



TRUTH IN LOVE

Shedding Light on the Word of God

God: “Let’s Be Friends”

Matthew 5:8

Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

There is a popular song being played on the radio and in churches today called “I Am A Friend Of God.” The chorus goes, “I am a friend of God; He calls me friend.” I heard the song on the radio just two days after I had spent some time studying Matthew 5:8, and in light of what I learned, realized that most of the people who sing that song might not actually be the friends of God. That’s not a criticism of most Christians who sing the song or the people who wrote it. I don’t know them. But I do know what the verse means, and it made me realize that most of us—myself included—are not God’s friends.

Matthew 5:8 begins with a seemingly harmless statement: **Blessed *are* the pure in heart**, but this Beatitude has bite! To be *pure in heart* does not mean to be a believer. Though all who have believed in Jesus for eternal life are justified, that is, declared righteous by God, this is not the same thing as being pure in heart. To be *pure in heart* is something the believer is to strive for through the washing of the Word (John 15:3; Eph 5:26) and obeying it by the power of the Spirit (1 Pet 1:22). This idea of being *pure in heart* refers to someone whose mind, motives, emotions, principles and conscience are without fault (John 13:10-11; 1 Tim 1:5; 3:9; 2 Tim 2:22)—not from a human perspective, but from Gods. While man looks on the outward appearance, God looks at the motives and intentions of the heart. This is what much of the Sermon on the Mount deals with, which is why Jesus introduces it here.

This is worth striving for. Look at the associated promise. Those who become pure in heart **shall see God**. Just as being pure in heart does not refer to receiving eternal life, seeing God does not refer to going to heaven. Nor does it mean that we will have a divine vision of God standing before us in all His radiance and glory. Though many claim to have received such visions, do not believe them, for no man has “seen God” in that way (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12).

So what does it mean to *see God*? It means to be His friend. In Biblical times, it was a great honor and privilege to be called to “see the king.” In Esther, you remember, no one would appear before the king unless the king called to see them. It was similar in NT times. Therefore, to be called to see the king was reserved for his closest friends, family members, allies and advisors. If you regularly saw the king, everybody would think of you as one of his closest friends.

That is the idea presented here. To *see God* is to be called by Him into His presence. It is to enjoy His fellowship. It is to walk and commune with Him on the most intimate and personal level. To *see God* is to be one of Gods closest friends. It would be similar to how the Bible describes the relationship Moses had with God: “The LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Exod 33:11).

Not all Christians have this privilege. Yes, we talk to God in prayer, but only the most intimate and tender times of prayer come close to what Jesus offers here. If you have ever had a prayer time that you wished would never end because of how close you felt to God, that is a taste of what Jesus talks about here. Seeing God, being His friend is not automatic for all believers. Jesus elsewhere taught, “You are my friends, *IF* you do whatever I command” (John 15:14, emphasis mine). Friendship with God is based on obedience and faithfulness. It is an incredible reward and privilege for those who purify their hearts.

Does all this still seem unattainable? Be encouraged. Just like being filled with the Spirit and regular human friendships, “seeing God” or “being His friend” can come and go—or wax and wane—in relation to the relative purity of our hearts. Remember also that the Beatitudes are completed in the order given. As each Beatitude increases in difficulty, the resulting blessing exponentially multiplies. So by the time you’ve completed the first five, you have all those blessings from God to help purify your heart so you can obtain deep intimacy and friendship with Him.