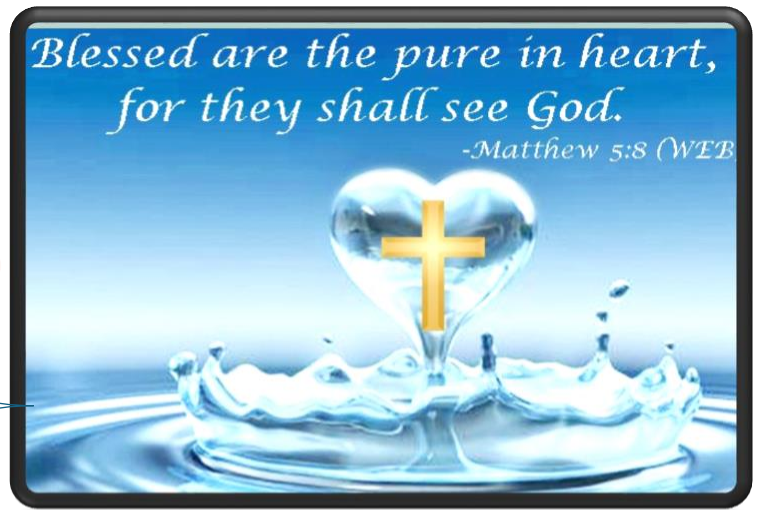


# HPC Trinity Class

April 6, 2025

**"The Beatitudes are not telling you how to become a Christian---they tell you what a true Christian looks like."**<sup>1</sup>



Until now the Beatitudes have shown Jesus hitting upon topics with which we can easily relate. We all know how it feels:

- to mourn
- to be hungry and thirsty
- to be merciful.

Pastor Colin Smith gives an excellent example of how we all fit this mold:

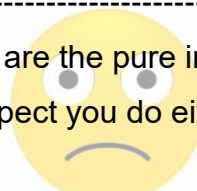
"When Jesus says, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,'...it's not very hard to say

'That's me.' And when Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who mourn,'

it's easy for us to think of our sins and shortcomings and say, 'That's me.'



But when Jesus says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' I don't find myself saying, 'That's me' at all, and I don't expect you do either."<sup>2</sup>



We may even know (or have known) the feeling of being poor in spirit, though the Greek word, *ptochoi*, refers to a totally helpless person. These are all physical and emotional characteristics over which we have some kind of control.

Now, however, in MT 5:8 Jesus gets personal. In ancient times the heart was considered to be the central and unifying location in the body.

"In the recesses of the heart dwelt the thoughts, plans, attitudes, fears, and hopes which determined the character of the individual; here also God (and, in the New Testament, the power of evil) could work in secret to transform that character by implanting new thoughts and feelings."<sup>3</sup>

Simply put, all of a person's emotions were attributed to the heart.

<sup>1</sup> Smith, intro to "Sermons."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Interpreter's, v.2, pgs. 549-50.

To be "pure in heart" seems to be something out of our control. We may find ourselves thinking, "God and Jesus are pure in heart, but not me." If this passage were being written in today's world we might expect the words "pure in thought" to be used instead, but the idea is the same.



**Which statement is TRUE?**

1. Choosing to pursue a temptation is sin but the temptation itself is not.
2. Those who are "pure of heart" are only those who never sin.
3. Paul said that if we stop pursuing our desires of the flesh we will walk in the Spirit of God.

**[READ GAL. 5:16-17]**

We are all tempted to sin, sometimes daily. Scripture says that even Jesus was tempted by the devil. **[READ LK 4:1-4]**. Yet, "he committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." (1PE 2:22)

The book of James is not often used as reference material in Protestant Bible studies. Even Martin Luther "good book" to read, though he did included in the Bible, partly twice. But our short reading from James' alley, with its emphasis on



downplayed James, calling it a not consider it worthy of being because it only mentions Jesus Matthew today would be right up common sense and morality.

**[READ JAS 1:13-15].**

Here we find the confirmation that it is not God who entices us to sin, but our own selfish desires.

"Sinful habits are usually indicative of unresolved conflicts. We must always seek underlying causes rather than treating the symptoms."<sup>4</sup>

If I have headaches every day, day in and day out, I'm not going to buy a dozen bottles of aspirin, continue to simply treat the symptoms, and hope for the best. No, I'm going to quickly visit a doctor who specializes in curing headaches.

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<sup>4</sup> Lutzer, pg. 51.

Does that mean that if we are good Christians who are attempting to have “pure hearts” we will not be tempted to sin? Of course not! Jesus was tempted by Satan, and we will also be tempted.

***The key question: How will we respond to that temptation?***

*Most people say something like, “I simply try to forget the temptation. I ignore it.”*

Pretend that this number is your temptation:



Now, try forgetting it.

- Are we looking for a simple quick fix or a life-changing solution?

“Unfortunately, we too often clutch the [quick fix]: we desire freedom from sin to avoid embarrassment, be relieved of guilt, or to save a marriage.”<sup>5</sup> We simply want to be free from a nagging feeling of guilt, so we take the easy way out—“God can wait,” we say.

Because of our ignorant and selfish ways, we end up missing the opportunity to fellowship with our Creator. We have treated this blessed opportunity as nothing more than, say, a simple New Year’s resolution—easily promised, easily broken.

- When we are tempted to sin, it most often stems from one of three basic causes: pride, sensuality, and/or covetousness.



Give an example of when **pride** would tempt someone to sin...

- or **sensuality...**
- or **covetousness.**

*Always remember —*

*purity of heart does NOT mean that you never have a bad thought.*

And it doesn’t mean you have led a totally sinless life, either. Even the apostle John knew this fact when he wrote, “If we say we are without sin we deceive ourselves....” (1Jn 1:8)

Again, ***How will we respond to that temptation?***

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Thomas Watson was a popular preacher some 400 years ago in England. He described purity of heart to be like gold mixed with dross. In other words, we are a mixture of the pure and the worthless. We are born of God (i.e., “pure”) but the world soon adds dross to our lives. As a result, God would not expect anyone but Jesus to be 100% pure in heart.



“Purity of the heart is to will one thing.”

This simple point made is from the famous Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard. He is emphasizing that we need a heart—an attitude-- that is undivided. The apostle Paul makes this clear in his letter to the Philippians. Here he writes that he wants to know Christ and to emulate him. **[READ PHP 3:12-13].**

“So, you want to be pure in heart?,” asks Kierkegaard.

Then, ask yourself this question:

“How long will you go on trying to embrace two different worlds?”



Give examples of what he means by “two different worlds.”

Finally, name your sin. (eg., drinking, porn, bad temper, etc.)

**Then give thanks to God for being able to stand up to it.**

You're already on the right track.

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