

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART AGAINST THE GRAIN - Part 7 Ben Rudolph

Good morning Life Fellowship. I know it has been raining for like seventeen days straight, but we are here and that is good. Turn in your Bibles to Matthew Chapter 5 where we will be this morning. Sometimes I just find it important for us to take a moment and go before the Lord and ask Him to speak to us, because I think sometimes we come in here with a lot of baggage. So I just want to ask you to bow your heads and let's go before the Lord in prayer. I think what we all need when we come to moments like this is to remember more than ever that we need to hear from God. More than hearing from me or anyone we just need to hear from the Holy Spirit. So let's pray and ask God to do that this morning.

Father, we are ready and we want to hear from you today. I don't know the baggage that everyone is carrying in this room; it could be sorrow, it could be pain, it could be a burden, it could be guilt and shame, but I know Father that the reason they are here is because you want them here. I pray that they will receive from you what you desire to communicate to them through your Word and through your Spirit. So we pray these things in your name. Amen.

We are in a series called 'Against the Grain,' which is a series by which we are looking at The Beatitudes. And The Beatitudes are a list of about eight sayings that Jesus gave to His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount. We find this sermon in Matthew Chapters 5 through 7, and there is this series of sayings that Jesus begins with. The whole idea, the whole context is that this is what it means to be a part of the kingdom of God. So for us, as we hear Jesus today, we don't think about the kingdom of God very often, but this is what it means. This is what it means to be the people of God; this is what it means to have God as our authority and our Lord.

So when it comes to the things that Jesus says in these statements, to set the table for the rest of His teaching, each and every one of these goes against a natural inclination of our hearts and it goes against what is normal for us in our culture and in our society. So each of these sayings should rub up against us and make us feel very uncomfortable at some level. All of these statements aren't going to make us think, '*Oh that is so nice and sweet for Jesus to say that.*' No, these are sayings that are meant to confront us.

Pastor Dan preached last week on "***Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.***" And today we are going to be on, "***Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.***" "***Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.***" We have been talking about how each one of these sayings build on one another. And we also know that there is a first four sayings and then a second four sayings. And we know that being poor in spirit correlates to the blessed are the merciful. Just like blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted relates to the blessed are the pure in heart. So there is this idea of once you mourn over your sin and the evil done to you, and you have allowed God to comfort you, now what do you do with holiness.

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So whenever you have a statement like this, and again one of the things that I say over and over when I preach is we have to ask the Bible questions. To really understand what God is saying and to be able to get deep into it, we have to understand why He is saying what He is saying. And when I was going through this text this week, there were a bunch of questions that I found to help me to understand what Jesus means.

Here are the questions that I came up with. First of all what does it mean to be pure in heart? That is a really heavy word. What does it mean to be pure? What is He talking about with the heart? Is it possible to be pure in heart? The Bible teaches us that every single one of us is a sinner, and so how do we get to be pure in heart? Is it something that we have to work toward? Is it something that we have to do? Is it a prayer that we have to pray? Another question is how do we become pure in heart? Because if something doesn't come naturally to me how do I get there? Then I wondered what does it mean to see God? Does that mean I could get visions of Him? Does it mean that when I die I get to see God? What does it mean to see God?

And the last question was the question I believe is probably the most important for us today. I didn't think of this question till halfway through my sermon study this week, but I think the last question is the most important. And the question I want to ask you this morning is this – do you want to see God? Do you want to see God? I mean we can talk about, *'Hey, this is what it means to be pure in heart, or this is what it means to see God, or how to see God,'* but I think what we have to get to is in our heart of hearts we have to ask this question today and that is – do we want to see God? Is God just some concept of being out there, but He is not close? And if I see God what does it do to my life?

So I think we have to begin with this last phrase first. Normally when I teach I begin with the beginning of what is said and then move toward the end. But I believe we need to look at the last part here to understand what He is talking about. Today I think the issue that we find ourselves in as people, as 21st century Americans, is that the majority of people, not just in our country but in our churches, don't care to see God. So we need to ask that question of ourselves first – do we want to see God? We have to begin with the end of this statement in order for it to make sense of the beginning of the statement.

It is like a good Christopher Nolan movie. Do you know who Christopher Nolan is? He is a really good film maker and director and he has made some of my favorite movies. He did the 'Dark Knight Trilogy' and he also did the movie 'Inception,' and the movie 'Dunkirk.' And he just came out with a recent movie called 'Tenet.' Tenet is one of those movies that you have to wait until the very end to really understand all that is happening and for it to make sense. If you are a person that asks a thousand questions, do not watch that movie. It will drive the person you are with absolutely crazy because it is one of those movies you have to watch a number of times to understand it.

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And I love movies where you are not sure what is going on, and then finally at the end of the movie you are like, ‘*Oh my, that is crazy.*’ And I think that is what we are going to do this morning by looking at what it means to ‘see God.’ And why do we not want to see God today? We have to ask that question - why don’t we want to see God? And if we don’t want to see God then there is no reason for discovering and learning what it means to be pure in heart. If we don’t want to see God then we don’t want to be pure in heart, we don’t care about the holiness of God and we don’t care about doing the things of God if we don’t want to see Him.

So the first question I want to ask you is this – what kind of person doesn’t want to see God? What kind of person has no interest in a relationship with God or to see Him? I am going to get to this a little bit later, but it is a different question than – do you want to go to Heaven? And I believe that many of us maybe we misunderstood that question. The question I am asking is – do you want to see Him? Do you want to know Him? And how we answer that question is this – the Bible gives us some answers about people who don’t want to see God. It has to do with our heart. The heart is the center of our being. It is the core of who we are. It is our identity, it is our thoughts, our emotions, it is the core identity of a person. That is how the Bible describes our hearts as being.

Number one - the kind of person who doesn’t want to see God is the rebellious in heart. We are going to be flipping around to a lot of passages of Scripture this morning so get ready to be looking these up. I want you to turn to Psalms 14 first as it is a really powerful Scripture. The question that we have to ask ourselves is what is the heart condition of the person who doesn’t want to see God? And we will see in Psalm 14 that the first heart condition that we can find people in who don’t want to see God is because they don’t really believe there is a God.

Look at verse 1 where it says: “***The fool says in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt, there is none who does good, not even one.***”

Right there Psalm 14 says it is by nature. And that no one can escape this whether you are in church this morning or not going to church, whether you are white or black, whether you are Hispanic or Asian, whether you are American or not an American, nothing disqualifies you. He says no one really wants to seek after God. Every single one of us has a rebellious streak inside of us that says, ‘*You know what, I don’t really want to be close to God. I don’t want to see God. I want to do my own thing.*’

And today we live in a world with a predominant viewpoint of ‘it only matters about me and what I want.’ Self has become God in our culture. Everything that we think about seems natural to us, it seems normal to us. To tell people, ‘*Hey, it is all about me,*’ and to focus around that seems natural to us. One of the things that we say over and

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over at Life Fellowship is ‘We want to pursue at all costs a passionate God-centered life.’ And a God centered life does not come natural and it does not come normal to us.

So we have to go against the grain. Even though I am only forty-four years old, I have seen as the years and the decades have gone by less and less people being interested in God. Every year they poll the country to find out people’s religious beliefs and there is a rise of a group that is called ‘The None’s.’ These are people who don’t affiliate with any religion and they don’t affiliate with any church so they are known as ‘The None’s.’ Most of these people are young people, millennials or Gen Zers. These are people who say, ‘*You know I don’t really care about God. I don’t really need God. I want to do my own thing.*’

There has just been this rise of this mindset today that it is ‘all about me.’ Now how did we get here? As I was thinking about how we got here I decided it didn’t have to be about the Corona virus or any political party; really what we see is about a hundred and fifty years ago there was this infiltration of thinking that affects every institution. You had Darwin about one hundred and fifty years ago who came up with this idea of how we became human beings by scientifically coming into being by evolving from one cell organisms. It was Darwin’s way of getting rid of God as the creator because if we get rid of God as creator we are not accountable to anyone. We could do our own thing.

And then later on there was a guy by the name of Karl Marx and he applied what Darwin thought to politics. He said that religion was the opium of the masses and we needed to throw aside this idea of God and honoring Him in government, and just do our own thing. Man is not ultimate. Marx brought in his philosophy to politics and we see what Marxism has done across the world through the death and destruction by the tens of millions. Not only Karl Marx but there was Friedrich Nietzsche who was a man who was a philosopher and he brought this idea that God is dead. He brought the idea that we needed to throw off the shackles of following an authority over us, a God over us, so that we could become the self that we determine ourselves to be.

A few years later it was Sigmund Freud the father of modern psychology and psychoanalysis. He was the guy that decided that who we are, our identity was not as image bearers of God, but who we really are was just merely sexual beings. Our sexual identity was who we were, so we could boil everything down to urges sexually.

And when we think about these four giants of philosophy, thinking and influence starting one hundred and fifty years ago, we see that western civilization today has continued to crumble because of the influence of these thinkers. And today many people have just bought into the idea that inside of every human being is this desire not to follow God and they do not want to believe in God because they want to do their own thing. They have now turned themselves into gods and they worship themselves. That is where we are today.

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The rebellious in heart doesn't care to see God and has no interest in seeing Him. Is that you this morning? Is that something that you can honestly look in your heart and see that is where you are at? We can be rebellious all we want, but at some point we have to ask ourselves – one day we will leave this earth, and if God is real, am I ready to meet Him? The rebellious in heart will have to face this.

The second type of person that doesn't want to see God is the proud in heart. These are people who are self-righteous. These are people who have a sense of superiority over others. They may see God as only an important entity for just some people. Have you ever talked to people who said something like: *'I know God is important for you. I know certain people need God because they struggle or they have moral issues, but I don't really need God because my problems really aren't that bad. I am not that bad of a person. My sin isn't that great. There are some really wicked, evil people in the world, but I am not one of them. And God is for them, but not for me.'*

We can even do this in our churches. If you are someone who ever sermon you hear, every time you read the Bible, every song you hear, you are thinking, *'Oh I know someone who needs to hear this. I read this verse in the Bible and I know someone who needs to read this so I am going to share this on my Instagram because they need to read this.'* If everyone else needs to hear something, but you don't ever look in your own heart and realize it is for you as well, that is a danger. There is pride that comes from that. We have to confront the pride in our hearts and understand that we have a hard time judging where our hearts really are. We have a hard time doing that.

There is another passage in Psalm 24 where there is a beautiful Scripture. It says: ***"Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place?"*** We sang a song this morning from Psalm 27 about this desire to be in the presence of God, and here it is in this passage. ***"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."***

You see the person who is proud in heart, this is what they do. They judge themselves on their clean hands, but they cannot judge themselves on a pure heart. They look at their external and not their heart. They compare the dirtiness of their hands to the dirtiness of other people's hands, but they have no sense of judging what is really inside of them.

Last night we had a really interesting episode happen at our house. For Christmas this year we bought our son a dart board, just something fun we could do as a family. The dart board is in his room, so we go in there every night or so, and we play a game of darts. I still stink at darts, but I am getting better. Last night my son was in his room kind of practicing the darts. If you are familiar with a dart board you know they have

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these little metal separations to distinguish between all the different numbers. And like one of the fluke things that can happen every once in a while my son threw a dart which hit one of the metal dividers on the dart board, and it ricocheted down and punctured a can of body spray in his room. And the body spray just started squirting everywhere. My son grabbed it and ran through our house to throw it outside. But once an aerosol can is punctured you need fumigation all over.

I was in my bedroom when I heard this commotion and then all of a sudden I got this smell. It was like a sea of seventh grade boys just filling my entire house. Body spray is meant to be applied by a single small squirt because that is all you need. It is not supposed to be spraying continuously, but that is what went on in my house last night. We started opening doors and windows, we had fans going even with the 30 degree weather outside, but we didn't care because we just wanted to get rid of the smell. Even now once in a while if I go in the garage to do something, or when I put up my chickens last night, and then came back inside I could still smell that body spray.

Have you ever been in a room some place and wondered what a smell was? And other people may not smell anything. Now that doesn't mean they have Covid; sometimes people just get used to a smell and they don't notice it anymore. And that is what can happen to us. We can get so used to our own sins. We get so comfortable with our own depravity that when it comes to wanting to see God and desiring to see Him, we can think we don't really need Him. We think we are doing pretty well on our own. Those other people may really need God but I am doing okay. And I treat God like a mechanic. I will go see Him when I have a problem, but my problems just really aren't that big. And that is what the proud in heart does. Is that a reflection of you this morning?

There is a third kind of person that doesn't want to see God and that is the religious in heart. Now the proud in heart and the religion in heart are very similar because there is a lot of pride in the hypocrisy of the religious in heart. But the religious in heart are people who simply go about the religious duties, and they are doing it for themselves. The religious at heart care about their clean hands as well, but they do it so that they will get something from God. For them, the religious in heart, they might obey, they might be pursuing holiness, but they are pursuing holiness because what they care about is receiving the blessing and the benefits that God can give to people. So their entire relationship with God is built off of this, *'I am going to do something for you, God, so that you will do something for me.'* Their entire relationship is for what God can do for them but it is for God.

I was thinking about how this happens and there is a passage of Scripture we need to look at in Mark Chapter 7 where Jesus is talking to this kind of people. They were the Pharisees in Jesus' day. The Pharisees were people who studied the Bible incessantly. They went to the synagogue and prayed all the time. And if anyone really knew God most people thought it was the Pharisees. They read the Scriptures, they memorized the

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Scriptures, they prayed constantly and they were always in the synagogue. These were people that were so religious and they looked so good on the outside. Yet Jesus had the harshest things to say to them because they were hypocrites. The Pharisees were complaining to Jesus about His disciples because they didn't think they were washing their hands the right way, and they were going to defile themselves and be unclean. The Pharisees only looked at cleanliness religiously as being external, and Jesus confronts them about what really defiles a person is what happens in their heart.

Look what Jesus says to the Pharisees in Mark Chapter 7 and verses 6 through 8. ***“And He said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” “You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”***

These are people that would be in church this morning singing songs, but their heart is far from God. And this can happen to us, if we only see things that we do externally, things that we have to do to look good to other people. And as long as we are doing good things to look good to other people, then we think we are okay and God is going to give us something. I was thinking about this and how much this has infiltrated even evangelical Christianity. How this heart has overtaken churches because it has overtaken people.

I remember as a young man going to a Christian leadership conference, and one of the things they did was to encourage us to share our faith more. We would go to these little seminars to teach us how to share our faith. They would take us out into the city and we were to share the gospel with people on the street. This was thirty years ago and in a highly Catholic area because I grew up in the northeast. And people were willing to talk about God because they thought they were good Catholics, but this is the question we would ask people – if you were to die today do you know for sure if you would go to Heaven or not?

And that is not a bad question, but we framed the conversation like this: *‘Hey listen, you know you are a sinner and don't you want to go to Heaven when you die?’* Again, what is wrong with that question? Nothing is wrong with it but I wonder if we have raised a generation of people, if there isn't a number of young people that grew up in our churches more interested in going to Heaven than in knowing Jesus. *‘Listen, I want Heaven too; I want paradise when I die. I want the good life, I know this world is horrible and filled with evil and darkness and pain. So don't you just want to go to Heaven when you die?’* We want to go to Heaven when we die so we sold Heaven to people and we had them pray this prayer, or believe these things in order for them to go to Heaven. And the problem is this – we have talked so much about Heaven in our churches, but we don't talk enough about Jesus.

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And we have people today that have fooled themselves into believing they are followers of Jesus when all they are doing is pursuing Heaven. When what really makes Heaven be Heaven is that Jesus is there. What makes Heaven so wonderful and glorious and good is that Jesus is there. And I don't want Heaven if there is no Jesus.

See the temptation to have paradise apart from God is the very reason why Adam and Eve took the bite of that fruit so long ago. The temptation was in wanting paradise without God. And if you want paradise without God you are fooling yourself, you are deceiving yourself. And this is how the religious in heart come across. Their relationship with God is merely a transaction. *'I will do for you if you do for me.'* And there is no real love, no grace, and no worship. They don't understand the gift of Jesus.

The last type of person that doesn't want to see God is the shameful in heart. The shameful in heart are people who know God is holy, they know God is perfect, they know God is just but they also have a sense of their sin as well. And that is good, because we need to understand that we have rebelled against God, but the shameful in heart believe that their sin is greater than the goodness of God. They believe that their sin, their evil and their wickedness has been so much that it taints any possibility of God forgiving them or loving them because they think they have done too much. So their faith is actually in the greatness of their sin as opposed to the greatness of God's grace.

And the shameful heart continually rejects wanting to see God because of their shame. Remember Adam and Eve when they took of the fruit they immediately hid themselves. So the reason some people don't want to see God or they are fearful of seeing God is because they have done so much. I remember as a young person growing up in church when I would hear a sermon about a sin issue that I was dealing with I would be like, *'Oh God, I know if I was to die today you would be in Heaven saying 'I can't believe you did that. Yeah, you are here, but I am not happy about it.'* Is that God? Is that His grace? Is that His love? Do we only see God through our shame as opposed to seeing God through His goodness and His grace?

So we can have these conditions of our heart and this is a big problem for us. I don't know about you but I wonder how many of these kinds of hearts we can identify with today? One of them, or all four of them, because maybe there are times when I am like that. And it is hard for us to really judge ourselves, and the reason why I say that is because the Bible says we can't trust our heart. We can't trust judging ourselves. In Jeremiah Chapter 17 the Scripture says a very profound statement about our heart. This is what it says in verse 5: ***"Thus says the Lord: 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength.'***

Remember we talked about the rebellious heart and what they did. It was all about me. *'I will trust in me. I will trust in my own way, in my own ideas of getting things done.'* But listen to what it says in Jeremiah: ***"Whose heart turns away from the Lord."*** Why is our heart turned away from the Lord? Look down in verse 9. ***"The heart***

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is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" You see you and I have a problem and that is we can't judge our own hearts. We look at ourselves and we think we are pretty good. And whether it is our own rebellion, whether it is our pride, whether it is our hypocrisy, or whether it is our shame those things have clouded our understanding and our ability to see ourselves for who we really are.

And that means this – we need God. We need God to help us understand our hearts. Look what it says in verse 10 after it says the heart is deceitful: ***"I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."*** This is our hope, our hope is God, our hope is only in God to come to us and show us our heart. He has to show us what we really love, what we really desire, and He has to show us our motivation. I might have clean hands, but the only one who can ascend to the holy hill of God has clean hands and a pure heart. And maybe we don't know how to get that pure heart, how to be someone that wakes up every morning and desires to see Him, to know Him, and to walk with Him.

As much as God wants us to know Him, we have a problem with the deceitfulness of our heart, and the sin that breaks our fellowship with Him because of His holiness. That leads us to this question which is – what kind of person wants to see God? What kind of person really wants to see God? And again this is where we have to travel back in time a few thousand years because Jesus was speaking to a bunch of Jewish people on a hillside. When Jesus said these things there were things that they would have thought about and remembered stories they would have heard. And Jesus brought them up on the mountain to remind them of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments.

When Jesus says, ***"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God,"*** that was something that would have triggered their memories and they would have thought of Moses. We find that story in Exodus Chapter 33. This statement of ***"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God,"*** would have made them think of Moses, because Moses was the man who asked to see God. If I am going to set the context right here, we need to remember how Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, out of slavery. They had seen all the plagues and they have had the Passover. Then they had wandered through the wilderness after the parting of the Red Sea that they walked through on dry land. They had witnessed Pharaoh's army being drowned. They had been fed manna. They came to Mt. Sinai where God was going to make a covenant with them. Moses is the only one allowed to go up on the mountain because it was holy and there he received the Ten Commandments.

As Moses is coming back down from the mountain to give the people the law and the covenant of God, he hears shouting and partying as the people of God are prostituting themselves to a golden calf. They are worshipping another god. And God tells Moses He is going to destroy them and Moses has to intercede for them. Moses throws down the tablet with the Ten Commandments and he destroys the golden calf. The people

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repent and Moses has to go back on the mountain to ask God for forgiveness again, and this is where God and Moses have this conversation.

And God says, *'Listen Moses, this is a rebellious people. Here is what I am going to do. I am afraid I am going to destroy them along the way to the Promised Land, so I will give you the Promised Land and I will send some angels with you but I am not going to go with you.'* What did that sound like? It sounded like Heaven without God. Some would have said, *'I'll take the Promised Land without God.'* But Moses said, *'No, no, no. If you don't come with us we will not leave this mountain because you are our treasure, and we need you more than anything.'*

Moses asked God to come with him, and now look at Exodus Chapter 33 and verse 17 where it says: ***"And the Lord said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." Moses said, "Please show me your glory."*** There it is right there. Moses wanted to see God. He wanted to see God in the fullness of who He was. And people who want to see God are the people who want to see the glory of God, the fullness of who He is.

Listen to how God responds to this request in verse 19. ***"And He said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. "But," He said, "You cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."*** There you have the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man.

Verse 21: ***"And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."*** That is a powerful story, an interesting story. Here is someone who wants to see God, but God says, *'No man can see me and live, but I will put you in this rock and cover you with my hand so that my glory doesn't kill you along the way. Then I will remove my hand and you can see the back of me, but you cannot see my face.'*

About fourteen hundred years later we hear Jesus, and He says, *'I am inviting you to see God now face to face. I am telling you that it is possible now.'* And people would have said, *'How can we see God because Moses was the hero of our faith, he was the one who received the law; how can we become more pure and holy than Moses?'* It was a crisis of faith to the Jewish people to hear this. But this is what Jesus was saying, *'You can't do it. I know your heart. I know your rebellion. I know your pride. I know your hypocrisy. I know your shame. And what you need is a new heart, because your old heart is too corrupted by sin. I can give you a new heart through my spirit. Just like God's hand covered Moses on that mountain, so my blood will cover you. And anyone who receives the covering of my blood will be able to see me face to face. You can have an intimacy and knowledge of me that is greater than Moses.'*

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That is His offering to us. That is the privilege that we now have. And the pure in heart people know that being pure in heart means an understanding that no one can get a pure heart on their own. To be pure in heart means that we have humbled ourselves to God's ways, we have humbled ourselves to His authority; we have humbled ourselves to His desires. And we can now have a holy heart, not because of anything we have done, but that our heart is now holy because of what Christ has done for us. It is because of His shed blood for our sins that His righteousness is now given to us through faith.

The invitation that Jesus is giving to His people now is this – He can create in us a clean heart, just like David prayed for in Psalm 51 after his adultery. His prayer of confession asked God to create a clean heart and renew a steadfast spirit in him. And that is exactly what Jesus is offering us today. We cannot get a new heart on our own and we cannot get a clean heart as long as we are holding on to our old heart.

There is a beautiful passage of Scripture in Ezekiel Chapter 36. The whole purpose of the law was to show us that we can't keep the law. The whole point of all the rules and regulations that were in the Old Testament was to show us what it meant to be holy and we can't get there on our own. We will always be unclean because of the simple inclinations of our heart which is why we need a completely new heart. We need a complete renovation. We need Jesus to redeem us, to give us a new heart.

This is what it says beginning in verse 25 of Ezekiel Chapter 36: ***“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and 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. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”***

We can't obey the law of God, we can't obey the commandments of Jesus if we don't have a new heart. And Jesus is the only one that can give it to us. I don't know where you are this morning. I don't know what your heart condition is, but I want to invite you to do a number of things. I want to invite you to let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart right now, to bring conviction where it needs conviction, and to offer you this possibility. Maybe you have been following God for all the wrong reasons. Maybe you have been rejecting God up to this point in your life, but there is hope and there is love and there is goodness because God knows your heart's condition and that is why He sent Jesus. He knew the impossibility of us being pure in heart and that is why He came to provide a way for us. That is what He is offering for us this morning.

A couple of questions and then we are done. Number one – do you want to see God? Do you want to know Him and walk with Him? Or are you okay with God at a distance? *‘I will go to God like I go to my mechanic. When I am really in trouble I will go to God.’* No, the question is do you want to see God now? I am not just talking about

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in the future. I am not just talking about when you die, but do you want to know the heart and the mind of God today? It is possible for you.

The second question is – what is the condition of your heart today? As you evaluate where you are spiritually and emotionally, what is the Holy Spirit saying to you right now? Do you have a rebellious heart? Do you have a proud heart? Have you been walking all your life with a religious heart? Is it your shame and fear keeping you from drawing close to Him? The invitation the Spirit is giving you right now is to leave behind that kind of heart and to let Him create in you a clean heart.

And that leads us to question number three – have you received this new heart from Jesus? Have you received salvation? Salvation must be received. It is not automatic; you don't just kind of get it by osmosis from just showing up to church, or having family devotions, or going to Bible study. To receive a new heart is something that we can only receive from the hand of God Himself. And all it takes for us is to believe the offering that He has extended to us and receive it by faith. That is what you can do this morning.

The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.