

ACTNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Cell Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Cell Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

## Blessed Are the Pure in Heart

Matthew 5:8

Rev Ming Feong Ching

### SERMON SYNOPSIS

- We often look for perfection or purity in the things we consume (eg, food, air, water), but we often overlook purity of the heart. The “heart” that Jesus was referring to in this Beatitude refers to the centre of our inner being that consists of our emotions, desires, and decisions we make. Our actions follow our heart. The human heart is devious (Jeremiah 17:9) and from the heart come evil thoughts (Mark 7:21-22). Yet Jesus tells His followers that the pure in heart will see God, knowing that none of us are perfect and all depend on God's forgiveness and grace.
- “Purity” that Jesus referred to is different from perfection. Jesus knows that none of us would ever be spiritually perfect in this earthly life. The Greek word for “purity” means to make pure by cleansing from impurities (eg, refining metals by fire). Another usage of the word “purity” refers to being unmixed, having no double allegiance. In the Latin, *sine cera* (literally “without wax”), denotes no cover up or without falsehood – what you see is what you get. An example of not being pure in heart would be the Pharisees, where Jesus referred to them as “white washed tombs” (Matthew 23:27) – looking good on the outside but full of death inside.
- What does a pure-hearted person look like today? It is one not of lifeless performance of duties, but a life of obedience to please and honour God (Psalm 40:8). A pure-hearted person has one allegiance to Jesus, whose heart is unmixed and not distracted or filled with the things of this world, but like Paul, singularly focused in pursuit of God and His kingdom (Philippians 3:8).
- How can the pure in heart see God? The problem is not God's inability to be seen, but our inability to behold the King. To the blind, all things are invisible. People don't see God because they are not looking for Him, they only see what they are looking for. God's hand is everywhere; in nature, in the circumstances of our lives. Only when we resolve within our hearts (emotions, decisions, desires) to yield to God alone, will we be able to see His mercies and faithfulness in our lives.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Has there been an occasion where you felt that God is not with you or you can't see God in the situation you are going through, but on hindsight know that God was indeed helping you through the situation? Share what happened and why you were not able to see God during the situation but after.

[Children's Activity: Have a few bowls of rice or red beans, with small objects mixed in. The objects must include a small cross. You can also include marbles, small toys or beads – small enough to be picked up with chopsticks or a teaspoon. The children must sift through the rice/beans using the chopsticks or spoon to find the objects hidden in the rice. These objects are “distractions” they must remove to transfer to another bowl. The kids can work in teams or run a relay. The first team to remove all the objects except the cross wins. Teaching point – to have a pure heart, we need to

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remove distractions in our life and only focus on Jesus. You can ask the children what are some real life distractions they face in their life that makes lose focus on Jesus. Eg, TV, electronic games and gadgets, chasing after grades.]

2. Compare and contrast Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees with David's Psalm. What can we learn from these warnings of the Pharisees and from David in having pure hearts; in the context of the sermon – lifeless performance of duties or hypocritical living? (Observe the attitude and actions, then think of application).

[Verses to help us go deeper: Matthew 23:1-12, 23-28; Psalm 51:1-12]

3. In the sermon, Pastor posed some questions for us to do a heart check-up. a) Which of the following is something you struggle most with? b) How can we learn from the Psalmist to continually abide in God and address these heart issues?

[Verses to help us go deeper: Psalm 19:14; Psalm 27:8; Psalm 57:7]

- Is pleasing others more important than pleasing God?
- Do I put popularity above principle?
- Is what I do consistent with that I think?
- What occupies my mind and time when I am alone and have nobody to impress?
- Am I more concerned about my reputation than my character?

### PRAYER POINTERS

- Give thanks that despite knowing the imperfections of our hearts, God gives grace and forgiveness to us.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show us where the impurities that need to be burnt away, i.e. areas to surrender or ask for forgiveness.
- Ask the Lord to give us an increasing desire and allegiance to desire His will and submit in obedience.

### MEMORY VERSE

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God [Matthew 5:8, ESV].