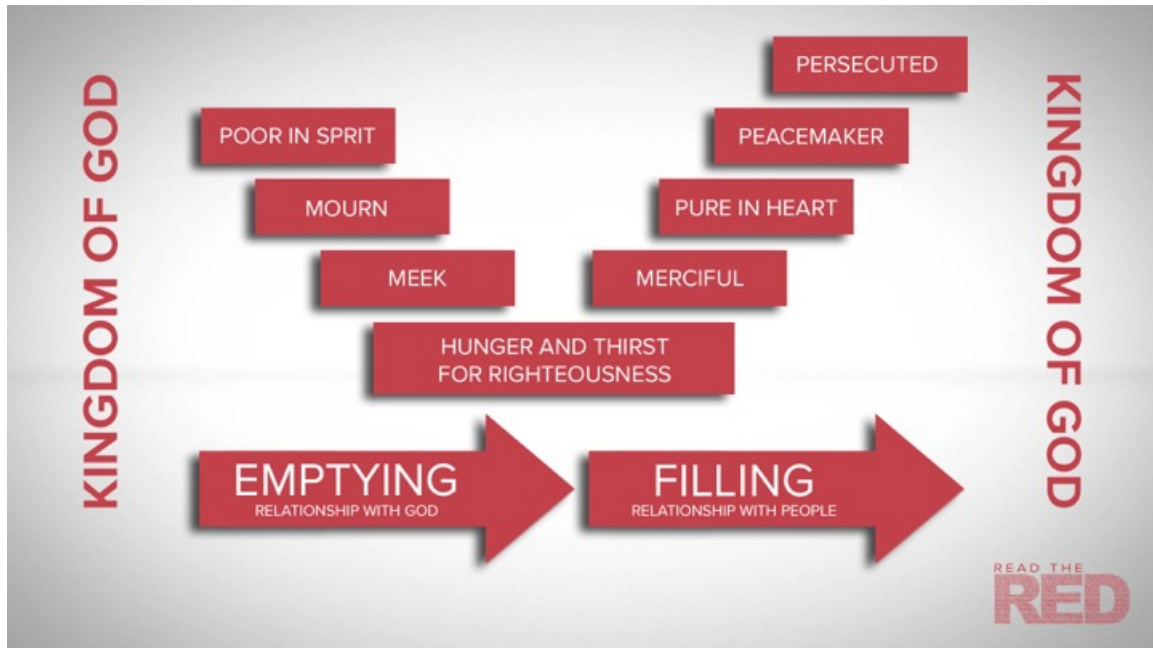




Believing is Seeing – Matthew 5:8

I. INTRO

- A. Today we will be in the Gospel of Matthew 5:8 (p. 802) as we continue in our series looking at each of the eight Beatitudes from the SOTM. The reason for the series is to review these beautiful attitudes that awaken us to a kingdom (or government) that spans way beyond our understanding of this time-space continuum.
- B. Today we will consider Mat 5:8: *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”* --Matthew 5:8 [pray]
 - 1. I have titled the sermon “Believing is Seeing.” Which turns our cultural idiom “Seeing is believing” on its head. This sermon is about positioning ourselves toward a purity that results in seeing God.
 - 2. The idea of seeing God reminded of a lyric from the U2 song “Walk On,” which says: “You’re packing a suitcase for a place none of us has been, a place that has to be believed to be seen.” –U2, Walk On
- C. An important question for you today is: Do you want to encounter God in your day-to-day life?
- D. Think about this for a moment...to see, or encounter God, is the **ultimate goal of every world religion** (right?).
 - 1. It would be natural to think that this Beatitude should come at the end of the list (right?). The culmination of all that is necessary to please or appease God. Yet it is not at the panicle, it’s kind of in the middle. What’s up with that? Let’s look at the graphic that we’ve been using...



2. Notice the first three Beatitudes are concerned with a deep honesty and awareness of our need. THEN we become hungry and thirsty to know, to love, and to please and honor God, which then leads to the fruit of a filling that begins to direct our many appetites toward God: first mercy, then purity, then peace—and then we have the great honor of persecution. (Mercy=compassion in action)

II. BODY

- A. Now we are up-to-speed and ready to consider our passage for today: *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”* -- Matthew 5:8
- B. I’d like to ask an answer two pretty straightforward questions of this beautiful attitude today:
 1. What does it mean to be “*pure in heart*”?
 2. How will we “*see God*”?
- C. Let’s look at them one at a time...
 1. What does it mean to be “*pure in heart*”? (First, we’ll look at the word “*pure*” then the word “*heart*”)
 - a. What does it mean to be “*pure*”?
 - 1) It will be helpful if we first consider what it is NOT saying.

- a) It's easy to think verse is addressing sexuality and sensuality, which is, unfortunately, a normal go to contemporary interpretation of this verse.
 - b) But that is not what this word "*pure*" means.
- 2) The Greek word for *pure* means, "without mixture," or "without pollutant," or "without alloy."
- 3) *"[God] will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver."*
–Malachi 3:3
- 4) What it's saying is: Blessed are those who are single minded, whose eyes are focused on God alone with an undivided heart.
- 5) Picture a conversation most of us have had where the person you are speaking with is looking all around the room. In those moments we feel like a mere placeholder. The person's heart is divided. There is a mixed motivation and focus.
- 6) Our biggest challenge in life is that, if we're honest, our hearts are **divided**. Jesus is saying acknowledge and pay attention to this division that is in our hearts and begin to focus only on one thing.
- b. Now let's consider what the "*heart*" is:
 - 1) In the Bible, the heart is used as a metaphor for the seat, or center of our **most basic orientation**, our heart reflects our deepest commitments — where we place our **ultimate trust**.
 - 2) Here's the problem: "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" --Jeremiah 17:9
 - 3) And then we read: "*Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.*" —Proverbs 4:23
 - 4) Wait, what? Our heart is deceitful AND we're supposed to guard it?? Yes, once we understand that our heart is deceitful, it's ADD and tends toward momentary affirmation and pleasure. SO, we begin to guard what goes in and out.

- 5) “The main human struggle is not between the heart and something else, but between forces that tear it in different directions. The great battle is deciding to what your heart’s greatest love, hope, and trust will be directed.”¹ – Tim Keller
- c. At first glance this is what Jesus is saying: To be pure in heart is to align our lives to focus first and foremost on God.
 - 1) But there is a **deeper meaning** (that holds true for ALL the Beatitudes—and the 10 Commandments for that matter): All the **beautiful attitudes** are beyond the reach of human willpower.
 - 2) **I hope you are beginning to see what is going on here: God demands what is humanly impossible and then gives it to us by grace through faith – with the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit.
- d. Big Idea: Purity of heart means that, because of the gospel, we are able to live our lives without deception, without hypocrisy, and our allegiance to God is increasingly undivided.
- e. If this is not a persistent longing or a growing desire in your life, then you are probably not a Christian.
2. How do we “see God”?
 - a. The fruit of this beautiful attitude of being fully present with God is an ability to “see God.” A well-regarded Greek scholar puts it this way: “To be admitted into the more immediate presence of God.”²
 - b. How do we see God now? (In five ways—one of which will prepare our hearts to celebrate the Lord’s supper together...)
 - 1) We see God in the Scriptures
 - a) *“Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, [Jesus] explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” --Luke*

¹ Timothy Keller. *The Revolutionary Christian Heart*, February 6, 2015

² <https://www.billmounce.com/greek-dictionary/horao>

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- b) My college *Bible as Literature* professor -- she knew the Bible but she didn't know the author...
- 2) We see God in creation
 - a) We see the footprint and the hand of God in creation.
 - b) *"Ever since the creation of the world His eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things He has made..."* --Romans 1:20
 - c) Flying over the Grand Canyon...
- 3) We see God in the difficult circumstances of life.
 - a) *"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You."* --Job 42:5
- 4) And when all is said and done, We will see God face to face.
 - a) If you are a believer, when we pass from this life at that split second, you will know 10,000 times more joy than all of the other accumulated joys throughout your lifetime.
 - b) *"For now, we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known"* --1 Corinthians 13:12
- 5) We see Jesus when we come together with other Jesus followers and celebrate the Lord's Supper.
 - a) I'm reminded of the disciples on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24), the two disciples encountered Jesus and did not recognize Him because they had become so caught-up in the circumstances and anxiety of life.
 - b) *"When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. 31 Then their eyes were*

opened and they recognized Him” --Luke 24:30-31a

III. CONCLUSION

- A. As we surrender to the cleansing grace and mercy of God – along with the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit the purer our heart will become.
- B. The pure in heart see mysteries of grace, mysteries of love and holiness, which are hidden from the eyes of the [unbeliever]. --B. C. Caffin
- C. As I thought about my Bible as Literature college professor this last week, I was reminded of a thought provoking story in William Barclay's commentary on the Bible...He tells about a dinner party in 19th century England where the host had asked everyone to come prepared to give a recital (or reading) after the meal. A famous London stage actor, with all his training and experience, stood up and eloquently recited the 23rd Psalm. When he finished he sat down to thunderous applause. Unfortunately, the next person, who was not a professional nor a very good speaker, had also chosen the 23rd Psalm. As he started out, with very little polish, there were some snickers at the table. Barclay writes that by the time the man finished, a stillness had fallen around the table that was far more profound than any applause. As the man sat down, the actor said to him, "I know the psalm, but you know the shepherd."