

"Transparency"

Pastor Wade
Matthew 5:8

3/27/11
9 & 10:45 am

Series: "Masterpiece: Becoming Like Jesus"

PREAMBLE

Mayor Jim Ridenour has declared this week a week of prayer for the City of Modesto.

You have the information in your program, and I want to urge you to pick one of those times and join with others to pray for our community.

OPEN to Matthew 5 (**PAGE** 1501)

INTRODUCTION

We've been looking at the early verses of Matthew 5 where Jesus describes the kind of character He wants to be developed in our lives. They're the qualities that He is building into our lives as we seek to become more like Him.

READ Matthew 5:1-8

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

ILLUSTRATION

A husband and wife were discussing the possibility of taking a trip to the Holy Land. The husband said to his wife, "Wouldn't it be fantastic to climb to the top of Mount Sinai, and then shout the Ten Commandments?"

His wife replied, "It would be better if you stayed home and kept them."

There's a story told about C. H. Spurgeon, the most well-known pastor in England in the mid to late 1800's.

After speaking at a Christian retreat, a man approached him and told Spurgeon that he had reached a state of spiritual perfection.

Noticing a pitcher of ice-cold water on the table next to him, Spurgeon picked it up and poured it on the man's head.

The man was shocked and then became really angry!

Spurgeon said to him, "Well, now I know what spiritual perfection looks like!" (Malcolm MacPhail, Christian Life Center, Santa Rosa, California)

A. Understand the call to purity

The center of Jesus' call to purity is our hearts; our hearts.

1. Heart

The heart ... includes the emotions, the reason and the will. (Vine's)

The Bible says the heart is:

the place from which sin expresses itself (Matt. 15:19, 20), and

the place of God's influence in our lives (Rom. 2:15; Acts 15:9).

The heart ... represents a person's true character ..." (J. Laidlaw, in Hastings' Bible Dictionary)

Jesus often spoke of the importance of the condition of the heart:

Matthew 15:18-20 "**... the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart ...**

19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

20 These are what make a man 'unclean' ..."

The same focus is in the book of Proverbs:

Proverbs 4:23 "**Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.**"

2. Pure

"katharos:" clean or washed,

free from mixture

free from sin,

A *pure heart* is one that is cleansed of impurities. It is a heart washed clean of all the pollution that gathers as a result of hurts, hang-ups, habits and poor decisions.

It's a heart that is sensitive to sin and to God, and turns regularly to Jesus to be washed clean.

It's the **pure in heart** who will see God.

3. See

- *physical vision*, (I see the snow on the Sierra Nevadas)

- *perception*, (discernment, "I think I'm seeing something about you.")

- *understanding* ("I see what you mean"). (BAG)

- *meet with* ("The doctor is ready to see you")

The pure in heart meet with God, they perceive and understand things about God, they experience God now, and they will see Him face-to-face in Heaven.

Purifying my heart removes the fog and darkness of sin and the devil's accusations, and fear, so that I can see God.

So, how do I do that? How does a person purify his heart and keep it clean?

B. Choose to walk in purity

Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

1. Openly examine and confess my faults to **myself**

- Openly examine my faults

This is a key battle within our hearts!

Jeremiah 17:9 "**The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?**"

God can clearly see and understand our hearts, so we look to Him, to His Word, so we can see our hearts through His eyes.

Hebrews 4:12 **“For the Word of God is living and active ... it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”**

The Word of God defines truth, sin, righteousness. It is trustworthy because God is trustworthy.

I need God’s insight because I am prone to being deceived.

The world around us tends to influence us powerfully, and we get molded by it.

So, I want to prayerfully evaluate my heart with Scripture:

Galatians 5:19-21 **“When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, your lives will produce these evil results: sexual immorality, impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, 20 idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, 21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other kinds of sin.”** (NLT)

- Confess my faults to **myself**

Goal: “According to God’s Word, I have been wrong, I have sinned.”

1 John 1:8 **“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”**

1 John 1:10 **“If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His Word has no place in our lives.”**

When I disagree with God’s Word, or justify my sin, my heart will not be cleansed. In fact, it will become increasingly impure, increasingly dark.

But, when I admit my faults instead of denying them, defending them, covering them up, I step on to the path of truth.

John 8:32 **“... the truth will set you free.”**

When we step onto the path of truth (God’s Word) the truth leads to personal freedom ... to forgiveness ... to being free in my heart!

1. Openly examine and confess my faults to **myself**

2. Confess my faults to **God**

1 John 1:9 **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."**

When I admit my own faults (sins) to God, He forgives me, He cleanses me.

Our relationship is renewed. The fog and darkness are gone. Purity and clarity comes. We see clearly.

ILLUSTRATION

Let me illustrate how this plays out ...

I have four different pairs of sunglasses here with four different shades of lenses ... clear, yellow, brown, very dark.

I want to use these to illustrate what happens when we move from impurity to purity and how it affects how we see God's Word.

Dark: difficult time understanding and making sense of God's Word. Seems foolish, extreme, outdated. We can't see clearly because our hearts aren't pure, but are darkened by the impurity in our hearts.

Brown: we start to see more clearly as we begin to deal with the impurity and sin in our hearts. We are beginning to grow in understanding and applying God's Word.

Yellow: As we continue to respond to God's Word and the work of the Holy Spirit, we see the condition of our hearts much more clearly, and grow in our understanding that if God says something about my thoughts or behaviors don't match His Word, I'm the one who needs to change.

Clear: Living a life of purity ... confessing sin, pursuing a life of living like Jesus, enjoying what it means to be close to God, to hear His voice, and to have a heart-felt desire to respond to Him.

(keep clear glasses on)

Let's take this idea and apply a verse of Scripture:

Hebrews 13:4 **"Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure ..."**

That's saying sex in marriage is honorable, worthy of being treated with honor, respected. It is sacred. It is to be treated as such.

"marriage bed:" Sexual relations are for marriage, and one of the things that means is that no one outside that marriage - between that one man and that one woman - should be involved sexually; in any way that would dishonor that relationship.

The verse goes on: **"for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."**

So, God is saying that He will judge those who engage in sexual relations outside of marriage.

The pure do not compromise with sexual immorality.

How do the impure see sexual relations?

They may agree with that verse completely, and don't see themselves as ever breaking their marriage vows or anyone else's.

(put on yellow glasses) But, maybe they'd say that it's OK to tell sexually immoral jokes. They're foul and crude. But if it makes you laugh, it's OK.

(put on brown glasses) Maybe they'd say that sexual immorality is OK to watch on TV or movies.

Maybe they would say, *"Watching impure movies doesn't affect me!"*

That's a very, very telling statement. That person has just said that they can bring immorality into their heart and be at home with it.

A pure heart cannot be comfortable with sexual immorality—viewed or imagined—even if not actually participated in with your body!

"I will dress stylishly, even if it isn't really modest."

(put on dark glasses) I'm now actively participating in sexual immorality ... porn, sex outside of marriage, dropping sexual hints to someone ...

We overcome impurity by constantly building purity into our lives. Your purity sensors become sensitive.

You make decisions that are pure.

We could apply this to many areas: our speech, (gossip, slander, divisiveness), work ethic, theft of an employers time, property, tax evasion, etc.

As we read the Word of God w/ an eye to knowing God and knowing His will so we can follow—and we do follow—the blood of Jesus cleanses us.

God will coach us as He brings up areas to apply, things to discard, weed out, other things to put in its place.

I need to confess my faults to God

3. Confess my faults to someone I trust

When I admit my own faults to a person I trust ...

+ I bring another step of reality to what is going on. Not only do I admit to God and myself that I have sinned, I'm revealing it to someone I trust. (Is this something the Bible talks about? Yes. We'll come to that in a minute).

+ I experience acceptance in spite of my failures,

+ I can ask for prayer support for on-going challenges,

+ I can ask for accountability,

+ I open myself to encouragement,

+ Bringing our past failure into the light helps break the power of Satan's accusations,

+ I realize I'm not the only one who has sinned. You'll find that there are others who have come from the same place.

+ It helps keep you healthy

James 5:16 **"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."**

** This is not saying that all sickness is caused by sin.

** It is saying some sickness is caused by sin.

CONCLUSION

1. Openly examine and confess my faults to myself

Get a pen, paper, and find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted. Turn off the technology. Don't rush. Block out an hour or two.

Pray: Psalm 139:23-24 **"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me ..."** *And help me to see what you see, the things I need to confess, and the things I need to be free from."*

2. Confess my faults to God

Go one by one, admitting your sin to God.

3. Confess my faults to someone I trust

Talk to a person you trust, someone who you look up to spiritually. Someone who knows you. Someone you believe will keep your list between you and God alone.

Tell them you would like to do, set a time, go through your list.

"Father in Heaven, thank You for making it possible for me to walk in purity, free of guilt, with a clear conscience, and fully forgiven and accepted by You! Thank You! As I take these steps, please enlighten me and help me. In Jesus' name, Amen."