

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 70 September 4, 2020

Section 54 The Sermon on the Mount

A. T. Robertson's Harmony of the Gospels

Welcome to another addition to The Mind of Christ. This is a study we've been doing for several months now and we are deep into the study. We are in **the Sermon on the Mount** which is a very large section that covers all of Matthew chapter 5, 6 and 7. We are at the very beginning of that study. It is going to take us weeks or months to complete that section of The Mind of Christ, but it's a great study because the Sermon on the Mount is probably the one single sermon that Jesus preached that covers *so much material* and *so many aspects* of the kingdom ministry of Jesus. It helps us to understand His mind on a whole host of subjects so it's exciting to go through that study.

Thank you for joining us. We are, again, in the middle of this. We have archived several of these studies and you can find even more in manuscript form and I would encourage you to search on our website <https://www.centernalsarasota.org/> to find all the things you are looking for.

We are taking the beatitudes. Sometimes we do one; sometimes we do two. Today we are only going to do one of the beatitudes and that is in **Matthew 5:8**. It reads, ⁸ [“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”](#) Some of the beatitudes are also found in the writings of Luke, but this one is not. This is only found in Matthew and it is one of those beatitudes that requires a great deal of thought in order to understand exactly what Jesus is talking about. Now, just considering the outcome of his beatitude ... seeing God, it really excites me as I think about who is allowed to do so. *Who gets to see God?* He answers: [“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”](#)

First, we must understand this idea about *“pure in heart”*. The word “pure” in Greek is the word “katharos” (καθαρος). It means “to clean, to clear, to be pure, to be unsoiled, to be unalloyed. This word is found in **Matthew 27:59**. Here it says, Jesus' body was wrapped in a clean linen cloth. **John 13:10**, speaking to Peter when Jesus was washing His disciples feet He said, [“He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; \(or pure\) and you are clean, but not all of you.”](#) Jesus is talking to the other apostles. Surely He does not mean sinless here, or even totally focused, because they weren't. But in some way, the eleven were pure and Judas was not.

Then in **Hebrews 10:22** it speaks of [“our bodies washed with pure water.”](#) This is not an overly scientific rendering of how pure the water is. I'm sure it had contaminants, depending on where you are experiencing this washing with pure water. I believe it is a reference to baptism, and depending where you are baptized might make a big difference on how pure the water actually was, but it was pure in a spiritual sense.

In **Revelation 15:6** speaking of the seven angels, they were clothed in linen, clear and bright and the word ‘clear’ there is our word “pure”. In **Revelation 19:8** the bride of the Lamb was clothed in bright linen, clean and symbolically, this fine ‘linen’ is the righteous acts of the saints. In **Revelation 19:14**, the armies who follow Jesus also were clothed in this pure linen.

In **Romans 14:20** an interesting distinction is made here where Paul says, “**All things are clean but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.**” Then you have to look at some of the verses that follow. So even something that is good or clean in itself, if offensive or causes someone to stumble, then the thing that is clean becomes evil. Because it is not of faith; it is sinful and condemning to the person who does it.

In **Titus 1:15** to the pure, all things are pure but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their consciences are defiled. Now this passage demands some great consideration, lest it is misinterpreted. The context, at least back to **verse 10** to the end of the chapter is very important in understanding what Paul is saying. The defiling of the mind with teaching or with doctrine, in this case possibly the requirement of circumcision in order to be saved, salvation by works of the law may be what is under consideration here. You add to this, the motive of financial gain, in other words some may have been teaching this circumcision for salvation doctrine as a way to make money among those who believed in that doctrine, so twisted thinking causes men to look at life and to see impurity where there is none; and to see purity in things that are blatantly impure. So, we can get twisted in our thinking; we can see impurity where there is no impurity and we can see purity where there is no purity. The defiling of the conscience, our internal guide to righteousness, must be avoided by training the conscience in truth. So we don't want to defile the conscience; we want our conscience to remain pure. Circumcision was connected with *ceremonial* cleanness. The Gentile who was uncircumcised was looked on as being *unclean*. Read **Acts 10-11** to see the story of Peter regarding this.

The person who has impure (something doctrinal, or faulty in their thinking) theology, will look at others with a jaundiced eye. Jesus spoke of the blindness of the religious leaders in the same way. The lens through which we view others must be clean to see clearly.

Pure is also used metaphorically in a moral sense; in guiltlessness or innocence. In **Acts 18:6** after attempting to teach the Jews who resisted and blasphemed, Paul shook the dust of his garment and he said, ‘your blood be upon your own head. I am clean.’ In other words, I am pure ... I do not take responsibility. I do not have any guilt for whatever happens to you.’

He told the Ephesian elders that he was innocent of the blood of all men because he did not shrink to tell them the whole purpose of God (**Acts 20:26-27**). In this case, his conscience was pure because he fulfilled his responsibility to warn and to teach people.

In other places the emphasis is being sincere or upright, or void of evil. **1 Timothy 1:5** instructs people not to teach ‘strange’ doctrines; the goal is *love* from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. So again, purity of heart leads to *purity of teaching*. Deacons are told to hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear or pure conscience.
1 Timothy 3:9.

In **2 Timothy 1:3** Paul says that he has “served with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did”. In **2 Timothy 2:22** Paul says to Timothy “now flee from the youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.” **Acts 22:16** comes to mind here in regard to that where he says “calling on the name of the Lord. This is the route to seeing God.

1 Peter 1:22 says, “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from [u] the heart ...” (Some manuscripts add “a pure and clean heart”. You’d have to see the footnotes on that particular passage.)

In **John 3:25** a connection was made between the Jewish ceremonial cleansings and baptism. The nature of this discussion is not very clear, though. In **Hebrews 1:3** we are told Jesus made *purification of sins*. It is implied that He did so on the cross. **2 Peter 1:9** says the person who does not have the qualities mentioned has forgotten his purification from former sins. So, those who have not been adding to their life the various qualities mentioned in **2 Peter 1** ... that person is not only ineffective and unproductive, but they have *forgotten that they have been purified from their past sins*.

Hebrews 9:14 says that the unblemished sacrifice of Jesus was offered to God to cleanse us, or to cleanse people, from dead works so that we can serve the living God. So, what are ‘dead works’?

Well, in **Hebrews 6:1ff** we are told an elementary teaching of Christ is repentance from dead works. Now, if this is taken to mean works that produce *salvation*, or at least in our mind, then the parallel with other passages in First and Second Timothy is clear. But there is a connection between *trying to be saved by works* of the Old Testament Law or some *man-made formula* I make up. Man’s law formula is “if I do ‘such and such’ then I will be saved from ‘such and such’”. In the legal field, if I require people to stop at a **stop sign**, then I can avoid injury and death, so the law becomes the savior. In an instrumental way, this may be true, but if I begin to trust the **stop sign** for my spiritual well-being, I have elevated it to an illegitimate place. For the first century Jewish convert to Jesus, to continue to practice certain Jewish ceremonies, *not as a witness* to Jesus’ fulfillment of these ceremonies like the Passover, but as a means of “**staying saved**”, then the ceremonies take the place of Jesus.

Apply this to the addict who obeys the drug alcohol to stay straight or righteous. Then there is a trust built between the addict and the substance. When the substance beckons, the addict obeys in hopes that they will be cleansed or be made pure, and in their heads return to a state of homeostasis, but it is a dead work because *it mimics the real thing but it is actually dangerous poison*. In **Hebrews 9:22** it connects the cleansing with forgiveness, and both by the shedding of blood; not just any blood but the blood of Christ.

Now we have a substance that can cleanse. Not drugs, or alcohol, or sexual images, or an accumulation of things or power or wealth or any other thing, but Jesus’ blood is the substance that cleanses. The abuse of substances like alcohol and drugs is fundamentally an expectation that these *substances* are going to **save** you from something. They are going to save you from anxiety, or from hopelessness, or powerlessness or something, but Jesus’ blood is the only substance that can **save** you.

1 John 1:7 says, “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sins.” In **1 John 1:9**, forgiveness cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

The point of all of these as relates to the beatitudes is to get us to a state of purity of heart. We have to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

This word, which is similar to the word we have for purity is the word “kathairo” (καθαροί). It includes the pruning of trees in **John 15:2** to make them clean; to purge them. Another similar word “katharizo” (καθαρίζω) of the cleansing of the leper who had to shout, “unclean”, to help others know that they were coming.

So there are variations on the word that is used in **Matthew 5:8**. A word derived from this is ‘catheter’. It is the tube that is placed in a person to drain off urine in order to keep the body clean.

In **Mark 7:14-15** Jesus speaks of the way a person becomes ‘defiled’ which is the opposite of pure. The word **defiled** means to “become common” or “belonging equally to several”. It means to be profane, to be ceremonially unclean.

Peter, in **Acts 10:14** confronted with the unclean animals said that he had never defiled himself by eating anything unclean. In **Acts 21:28** Paul is accused of bringing a Greek into the Temple and defiling this “holy place”; bringing the common into contact with the holy or defiling it. This is why in **Mark 7** and in **Matthew 15** it is not what *enters* the mouth that defiles but what *comes out* of the mouth because “*that*” comes from the heart. He declares that all food is clean, also, in this particular passage.

So, **what in the heart** defiles? Jesus explains that evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and slanders ... all of these defile. Later in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus will address these very things. And for Jesus it is not merely the **act** of these things, but they are “in the heart”.

The **pure in heart** have a different view of the world. They do not trust in their acts to purify them, in fact, they understand that the common things on which others put their trust are not able to save or cleanse and only serve to further pollute and defile the person. Whether it be works of some religion or works of a heart that operates out of evil desire, none other than the blood of Jesus can cleanse us and make us pure.

The idea of **purity of heart** is strangely **connected to having a clean or clear conscience**. We have looked at several passages, and there are several passages that deal with this. Let me give them to you briefly.

1 Timothy 3:9

Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,⁹ but ***holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience***.

2 Timothy 1:3

As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, ***remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines***

2 Timothy 2:22

Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

1 Peter 1:22

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified, your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, *ferently love one another from the heart,*²³ *for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.*

Hebrews 9:14

How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, *cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Hebrews 10:22

Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, *having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

Hebrews 6:1 which connects with **Hebrews 5:13-14**

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of *repentance from dead works* and of faith toward God,² of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

And

Hebrews 5:13-14.

For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.¹⁴ **But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.**

Paul's famous ... I will call them 'good conscience' statements ... gets at one major meaning of 'pure in heart'. Keeping the conscience clear is of *major importance* in Scripture. **Romans 2:14-15** defines the function of the conscience as accusing and defending. It lets us know if we have done evil or good. If according to **Hebrews 5:13-14** *if one's senses*, and that's a very important word ... *if one's senses* have been trained to discern good and evil by the consumption of meat, and not just milk.

'Senses' is a word that means "*an organ of perception or judgment*", both external as in the cases of the five senses and internal senses. So it means to apprehend or perceive. In **Luke 9:44-45** Jesus says, "Let these words sink into your ears for the Son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men." In other words, let them be perceived; but they did not understand this statement and it was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it ... it did not come into their senses, and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement. *This passage is a good example of some conflict or obscurity in one's heart that clouds perception, blocks understanding and impedes purity.*

Jesus seems to desire some temporary obscurity but urges them to let the words sink into their ears. A similar word is used in **Philippians 1:9**. It is translated *discernment*; also in verse 10 so that you may *approve* the things that are excellent in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ. Sincere - two words; one that has to do with the sun's rays and the other word that means to be judged or tested...as in 'tested by the sun's rays to see if something is genuine or pure'.

In **2 Peter 3:1** Peter writes, "to stir up the sincere mind by way of reminder" the words spoken by the prophets and apostles. So along with *the blood*, *the word* is the cleansing agent of the heart or the conscience. **We need to 'get this'**. This is a very important point. If we are going to be pure in heart ... there are two things necessary for purity of heart. One is the **blood of Christ** and the second is **the word of God**. In **Ephesians 5:26**, *sanctification* comes by '*washing of water with the word*'.

Of course, the other aspect of purity is the *location*. It is pure **in heart**. The word **heart** is "kardia" (καρδια). This is a rich word meaning 'thought' or 'feelings' or 'mind'. It is the seat and the center of circulation and therefore, of human life. It is used only figuratively in the New Testament. Looking back on the beatitudes, He has already addressed the **spirit**, the **emotions** ... about mourning, the **character**, the **desires** of man, and now He's addressing the **heart**. *This might be too fine of a distinction but the beatitudes cuts to the core of our identity and our personality* by addressing all of these various aspects of who we are.

So again, let me give you those five things up to this point in the study of the beatitudes. They are the **spirit**, the **emotions**, the **character**, the **desires** and now, the **heart**.

In **Matthew 5:28** Jesus speaks of adultery "in his heart" as being as real as the act of adultery. In **Matthew 6:21** Jesus says, "*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" The heart follows what we value, *or is it the other way around ... what you think about and feel deeply about*, you value.

The word "heart" is used three times in the Sermon on the Mount. Once it is in regard to *purity*, the pure in heart; once in regard to *lust*, lusting after a woman in your heart, and then the '*treasure*'; where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. So, the focus determines how *pure* something is. The focus on the wrong thing is to create an environment "ripe for *impurity*".

Now think of a crime scene where we do not want to contaminate the evidence. When the investigator steps into the scene, they have to be '*super-focused*' on *procedures*, *precautions*, *purposes* etc. or they will end up with a **false** outcome. Think of a surgical room. Focus is important so the room does not become contaminated. So, with life. What I look at, *what* I value, *what* I spend time on, and *who* I spend time with and *why* I spend time with them will determine *where my heart is*. My perceptions or senses allow certain stimulus to enter my consciousness and produces a certain climate in my heart where ways of looking at things develop and grow and become **my bias**. That is why it's so important what I allow into my heart; for these things will enslave me, whether for *good* or for *evil*.

Now, the idea of the **blood** and the **word** as cleansing agents, along with the heart, paints a metaphorical picture that parallels the body-cleansing system. The heart is the pump that moves the blood, but also stays healthy because ‘of’ the blood. If our heart is good and healthy, then it can move the blood and the word of God throughout the body and the pollutants can be removed and life-giving nutrients can be supplied. This is a continuous process happening semi-automatically. The nutrients for the blood have to be deliberately supplied from the outside of the body by foods that we eat.

This is comparable to the **Word of God**. As one feeds on the word, both written, and the Word, Jesus, of course; but can they really be separated since Jesus is the embodiment of all truth which according to **Hebrews 4:12** says, ‘**For the word of God is alive and active.**’ But when truth is digested into the spiritual life of the person which bonds with the blood of Christ, it is pumped through our system **by the heart**. **This keeps us clean**. We do not have a buildup of worldly or fleshly contaminants. This allows the heart to remain pure, and since the heart functions as the seat of thinking, combined with emotions, it is the spiritual organ able to connect with and see God. Faith occurs in the heart. Later in the Sermon, Jesus will speak of the heart being **the lamp of the body**, an *eye* which must be clear in order for the body to be full of light. It is a word meaning single, simple, sound, perfect, properly folded together. The singleness of the *eye* compares to the focused heart that keeps its priority straight. It knows what is important and valuable and pursues these things relentlessly. To see God, our *eye* must be single and our heart must be clear and clean. This beatitude should inspire and motivate us to greater devotion and greater worship.

Take away from this one thing – if you’re going to be pure in heart, you’re going to need **two** ingredients. You are going to need the **blood of Christ** to purify you, to purify your conscience from sin and from anything that contaminates; and you are also going to need the **Word of God** to keep you pure.

So the blood of Christ continually takes out the contaminants of sin; and the Word of God supplies the nutrients into the blood system so that your body stays healthy. When you have the combination of these two, you can stay pure in heart and you’ll one day be able to see God.

Again, I encourage you to go to <https://www.centralsarasota.org/> to our website and you will find links to many other teachings and opportunities.

I would mention that if you are looking in this particular lesson, we do have some trainings that are coming up and you will find those on our website as well. May God bless you, and thank you for joining us today. I look forward to being with you again very soon to continue our study of the Mind of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount.

God Bless.