**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 10-18-2020**

**Blessed Are the Pure in Heart**

Over the years, I was blessed to play and enjoy several sports. I remember playing baseball tournaments on very hot summer days. And between innings and games, how refreshing and satisfying an ice-cold water would be. You could feel like you could just drink the entire bottle at times.

And even with all the sports drinks out there today --- Gatorade, Powerade, and others, there is nothing that truly compares to simple pure spring water.

In fact, you can go into a convenience store today and find some very high-quality waters that are priced as high as $4 of $5.

But something changes if you take one of those $5 waters and just add a tiny little bit of dog poo in with it. It could be so tiny that it is not visible to our eyes. It could still be 99.9% pure high-quality spring water, but the .1% still seems to keep people from wanting to drink.

In fact, I doubt that any of us here would choose to drink from this bottle.

**Friends, purity matters**. It really does. And as much as we desire to consume things that are pure outwardly, purity is first and foremost a matter of the heart.

Over the last month or so, we have been taking a journey through Jesus’ beatitudes, found in Matthew chapter 5.

In these beatitudes, Jesus gives the crowds listening to Him the keys for how to live a truly blessed life.

Today’s key is all about how we see things and how we hear things.

I am reminded of a Christian song often taught to children. Feel free to sing along if you know it.

**“Be careful little eyes what you see. Be careful little eyes what you see. For the Father up above is looking down in love, so be careful little eyes what you see.**

**Be careful little ears what you hear. Be careful little ears what you hear. For the Father up above is looking down in love, so be careful little ears what you see.**

I invite you to turn with me to Matthew 5:8.

Deb volunteered to read our Scripture for this morning and so I would like to invite her to come forward at this time to lead us in this important teaching of Jesus.

Deb: **Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.**

In the Scriptures, when the heart is mentioned it refers to far more than the organ in our bodies. The heart represents all of our inner state, which is who we really are.

And Jesus says ‘**blessed are the pure in heart**.’

In Matthew 15:19-20, Jesus states**, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man ‘unclean’: but eating with unwashed hands does not make him ‘unclean.’”**

Again, purity is a matter of the heart. When we are living out this beatitude, we are single-minded in our devotion to the Lord.

Jesus was single-minded in his devotion to fulfill one of His missions on earth, which was to give life for the sins of the world. When Peter tried to stop him from going to Jerusalem, Jesus’ pure devotion to His Father led to Him having to rebuke one of his closest friends for trying to stand in the way of that.

In contrast to Jesus, the Pharisees hearts were greedy and focused on man’s approval, rather than God’s. Jesus said of them, **“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.”**

**They were focused on the outside rather than the inside.**

So friends, how are we to be pure in heart? I believe that the most important step in living out this beatitude is realizing the power of the gospel. Did you know that Jesus did a heart-transplant on you?

We are told in the Old Testament that the New Covenant that God will make in His Messiah is that He will take out our hearts of stone and give us a heart of flesh?

What does this mean? It means that He has purified our hearts to faith.

Now, deep down in the core of our being, we truly want to please God and live pure and holy lives. That is who we are by the power of the gospel.

But even though God gives His children a new heart through faith in His Son Jesus, **we need to learn to live out of this new heart that God has given us**. And this is where the rubber meets the road on our Christian life.

We live in a world that is so saturated with sensuality. Our present world system seeks to do everything they can to dehumanize how we see people, whether it is by trying to make us view others as mere objects for our consumption or as enemies to be demonized. Our enemies are not flesh and blood, which is important to remember, especially in times when elections are taking place. Truly, as God’s image bearers, we are to see each person as a beautiful and precious fellow image-bearer of God.

But our spiritual enemy, Satan, and the ungodly systems that he has influence over in our world are aligned and they seek to get people to live out of the dead sinful natures, rather than of the new godly nature that Christ has re-made us into.

The means that he so often tries to do this is through our eyes and our ears. He wants us to view and listen to the equitant of doggy dodo.

In Christ, we are made into $5 waters, so to speak, but sadly, Christians chose to allow our enemy to spike our pure hearts with the doggy do of pornography or filthy and ungodly talk.

Friends, this is not to be. This is not who we are in Christ. The power of the gospel is that no matter our background or life experience or sins of our past, we are made holy and blameless because of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

**So the battle is not about trying to beat ourselves up for living less than pure lives, it is about recognizing that this is not who we are in Christ. We are to consider ourselves dead to sin. Dead to anything less than purity of heart.**

And anytime we are tempted to think otherwise, anytime we are in the grocery store and notice an inappropriately dressed person, to turn our heads quickly and give no place to the devil.

Or anytime we are listening to television or the radio and the talk become filthy or vulgar, we must change the channel or turn it off.

*Job example* - In our Bibles one of the godliest people to live was a man named Job. The Lord noticed how devout He was. I believe that Job lived according to the beatitudes, long before Jesus spoke them out loud. They are timeless truths.

And Job made this statement **“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a woman.”** --- And this is long before the new covenant was established. He knew that God’s people were called to purity in heart. Purity from the inside out.

And so he firmly makes this decision in his mind to not look with lust.

He knew that his eyes were to be instruments of goodness, rather than instruments of vileness.

And as you probably know, Job went through some very challenging times in his life. Even though he walked with purity in his heart, he suffered much.

But in the midst of his suffering, he makes this profound statement, **“I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”**

That’s just profound! And it reminds me of how Jesus concludes this powerful beatitude.

***Blessed are the pure in spirit, for they will see God.***

Friends, it is a joy to know that as we choose to see others as image bearers of God, rather than as objects, that you and I will see the One who made all of us in His image – our Triune God.

I am excited about that day! The day when I see Jesus face-to-face and see my heavenly Father and see the Holy Spirit. I hope you are as well.

But until that day comes, we are invited to grow in our relationship with our Triune God each and every day.

And I can say one thing, if we simply live according to these beatitudes, we will grow in the Lord each and every day.

Let’s pray…