

# BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

Mt 5:8; Jas 4:8; Ps 51:10

## I. PURE (*katharos*)

- A. Unadulterated, faultless: e.g. water
- B. Undivided: e.g. single-minded, concentrated, focused; Augustine's *simplex cor*;
- C. Perfected: e.g. "pure athleticism"

## II. IN HEART (*kardia*)

- A. Unlike concerns for bodily or societal purity
  - 1. Pharisees' obsessions with ritual purity
  - 2. Health-food & exercise fanatics obsessed with physical health
  - 3. Utopian aspirations for purity—Cromwell's "godly" corps; Jacobins' "virtuous citizens," Bolshevik's "comrades" in "dictatorship of proletariat," BLM's abolition of racism
- B. *Purity in Heart is to Will One Thing* (Soren Kierkegaard)
  - 1. Eternal perspective: "Only the Eternal is always appropriate and always present, is always truer. Only the Eternal applies to each human being, whatever his age may be" (p. 33).
  - 2. Eternity's Emissaries: remorse; repentance; confession; "repentance and remorse belong to the eternal in a man" (p. 41);
  - 3. Barriers to Willing One Thing (cf Jas 4:8); "And he who in truth wills only one thing can will only the Good, and he who only wills one thing when he wills the Good can only will the Good in truth" (p. 53).
    - a. Crisis experiences misinterpreted when become fixations
    - b. Concerns for rewards—double-minded man looks for temporal as well as eternal goods
    - c. Fear of punishment (both now and hereafter); following Judgment, damnation
    - d. Egocentric service—preaching to please the crowd rather than God; giving to garner publicity;
    - e. Qualified commitments—"multi-tasking," seeking assorted commendations, appeasing factions
  - 4. The Price of Willing One Thing
    - a. Commitment, loyalty, long-suffering
    - b. Exposing evasions, rationalizations, self-deceit; "Above all, the one, who in truth wills the Good must not be 'busy,' In quiet patience he must leave it to the Good itself, what reward shall have, and what he shall accomplish" (p. 146).
  - 5. What Then Must I Do?
    - a. Listen to God
    - b. Live as an "individual"; "But in eternity each shall render account as an individual. That is, eternity will demand of him that he shall have lived as an individual" (p. 185). "But in eternity, consciences the only voice that is heard. It must be heard by the individual" (p. 186).
    - c. Find and follow "vocation" rather than "occupation"
- C. *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Eugene Peterson (quoting Nietzsche: "The essential thing in 'heaven and earth' is that there should be a long obedience in the same direction; there thereby results and has always resulted in the long run, something that has made life worth living") finds "songs of ascent" good devotional guides—facets of proper pilgrimage, moving toward Jerusalem
  - 1. "In my distress I cry to the LORD" (120:1), confessing fallenness, looking up to savior
  - 2. "I lift up my eyes to the hills" (121:1), aware of finitude looking to Infinite
  - 3. "I was glad when they said to me" (122:1), rejoicing in Word coming to us
  - 4. "To you I lift up my eyes" (123:1), enlightened by Light, looking Above
  - 5. "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side" (124:1), acknowledging ultimate Comforter
  - 6. "Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion" (125:1), faith makes one secure
  - 7. "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion" (126:1), God's promises sustain us
  - 8. "Unless the LORD builds the house" (127:1), only God can make an eternal Home
  - 9. "Blessed is every one who fears the LORD" (128:1), the fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom
  - 10. "Surely they have afflicted me from my youth" (129:1), needing deliverance from foes
  - 11. Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD" (130:1), *de profundus* (though in the pits one can persevere)

## III. FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD (beatific vision)

- A. Now we see "through a glass, dimly"—partial, distorted, inconclusive, but wonderful still
- B. Bliss of ultimate vision: seeing God as He Is (not in toto but inasmuch as we are able)