

Real Christianity: The Sermon on the Mount

#7: You Have a Pure Heart

Matt 5:8

Jesus said: "**Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God!**" (Matt 5:8 GNT). You Christian have a pure heart. How can this be?

I believe Jesus has in mind an OT promise that would be fulfilled in the New Covenant. (Read Ezek 36:26-27).

When we are born again by the Holy Spirit, we get a new heart and a new spirit. What does this practically mean? We get new desires. How is this described in the NT?

Paul writes in Ephesians that we now have a "**new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy**" (Eph 4:24 NLT). This is just another way of saying that Jesus Christ, through the indwelling of God the Spirit, lives in us. Or as Paul said in the famous statement in Galatians 2:20, "**My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**" (Gal 2:20 NLT). Christ living in us is our new heart. But more specifically, the Christ living in us is our new identity. Paul says it is no longer I, my old self who is living, but it is Christ living through me.

The Apostle Paul illustrated this theology about our true identity in Romans 7:15-23 [Read this].

It is because of our struggle with sin that we doubt our true identity. But Paul seeks to correct this.

First, notice in v. 18 Paul says, "**I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.**" Your sinful nature is simply the World's sinful programming in your mind. This creates the conflict within us (Gal 5:17).

Paul admits that the sinful programming in his mind still tricks him into sinning. But he refuses to agree that this is His true nature and real self. In v. 22 he says, "**I love God's law with all my [new] heart.**" In spite of his sin, he is proclaiming that the real Paul loves to please and obey God.

Perhaps you are still tempted to think that your sinful desires are your real desires. But Paul says something radical to correct that. In verses 17 and 20 he writes: "**I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it**" (Rom 7:17, 20). Paul is simply saying: "The real me does not sin anymore." Paul is saying, "I have a pure heart. My mind is corrupted. But my new heart, the real me, is pure." And this is what Jesus was referring to when He said we have pure hearts.

Your sin does not define who you really are. When you sin, you are not acting like your true self. Therefore, the real you does not sin.

Sin is merely a disease we have. But a disease does not define who you are.

This helps explain our position with God. The Bible says this about the Christian: you are “**holy and without fault in his** [God’s] **eyes**” (Eph 1:4 NLT). How can this be? Many Christians say God simply chooses to ignore and overlook who you really are and view you through some distorted filter that does not reflect reality.

But God knows your true identity better than you do. Holy and righteous is not just how God chooses to see you as He denies reality. Holy and righteous is who you really are. Not just because you are forgiven, but because like Paul, God understands the truth that it is no longer the real you who is sinning. This understanding should help us combat our guilt. So the next time you sin, remember, **THAT WAS NOT ME.**

Also understanding this aspect of our Christian identity effects our power over sin. If you believe that your true nature is to sin and rebel against God, then you will live like a sinner. As Mike Quarles said: “The problem was not the bad behavior but the belief behind the behavior that caused me to act that way.”

Discussion ?’s

- 1) Mike Quarle’s did all kinds of spiritual things that did not help him overcome sin. What are some lessons there?
- 2) In your own words, what did Jesus mean when He said Christians have a pure heart? What are some other verses that say the same thing?
- 3) How did Pastor Kurt define and describe the sinful nature? Why does this make Romans 12:2 such an important command and wonderful promise?
- 4) What are your conclusions from what Paul says in Romans 7:17 and 20?
- 5) How does having pure hearts effect the way God sees us? How is this different than many Christians think?
- 6) Why does believing you have a pure heart, give you power over sin?
- 7) What was most meaningful to you about the Sunday message?