

Integrity Helps Us to See Matthew 5:8

I. The heart is the center of our being, who we are at our core.

- A. We are commanded to love God with our “whole heart.”
 - 1. God wants love for him to be central to who we are.
 - (a) Our love flows out of our heart.
 - (b) When we come to know Christ, we experience his love (Romans 5:5).
 - (c) Love for God is a response to his love for us.
- B. A big part of our transformation is heart change.
 - 1. We live out of our hearts.
 - (a) So, good things like love, flow out of our hearts.
 - (b) But, so does sin.
- C. Christianity emphasizes the heart (internal).
 - 1. So transformation happens from the inside out.
 - (a) In other words, change the heart and behavior will follow.
 - 2. In contrast to that, religion emphasizes behavior (external).
 - (a) So, the Pharisees were all about rule following.
 - (b) Following external rules was thought to make you righteous.
 - (c) For example, they practiced ritual hand cleaning.
 - (d) This was not in God’s Law. It was man-made tradition.
 - (e) They thought that earing without washing takes away holiness.
 - 3. What did Jesus say? (Matthew 15:1-2, 8-11, 17-20).
 - (a) New morning Mercies; Paul Tripp; March 7th devotional.
 - (b) So, our behavior is just the symptom. The problem is my heart.

II. The purity being called for is more about honesty than morality.

- A. Moral purity is a good thing. It’s just not the point here.
 - 1. Why I had to re-write this sermon.
- B. Two other possibilities.
 - 1. Singlemindedness of devotion.
 - (a) James says “purify your hearts you double-minded.”
 - (b) Some commentators think this is about making Christ the focus of our devotion.
 - (c) So, it would be avoiding idolatry and worldly distractions.
 - (d) That kind of devotion is important. It does help us see God.
 - (e) But, although that may be true, it may not be the point.
- C. John Stott’s perspective: pure of heart is about sincerity.
 - 1. Jesus’ greeting for Nathaniel, “a man of no guile.”

- (a) Guile (Webster’s): slyness and cunning in dealing with others, craftiness.
 - (b) Jesus calls him a “true Israelite” (emphasis on truth).
 - (c) Nathaniel was not a “game player,” a fake.
- 2. He had integrity.
 - (a) Integrity is being the same inside and out (actions and thoughts).
 - 3. Ways in which we can lack integrity.
 - (a) Intentional manipulation.
 - (b) Prayer request gossip (or “I’m just processing.”)
 - (c) A critical spirit motivated by jealousy.
 - (d) Talking about people to be “helpful” but actually wanting to chop someone down.
 - (e) We claim that we are constructively criticizing but our real motivation is that we really don’t like the person.
- D. Motives are very important to God.
 - 1. Transformation begins with the exterior sins (what I do).
 - (a) But then it moves to the heart (why I do it).
 - 2. The Pharisees were all about the “what” (pay your tithes).
 - (a) Jesus looked at the “why” (for the praise of men).
 - (b) If it’s truly for the love of God, don’t do it for the approval of men.
 - 3. Ulterior motives do not come from a pure heart.
 - (a) Doing or saying something with an ulterior motive is a form of deceit and hypocrisy.
- III. The blessing: “...for they will see God.”
- A. This is not referring to seeing God in heaven.
 - 1. It is seeing God now. It is about spiritual perception.
 - 2. Paul prayed for the Ephesians to have spiritual perception
 - (a) (Ephesians 1:17-18)
 - (b) Spiritual perception is needed to grow.
 - (c) Without it we lack insight and understanding.
 - B. This beatitude tells us that a truthful heart helps us to see God.
 - 1. This is because truth is part of the essence of God’s being.
 - 2. When we lack integrity our hearts are out of alignment with his.
 - (a) We can’t see from his perspective.
 - (b) We miss his beauty.
 - (c) We miss being able to integrate his values into us.
 - 3. So, we don’t want to be playing games.
 - (a) We don’t want to be driven by ulterior motives.
 - (b) (Psalm 51:6,10)
 - C. Sometimes we are blind to our sin.
 - 1. Ask him to show you (Ps.51:16-17)