

The King's People: Pure Hearts Pt 1

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[0 : 00] Father, as we come now to hear your word, Father, thank you for filling this place with your presence. That's what we pray every single week, that you would dwell among us, that you would inhabit the praises of your people, that you, oh Lord, that you would be the center of our joy.

For Lord, if you are not with us, don't take us up from here. It is by you going with us that distinguishes us from all the other peoples on the face of the earth. It is your presence.

It is your grace. It is your mercy. We are nothing. You are everything. So we thank you. We have earned nothing.

All that we have from you, we receive by grace and your eternal love and mercy. Thank you for Jesus. O Lord, speak to us now of him.

As we open your word, draw our hearts to you, oh triune God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Draw our hearts to behold you, to see Jesus, and to renew our faith in him today.

[1 : 13] Renew our commitment to him today. Even as we have seen the waters of baptism fall, remind us of our baptism. that we have declared publicly that we belong to you.

So Lord, help us now to live like we do, to live as becomes the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. So open our ears and our hearts that we may hear the word of truth and use your unworthy servant, please, that only your word might go forth, only Jesus might be seen.

And our hope renewed only in him. For his sake we pray. Amen. Once again, we turn to the Beatitudes.

And we are now in verse 8. I'm going to read the other ones before. And then we will end on our passage for study this morning.

Jesus told them, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

[2 : 25] Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

In our text. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. That is the word of the Lord. Thank you, God.

Please be seated. Thank you once again, praise team. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

I'm going to geek out for a second. I'm going to jump into the TARDIS, Dr. Who's time machine. I'm going to take you back to 1991.

1991. So, zone in. Those of you who were alive then and old enough to remember. there was a movie called City Slickers.

[3 : 33] Anybody remember? Okay. Just three people. Great. It's worth. Okay. Thank you. Okay. Yeah. Be honest, people. I do commend it to you.

It's a funny movie. Three friends decide they want to have a real dude ranch experience for their, I think, vacation. There, they meet this old, tough, rugged cowboy named Curly.

Now, Curly is played by the actor Jack Palace. If you remember Jack Palace, he made you tremble just looking at you. And he was old then and he still made you tremble. Curly asks Mitch, who was played by Billy Crystal, he asked him a bit and very important question one night.

He says, Mitch, do you know what the secret of life is? And he holds up one finger.

And Mitch and Billy Crystal fans usual set of humor says, your finger? Curly ignoring.

[4 : 45] He says simply this, one thing. Just one thing. You stick to that and the rest don't mean anything.

So Mitch is curious, right? What's the next question? The obvious question is, what is the one thing? And Curly smiles at him.

That's what you have to find out. Hmm. Partly true. God wants us to seek the one thing.

But I'm so glad he doesn't ask us to find out what it is. To stare inside and find the one thing or to go on some cosmic search looking for the one thing.

I'm so glad that he tells us what the one thing is. Jesus brings us into his kingdom so that we learn to seek one thing.

[6 : 06] I'm not going to tell you just yet. But do you know what it is? Just in your own heart, do you know what it is? And if you do, is that where you're going?

One thing. These beatitudes pronounce, these pronouncements of blessing are, they help us to do two things in particular. They help us to bear witness to the world of the reality of another king and kingdom.

These characteristics of the Lord Jesus in us go against the grain of our culture. They look weird. But they are right.

the second thing they do for us is they cause us to flourish as a kingdom community.

Our church life and family life are greatly improved if we pursue the characteristics of the king's people outlined here in the Beatitudes.

[7 : 17] as we grow into this image more and more our church life our community life more and more exalts Christ.

Here's the thing if we don't we end up doing what Paul said in Galatians that this is the church he's talking about.

we end up biting and devouring one another. So we fail to look like kingdom people that we destroy each other because the darker side of our nature the meism in all of us shows out shows up and causes destruction in churches everywhere.

poverty the kingdom characteristics are poverty of spirit mourning over sin submitting to God in humility that's meekness hunger and thirsting of a righteous life not just positional righteousness but practical living out what is right before God being people of mercy as we saw last week which also includes forgiving one another now he comes to one that is bigger than I thought it was we're doing this in two parts I think living in purity of heart that's huge I didn't realize how huge it was it's amazing when you come to the world and begin to study it you learn things you didn't know before this one is huge let's begin for the king's people the heart is the heart of the matter you see today in the west we speak of the heart if not meaning the organ in our chest we speak of the heart as the place of our emotions and feelings and that's the way we see it that's okay amen but if you're doing bible study and if you're living as the people of the king you gotta go beyond that you see the bible has a deeper understanding of the heart when Jesus in the bible speaks of the heart it means more than the emotions and feelings the heart is the center of our being it is made up of the emotions and feelings but more it's made up the mind the will your desires your imagination is much more than your feelings though it includes that when correcting the pharisees now we're gonna look at some bible passages okay so just know that I'm just I have to that's one verse here and he meant it to be understood so we're gonna have to look at the rest of the passages to look at what he's meaning here okay just so you know heads up when correcting the pharisees who accused him of casting out demons by the power of the devil Matthew 12 Jesus said should be on the screen either make the tree good and its fruit good or make the tree bad and its fruit bad for the tree is known by its fruit you brood of vipers how can you speak good when you are evil for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks much more than emotions here right much more of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks a good or evil life is seen he says by what you say and what you say he says comes from your heart years ago I'm going back in time again Jesse Jackson was running for president at the democratic national convention I'll never forget it because it was such a powerful statement he said Jesse had you know you know what politicians do they go after each other in the primaries and then they got to make nice at the end our system sometimes is weird okay so Jesse had to make nice and they let him speak and that man can speak okay he could speak I mean Jesse said at one point he said y'all charge it to my head not to my heart wrong out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks you can never say charge it to my head not to my heart in the bible they're connected actually

remember mind and will up here it connected so he spoke out of his heart you can't say that either my i was just my my my thinking was it don't it's not my heart yes it is your heart that's the problem it is our heart i didn't mean to say it yes you did you didn't mean to say it out loud maybe you didn't mean to get caught saying it you didn't mean to get confronted by saying it but yeah Jesus says out of your heart comes your words when accused of letting his disciples eat without ceremonially cleansing or washing their hands our Lord said in Matthew 15 but 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 these are what defile a person but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone look what comes out of the heart and defile you make you dirty he says evil thoughts before evil actions evil thoughts plans commit commit all kinds of evil resulting in doing them this is why wow this is why Proverbs 4 says what it says you all know Proverbs 4 it's so important but note the following verses Proverbs 4:30 up 4:23 you know this above all else keep or guard your heart with all vigilance for from it flows the springs of life we know that verse but read the following put away from you crooked speech put devious talk far from you let your eyes look directly forward and your gaze be straight before you ponder the path of your feet think about where you're going then all your ways will be sure do not swerve to the right or to the left turn your foot away from evil listen saints the Bible God's word tells us we need to guard our hearts like a she bear guarding her cubs your heart is so important to God the center of your being your emotions your mind your will your imaginations your thinking all of that is so important to God that he says to you you've got to protect your heart protect it and listen Proverbs suggests we protect it in a certain way it's not the only way but he gives us some ideas here you know watch your speech we already talked about that a little bit what you say matters what you say matters watch what you let your eyes see that's huge that's scary huge we give our eyes to things that we should not and when you do it impacts your heart we talk about forgive me but we talk about how pornography messes with your brain

[16:16] imprints there it's more your mind your heart captivated by images that defile you and lead you in places you don't want to go so he says then also to watch where you go that's also huge forgive me let me just talk to my younger folk I'm not talking teenagers per se where do you spend your time how what where do you go to have a good time it's not neutral it's not neutral where you go matters where you allow your feet to take

I'm in the word y'all so don't get look at me like I'm funny I'm in the word where you go matters think about it for a little bit how many times do we find ourselves doing things saying things we would not have normally said or done because we're in the wrong place I don't know what to say stay on the right path don't swerve I mean I tell you I gotta talk about Chattanooga driving why do people wanna be in my lane when I'm already in it is my lane prettier or something and they don't seem to look they don't look they will swerve in my lane and I'm right there I'm right there beside them slamming my brakes and yes I'm from Philly I use my horn boo

I'm here bro and some people still don't swerve they keep coming anyway and just drive them are you swerving see they knew I was there they wouldn't have done it they don't wanna hit me no one wants to be in accident watch this they never looked that's how we that's how we get off onto the wrong path we don't look we just react emotional something and we do and the Bible is warning us look before you leap look before you swerve make sure you stay on the right path stay on the path the path God's word illumines the path stay on the path keep away from doing evil some would summarize this and I think it's a really good summary by saying it's about what you love it's about what you love is what captures your heart it captures your passions it captures your imaginations come on come on

Isaiah when when when when when you you're drawn to Rachel because she's captured your heart and that's a good thing and when something captures your heart what do you do you think about it all the time you think about person all the time you want to be with that person or that thing you want to be there you want to go there you you you you you have you imagine even doing things together because someone's captured your heart if you never think about them they haven't captured your heart if you can be cold towards them and and ladies help me out if a guy is cold towards you run he ain't gonna change he ain't gonna change if he's into you he's gonna be passionate about you he wanna spend time with you he's gonna wanna do things for he wanna serve you open the door for you won't be no big thing he will jump out the car and run around the car fast as he can to get that door for you

I know that's old fashioned I know I know so whatever works for you today okay whatever works for my wife still wants me to open the door for her come on after 30 almost 37 years of marriage I still gotta get that door women stick together yes it's all right with all this information from scripture doesn't it make sense for Jesus to want his people those who claim to submit to him as their king in his kingdom doesn't it make sense that he wants us to be known by the purity or literally clean hearts doesn't it make sense that that heart is so important to him many scholars believe that

[21 : 57] Jesus has psalm 24 3 to 6 in mind particularly there are other verses we're going to look at but we're going to start there psalm 24 3 to 6 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 he will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation such is the generation of those who seek him who seek the face of the God of Jacob David said one thing have I asked the Lord and that will I seek after that I may dwell in the house of the Lord gazing gazing upon the beauty of the Lord in his temple listen this this this is good verse three and six actually sandwiched this section who what kind of person will live in

God's presence seeking his face I'm putting them both together that's the question who who will live in God's presence seeking his face the answer only those whose hands are clean meaning they do no evil hands do things who have a pure clean or sincere hearts or morally upright hearts that that word pure has all these ideas here pure clean sincere morally upright and then who give undivided devotion to the Lord that's that last part who does not lift up his hands or heart to what is false he's talking about idols idols are false gods they're god substitutes in that and David's day of course they actually had a physical representation of a false god we don't do that we have other idols power money influence stuff fill in the blanks sometimes many times they're good things that's the nature of idolatry and which makes it so sneaky is that we take a good thing and make it an ultimate thing we take a good thing and make it too important we take a good thing and end up worshipping it that is finding our identity our security and our significance in it without it we feel like we have nothing without it we feel like we're not whole without it we feel like we cannot be happy that's an idol whatever that is for you that's an idol it can't save you it doesn't speak usually if it's people they do speak but it can't save you idolatry destroys us sincere hearts sincere hearts not just external faith pure hearts not just external religion going to church being baptized taking the

Lord's Supper showing up at the right places that's good but if that's all you got no it's not better than nothing amen but it's not enough the sincere heart the heart that's beating inside of you spiritually speaking what does it love what does it want the heart here psalmist David says needs to be undivided devoted to the living God undivided devoted not trying to serve the idols and God at the same time Jesus said it was it Matthew 6 you cannot serve God and mammon or money depending on your translation you see we are that's the problem with us there's always stuff pulling and today there's this there's a revolution taking place in our hearts that in our culture that is really leading so many of us into a place that's not that's not good some people call it expressive individualism expressive individualism the best way let me give you the marks of it marks of it the best way to find yourself is to look inward you want to know who you are you want to find them look inside you the highest goal in life is my personal happiness all moral judgments are expressions of feelings or personal preference all forms of external authority are to be rejected and everyone's quest for self expression should be celebrated expressive individualism

I just call it self the worship of self I determine my reality I am self made what I desire is the highest good and should be respected by everybody I pursue my own happiness you have no say my community has no say my family has no say it's all about me and what I desire it gets us into trouble it gets because our hearts are all focused on myself you live to make me happy and if you don't bye see ya wouldn't wanna be ya people are used and twisted and in our pursuit of our own self happiness self determined we warp ourselves and we give ourselves to things that 20 years ago we would have said no way not that 20 years ago we were holy or righteous not saying that at all just that things keep going down as we become more focused on the idol of self and as

Christians we're not immune to this we've been living in it we swim in it and we have to deal with it ourselves 19th century danish philosopher named seren kirkegaard talked about what purity or heart is now i disagree with his answer but he did talk about it it was a good one he said purity of heart is to will the one thing my problem is i will many things yeah we to will the one thing but we're pulled that's what got david into trouble why psalm 51 is such a incredible passage for us and a wonderful picture of true repentance before god read psalm 51 but david david had committed adultery then murder and then cover up and in psalm 51 10 he says create in me a clean heart oh god and renew a right spirit within me you do something i've sinned against you give me a clean cleanse my heart lord because he recognized in his pursuit of self in his pursuit of expressive individualism in his pursuit of his own personal happiness he had destroyed people even committed murder and he should have been executed by the way but god had mercy oh the grace of god proverbs 20 verse 9 says something very very difficult and pulls us up short i'm almost done this morning it makes the idea of a pure of a pure heart seem totally hopeless i know if you're like me you're feeling that way too what what hope is it for any of us to have such a pure heart who can it says who can say i have made my heart pure i am clean from my sin that's the text who can say that who can you can can you say you've you've made your heart amy can you say that can david can you say you've made your heart pure and clean nobody can say that in truth not on our own god has to do something and he does whoo i'm in them right here this last passage ezekeil 36 here's god here's what he's going to do for us i will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness from all your idols i will cleanse you and i will give you a new heart and a new spirit i will put within you and i will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh i and i will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules hallelujah that's the new covenant prophecy that is a prophecy of what would happen when the messiah comes when jesus comes proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom complain proclaiming the good news and and raptiding that good news is this god gives people new hearts god does it because you can't god comes and jesus comes and pours out his spirit upon you note the word the spirit is mentioned in this text he pours out his spirit his spirit cleanses you and washes you baptism becomes a symbol of that he washes you and cleanses you that is he cleanses your body first of all but he also takes out that you got he says you your heart your problem is your hearts rock hard meaning it does not respond to me it's insensitive to my

[34 : 06] word and my will so what he does in the new covenant hallelujah as the gospel goes forth and the spirit of god works is he takes that heart of stone and does heart transplant surgery and he reaches in now he does it with his hand he reaches in yanks it out and then puts one in there and we come alive hallelujah he doesn't give you a partially pure heart he gives you a pure heart before the lord your heart is pure now here's the thing now we are to work out what he's put in well we'll talk about that next week what will we the one thing but we desire many things so walking with

Jesus involves letting him guide us and move us more and more towards the one thing that he's put in us an undivided heart an undivided devotion to Jesus where Jesus has my heart and he's the center of my joy he's the center of my thoughts he's his his kingdom is what I want to work in and becomes the center of my ambitions I want to exalt Jesus Jesus becomes the meaning of my life he didn't come to be your life coach he came to take over your life and when you see his love and mercy clearly you go yep I'm with yes yes yes take my heart seal it to the courts above take my heart lord shape it and mold it remove any impurity take away my love of self take away my love of stuff and false gods and idols take it away take away my love of me being first and my way my kingdom come my will be done take it away so that I can follow you is that your prayer father in

Jesus name help us help us the world is always trying to get us to believe it knows best and always trying to pull in our heart look because we're in the flesh we're still human we're still fallen though you've given us new hearts your bible word tells us we still live in the flesh we still live in our fallen humanity and the whispers lord the voices oh the voices they're always whispering god give us ears to hear your voice the voice of our good shepherd so that we can follow him and stay on the path and keep our hands from doing evil and keep our eyes from looking and rejoicing in evil help us to watch you and to want your righteousness may we hunger and thirst for righteousness may we hunger and thirst for you in Jesus name amen