



Blessed: Pure in Heart

Text: Matthew 5:8

Founding Pastor Ken Werlein

1. What has God been teaching you through this study of the Beatitudes about the difference between superficial blessing and *true* blessing?

2. Read Matthew 5:8.
 - a. Ken described “pure in heart” as analogous to integrity. Integrity is living as one, unified, whole self. However, so many of us live compartmentalized lives, or we could even say multiple separate lives altogether. Think about your life: how many different lives do you lead, and what are they?
 - b. Included in this is that many of us who want to follow Jesus, still live our “spiritual life” as separate from the other “compartments” of our lives. There is “God time,” and then there is the rest of “real life.” We go to church on Sunday, and if we are “super spiritual,” we may spend time reading the Bible and praying on our own, going to a Grow Group, and being on a Serve Team. However, we experience little to no effect or awareness of God throughout the rest of our days. How do you see this dynamic to be true in your own life?
 - c. God made us to live our whole lives with Him at the center. No area of our lives should be off-limits to him. What is an area of your life, either consciously or subconsciously, in which are you not allowing God access?
 - d. What would it look like to surrender that part of your life to God?

3. Read Matthew 6:24.
 - a. What happens when we try and serve two masters?
 - b. What are the consequences when we say one thing and do another, especially as it relates to our witness for Christ?
 - c. Ken said that our lack of purity in heart, our lack of integrity, and our hypocrisy ultimately boil down to one thing: idolatry. An idol has been described as when we take a *good* thing and make it an *ultimate* thing. Identify your idol(s) using the Study Deeper material and write down what the Lord reveals to you.

Challenge: New Testament scholar Craig Blomberg described purity in heart as “single-minded devotion to God.” The only way to dislodge a lesser thing from the center of your heart is to replace it with a greater thing. In other words, if you want to remove the idols from your life, you do not do so by focusing on the idol. You do so by focusing more on God. Be encouraged. Pastor Ken said, it’s about *direction*, not perfection. What spiritual practices keep your heart directed towards God? Write down an action plan for this week, with as much specificity and detail as possible, on how you will aim to keep your mind and your heart set on God. Describe the what, the when, the where, the how, and the why.

Prayer:

“Oh God, you alone are God. You alone are glorious. So we pray today, everything that happens today in our lives, God use it all for your glory. That’s what’s most important today is Your glory. Not even how we feel, not even what happens to us, and certainly what others perceive about us. So we want Your glory, Your perception to be known as great, and You to be perceived as gracious and good. So, use our lives toward that end today, we pray.

Keep us from idolatry in our own hearts. Keep us from looking to people in this world, or possessions in this world, or even pursuits in this world as supreme. God, You alone are supreme. Help us to love people in a way that shows ultimate love for You. God help us in the midst of all kind of possessions and pursuits in this world. Help us to keep them in perspective, help us not to put our trust in them, help us to keep our trust in You. Help us to honor you with our possessions, help us to glorify You with the pursuits we have in this world. And then God, we pray, we do pray that in a world filled with all kinds of idolatry; in a world where all kinds of carved idols exist, we pray that You would show Your supremacy.

Oh God, hallowed be Your name in all the earth. Show the nations that You alone are God, and use our lives today toward that end. Use our lives to exalt You among all kinds of idols in this world. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.”

From <https://radical.net/podcast/152-guard-us-from-idolatry-isaiah-428/>

STUDY DEEPER

How To Identify Your Idols

Adapted from the teaching of Mark Driscoll

What are you most afraid of? “I don’t want to get sick?” “I don’t want to be alone?” “I don’t want my spouse to die?” “I don’t want to be at the funeral of my child?” “I don’t want to lose my job?” “I don’t want to lose my last friend?” What are you most afraid of? Behind that may be your idol.

What do you long for most passionately? What gets you up in the morning? Why do you go to work? Why do you pray? Why do you care? Why do you strive? Why do you try?

Where do you run for comfort? Things go bad, you’re stressed...do you run to alcohol? Do you run to food? Do you run to pornography? Do you run to vice? Do you get angry? Do you curse? Do you just go to bed and pull the covers over your head and pretend that it’s all going away?

What do you complain about most? Probably indicates something that you’re very frustrated with, and if you’re frustrated with it, it’s because you value it so much, and it’s not being or doing what you want or need, perceptibly, for it to be or do.

What angers you the most? What just makes you furious? Is it when Jesus is not taught properly? Does it have anything to do with Jesus or is it all about you? All of your anger is about you. It's not about the people who are suffering or the name of Jesus being dishonored. What angers you?

What makes you happiest? What are the best memories in your life? "Oh, if I could just do that again."

How do you explain yourself to other people? "Hi, my name is so-in-so. [Fill in the blank]." "I'm married." "I have kids." "I am a lawyer..." How we explain ourselves may indicate our identity. See, idolatry is building your life on anyone or anything other than Jesus...

What has caused you to be angry at God? "God, how dare you let me lose my job!" "How dare you let my spouse die!" "How dare you let me not have children!" "How dare you let my children wander away from you!" "How dare you let those people say those things about me!" What you're saying is, "God, how dare you take my idol."

What do I want to have more than anything else? That's a good question to ask yourself—the proverbial genie-in-a-bottle question. If I came up and said, "One wish: anything you want." Is it, "Love Jesus"? You go, "Well, no." Okay, then, that's the wrong answer...

What do you make the biggest sacrifices for? Time, energy, money, effort, long hours, lots of money, devotion. What's on your mind when you can't sleep? What are you thinking about? Is it Jesus?

Whose approval are you seeking? Is it Jesus?

And what do you treasure the most? What is the one person or thing that if taken from you—that would ruin everything? Is it Jesus?