

## Be happy: Be pure

Message for Sunday, November 10, 2019  
by Bruce Fraser

### Children's Message:

Matthew 5:8

"Happy are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

*Props: two boxes with identical writing on the outside. The top says "I am a Christian." Around the sides it says "I go to church," "I go to Junior Church," "I sing," "I give my offering."*

I have two boxes for you to look at this morning. Can you read what it says on top? *I am a Christian.* How about the other box? *I am a Christian.* They're the same.

Can you read what it says on the side of the boxes? *Let them read the same lines from each box, one at a time.* Any difference? *No.*

The two boxes are the same, except one is bigger. That makes sense; some Christians are bigger than other. I'm bigger than you, and some people are bigger than me.

*Shake the boxes.* O listen! I heard something. *Shake them again.* They will say "There's something inside one of them!" Well, let's open them and see!

*Open the empty one first.* What's in there? *Nothing.* OK, let's open the other one. *Open it.* What's in there? *It's a heart!*

Can you read what is written on it? *I am a sinner. Jesus loves me and forgives me.*

These two boxes look the same on the outside. But there's a big difference on the inside. What's on the inside is what is really important. We can look like Christians on our the outside. But we need this—the *heart*—on the inside to be real Christians.

Thanks to Lavern Franzen for this idea, from her book *Smile! Jesus is Lord.*

**Message:** "Be happy: Be pure"

It's amazing how the brain works. It stores information—vast quantities of information—and then can retrieve it instantly. (Or sometimes, not so instantly, such as when you're trying to remember someone's name!)

For example, Jim Taylor is an author whose newsletter I like to read. In an article this week he wrote, "We cannot live without a brain." I immediately remembered something I read more than ten years ago. It's interesting, so I'll tell you. It's the transcript of what happened in a court case. A lawyer is questioning a witness.

Q: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for blood pressure?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for breathing?

A: No.

Q: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

A: No.

Q: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

A: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

Q: But could the patient have still been alive nevertheless?

A: It is possible that he could have been alive and practising law somewhere.

It happened to me again this week when I was reading today's Bible passage:

Matthew 5:8

"Happy are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

As I was thinking about being pure, a memory flashed through my mind. It was an article in *Macleans* magazine in 1986—that's more than thirty years ago; isn't it amazing how the brain does this! A Toronto company was charged with dumping chemical waste into the city sewers. This is bad enough for the environment; but it's especially dangerous here, because after the sewage is treated, it drains into Lake Ontario, and millions of people get their drinking water from there. But the chemicals this business were putting in the sewer were deadly poisons, which would not be removed by the sewage treatment.

Actually, the company had already been convicted dozens of times with pollution, but each time the company was fined just a few hundred dollars. This time, the president of the company, millionaire Keith Alexander, was charged as a criminal, found guilty, and sentenced to a year in prison.

Being pure is important when it comes to our drinking water. Even more important is being pure ourselves.

When something is impure, it means that it has been contaminated. There are things that don't belong there. Not necessarily bad things; just things that interfere with it.

For example, Jesus spoke about this later in his message that day.

**Matthew 6:24, New Living Translation:**

**“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”**

He's not saying that money is bad. It has a purpose in life. But when it starts interfering with God as our number one priority, then it's a problem.

To be “pure in heart” means that our heart is undivided, our motives are uncontaminated. It's much the same as the word “integrity.”

It's not about behaviour and reputation; that's what others see. It's about what's on the inside, something only you and God can see.

### 1) Have pure motives

It's possible to do the right thing, but for the wrong reason.

**Matthew 6:1, New Living Translation:**

**“Take care! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired, because then you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.”**

This person doesn't want to *do* good; just wants to *look* good.

The next few verses have a similar theme.

**Matthew 6:5-6, New Living Translation:**

**“When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I assure you, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly. Then your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you.”**

You might impress other people with your good deeds and your piety, but you don't impress God. God knows your heart.

By the way, Jesus is not condemning praying in public. The Bible tells many times that he himself prayed in public. The point he's making here is about our motives.

**Here's the key to understanding your motive: can you keep it a secret?**

Let's say you help someone in desperate need, and you really go out of your way to do that, and you give sacrificially. Do you need to tell someone what you did, to make yourself feel good? Do you want to look good in other people's eyes? Or is it enough that God knows?

Having a pure heart—pure motives—is a key to happiness. Worrying what others think about you, living to impress others—that's the key to unhappiness.

Dwight Moody used to say, “If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself.”

### 2) Test your heart: what do you worry about?

Jesus said the greatest commandment is:

**Matthew 22:37, New Living Translation:**

**“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.”**

I might think that I do that. “Sure, God, you're the most important thing in my life.” But I might just be fooling myself. Here's how to test our motives.

What do I worry about?

**Matthew 6:25**

**“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life...”**

In verses 24-31, Jesus lists the most common worries that people have: money, food, health, clothing, and how long we live. When you worry, that thing dominates your life. It has replaced God as your top priority in life. If you worry about any of these things, it has contaminated your heart.

### 3) ... You will see God

Jesus says that if you have a pure heart, you will be happy. Of course you will! You're being the real

you. You're not trying to be someone you're not, you're not living for other people's expectations, you're not worried that people will discover your secrets. Living any of those ways will give you ulcers. Living God's way is pure joy.

Then Jesus goes on to say, "they will see God." You will see God in your life, in your surroundings. You will even see God in that impossible problem you are facing. You will know that God is with you and can help you. And ultimately, you will see God in heaven.

#### **4) Get a pure heart**

This is the time of year when the vehicle coming towards you will splash slush on your windshield, so you can't see where you're driving. You need a clean window. In the same way, you need a clean heart, a pure heart to see God.

How do you get a clean heart? You can't, at least you can't do it by yourself. You need to see a heart specialist. His name is Dr. Jesus. Let's come to him in prayer.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Pray: ask Jesus to give you a pure heart.
- Pray: ask God to help you be honest with yourself. Do the test to see how pure your motives are.
- Be happy and enjoy seeing God in your life!