

# Bona Fide- From a pure and sincere heart.

## Sermon Note

February 21, 2021

### Review:

Jesus is profiling what type of person is approved and blessed by God in contrast to the failed profile projected by the religious leaders of their day.

#### *Journey of the transformed heart:*

Acknowledge your fallen state.

You mourn over that state.

As a result, you have a humble spirit before God and others.

You begin to long for right relatedness between you and God and with others.

Your awareness of the mercy you have received is paid forward towards others.

#### *God's affirmation and response to that person:*

The Kingdom of Heaven is yours.

He comforts and embraces you.

You will thrive and succeed on earth.

You will experience right-relatedness with God and others.

You will continue to receive mercy from God.

**Matthew 5:8** *"Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God."*

In a person's journey of faith there are often sweet beginnings and challenging middles that affect how we finish in life. The challenging middle is what you might call the daily grind. It is where the daily mundane becomes a challenge to stay sharp, sincere, and faithful. It is the pursuit of holiness—becoming like Jesus in the way we love God, love others, live truth, and proclaim Jesus to those in our oikos (our relational world) and beyond.

This journey starts with the realization we are not the answer but in reality we are utterly hopeless due to sin. We grieve it and are humbled by it. We seek to be in right relationship with God and others. We become merciful by paying forward the mercy we have received, but...A new day starts. Each day begins with new challenges, repeated temptations, common idols, pressure for social conformation, seeking identity approval from the rest of society, due to the day after day confrontation numbness can creep in, we have days where we are alarmed by the lack of God's presence, but we slowly dismiss those feelings and ultimately numb out or succumb to the standards of the world. We hold in one fist I am follower of Christ, but in the other a "me-centered" world view. At first, we cover it well around those who are brothers and sisters in Christ, but eventually the condition of the heart becomes too much to cover. We have changed and often reverted to our old selves.

**Matthew 5:8** *"Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God."*

- **Pure** (καθαροι)- *"pure in heart"* to be sincere, virtuous, or integritous of heart—holy!
  - It is the person who is becoming more and more like Jesus from the inside out.
  - Purity and holiness are worked deep within by which hypocrisy is rejected.

- **See** (οψονται)- “*see God*” Because it is in the middle voice (future middle indicative plural) it literally means that there is an immediate cause and experienced effect for the one who is pure in heart. As Mounce puts it the one who is pure in heart will “... *be admitted into the more immediate presence of God*” Mounce
  - In other words, the person who is sincerely living out from the heart a holy life, that person will not only see God, but will see God now—at work in them and around them.
  - **God’s promise is that we will experience his presence daily as we walk sincerely with him.**
  - That is the daily desire for all of us is to experience on a daily basis the presence of God.

Jesus is claiming that the one who will see and experience God in and around their life is the one who approaches him and others with a pure heart.

This is a direct rebuttal to the Pharisaical approach to God which was to wash the hands as an external practice to be seen by others as pure, innocent, holy, and worthy to go before and experience God.

Consider Pilate. Was he innocent before God because he “washed his hands” of the judgment of Jesus? Or was that an insincere attempt to alleviate guilt before his wife and before others while yet still succumbing to the public pressure to crucify Jesus? God could see right through the façade of this practice.

God could care less about your outward acts of “righteousness” if the heart is far from him.

**The condition of your heart matters in being able to experience daily the presence of God.**

### **Biblical example of the need to daily guard and nurture the heart. Acts 8:9-24**

- Simon was a self-promoter. (9b)
- Simon was attracted to the adrenaline rush of the experiential. (11)
- It was even the experiential that attracted him to Jesus. (13b)
- He believed, was baptized, and followed Philip everywhere. (13)
- Peter and John show up and lay hands on people and as a result the Holy Spirit came upon them.
- The inner heart of Simon was not pure but rather divided and was on display for everyone to see. (18-19)
- Peter rebukes him and dismisses Simon from the team. (20)
  - Why? Simon’s heart was not right before God. (21b)
- Peter guides him. (22)
  - Repent and acknowledge you are not right—become poor in spirit.
  - Pray to the Lord in hope that he might forgive you—mourn, humble yourself.
  - Hope that God forgives—right-relatedness returns.
  - Your heart is bitter and captive to sin—you need a pure heart.

## Take aways:

1. Guard your heart.
  - There is a battle that wages for your heart.
  - The enemy will seek to set your eyes on possessions, promotions, pleasure, and social approval. These values will leave you temporarily satisfied but ultimately empty and unfulfilled.
2. Daily come before the Lord with a grateful and yielded heart.
  - Rightly relating to God each day protects the heart and sets the eyes.
  - It leads to your life conforming to his.
  - Paying forward mercy out of a pure heart becomes the mantra for the day.
3. Call out sin in its smallest form before it manifests into something greater.
  - Small roots of sin left to fester will begin to eat away at your right-relatedness with God and with others.

## Discussion Guide:

1. What sin battles of life, do you find most common within your heart? When do you find yourself most susceptible to failure in those areas? What have you found to be most helpful in winning those battles? How do you engage God and others in helping you find victory in those areas?
2. What daily patterns have you found to be most helpful in keeping your heart and life grounded in Christ?
3. Is there an area of sin that you are currently losing the battle in and need help? Consider following Peter's advice to Simon the sorcerer in coming clean with God first. Then seek wisdom from someone who is grounded in Christ for guidance. Going it alone is not how God designed us. The church family exists to help each other with the power of God!