

You Can Experience a Pure Heart

Text: Matthew 5:8

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

Romans 7:14-25 – 8:1

Introduction:

Bill Perkins writes, “It is high noon on the plains of northern Illinois.

A zebra, the wild horse of Africa, is napping in the dust on an old corral under the warm autumn sun.

Randy Steffen, the zebra’s owner, has worked with more than a dozen zebras over the past 20 years before finding one that could be trained.

These animals are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to tame.

This zebra, name Partner, can perform a remarkable repertoire of tricks, but even though Partner is trained, he is still easily frightened.

“Flight is life to zebras.”

Steffen says, “Their main defense is to get away.”

In other words, you can take the zebra out of Africa, but you can’t take the Africa out of the zebra.

A converted Indian described it in the words, “I find two Indians in me; one good Indian and one bad Indian.”

Now let me address both the zebra from Africa and the converted Indian.

Spiritual Application:

In a very real sense the same is true of people.

While you can take people out of sinful situations, you can’t take the sin out of people.

Only God through His Holy Spirit can accomplish that feat.

Let me illustrate it this way:

While we have been saved from our sins and changed into a new creature as the Word of God says

If everyone believer would be honest we would confess at times that there is a Sunday man or woman and there is a Monday man or woman in all of us.

This brings me to my first point:

I. What is a Pure Heart? I Timothy 1:5

“The whole point of what we’re urging is simply love – love uncontaminated by self-interest and counterfeit faith, a life open to God.”

Our Lord said in one of the beatitudes, Matthew 5:8

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”

In other words, *“Blessed is the person who is seeking and finds a pure heart, that only God can give.”*

Now – understand this – there is a difference between the **New Heart** of a born-again Believer and a **Pure Heart** of a born-again Believer.

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The Bible teaches us a new heart has been forgiven of sins (Plural) and the blood of Jesus Christ washes those sins (Plural) away.

But, believer friend, there is still inbred sin (Singular) in the spiritual life. It's the tendency towards sin.

And the only way this tendency toward sin can be removed is through the baptism and fire of the Holy Spirit.

Possibly you've never heard of the fire of God's purity.

This results in a purging where the heart of the believer becomes pure and blameless.

And let me make this clear before I go any further: Blameless does not imply perfect performance in the spiritual life.

I'm not talking about Christian perfection here.

What I'm preaching about is each of us wholeheartedly seeking to do God's will.

In other words there is no mixture of wanting God's will along with my will.

It's an undiluted desire to do what God wants me to do.

So the word "Blameless" gives us another insight into our Quest for God's work of the Holy Spirit in us.

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Let me explain like this:

There was a time when James and John, disciples of Jesus Christ, who wanted to call fire down from heaven to burn up a town and all the people in it. James and John just lost their patience with these people.

Can you relate to that?

I do know that most of you here today would never feel that way towards another

But Jesus rebuked James and John and said, "***You do not know what spirit you are of.***"

Yes, these guys were His disciples. These guys were His followers.

They were "***not of the world***" and yet Christ spoke of James and John as operating from a spirit that was dark and the opposite of His own Spirit.

I have known of fellow pastors after preaching what I thought was a great sermon leave the pulpit and criticize another pastor or a laymen behind their back.

There was a just a spirit in them that was not like the Spirit of Christ.

It was not a temptation in him! It was something in Him!

Now, let me help us to understand this.

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The conflicting natures within each of us are as real as life.

One can be born-again as a child of God.

And yet there be in us an Old Nature that gravitates toward sin. The tendency toward sin.

Paul wrote it like this:

“So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” Romans 7:21-24

What I am trying to explain to you this morning is that every Christian has a split personality when it comes to the battleground between good and evil.

The Born –Again Christian still has the old tendencies to sin.

But he also has a new desire that wants to please God.

The next Quest we want to discover is seeking purity for the life we’ve always longed for.

I’m not talking about legalism here:

Don’t do this

Don’t go there

Don’t watch this

Don’t drink that

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Go to church more
Watch that attitude

That’s not what I’m preaching about this morning.

What I want us to hear is Purity that comes from God’s direction to us.

God’s call to purity is not another guilt ball for you to catch. It’s a call to obey God’s truth.

Peter said in I Peter 1:22 ***“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have a sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.”***

But how do we do this? Again let me say – we struggle to do this in ourselves.

The inner conflict can that experience can be very disturbing and unsettling to the Christian believer.

But I have good news for you – It does not have to be defeating.

Victory in the Christian life is possible.

Not by our own human struggling, but by yielding our live to God and letting the Holy Spirit apply the fire of God to change our lives.

Many in the Wesleyan persuasion have taught that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is baptizing the soul with fire

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that causes the believer to be filled and have an empowering for service.

And while that is true, it goes farther than that.

This experience that I am preaching about from God's Word is needed in every believer.

Every believer needs to go to the Word and the Experience what God commands us in Heart Purity.

Illus.

A couple of years ago we had a salesman come to our house to show us how we could get our water purified. He showed us all kinds of tests and the results of those tests.

I was amazed at what was in our water.

You know chlorine and other stuff that is awful looking.

We decided to make an investment and purchase this unit.

It was like purchasing bottles of spring water from the store right from our own faucet.

We have good water now.

And they claim it to be pure.

Well – almost pure.

Spiritual Application:

When we get saved our sins are forgiven.

But there is still that sin nature in us.

We need a special working of the Holy Spirit to cleanse it from us.

That's the Purity of Heart.

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Our Savior spoke clearly when He said in Acts 1:8 ***“You shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”*** That's the Power.

After the Day of Pentecost, Peter is preaching and records in Acts 15:8-9 ***“And God, who knows the hearts, bore them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost even as He did unto us (on the day of Pentecost), and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”***

That's Purifying Our Hearts.

II. The Struggle of an Impure Heart.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 6:6 ***“Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”***

The Apostle Paul struggled with what we are talking about here when it said in Romans 6:14

“We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.”

Now – if Paul struggled with this – we've to pay attention here.

There was no doubt about Paul's Damascus Road conversion.

Look at the statement Paul makes, he said, “*I am Carnal.*”

The Bible speaks about the carnal mind, the old man, and other such terms when speaking of the self-centeredness that expresses itself in opposition to God.

Romans 8:7 reads, “...*the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.*”

So how did Paul come to the conclusion that He was Carnal?

What was his frustration?

What showed him that this was present in his life?

What made him see this?

Let me give you the answer:

When Paul realized the heavenly spiritual nature of God, he came to understand his own wretched carnality.

When we come to that place in our lives where God can show us the heavenlies.

Where God can show the spiritual

Where God can show us Son Jesus Christ

When He shows us the very throne.

We will be like Isaiah that cried out in utter frustration and fear

“I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people with unclean lips.”

Let me stay here a moment with Isaiah.

Here’s another example where the Bible uses fire as a symbol for purity.

The book we are using for this series, **The Power to be Free, by Frank Moore** says it like this:

“when Isaiah caught a glimpse of the holiness of God, it was unlike anything he had ever seen before. When he saw how holy and spotless God appeared, he immediately looked at himself. He didn’t like what he saw; he didn’t measure up. He needed something in his life that his religion had not given him up to this point. Once he caught a glimpse of Holy God, he could never be satisfied with remaining the same.”

Notice God’s use of fire and its purifying properties.

Notice how Isaiah’s close encounter with the presence of a Holy God transformed him.

Oh, folks, what an example for us!

Just a glimpse of God, even the briefest glimpse, raises the bar for us.

Let me try to illustrate this through the story of Uncle Bud Robinson.

Uncle Bud Robinson was a great baseball player turned evangelist.

He said this of experience with being filled with the Holy Spirit.

He said, “The Lord laid it on Sister So and So’s heart and every Friday night we had a holiness meeting at her home.

It was there that I began to definitely seek the blessing of a clean heart..

I found it, however, at home, after seeking from the fall of 1881 until the Saturday of March 1882.

I was in my own little room, on my little red couch alone about 9 o’clock at night.

He said, “The old Man just does not die easily.”

He said, “Lord, if you will sanctify me I will testify to it and if I lose it I will know how to seek it again.”

The Lord seemed to remove three things in my heart, and I was made made whiter than snow, cleaner than dew-drops. I felt purer than the blue sky, whiter than the lilies.”

Uncle Buddie knew there was something after he was Born-Again and when the Lord came and filled Him with the Holy Spirit, God used him in a mighty way.

Folks, listen to me, God help us because this is the need of the church today.

Freeman says, **“It almost always happens this way in the Bible. Moses and Isaiah did not have an encounter with an awesome concept in a book or a**

startling realization as they participated in mental gymnastics. Both had a read encounter with our living God. In the give and take of that relationship, God revealed new truth to both men. And in both cases, God used fire to make His point.”

Paul said, “*I am carnal, sold into the slavery to sin.*”

Now see this with me.

Paul was a slave under the dominion of sin. (singular)

He is not saying that he is still a slave to sin in a judicial sense.

You see, Paul had been saved from his sins (plural)

But he had not died to **the sin** in the body.

He still had a fleshly nature in him that was still there when he got saved

It’s still in his personality.

It’s still in his will.

It’s still in his intellect.

It’s still in his emotions.

This is what we refer to as an impure heart in the Born-Again Believer.

So the question is – What is a pure Heart?

Answer: It is a heart that draws us toward purity.

We ask ourselves? “Where can I experience the purity for the life I’ve longed for?”

Today’s Bible lesson reminds us: GOD IS THE SOURCE OF PURITY.

**AND ONLY HIS FIRE CAN TRULY PURIFY
OUR HEARTS.**

III. The Evidences of an Impure Heart.

“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.”

Paul said, “What I hate I do.”

I think all of us here this morning could say the same thing at times.

Can you think back on a time when you were tempted towards the tendency to sin?

And knew it was wrong to do that thing, and yet you went ahead and did it.

You knew it was wrong yet you sidestepped the Holy Spirit and went ahead with it anyway.

And every time you did it, you felt guilty for it.

And believers that’s the devil who comes and tempts you do sin and then after the sin is done he makes you feel guilty for doing what he tempted you to do in the first place.

**Let me sketch you a Picture of the “Old Man”
Carnality.**

It’s not a very pretty picture.

This picture might even arouse the “Old Man” in some people who are here this morning.

It might make you bristle that I am even preaching on this today.

Friend, you can react one of two ways:

The First Way to React:

This “Old Man” is a cold man.

He is opposed to all religious demonstrations in the church service.

A raised hand makes him feel uncomfortable and feel out of place.

There might even be times when he or she is blessed in a service, but a few hours later, be back to their former state of coldness and indifference.

I really do believe when the “Old Man Carnality” is gone from the believers heart there is a warm heart spiritually all the time.

The Second Way to React:

They are easily offended.

If someone disagrees with him – he gets mad.

If someone doesn't do what he feels the way he feels it ought to be done – they gets upset.

The carnal man looks for the possibility of two people talking together and is persuaded to believe that they are talking about him – that he is the subject of their discussion.

Are you following me?

This kind of person is hypersensitive.

Why when this happens the backbone stiffens.

The nostrils flare.

Illus.

I'll never forget the time when I visited a prospect for a church that I was pastoring when we lived in Yazoo City, Miss.

The man had a big dog.

There was sign that warned me before I ever got into the driveway – “Beware of Dog!”

Underlined in big Red Lines.

When I got out of the car, I saw the dog coming.

I jumped back into the car and rolled up the window just in time.

The dog tried to get to me through the window.

He was a mad dog.

He frothed at the mouth.

He barked.

His hair on the back of his neck stood straight up.

If was as if he was saying, “I dare you to come out!”

Application:

You know, there are some regrettably in the church who act that way and the problem is carnality.

They carry this kind of spirit about them.

They sort of say, “I dare you to do something or say something that I don't like.”

“I dare you to do something that I don't agree with.”

Listen folks, That is nothing more than the trait of the “Old Man.”

The Third Way the Carnal Man Reacts is that he is a “Talkative Old man or Old woman.”

In spite of all caution, watchfulness, and severe self-restraint, suddenly the tongue will begin talking wrong.

Finding fault, being critical. It all begins with self-centeredness.

This old man carries grudges and has a difficult time forgiving.

It's a spirit that is not of God's spirit.

They loose their first love. Their church is no longer doing things right.

Putting down others – hoping to prove their point.

IV. The Conceit of the Impure Heart. V.17

“As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.”

How does this conceit effect our family members.

I really think it starts little and innocently.

You see, the “Old Man” is a great fault-finder.

Where does this pastor get these ideas.

Nothing in the Children’s department is right.

If I was on the Church Board I would show them how the church ought to be run.

Did you see that hat Aunt Bess wore to church today?

Why Charlie was way too casual. Why he had jeans on in church today.

Illus.

We have a certain bird in our country that sails high in the air in graceful circles.

Round and round it goes with dizzy looking spirals.

It doesn’t look for the fragrant pine trees that give shade.

It doesn’t look for broad meadows and pastures or in search for clover blossoms.

The landscape spreads over the rare loveliness far beneath, but the bird is not after that and does not care for anything that has beauty and goodness about it.

That bird is looking for something that lays still on and looks dead on the ground.

And when he sees it, he curves nearer and nearer until at last with hovering wings he alights near it.

It’s a carcass! And the bird as you already guessed is called a Buzzard.

That bird begins to pull and jerk at that carcass and than others join in.

A hundred good things are said, but the “Old Man” is not after the good things of God.

It is not after the pine trees.

It’s not after the broad meadows with its beauty.

It’s not after the clover blossoms.

“The Old Man” is looking for something that he doesn’t agree with.

Some unwise word someone uttered but didn’t mean anything by it.

In a word – he wants to light upon someone.

Application:

After church at the dinner table the husband says to the wife, “Wife, did you hear what that man said this morning?”

2. And on the other side of the table, the wife responds,

“Yes, I heard what he said, and I didn’t like it.”

And the children hear the conversation and each one of them join in taking some part of that criticism.

And the children learn to be just like Mom and Dad.

And years later, now listen to me, the mother and father wonder why their children are not in church.

They wonder why the children have no reverence for the pastor, the church, or the Bible.

They wonder and wonder

You know, it is a wonderful thing in the spiritual life when the Carnal Man is dealt with the Fire of God’s Holy Spirit.

Why the preacher’s average sermon is wonderful to them.

The blemishes in someone’s else’s life is okay.

What they wore to church doesn’t bother them.

They aren’t super sensitive.

That is when the “Old Man” is taken out of the heart.

V. Is it really possible for us to have a Pure Heart?

Let me give you some examples of what the Bible tells us:

1) Only those with a Pure heart will be able to stand in His holy place.

Psalm 24:3-5 puts it like this:

***3 Who may ascend the hill of the LORD ?
Who may stand in his holy place?***

***4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to an idol
or swear by what is false.***

***5 He will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God his Savior.***

David prayed for a pure heart when he prayed this prayer: “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

The Goal of the Gospel is that every Christian believer have a pure heart.

Paul said to young Timothy, “The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

Paul said, “For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) there dwells no good thing...”

Since he had been converted, he had a new personality.

He had a will that wanted to do good.

He had an intellect that recognized the importance of doing good and be righteous in the sight of God.

He had a desire to obey God in every part of his life.

But he couldn't do it.

He was Frustrated with his spiritual inconsistency.

Frustrated with his critical spirit.

He was Frustrated with his failure to be all that he knew God wanted him to be.

He was Frustrated with his lack of Power and inconsistency.

And He was Frustrated with his lack of living a Pure Life.

Conclusion:

Let me quickly close by reading verse 24 and 25 *“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?”*

What concerns me today is the lack of this kind of agony.

We can't stand the thought of people putting themselves down and thinking of themselves as wretched.

The only solution to this need in our spiritual lives is to be delivered and set free.

On the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came on the 120 disciples it says *“They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...”*

Let me close with this story.

At a special chapel service in the Ohio State penitentiary, the governor was to grant freedom to several convicts.

The suspense mounted as it came time for the governor to announce the names of those selected.

“Reuben Johnson, come forward and receive your pardon!”

No one responded.

The chaplain directed his attention toward Johnson and said,

“Reuben, it's you, come on!”

But the man looked behind him, supposing there must be someone else by that name.

Then, pointing directly at him, the chaplain said, “That's right Reuben, you're the man.”

After a long pause, he slowly approached the governor to receive his pardon.

Later when the other prisoners marched to their cells, Johnson fell into line and began to walk with them.

The warden called out, "Reuben, you don't belong there anymore. You're a free man."

Application:

Not only does Jesus forgive us of our sins (Plural) and we become Born-Again Believers.

But Jesus has provided His Holy Spirit to Free us and Deliver us from the bondage of "The Old Man."

Have you been set free from the Carnal Man?

Are you interested this morning in living a consistent Christian life that is Pure and has Power.

Here is the Victory in Romans Chapter 8 and verse 1
"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Invitation:

Isaiah 6:1-8 from the Message:

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Master sitting on a throne—high, exalted!—and the train of his robes filled the Temple. Angel-seraphs hovered

above him, each with six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two their feet, and with two they flew. And they called back and forth one to the other,

**Holy, Holy, Holy is God-of-the-Angel-Armies.
 His bright glory fills the whole earth.
 The foundations trembled at the sound of the angel voices, and then the whole house filled with smoke. I said,**

**"Doom! It's Doomsday!
 I'm as good as dead!**

**Every word I've ever spoken is tainted—
 blasphemous even!**

**And the people I live with talk the same way,
 using words that corrupt and desecrate.**

And here I've looked God in the face!

**The King! God-of-the-Angel-Armies!"
 Then one of the angel-seraphs flew to me. He held a live coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar.
He touched my mouth with the coal and said,**

**"Look. This coal has touched your lips.
 Gone your guilt,
 your sins wiped out."**

And then I heard the voice of the Master:

**"Whom shall I send?
 Who will go for us?"**

**I spoke up,
 "I'll go.
 Send me!"**

Prayer:

