

2023 Theme - Focus On What Matters
Sermon Series - Focus On The Heart
Sermon Title - A Resurrected Heart
Sermon Text - Matthew 5:8
Sermon Presenter - Pastor Larry

Introduction:

“Look at the wounds that give me life, Grace flowing from His side, No greater sacrifice!” What Jesus did on that Good Friday over 2000 years ago is still changing lives today! He is still purifying hearts and allowing people to see God! How so? He didn't stay in the grave! He was resurrected on the third day and has the ability to transfer that resurrection power to our hearts and lives! Jesus wants to take our old hearts that have been broken and corrupted, and subjected to death and despair, and He wants to purify them, raise them to new life and infuse them with a blessed hope! Let's pray and ask God to teach us how our hearts can be resurrected with Jesus to become pure like Jesus! Let's pray!

Today is an important day in Christendom, and it's an important day for us as individuals! And today, regardless of your reaction to the message, will be an important day in your life. It will either be an important day because of positive and powerful changes you made in response, or it will be an important day in your life because of a missed opportunity. You're the one who will make that decision. Our hearts are the seat of emotions, our will, and our motivation in life. It affects everything! As we continue our message series, focus on the heart, we read these words Jesus spoke in His famous Sermon on the Mount:

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

That's such a powerful statement and one that causes us to ask some very important questions! Questions I want us to answer today...

1. Why do we need a pure heart to see God?
2. Who makes it possible for us to have a pure heart to see God?
3. How do we get a pure heart to see God?
4. What are the benefits of having a pure heart?

So first of all...

1. Why do we need a pure heart to see God?

Let's first look at the definition of the word pure. According to the Webster Dictionary it has several meanings.

Pure -adjective 'pyür purer; purest

1 A (1) : unmixed with any other matter —like pure gold

(2) free from dust, dirt, or taint —like pure spring water

(3) SPOTLESS, STAINLESS

B. free from harshness or roughness and being in tune —used of a musical tone

2 being thus and no other : SHEER, UNMITIGATED

3A(1) : free from what vitiates ([spoil](#) or [impair](#) the quality), weakens, or pollutes

(2) : containing nothing that does not properly belong

B : free from moral fault or guilt

So Jesus was saying our hearts need to be unmixed, untainted, not harsh, unmitigated, not spoiled, impaired, weakened or polluted, containing nothing that does not properly belong, and free from moral fault or guilt! “Okay, Pastor Larry, I think that just counted me out! You would have to be perfect for all of that to apply and I’m not that!” Well neither am I! In fact God’s Word makes it clear...

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

But God has a way to give you and me pure heart and we’ll see that in a moment. I’m just laying out my case to show you why we need a pure heart! So it is important to understand the meaning of pure! You see, God is purely Holy and Righteous and without any mixture of sin or uncleanness! In the Hebrew language Holy meant...

Holy: Set apart, Consecrated, purified!

You might remember that in the Old Testament there was the tabernacle. Within the tabernacle was the Holy Place and then there was the Holy of Holies, where God’s presence was! His presence was manifested behind the veil, the thick curtain that separated the people from God because of their sinfulness! That veil also protected the people and we’ll see why in a moment. But Isaiah was given a glimpse of what was behind the veil and it was awe inspiring and awfully scary at the same time! Isaiah said this of his vision of God...

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.

Isaiah 6:2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.

Isaiah 6:3 And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

When the Hebrew people wanted to emphasize something they would say it twice. Jesus would do that when He said, “Truly, truly,” or “verily, verily I say to you!” The fact that the seraphim said the word holy three times, was extremely meaningful to the Jewish people! The holiness, and purity of God was being emphasized! But therein lies the problem... God is Holy and we are not!

Isaiah knew full well the implications of that dilemma and that is why I said his vision was awful scary. He went on to say...

Isaiah 6:4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

Isaiah 6:5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

Matthew Henry, in his well known commentary, said this...

"This awful vision of the Divine Majesty overwhelmed the prophet with a sense of his own vileness. We are undone if there is not a Mediator between us and this holy God. A glimpse of heavenly glory is enough to convince us that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Nor is there a man that would dare to speak to the Lord, if he saw the justice, holiness, and majesty of God, without discerning his glorious mercy and grace in Jesus Christ."

Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott, Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), Is 6:1.

But we must not leave off the next two verses of Isaiah's vision. Isaiah is broken over his own sinfulness and impurity, and also worried about the ramifications! But then this happens...

Isaiah 6:6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.

Isaiah 6:7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

Dr. Page H. Kelley says...

"This part of the vision suggests that there is no painless cure for sin. Forgiveness has always been secured at the price of suffering and death."

Page H. Kelley, "Isaiah," in Proverbs–Isaiah, ed. Clifton J. Allen, Broadman Bible Commentary (Broadman Press, 1971), 211.

We will talk about that in just a minute. But I want you to realize this amazing and almost incomprehensible thing about God:

As pure, holy and righteous as God is, Holy, Holy, Holy, He desires to have a relationship with sinners like you and me! He desires to love us and to fellowship with us!

The problem is that we are not pure and if God allows us to come into His presence in an unclean condition, we would be consumed and destroyed by His holiness and that would break the heart of God. That's a part of the reason there was a curtain in the temple, to protect the

people. You see, God doesn't want to destroy us, He wants to save us, but His holiness will not tolerate wickedness! God hates the sin, but loves the sinner! In fact, Ezekiel quoted what God said to him...

Ezekiel 33:10 "Son of man, say to the Israelites, 'This is what you are saying: "Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?" ' Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?'

Sin separates us from God because Sin causes impurity! Impurity as it relates to our morality, honesty, integrity, love, attitudes, motives, temperament, and actions! Impurities in our lives not only separate us from fellowship with God, they also separate us from the blessings of God! Why? Because God cannot and will not bless a life of sinful impurity! But the good news is that He has provided a remedy and we'll see that today. God has a way of purifying our hearts so we can see Him if we will come to Him and let Him do His wonder working miracle of purification in our lives! Theologian Frank Stagg states this about the word pure which Jesus used in our text...

"Pure translates *katharos*, the term for cleansing; and purity in heart contrasts with ritual cleansing of hands or body. By various groups within Judaism, a sharp distinction was made between what was ritually clean and what was unclean. Jesus brushed this aside in the interest of real purity, that of **heart**. The heart stood for the whole inner self, mind as well as feeling. Purity of heart is simplicity or integrity as against duplicity. It is the concentration of the whole self upon God."

Frank Stagg, ["Matthew."](#) in *Matthew–Mark*, ed. Clifton J. Allen, Broadman Bible Commentary (Broadman Press, 1969), 105–106.

Now I want to share with you a story from the life of Jesus that illustrates why we need a pure heart to see God and to see things the way God wants us to see things.

Matthew 15:1 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked,

Matthew 15:2 "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!"

Matthew 15:3 Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?"

Matthew 15:4 For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.'

Matthew 15:5 But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is 'devoted to God,'

Matthew 15:6 they are not to 'honor their father or mother' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

Matthew 15:7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:
Matthew 15:8 “ ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.
Matthew 15:9 They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.’”
Matthew 15:10 Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand.
Matthew 15:11 What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”
Matthew 15:12 Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”
Matthew 15:13 He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots.
Matthew 15:14 Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”
Matthew 15:15 Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.”
Matthew 15:16 “Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them.
Matthew 15:17 “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body?
Matthew 15:18 But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them.
Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.
Matthew 15:20 These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”

Bottom line is this: “if we’ve got garbage in our hearts, then we’ll have trash in our lives! The heart affects the eyes, the mouth, the hands, the feet and the feet of a man with an impure heart will take him to places that are dark.” (Itm)

Frank Stagg went on to say this about our beatitude for today...

“Although the emphasis here is upon inner purity or integrity as contrasted with outward, ritual cleansing, there is no indifference to the outward life of words and deeds. Purity of heart and wholeness go together, the outward life reflecting the inner purity.”

Frank Stagg, [“Matthew.”](#) in *Matthew–Mark*, ed. Clifton J. Allen, Broadman Bible Commentary (Broadman Press, 1969), 105–106.

People in the world, including many religious people, think that if their behavior is good enough, it will influence their character, but it’s the other way around. Your character influences your behavior! And the only way to have a transformed character is to have a pure heart, but we are incapable of purifying our own hearts. It’s impossible! So we must ask this very important question...

2. Who makes it possible for us to have a pure heart to see God?

God's One and Only Son Jesus Christ! Paul put it this way in his letter to Titus...

Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,
Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.
He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,
Titus 3:6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,
Titus 3:7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

But we must remember what Dr. Page Kelly said...

"...there is no painless cure for sin. Forgiveness has always been secured at the price of suffering and death."

And the writer of Hebrews speaks of the heart cleansing that could only come through the precious Blood of Jesus...

Hebrews 9:12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.

Hebrews 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

There's an old hymn that speaks this truth so clearly.

Would you be free from the burden of sin? There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood;

Would you o'er evil a victory win? There's wonderful pow'r in the blood.

Refrain:

There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder-working pow'r In the blood of the Lamb;

There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder-working pow'r In the precious blood of the Lamb.

3 Would you be whiter, yes brighter than snow? There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood;

Sin-stains are lost in its life-giving flow—There's wonderful pow'r in the blood. [Refrain]

4 Would you do service for Jesus, your King? There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood;

Would you live daily His praises to sing? There's wonderful pow'r in the blood. [Refrain]

Source: One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: an African American ecumenical hymnal #375

So we know there's power in the Blood of Jesus to cleanse and purify our hearts! But how and when does that blood actually get applied to our sin? In other words...

3. How do we get a pure heart to see God?

Well, you've gotta want it and ask for it! The Psalmist, King David, known as a man after God's own heart, wanted a pure heart. He realized the horror of his sin, and prayed this...

Psalm 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

Psalm 51:2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Psalm 51:4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge...

Psalm 51:9 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

Psalm 51:10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalm 51:11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Sadly, there's a lot of folks who don't want anything to do with God or with purity. They have bought the lie that sin is fun and purity is simply old fashioned, outdated, boring, restrictive and unrewarding. Nothing could be further from the truth, but Satan's still selling that lie and people are still lining up to buy it! When I say "buy it" I'm not kidding. People will sell their soul for things that never really satisfy and chase things that once they catch them will disappoint them! But if you've examined your life and you're willing to admit the truth that you are a sinner in need of a Savior and if you're willing to receive the truth of God's love for you and if you will accept the truth that His plan for your life is better than anything you could ever imagine, then Jesus' words in John 8:32 are for you...

John 8:32 "... the truth will set you free."

And speaking of truth, the only One who can give you a pure heart is the One who had the purest heart ever to beat in the chest of a man on this earth and that was Jesus Christ! He was fully God and fully man at the same time. Yet He was a man who had no sin in His life! He was perfect, and yet while He was perfect, He had a deep love and concern for those who aren't perfect, you and me! He had great compassion for sinners like us. He knew that sin destroys and kills. He knew that sin corrupts and dismantles God's intentions for us! He knew that sin separates us from God! He knew that sin causes us to lose our purity, and our fellowship! Jesus knew that in order for us to be purified we would need to be cleansed from the inside out! He knew that ritual cleansing of the body would not fix the filth that had contaminated our heart, soul and mind! He knew that His body would have to be sacrificed in order for our spirit to be saved! Jesus knew the only way to tear the curtain that stood between us and a Holy, Holy, Holy God, was for His Body to be torn! And while His bones were not broken, His flesh was torn in many places by nails, thorns, fists, a whip and a spear! Isaiah prophesied this...

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

God's Word tells us what happened at the moment Jesus took His last breath for you and me on the cross...

Matthew 27:50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

Matthew 27:51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom...

Jesus had made a way for all us impure sinners of the world to be reconciled to God and to be given a new, pure, resurrected heart. Let's read Romans 3:23 again, and add the next two verses...

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 3:24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 3:25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith...

There's only one way to have a pure heart, and that is when you, by faith, let Jesus Christ cleanse your heart of all wickedness and evil! You have to make the decision to let his perfect cleansing blood be pumped through your heart in a spiritual way that makes you new and regenerates your heart, and begins to change your mind and your actions! You've got to let Jesus do what He died to do and that's to give you a resurrected heart! A heart that's been made brand new! Cleansed from the impurities of selfish, self-serving sin, and self-destructive sin! Let Jesus bury your old corrupted, clogged up heart, that has been blocked from receiving God's blessings or being able to see God. Let Him resurrect your heart from its spiritual darkness, from its hardness, brokenness, hopelessness and discouragement, to one of hope, peace, and strength no matter your circumstances! And speaking of resurrection, listen to what Isaiah prophesied about Jesus...

Isaiah 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

Isaiah 53:11 After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

Isaiah 53:12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Yes Jesus prayed for the very people who had beaten Him, mocked Him and nailed Him to the cross! But I believe His prayer was also for you and for me! If you've never believed in Jesus,

your path to a pure heart starts with salvation. Admitting you're a sinner, believing Jesus died to save you from your sins, and calling on Him to be your Savior! It's really that simple. Simple doesn't mean easy. It's not so easy to admit you've messed up and to ask for help, but that's what we must do if we want to have a pure heart and be able to see God! If you're a believer and have been saved, but you know there's things in your life that are not glorifying or honoring God, then sanctification is what you need! Paul mentions salvation and the concept of sanctification when he said...

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

Titus 2:12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

Titus 2:13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Titus 2:14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

We are sanctified as we daily ask the Lord to cleanse us and help us live the new life Jesus died to give us! And how is any of this possible? It is through His death and our acceptance of that sacrifice that we are forgiven of the penalty of sin, and it is through His resurrection that we find victory over the power of sin! Salvation is getting a new and purified heart! Sanctification is letting Jesus help you keep that new heart clean and pure! Through the resurrection we have His power in our lives to live a pure life via His Holy Spirit! In fact Paul put it this way in Romans...

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Romans 6:5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Romans 6:6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

Romans 6:7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Romans 6:8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Romans 6:9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

Romans 6:10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Romans 6:11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus! And that in itself answers our last question...

4. What are the benefits of having a pure heart?

Wow, I don't even have time to begin! That's not another sermon, that's a series of sermons. But let me just tell you the two main things Jesus revealed in our beatitude for today...

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

Benefit #1 - Those with a pure heart will be blessed by God!

Remember when I said, God can't bless an impure heart? But when we allow God to purify our hearts through the blood of Christ and we let God purify our lives as we begin living for Him, He will bless us! In fact the Psalmist said this...

Psalm 24:3 Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?

Psalm 24:4 The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.

Psalm 24:5 They will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God their Savior.

Psalm 24:6 Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob.,

Benefit #2 - Those with a pure heart will see God!

Certainly that means you will see God in all of His glory someday in heaven, but I can promise you this: When you allow Jesus to purify your heart you will begin to see God at work in your life here and now! God's Word says it beautifully...

Ephesians 3:12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence...

Ephesians 3:16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

Ephesians 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

Ephesians 3:18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

Ephesians 3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

Ephesians 3:21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

As we get ready to enter our time of invitation and decision, we must remember that for Jesus to defeat sin, death and the grave through the resurrection He first had to face the agony of the Cross! I was talking to Kayla Muller about the women's prayer night and she was telling me how the ladies wrote things on post it notes and then nailed them to the cross. She said it was very convicting to hear the sound of the hammer hitting the nails. I later thought about how it must have been on the actual day of the crucifixion! So here's what an eyewitness account might have sounded like...

I had seen the beating with the whip called the cat of nine tails,

witnessed them spitting upon and striking Jesus' face
I watched as He carried His cross to Golgotha, the place of the skull
I couldn't bear to watch anymore, so I closed my eyes as the crown of thorns upon His brow
was placed
And then they laid Him upon the beams of that old rugged cross,
But I couldn't help but hear the cruelty of the soldiers' mocking words and then came the
unforgettable sound of the hammer as they drove the nails. It seemed it would never stop, as
they moved from one hand to the other and then the feet! It was excruciating to hear, but
nothing could compare to the actual pain Jesus must have felt with each blow of the hammer.
And all because of my sin, my wrongs, my guilt, my impurity! It's hard to imagine, hard to
fathom, why He would do that for me. Why would He take someone else's punishment? Why
would He love me that much? I can't fathom! Could I ever understand? Will I ever know? But
wait, it's been revealed in God's Word...

Hebrews 12:2 ...For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat
down at the right hand of the throne of God.

His joy was knowing that His death would mean life for you and me! Our broken, tainted, lifeless
hearts, would be purified and would beat once again, but with His life, His Spirit, and for eternity!
Let's pray!