

# The Ultimate Goal

*Main Idea: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!*

What's at the top of your bucket list? You may not have a list, but if you did, what would you put at the top?

I was curious about what items most frequently end up at the top of bucket lists and so I googled it and found a site dedicated to the topic, [bucketlist.net](http://bucketlist.net). This particular site claims that the following 10 items have consistently topped the bucket lists of people all around the world.

1. See The Northern Lights
2. Go Skydiving
3. Get a Tattoo
4. Go on a Cruise
5. Swim with Dolphins
6. Get Married
7. Go Scuba Diving
8. Run a Marathon
9. Go Zip-lining
10. Ride an Elephant

While I would enjoy experiencing or accomplishing most of these things, I have to say that if any of these things are at the top of our lists, we are setting our sights far too low!

I would suggest that the main reason we set our sights too low is that we forget (or have never understood) reality. We get captivated and consumed by the things that fill our senses and have a hard time acknowledging any portion of reality that we can't see. Our sin, and the fallen world around us, skews our perspective and clouds our vision.

And so, before we get into the passage we're studying today, I want to attempt to remind us of reality. I am hoping that the fog clears (at least a little) and we begin to recognize what is truly valuable, actually fulfilling, and what we are ultimately made for.

One of the things that is very effective in jerking me back to reality is death. In the last few weeks a number of people, related to or closely connected to people in our church family, have passed away. This includes my Grandpa and one of my aunts.

As I have been reminded of the reality of our mortality (of the briefness of this life) I have also been reminded that my sights must be set higher than anything that is temporal.

While preparing to give the message at my Grandpa's service, I spent a lot of time contemplating a phrase I have frequently heard Pastor Stan say, in regard to believers who have died and gone to Heaven. It goes something like this (I am going to insert my Grandpa's name for the illustration)...

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*“Albert Cowan is experiencing the goal of his existence. He has come face to face with his Savior. He is beholding the Lord of Glory, and he is full of wonder, full of delight, full of joy.”*

What do you think of that statement? Does the prospect of seeing God’s face thrill you? Has it ever been at the top of your bucket list? Is seeing God’s face the goal of your existence?

Whether or not we value seeing God, it IS what we were made for! In Genesis we discover that God created mankind in His image. He created humanity with the unique ability for close relationship. Primarily for relationship with God Himself. It was thus, in essence, an invitation into the perfect, loving, fulfilling, and glorious relationship that the Godhead has enjoyed for all eternity past.

We were made to be in relationship with God. We were made to SEE GOD!

To see Him, is to see perfect love, goodness, beauty, and strength. He is like nothing you have ever seen and a mere glimpse of Him will take your breath away. Upon seeing Him, every knee bows and every tongue confesses that He is Lord!

Seeing God IS what we were made for and when we are living in reality, it is at the top of our bucket list!

In the passage we are looking at today Jesus gives the condition that must be met for us to reach this ultimate goal of seeing God. We will look at that in just a minute, but first let me give a bit of context with a brief review...

If you have been here for the last few weeks, you know that we are studying the Gospel of Matthew, we are in the Sermon on the Mount, and we are currently working our way through the 8 Beatitudes (supreme blessings).

Today we are looking at the 6<sup>th</sup> Beatitude (supreme blessing) that Jesus declares belongs to kingdom people. We find this particular beatitude in verse 8, but let’s read beginning in verse 1...

### **Matthew 5:1-7**

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup>“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup>“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

<sup>5</sup>“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup>“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup>“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

### **Matthew 5:8**

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

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The word that is translated “**Blessed**” here, has also been translated “Happy” and “Happier”. It means fortunate; well off; supremely blessed. It refers to true, lasting, and surpassing happiness.

So, who is blessed? Who is truly happy and supremely blessed? Jesus says it’s, “**the pure in heart**”. Simply said, the pure in heart are those who are not just good on the outside but also good on the inside.

*Illustration: Watermelon*

I would like to illustrate this with a couple of watermelons...

When you go to the store to pick a watermelon, the goal is to find a good one. What makes a good watermelon good?

The goodness of a watermelon is ultimately determined by what you find on the inside! Yes, there are outward signs that you can look for, but in the end, you are trying to find one with beautiful, red, sweet, firm fruit, on the inside. If the inside is good, you have found a good watermelon. If the inside is bad, no amount of outward beauty can make it good.

Let’s do a little test with the watermelons we have here today. Let’s see if we can find a good watermelon. Here are some tests I’ve been told to use while trying to find a good watermelon...

- The Stem Test
- The Slosh Test
- The Thump Test

Outward signs may provide some clues as to whether or not a Watermelon is good. However, the true test happens when we cut it open and see what’s inside.

In a similar way, when Jesus says, “the pure in heart”, he is talking about those who are truly good. Those who are good at the core. It isn’t enough to pass the external tests. It isn’t enough to put on an external mask of purity or goodness... God looks at the heart!

Keep in mind the culture where Jesus is speaking. The religious leaders at this time were obsessed with exterior purity while neglecting the inward purity of the heart. They strictly enforced the law (as well as many additions they had made). They had every kind of ceremonial washing you could imagine. On the outside, they may have looked like they had it all together but if you got a glimpse at the inside, you would discover that they were just as broken and wicked as the worst of sinners.

In **Matthew 23:25-28**, Jesus confronts this issue head on...

<sup>25</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

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<sup>27</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Jesus accurately diagnoses and boldly confronts a huge problem in these religious leaders. In their attempt to follow the law; in their attempt to make themselves acceptable to God; in their attempt to clean themselves up and be good, on their own, they had completely missed the mark. They were focused on trying to fix up the external, while neglecting the brokenness inside; neglecting the corruption of their hearts; neglecting the source of the problem.

Jesus continues to confront this massive problem throughout His ministry and even later on in this particular sermon (the Sermon on the Mount). In verses 21 and 22 He says...

<sup>21</sup> “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ <sup>22</sup> But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; (Matt 5:21-22)

Jesus is saying, the inward anger you all experience toward your fellow man, points to the brokenness of your heart, even if you are successful in suppressing or avoiding the outward manifestations (such as murder).

He continues to drive His point home in verses 27 and 28...

<sup>27</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ <sup>28</sup> But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matt 5:27-28)

Not to minimize it (Jesus wasn't minimizing it), but the main problem is not adultery. The main problem is the sinful, lustful heart where adultery originates. Just because one is successful in outwardly avoiding adultery doesn't mean the real problem has been addressed. Outwardly conforming to the law without addressing the problem of a wicked heart, is simply hypocrisy.

This was not an easy thing for the religious leaders to hear. It is not an easy thing for us to hear. But let me assure you that love IS Jesus' motivation. He did not come to the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved (John 17:3).

Jesus was lovingly speaking truth, so that the fog of deception would be rolled back, His audience would see their desperate condition, and would ultimately be saved. He wants them to receive the best gift ever given... Eternal life with God, purchased not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19)!

You see, though we were created in the image of God with a perfect nature, that image was marred when humanity walked away from and rebelled against God (through Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden). Our nature was changed. We became broken and sinful at the core of our being. Our hearts went from being pure – to – being deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; desperately sick (Jeremiah 17:9).

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But God, due to His incredible love; and mercy; and grace, responded by unveiling His plan to redeem us. Jesus would come and take our place... He would live the perfect life that we could no longer live, and pay the price that we could not pay, so that in Christ...

- Our hearts could be made new (made pure once again)
- We could meet God's perfect standard.
- We could be adopted into His family.
- Our relationship with God could be restored and we could live with Him forever!
- We could SEE GOD!

Jesus lived a perfect life, died in our place, and then three days later rose from the dead, so that our hearts could be transformed; so that they could be made new; so that we could be saved. He soundly defeated sin and death. He made it possible for the curse to be reversed!

Jesus is the only solution to our brokenness. He is our only hope for a pure heart. He is our only hope of reaching the goal of our existence... Seeing God (seeing perfection) face to face.

So how is this pure heart, which is necessary for seeing God, obtained or received?

I really REALLY like Jesus' simple and clear explanation of how this happens, in His conversation with Nicodemus, one of the prominent religious leaders of His time. This encounter is captured in John 3, a passage that Pastor Stan referred to a couple weeks ago.

I would like to go there again as it speaks so clearly to the change of heart that is necessary for eternal life (for seeing God).

In verse 3 Jesus says this to Nicodemus...

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

Nicodemus responds (in the very next verse) by asking a logical question...

*"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*

Jesus is not talking about physical rebirth. He is talking about an internal rebirth of the heart. He uses "born again" to communicate the magnitude of transformation that is necessary. Our hearts, our core, or nature must be made new (born again). Not fixed up, refurbished, or repaired, but completely transformed. Our hearts need to be changed from desperately wicked to absolutely pure.

Jesus goes on to tell Nicodemus (and us) how this transformation is accomplished. In verse 5 Jesus says...

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*

Jesus is saying that the Holy Spirit is the one who does the cleansing of the heart. It is the Holy Spirit who accomplishes this necessary transformation or re-birth.

This is the fulfillment of [Ezekiel 36:25-28](#)

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<sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. <sup>28</sup> You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

God is the only one who can change our hearts and it is specifically the Holy Spirit who does the “surgery”.

Jesus continues, in verses 14 & 15, to tell Nicodemus (and us) what triggers the Holy Spirit's transformative work...

<sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

Jesus is referring to the time that God provided salvation for His people through the bronze snake that He had Moses make and put on a pole. Anyone who was bit by a poisonous snake was to look up at the bronze snake. If they did, they were healed; they were saved!

Jesus tells Nicodemus that this is a picture of how mankind can be healed, saved, and receive eternal life. All we have to do is look to Jesus!

Looking to Jesus means that we acknowledge that we are sick; that we are filled with the venom of sin; that our hearts are sinful; that we are headed for death and have nowhere else to turn for salvation. When we look to Jesus, the Holy Spirit transforms us, he births in us a new heart, we are adopted into His family, and we receive eternal life!

The very next verse in one of the most popular verses in the Bible...

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

God's love has been directed toward us! It has been directed toward you! He has made provision for you to be saved! If you look to Jesus, **you will not perish but have eternal life!**

The supremely blessed are the pure in heart (those who have looked to Jesus and received a new heart by the Holy Spirit), for they will see God!

I began by asking you what is at the top of your bucket list. If seeing God has not been at the top or isn't even on it, I hope you will reconsider. Seeing God IS the goal of our existence; it IS what we were created for; it IS what we all ultimately want.

But, there is a condition... you must have a pure heart.

You don't get a pure heart by going to church, by keeping a list of rules, or by mustering all your strength and being a relatively good person. There is nothing any of us can do to fix our heart problem and become truly good. God is the only one who can fix our hearts and He does it when we recognize our need and look to Jesus!

If you have already looked to Jesus, you have received a new heart; a new nature and you have a lot to look forward to! You will see Him! You will come face to face with perfect love, goodness, beauty, and strength. His beauty WILL take

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your breath away and you will be in a perpetual state of awe and delight for all eternity! You have every reason to be truly happy. You are supremely blessed!

If you haven't yet looked to Jesus, please consider doing so today! He created you to be in relationship with Him and paid an incredible price for your brokenness to be healed. A pure heart and all of the treasures that are in Christ are yours to receive. All you have to do is recognize your need and look to Jesus! The moment you do, the Holy Spirit will transform your heart and you will qualify to see perfection face to face!

**Matthew 5:8**

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

### Other Passages to Consider

#### 1 Samuel 16:7

<sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

#### Revelation 22:1-5

Then the angel<sup>[a]</sup> showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup>through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life<sup>[b]</sup> with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup>No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup>They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

#### Acts 15:9

<sup>9</sup> and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.

#### Psalm 18:25-26

<sup>25</sup> With the merciful you show yourself merciful;  
with the blameless man you show yourself blameless;  
<sup>26</sup> with the purified you show yourself pure;  
and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous.

#### Psalm 24:3-4

<sup>3</sup> Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?  
And who shall stand in his holy place?  
<sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not lift up his soul to what is false  
and does not swear deceitfully.



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## "THE ULTIMATE GOAL"

Matthew 5:8

**Main Idea:** Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!

### Introduction

Bucket Lists

The Goal of Our Existence

**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matt. 5:8)!**

Blessed

Pure in Heart

What is a Pure Heart?

The Heart Problem in Jesus' Audience.

Mankind's Heart Problem.

How a Pure Heart is Received.

### Application