded. We have all tried to serve two masters. We have all let our treasure drift toward earth. We have all been, in some arena of life, a whitewashed tomb.

And here is where the gospel arrives, exactly when we need it.

Remember what we have said throughout this series: the Beatitudes are first a description of *Jesus*. He was perfectly pure in heart. His devotion to the Father was total, undivided, and uncontaminated by any competing loyalty. He saw the Father with perfect clarity — because He *is* the Son.

And this perfectly pure One went to the cross for people with impure hearts. He took the judgment that belongs to the double-minded, the performing, the divided, the hypocritical. He bore it in our place. And now He offers His own purity — His own righteousness — to everyone who comes to Him empty-handed and honest.

When we are united to Christ by faith, His purity is counted as ours. And then the Holy Spirit begins His slow and glorious work of *actually* making us pure — reforming our desires, reordering our loves, healing the divided heart.

This is not a demand to produce purity on your own. It is an invitation to *receive* it — and to grow in it — by beholding the pure One.

CONCLUSION

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

This is not a promise for the perfect. It is a promise for the **wholly devoted** — those whose heart, by grace, is being turned fully toward God. Not performing. Not calculating. Not split between two masters. But wholly His.

The pure in heart are not those without remaining sin. They are those whose *ruling desire* — the great settled direction of their life — is for God. They want one Master, one Treasure, one Love. And that desire, imperfect as it still is, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit at work.

And the promise is breathtaking: **they shall see God**. Now — more clearly than the double-minded, because they are not looking two ways at once. And one day — face to face, they shall see Him as He is, and be made fully and finally like Him.

Do you want to see God? Then come to Christ — with your divided, impure, cluttered heart — and ask Him to make it wholly His. Come often. Gaze at Him in His Word. For it is in seeing Him that we are purified. And it is the pure in heart who shall see Him forever.