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**Presentation Transcript**  
**Pure in Heart**  
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We're doing a series on the beatitudes. This is the seventh of the series. The title is *Pure in Heart*. It's the sixth beatitude.

Good afternoon, everybody. It's nice to see you – especially those watching us live as we stream up.

Let's look at these beatitudes.

**Mt. 5:3** – *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* That's the first. *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.* That's the second. *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.* The fourth one is, *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled.* And then fifth: *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.* And then the one we're doing today: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

It's just so easy to read over those things. You know, those are things that Jesus said – like introductory material – but God's mind is infinitely deep and there is always a lot behind everything He says. So we're going to take a look, today, at the meaning of the words, *Blessed are the pure in heart*. We're going to look at the attitude that He's talking about – what that is. We're going to see how it connects to the previous beatitude, because we believe that these are a progression – that the one before it is necessary before you can accomplish this one. And then we're going to see how it connects to God's salvation plan through the biblical holidays, or holy days.

What the words mean. Let's start there. *Blessed are you...* Well, that just means blessed are you – happy are you. To have this attitude is a blessing. That's what He's telling us. The word *pure*: that's a term that implies holiness or sanctification. In other words, it's something set apart for God's use, not used for other things. The word *heart*, according to the Louw & Nida Lexicon, the causative source of a person's psychological life and its various aspects, but with the special emphasis upon thoughts, heart, inner-self, mind. *You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart.* So the inner-self – the thoughts, the emotions, the intentions, the desires, the hopes – that's what it is talking about. When you

think about yourself, you know that the *me* that's in there? That's what this is talking about. *You!* And combined with that word *pure*, it means that *we* are to be dedicated to God completely, with no other impingements. Then the words *see God*. Those words are very difficult to define. It just means to see God. We're going to see God, if we are pure in heart. We'll talk a little bit more about where and when that might happen later.

Okay, the attitude. What is the attitude of being pure in heart? Let's start in James 4, and verse 8, and let the rest of the Bible amplify what Jesus was talking about. James says here in verse 8 of chapter 4:

**Jm. 4:8** – *Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.* So, if you're double-minded, you are not singly and solely devoted to God, are you? Because there's more than *one* thing there – *one* prime motive.

How about a little more elaboration. 1 Timothy 1:5:

**1 Tim. 1:5** – *The goal of the commandment is love, which comes from a pure heart – love, which comes from a pure heart – and a good conscience and a sincere faith.* So the love that comes from a pure heart is closely associated with a good conscience and a sincere – or not phony – faith – *real* faith. So that's all pointing toward a single-minded focus, isn't it, if you just think about it – all pointed toward *one* thing.

Why is that so hard? Well, think about how complicated life is – just think about it. I'll give you a personal example. Elaine and I operate a ministry – LifeResource Ministries. And in that ministry we attempt to accomplish a number of things. We give presentations on topics, like this one. We do it every two weeks. We talk about children. We talk about Christian living. We talk about congregational health. We talk about the family, marriage, Christian virtues. Besides that, we do a variety of other things. Besides speaking, we write, we travel, we host activities, pretty much go where we're invited. We buy and use equipment to make all this happen. We do a Website. We keep records. We take in, spend, and account for money. We meet and interact with people. But all these things that we're involved in, in this ministry, have behind them – or underneath them, or supporting them – *one* thing: the spiritual well-being and growth of church children. That's what LifeResource Ministries is all about. But, in all of this activity, it would be very easy to become distracted and focus on activity instead of the *one* thing. And that's the big challenge for us in this life. We not only have to be dedicated to God, we have to earn a living, we have to maintain our health, we have to take care of other people. And so it's easy to become distracted – probably more now than ever in the history of human civilization, because there are *so* many things to distract us.

Now, I've used this example before, but, to me, it makes a lot of sense. When I was a kid, there were three kinds of tennis shoes you could buy. That was it. Today, how many are there? I remember my brother. He got, for Christmas one time, one of these little transistor radios that you could hold up to your ear. You'd see all the kids walking around with that. That was it. Now what do kids have? So many different things, you can't keep

track of it all – so many new technological gadgets, they can't even write the software for it. The proliferation is incredible!

So we have all these things distracting us – so many ways to learn about what's going on in the world – so many blogs, there are enough people to read them all. There's just so much happening! So it's very easy to get distracted. And in LifeResource Ministries, if we ever lost sight of our one goal – if we went off-track and away from what we said we were going to do – we would lose our whole purpose. There are lots of important things we *could* do, but, because they don't pertain to our mission, we try not to get sucked into doing those things. We leave those important things to other people, who are dedicated to doing them.

When Jesus is talking about being pure in heart, what, I think, He wants us to know is, that under all the necessary activities that we do – the working, the having fun, the going to church, taking care of our kids and other people, and whatever – under all the thinking, under all the desiring, the hoping, the longing, the feeling – there's *one* thing. And that's God. That's where our emphasis is supposed to be. And that encompasses, strangely, everything human. In all of our motives, all of our desires, all of our intentions, all of our efforts, all of our work, all of our interests, they all ought to be, in some way, *connected to being like* – pleasing, living for, serving – *God* – and even more than all of that, to *see Him* – to see Him like He is.

Let's go to Job 19. I want to read you an interesting scripture. Job said, in verse 25 of chapter 19:

**Job 19:25** – *I know that my Redeemer lives and that, in the end, He will stand on the earth.* He knows a lot more than a lot of people, today, that call themselves Christians, doesn't He? *And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh, I will see God.* So how does somebody, whose skin is destroyed – who is dead (You can't live without skin, right?) – how is he, in his flesh, going to see God? What a question, huh? Now verse 27. I love this verse.

**V-27** – *I, myself, will see Him with my own eyes – I and not another! How my heart yearns within me!* Can you feel the longing?

The book of Job is one of the oldest books and, probably, the most mysterious book in the Bible. We're not even really sure who Job was – where he lived or where he came from. There are all kinds of ideas about it, but no clear, definitive evidence. And yet, his words come to us out of the ancient past as clear as a bell. He *wanted* God. He wanted to *see* God. And he was *so* excited about the prospect of being with God. And we read his book and we see all the ups and downs, and back and forth, and around and around he went through to get closer to God – how dedicated he was to learning more and how willing he was to suffer to learn more. So this ancient man has that longing for God – that pure-heartedness – that single-minded focus that Jesus was talking about there.

Let's go to Psalm 84 – another example. This is David.

**Psa. 84:2** – *My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.* Where are the courts of the LORD? Where are they? Well, maybe the better question would be, “Where are they going to be?” They’re going to be here, aren’t they? David said that he *yearned* and, even, fainted for the courts of the LORD, and that his heart and his flesh cried out to the living God.

**V-10** – *Better is one day in Your courts than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.* A lot of people lived in tents back in David’s day. There were a lot of people out in the desert that were nomadic and lived in tents.

**V-11** – *For the LORD God is the sun and shield. The LORD God bestows favor and honor. No good thing does He withhold from those whose walk is blameless* – who are single-minded in their walk with God. *O LORD Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in You.* Can you feel that? I mean, he had to go through a lot to get to that point. He didn’t come out of the chute that way, did he? He had to suffer a lot to get to that point. But he, at this point, had arrived. He was a man who was single-minded in his desire for God.

Okay, so we now know what it means to be pure in heart – at least, have a working definition? How does it connect to previous attitude? How can we become whole-hearted for God – pure in heart? Well, it’s a progression. How does it all fit together? If we start with the first beatitude and poverty of spirit, the whole issue of our salvation revolves around trusting God or self? Which way are we going to go with it? Which way will it be? Will we take matters into our own hands, do the things that seem right to us, or will we trust God and do what He says? Will we admit that He knows better than we know? Will we become poor in spirit?

Mourning. We said, in our ignorance of God and all things spiritual, we have all done a lot of hurt to ourselves and to others. We have caused the death of Jesus Christ by our sins. So, if we really deeply know that, we don’t feel good about it. We feel bad. We mourn. It’s not just an intellectual awareness. But an emotional one. God wants us to be engaged with Him with our whole being. And that would include our emotion. So this gut-wrenching emotion – or awareness of our own spiritual failings and damage that we caused – helps us to become teachable, or meek.

And all of this meekness leads to a desire to be better people – to follow God, to be like God, to do the inner work and become less angry, and more calm, and more humble, and more kind, and more accepting, and more loving, which is the aim of the law of God.

When we get to that point, then – once we start trying to *do* that – then we realize we’re just like all those other law-breakers that we’ve been condemning. And we realize none of us, really, is good and that we all have our failings and faults, and there’s no room to judge or condemn other people. So we’re kind of all in the same boat.

And that leads us to an attitude where we're willing to let go of the hurts and the offenses, and to realize that we have dealt out plenty of those ourselves to other people. And so it's time to forgive and let go of that stuff and to treat people mercifully, like God has treated us, and like *we* would like to be treated by everybody else.

And that, then, leads us to being pure in heart. And with this one, we come to one of the really great truths of life. If we do what God says, and we act mercifully to people – because of our awareness of our own need for mercy – as we become pure-hearted toward God and single-minded toward Him, something amazing starts to happen. So what would that be? Let's just take a step back and ask, "Where is Jesus Christ taking us in His exposition of these seven attitudes?" Well, in the beginning of them, we saw a gradual turning away from one's own state to thinking and caring for others. That's what this progression is leading us to.

Purity of heart is not only towards God. It's toward other people, as well. If we're going to treat other people with mercy, we're going to be pure-hearted in it. And the pure-heartedness comes – this is the important part – the pure-heartedness comes as an *outgrowth* of our pure-heartedness toward God.

Read with me in 1 Peter 1, and verse 13. He says:

**1 Pt. 1:13** – *Therefore, prepare your mind for action.* Some people think being a Christian means to prepare your mind to sit and listen – interminably and never have to do anything. *Prepare your mind for action. Be self-controlled. Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Christ is revealed.* Catch that word *fully* there? No room for vacillation, ambivalence, waffling back and forth. It's got to be *fully*. It's got to be pure-hearted. *Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you.... As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance, but just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do – not half of it, not ninety-nine percent, but all! Be holy, because I am holy.* So no more ambivalence about God's way. Complete whole-heartedness.

**V-17** – *Since you call on a Father, who judges each man's works impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things, such as silver or gold, that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ – a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through Him you believe in God – how? Pure-heartedly, right? – who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him. So your faith and hope are in God.* And what would the characteristic be there? Whole-heartedly. *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth.... Purified, right? Nothing else in there. Just that one thing. ...so that – one is the by-product of the other – the so that here is based on that pure-heartedness – you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, purely, from the heart.*

So the result of committing to God is a merciful and whole-hearted love for other people. That's where it comes from.

I'm going to go a little bit afield here, then come back to what I'm talking about. I'm going to tell you a story about one of my clients in my private counseling practice. I was doing EMDR with a young woman, who had been abused by her father all of her childhood and assaulted by some guys when she was thirteen years old. She'd had a really hard life. And we were making up, what we call, a targeting list of traumatic events, because we were going to reduce the trauma from those things that happened to her. It was a long and terrible list. So we began targeting those things, once we made the list and agreed on what should be on it – targeting them one by one. It was very hard for her to recall those things and to focus on them enough for the process to work. But she worked hard at it and she was successful. After a few weeks, I began to notice an upturn in her mood and a more determined willingness to confront those hard memories.

One day we finished a particularly difficult session, and I asked her to look at the list and choose something else. She perused the list for a few minutes with a frown on her face. I thought she was having trouble picking one. But she finally said, "I don't think any of this is frightening to me or even a little bit upsetting anymore. I don't even know why I put those things on this list." Now, in EMDR, we call that generalization – the positive effect generalized through that neuro network that's created by the trauma. If we get rid of enough of them, it seems that the related structures collapse, dissolve, unlink or purge. I don't really know how to say that. I'm not a neuro scientist or biologist. But I know that it goes away. The bad stuff isn't disturbing any longer after we do enough of it.

I think that that's what can happen with us, but in a *positive* way, as we focus on our relationship with God more tightly. I think the powerful effect of the love of God and the Holy Spirit generalizes to include other people, as well. And I think our feelings for God spread to other people – or *can* – if we can find our way to that place where *one day in your courts is better than a thousand somewhere else*. I think that is what Jesus is trying to tell us here.

Just think about it. Does it make sense to see someone, who deeply loves God, who trusts God, who accepts the mercy of God, who is, also, spiteful and cruel to other people? They don't go together do they? They are inharmonious. It's ambivalent. So both aspects of the law of God – love of God and love of fellow man – are all a part of the same package. You get one, you get the other.

So what if we're having trouble with somebody – trouble forgiving somebody that did something to us long ago? How would you solve that problem if you *know* what the beatitudes really mean? Well, having problems with loving other people, the beatitudes teach us to step back and go through each of them – back to our relationship with God. That isn't immediately apparent to us, is it? If we're having trouble with somebody else, our attention usually goes to what they did, or how bad we are because we can't let go of it. But when we know that the secret to forgiving is to go back when we were forgiven,

and our relationship with God was first formed, then it can be incredibly helpful. I want to talk more about that in the following week, I think.

Okay, so how would this beatitude – purity of heart – relate to the salvation plan? Well, the fifth holy day is the Day of Atonement; the fourth one is Trumpets. The fifth one is the Day of Atonement, so that would be the one that relates to mercy. Trumpets pictures the return of Christ, which we associated with hungering and thirsting for righteousness, because, when He comes, that’s all going to start happening on the earth for the first time – first time since the Garden of Eden. Atonement pictures God reclaiming all the peoples of the earth and binding the devil. So that’s a day when God is going extend incredible mercy. Then, after He returns – during the time that’s pictured by the holy day that is the Feast of Tabernacles – He’s going to establish a kingdom on earth. It’s not going to be a day long, or a week long. It’s going to last a long time. That’s why the festival is seven days. And it will be a time when everyone will learn God’s way at last!

So let’s read something noteworthy about that time. I want you to notice the way this is characterized by the apostle Paul in Hebrews 8, and verse 10.

**Heb. 8:10** – *“This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after that time.”* After that time is Bible-code talk for after this age is over and the new age begins. *“This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put My laws into their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be My people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know Me – from the least of them to the greatest.”* So, do you get the tone here – what this is really about? No more doubt, no more ambivalence, no more vacillation, no more mixed feelings. Everybody is going to know. It’s going to be common knowledge. It’ll be accepted. And that is the picture of pure-heartedness toward God. And it’s going to take place on the earth. It hasn’t happened for a very, very long time. *“I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”*

So *all* the nations are going to convert to God and peace is going to break out all over the earth. And there’s going to be a whole world full of people that are united in their love for God. And that’s going to happen for the first time since Adam and Eve were there in the Garden by themselves. All humans and God will be in relationship and they’ll be whole-hearted in that relationship.

So the Feast of Tabernacles is where everyone will have a chance to experience what David was talking about when he said that one day in the courts of God would be worth more than thousands elsewhere – because the courts of God will be set up on earth at that time. It was the time that Job was talking about when he said, “I know that my Redeemer will stand on the earth. And even though I die, I will live again. And at that time, I, myself – can you scarcely believe it? – will see Him!” He was so excited about it! It’s the time John was writing about, in the book of Revelation, when he spontaneously exclaimed, “Come, Lord Jesus!” That’s a pretty interesting exclamation that he made. He just *burst* out with that. That time, when the whole earth will turn whole-heartedly to

God, is the picture that we see in the Feast of Tabernacles – and connected to the beatitude, I believe.

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* Can there be anything better than that? It might seem unlikely. But you know, there *is* something that's even better! There is one more beatitude and one more holy day, and *they are awesome!* They point to something even better – even greater – more astounding – the sublime, perfect conclusion to God's plan of salvation for humanity and the final step that we all have to take to be in it. So stay tuned. We'll talk about that in the very near future.