



Pastor's Pen

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

Dear Bethel Church family and friends,

Grace and peace to you! I pray this pollen-filled, rain-deprived early spring letter finds you well. With this article, we enter month two of our weekly email newsletter. Are you finding it useful? Is it communicating helpful information? Please let us know so we can make any changes needed sooner rather than later.

Last month, we resumed our study of the characteristics of Christ's disciples, which the Lord described at the beginning of His Sermon on the Mount. As we've seen, each of these qualities describes what all Christians should embody. These behaviors are the fruit of a transformed life and indicate the essential difference between those in Christ and those still in Adam. Why am I poor in spirit? Because I understand that apart from Christ's atoning blood, I deserve only the judgment of God. Why should I mourn? Because I am a sinful man and, to paraphrase the prophet Isaiah, I live among a wicked people. And how should these truths cause us to react? Having understood our own bankrupt condition before God, we become humble and gentle with others, not thinking more of ourselves than we should. These foundational truths lead us to the sixth beatitude, **"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."**

As we saw last time, the Bible uses the word heart to talk about the center of our being. It's the very core of who we are individually. Unfortunately, it is also the center of our problem, the seat of all that is wrong with us. Since we have a foundation problem, any modification we attempt to make to this

crumbling base through education or by changing our external environment makes no difference. We need a new foundation. We must have a new heart to live according to God's design. We see the Lord's hand at work in His great mercy, even in our hearts. God tells us through the prophet's pen, **"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws"** (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

What does it mean to be pure in heart? It means that internally, we've been cleansed from deceit, hypocrisy, and sin's hardening effects. You might wonder, then, do we still commit sins? Unfortunately, the answer to that question is a resounding yes. But the difference is we no longer embrace sinful behavior; we no longer make it a habit. We also see a difference in that when we sin as followers of Jesus Christ; we are deeply sorrowful that we have desired something created more than we wanted the Creator, that we loved something or someone else more than God.

What promise does Jesus make to those with a pure heart? Saints, we will see, actually SEE God with our own eyes. Unless the Lord returns for us soon, this promise will ultimately be fulfilled for each of His children when we cast aside the mortal coil and gaze upon the face of our Lord and Savior in heaven. Oh, what a marvelous day that will be!

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Chris

this week

Sunday's sermon:

Listen Up! - Revelation 2:1-7

events

Children's Spring Showcase
3/30 at 5:00 pm

GriefShare
4/1 at 6:30 pm & 4/2 at 1:00 pm

Youth
3/30 at 5:00 pm

Diaconate Meeting
4/1 at 7:00 pm

Circle #1
4/1 at 10:30 am

Mentors & Moms
4/3 at 9:30 am

volunteer schedule

Infant Nursery
Trinna Meek & Cindy Love

Toddler Nursery
Laura, Brent, & Macie Clinton

Worship Training
Jenni Quinn & Kathy Donnelly

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