

The God of All Flesh

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"BLESSED are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." **Matthew 5:8**

A Sermon By Dr Charles S. Price

During the earthly life of our blessed Lord, He seemed to do some very strange things. As a matter of fact, the unconventional and the unusual were common incidents with Him. He refused to bow to the traditions of men and more than once entirely ignored the established conventions of His generation and day.

In our modern times we spend tremendous amounts of money, endeavoring to reach the multitudes by newspaper advertising, and the like, of the most splashy and arresting type. We stay awake at night to think up some catch-subject which will "bring them in," and as a general rule, the modern, evangelistic preacher gauges his success by the size of his congregation. The slogan seems to be "Anything and everything in order to be able to preach to a multitude," while some of us have invaded Holly wood to borrow the superlative adjectives with which to describe the meetings.

There is nothing wrong necessarily in the fact of a crowd; the greater the size of the congregation, the greater is our corresponding opportunity to reach the hearts of men with the story of the Cross. The question which should demand our sincere contemplation, however, is why did we seek them and why did they come?

Jesus has never measured success by statistics. You can't compute Heaven's power with human numbers. The Lord is far more concerned with a little extra love and faith in human hearts than he is with a few extra chairs in the back of the building!

The last verse of the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew tells us that there followed Him great multitudes of people from the entire countryside. They not only came from the cities in the immediate vicinity, but from foreign countries and the congregations must have been enormous.

The Lord met them and in His infinite compassion, He touched their sick and healed them; but we cannot get over the fact that in the opening verse of the

fifth chapter of Matthew we are told that, with His disciples, He slipped away from that enormous congregation and lost Himself" in the solitude of the mountain. Did it not seem a strange and unusual thing for Him to do?

Why should He preach to a little handful of eleven or twelve men, when He could have said the same thing to the multiplied thousands. The probability is that the multiplied thousands would have listened, but only the twelve could HEAR! The masses of the people, bringing their loved ones who were lunatic and possessed with devils, palsied and sick, were all vitally interested in healing; but only a comparative handful were interested in the Healer!

So, Jesus left the multitude for the few. He had come to contact men who were able in some degree to accept, receive and assimilate the things which He had to say. How blind was that crowd milling around, looking for temporal blessings, and being satisfied with the superficial things which affected, primarily, the life we now live in the flesh.

Think of the thousands of eyes which looked upon Jesus and how very few saw Who He really was! Think of the multitudes who listened to the words He had to say and it will almost break your heart as you contemplate the few who really HEARD!

The Pure in Heart

So it was that our adorable Lord, having in His mercy ministered to the physical needs of a huge congregation, took His little band of faithful followers into a secret place in the mountains and talked to them, while they sat at His feet. He not only opened His mouth, but He opened His heart, as He taught them from those eternal truths which poured like a clear, pure stream from the Spirit of God Himself.

There is one eternal truth which I would discuss with you for a little while this day, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." What a statement! What a promise! To SEE GOD has always been the cry of the sincere heart. David uttered that cry when, in the misery of his soul, having exhausted every available human resource, he felt as empty and as void as a vacant heart could be. David hungered and thirsted, once again, after the LIVING GOD!

It was his desire for God which made Abraham leave Ur of the Chaldees to journey, as he was led by the Spirit of the Lord, into lands unknown. That cry was wrung from the heart of Job, as he sat in the midst of his perplexity and bewilderment, looking for God and waiting for the manifestation of the Presence Divine! "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His

seat!"

Rest assured, human heart, that you will never be satisfied until you have seen HIM! Your restless soul will go on in its eternal quest, until you meet Him face to face. There is a song that declares "the round and the common task will furnish all we ought to ask" but I know in my heart that is not true. Service is not enough! Doing things for our Lord is not enough! Prayer meetings are insufficient and church services will fail! Loyalty to systems and fealty to cults and movements will leave us pitifully empty, in the last analysis, with the same old heart-cry resounding from the depths of our being.

Seeing the form of our lovely Jesus, coming through the trees in the Garden on the Resurrection Morning, turned the sobs of Mary into an anthem of praise; and His calling her by name, as they met face-to-face, wiped her tears away as only PERSONAL CONTACT with HIM, our Saviour and Lord, will meet the need of our lives, and fill the void which exists in every heart.

Beholding Him

Let me assure you, my friend, when Jesus talked about the possibility of SEEING GOD in the Sermon on the Mount, He was not referring to the glorious experience which awaits us when traveling days are over and we are on the other side of the Gates of Pearl. He was talking about the possibility of a man seeing God in this present world. It was not a promise that, when the clouds have rolled away and the mists of life have lifted, we should see the face of our Father in the Land of Endless Day; but He meant that we could see the Face of God in the Clouds of Misunderstanding and behold the Eyes Divine in the Mists of Human Bewilderment. We were to behold HIM here and now!

It is only as we see the LORD that life becomes radiant in the most blessed of all certainties the certainty that GOD IS and that HE is a rewarder of them that diligently seek HIM! To know God theologically is one thing, but to be acquainted with Him experimentally is something far better! You must not post pone the promise of this beatitude and put the possibility of this experience in the far, distant future, when you hope to awake in His likeness on the other side of the River.

You can see God HERE AND NOW! He wants us to enter into fellowship with His Son in this present world. He is waiting to manifest Himself in you and in me, until our surrendered beings will become the medium through which the irresistible dynamic of His glory, His presence and His power will become manifest unto the world!

The Beatitudes have no reference whatever to the Land Beyond The Skies! They

refer to the life that NOW IS! "Over There" everyone will be "pure in heart" and there will be no need for the Saviour to preach such a sermon as this.

One of the difficulties with our modern church is that we insist upon placing in the future experiences which are possible today! What a distortion of Scripture it is to take God's PRESENT and make it man's FUTURE! When Jesus used the words, "For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven," He did not say "For theirs WILL BE the Kingdom of Heaven," but He used a PRESENT tense which linked it with infinity, making it CONTINUOUSLY OPERATIVE throughout the ages!

The Real Kingdom

We close our eyes and pray "Thy Kingdom Come," and immediately dream of a time when the nations and empires of this sin-cursed earth will bow at the Saviour's feet on the Morning of His Millennial Reign. That will come all right! That is part of the "program." Forget not that "man" is earth" but remember that God's Kingdom can come in us! Why spend so much time being concerned about the dispensational events which will shake the universe and which all the powers of earth and hell can never stop. Rather let us give homage to the God whose glory and power is sufficient unto the day! How often we pray the Lord's prayer and dream of "someday"; when all the while His Spirit is speaking to our hearts that are dull of hearing, "NOW, NOW, NOW."

All of God's external manifestations have internal counter parts. There we have "missed the way." We are always looking for the OUTWARD when we should be looking for the IN WARD! Jesus did not say, "Blessed WILL BE the pure in heart in the days that they see God," but He said, "Blessed ARE the pure in heart, for *they see God!*" HERE AND NOW!

Only the flesh is bound to the earth. The Spirit soars with eagles wings into the eternal infinities of God! The Blood of Calvary snaps the cords that bind the soul and destroys the boundaries that have hemmed in the spirit! Though your feet be on the earth, your head can be in the clouds!

The Lord knew that our mortal ears would be subjected to the hubbub, the noise and the rattle of contentious men in a God less earth. However, He has given His redeemed EARS OF THE SPIRIT which can catch the VOICE OF THE SAVIOUR and receive the entrancing melodies of the angel songs from around the Throne Eternal! He knew also that it would be necessary for us to use our human eyes in the conduct of our appointed tasks; but He saw to it that His children were not confined to these boundaries or enslaved within such narrow limitations, by giving them EYES of which the children of the world knew nothing. He has given to His children SPIRITUAL VISION and the power to

change "We shall see the KING," into "I HAVE SEEN the KING!"

Face to Face!

We shall be like HIM, when we see our SAVIOUR face to face! — freed forever from the limitations of this mortal body! It will not be like meeting a stranger for the first time, but will be a glorious reunion of two old friends who have walked and talked together. That is our privilege under grace! True it is that the multitudes cannot receive it. They did not then and they will not now. Knowing this, our blessed Lord left the great congregation of thousands on the dusty highways to tell these things to a little group who were beginning to HEAR and who were beginning to SEE!

The condition Jesus lays down here, as a requisite for seeing God, is that we be pure in HEART. I am convinced that this is NOT the old idea of "heart purity" set forth in the doctrines of "entire sanctification for" the things which its theological phrases imply are subsidiary to the one burning truth which, I trust, the Spirit of the Lord will enable you to see.

It has been the teaching of many that, after we have attained to a certain status or condition of life, after we have arrived at the place where we think no "wrong things" and the lofty mountain peaks of internal and external purity have been won by the climber; then, at the top, we shall meet God face to face. No two people agree as to the location of the mountain, or the timber line of conduct. We would do well never to forget that *"holiness unto God"* is MORE and indeed BETTER and SWEETER *than mere abstinence from SIN!*

Jesus still has the same problem with His disciples in these days as He did in the days of old. We insist on dealing with EXTERNALS instead of INTERNALS! There are those in these days who contend that a life lived OUTWARDLY as a Christian is sufficient, failing to remember that IT IS NO SUCH THING. The true CHRISTIAN LIFE is the LIFE OF CHRIST *within the believer!* The OUTWARD LIFE of the disciple is but a reflection, the effect and not the cause of the CHRIST (ian) LIFE WITHIN! What you are before God is determined by what HE IS allowed to be in you!

The "righteous" old Pharisee on the Temple steps was bewildered beyond measure at the attitude of Jesus toward the Publican and the Scriptures leave us little or no doubt in the matter that a sincere sinner who is looking for Jesus stands a far better chance to SEE THE LORD than a self-righteous Pharisee who is wanting everyone to look at him.

The Pharisee was interested in what he was doing, while the weeping Publican was interested in his great need for God's mercy. It is the "PURE IN HEART" who

will see God. Jesus did not say the "PURE IN LIFE"; for that would necessitate a certain standard of conduct, which man would have to possess as a requisite before he could behold His face!

There is NONE GOOD save God! Who among us would presume to claim that he or she had attained COMPLETE PERFECTION in thought, heart, or life? If the Lord were speaking of external conduct, then to what degree of purity should we aspire or what measure of purity should we possess? The purity spoken of here reaches far beyond the boundaries of the fleshly and the sensual. We cannot make it "conduct" any more than we can say that "the peace that passeth all understanding," of which He spoke, means cessation of hostilities or a quiet environment in which to live.

The Hungry Heart

Though it was not the OUTSIDE, of which the Lord was speaking, but the INSIDE; do not sit down in despair as you behold your shortcomings. Neither is it a question of setting out to spend weeks, months and years in an attempt to develop *a spiritual life* in which we might seek to say that we have attained "purity of heart." No matter what yesterday has been, let the fullest extent of your sincerity reach out to the Lord. Reach out for the nail-pierced Hand. Only turn to Him with all your heart! Come today with an unpolluted, pure stream of sincere desire, and let your thirsty soul cry out for the Living God, even as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, and it will not be long before you find PEACE IN HIM!

There is more than one Nathaniel who has been sitting under neath the fig tree, filled with his doubts and fears; and, perhaps, conscious of his great need. The experience which was factual then can properly be spiritualized; and we can declare without contradiction that it has been experienced over and over again. Only the day before, Philip had seen a Man who they had said was the son of Joseph, the Carpenter of Nazareth. More eyes than Philip's had looked upon Him, but perhaps they did not have what Philip possessed in his heart.

The moment Philip saw Jesus, he knew Him. He did not have to pass a theological examination to become a competent Christian. The moment he looked into the eyes of Jesus, his heart broke into an anthem of praise and inexpressible happiness. What could be more natural than that he should look for his friend, Nathaniel? Not to persuade him to try to live a Chirstian life, but to tell him that they had FOUND THE CHRIST! When one finds the Christ, the Christian life takes care of itself.

So Nathaniel came to Jesus and argued with Philip, even as he came. You know what happened. Jesus Himself gives us the key which unlocks the door to the

mystery of Nathaniel's instant conversion. "Behold an Israelite, indeed," saith the Lord, "in whom is no guile." Here came honesty. Here walked sincerity, and around the bend in the trail, Philip came face to face with the One Whom he recognized as his Lord!

The Other Side

You must not be discouraged, my friend. Jesus is closer than you think. Remember, He comes to you not because you are perfect in yourself, but to make you *perfect* in HIS PERFEC TION! He walks with us, not as a reward for our "goodness," but in order that our contact with Him may prepare us for the impartation of His divine nature. He comes not to teach us how to live a Christian life, but what is sweeter, by far, HE COMES TO LIVE HIS LIFE IN US!