

Matthew 5:8

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-5/matthew-58/>

The sixth statement (C') of Jesus's chiasm focuses on inner purity (purity of heart).

There is no apparent parallel account of this teaching in the Gospels.

(C') *Makarios are the pure in heart, for they shall see God* corresponds with (C) *Makarios are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth*. The *gentle* or meek channel their energy and capabilities as they are directed by their Master. They pursue their Master's will because they are *pure in heart*.

Purity and cleanliness were important in Jewish life. The book of Leviticus stresses the importance for priests, who mediated between God and man, to maintain purity in all aspects of their lives. Leviticus especially shares in great detail how priests were to remain pure as they prepared themselves and performed sacrifices. Several of these sacrifices were offered for the purpose of making one pure (from sin—Leviticus 4-6:7; disease—Leviticus 14; or some other uncleanness—Leviticus 15) so that they could rejoin fellowship with others and God.

But being pure was not only for the priests; it was for the entire nation (Leviticus 11:13-46 ; Numbers 19).

While external purity was important, it was not as important as being *pure in heart* (purity inside). King David (a man after God's heart) recognizes the importance of internal purity in his psalm of regret after his affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah. David confesses to God:

“For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it;
You are not pleased with burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”
(Psalm 51:16-17)

At the center of this Psalm, David cries out:
“Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from Your presence
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.”
(Psalm 51:10-11)

David's psalm foreshadows Jesus's statement “*Makarios are the pure in heart for they shall see God.*” Those who are *poor in spirit* do not have egos or self-importance, which clears the way for them to see reality for what it is, and to submit to their Creator. Those who *mourn* for their foolish ways and repent have the opportunity to live a life of obedience to God. Those who are

gentle and meek are like a war horse following their rider into battle. They humbly submit to God wherever He leads. Those who *hunger and thirst for Christ's righteousness* both for themselves and for the world, who seek first His Kingdom and His *righteousness* bring harmony to their surroundings and their community. Those who are merciful unto others, and live in forgiveness *have a pure heart*.

The pairing of a *pure heart* with mercy and forgiveness toward others highlights the reality of the poison of bitterness toward others. It is not possible to have *Makarios*, or happiness, when we are bitter. Bitterness is an inner anger we direct toward others in an illusion to punish or control them. The reality is that it causes us to be under the control of the person toward whom we are angry. Not only are we controlled by them, our anger punishes us, rather than them. Jesus says that the *pure of heart* will be *Makarios* because they *shall see God*.

Since God is Spirit, and cannot be seen, what does Jesus mean by this? There are a number of Bible verses that speak of seeing God all around us. Romans 10:17-18 makes an interesting point regarding seeing and hearing God:

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:
‘Their sound has gone out to all the earth,
And their words to the ends of the world.’”

Paul asks the question whether all Israel has heard the gospel. Then he answers, “Yes, because they have seen God in creation.” Paul quotes Psalm 19 to make the point:

“The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.
Day to day pours forth speech,
And night to night reveals knowledge.”
(Psalm 19:1-2)

God’s creation is constantly expressing His character through what He made. By observing the creation around us, we have the opportunity to hear God, and to gain knowledge from God. But it takes eyes to see. A *pure heart* will desire to see what is. To seek what is true. Titus 1:15 says, “To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.” When we seek what is true, God is all around us. In fact, Colossians 1 says that Jesus is in all things, holding them together:

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:15-18).

It also seems reasonable that as we walk in meekness and mercy, forgiving others, we will cease to see other people as obstacles, but as God’s creations made in His image. Perhaps by being

pure in heart we can even begin to *see God* in other people. When we see as God sees, we are fulfilled, we are *Makarios*.

Those who are not *pure in heart*, even if they are ritually pure like the Pharisees, are not *Makarios*, but are woefully wretched (Matthew 23:25-28). *They shall not see God*. They have too much self in the way. They do not seek the benefit of others. They do not seek to play their role in the Body of Christ in submission to the Head. They seek to be the head, and to extract benefit for themselves at the expense of others (Matthew 23:4-6, 16).

Biblical Text

5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.