

Happy Are the Pure in Heart

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 February 2025

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 00] Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word. Heavenly Father, who dares to approach your throne without purity of heart?

Lord, this is such a such a big and profound truth that we are wrestling with this morning and I desperately need your help, Lord.

Show us how to be pure in heart because we want to see you. We want to see you, Lord.

Amen. Give us ears to hear and eyes to see that we might behold the glory of God in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It's in his precious name we now pray. Amen. Please stand and if you are able to honor God as we read from his word, I will read verses 1 to 12, but I'll be focusing only in on verse 8 for the sermon.

[1 : 27] Seeing the crowd, he went up on the mountainside.

And when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

[2 : 33] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

Please be seated. Amen. It is not an exaggeration to say that to see God is the sum and goal of all religion.

One of the most influential philosophers of Western civilization was a 13th century pastor named Thomas Aquinas. And he writes in his book, Summa Contra Gentiles.

Now the ultimate end of man and of every intellectual substance is called felicity or happiness. Because this is what every intellectual substance desires as an ultimate end and for its own sake alone.

Therefore, the ultimate happiness and felicity of every intellectual substance is to know God. And so it is said in Matthew 5, 8, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

[3 : 38] And in John 17, verse 3, This is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God. The ultimate end of man, the purpose of man, is to know God and to see God.

That is our ultimate salvation and glory. But how can we, as human beings, sinful human beings, attain that ultimate end?

Who is sufficient for such things? That's the subject of the sixth beatitude. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Who gets to see God?

The pure in heart. And that's my main point this morning. Those with undivided hearts shall see God with unveiled faces. We're going to first talk about the condition that we must be pure in heart.

And then we're going to talk about the solution, which is to have a new heart. And then third, we're going to talk about the promise of seeing God. Purity of heart is the condition for seeing God because God is holy and can admit no evil or sin into his presence.

[4 : 51] It says in Habakkuk 1, verse 13, that God is of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong. Our God is holy, holy, holy.

Thrice holy. As holy as he can possibly be. He's the consuming fire who consumes sinners with everlasting burnings, it says in Deuteronomy 4, 24.

For this reason, only the pure in heart can see God. We read from Psalm 24 for our call to worship this morning. Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?

And who shall stand in his holy place? In other words, who gets to see God? Who can go enter into his presence and stand in his presence and behold him? And this was the answer.

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. The pure in heart get to enter God's presence.

[5 : 50] But what does it mean to be pure in heart? In order to understand that, let's first consider what the heart means and then secondly, what purity means.

The fact that this beatitude emphasizes the heart really cuts through all the fluff of religion. Jesus is getting to the heart of spirituality.

It doesn't say blessed are the pure in appearance. Blessed are those who are pure on the outside. It says blessed are the pure in heart, those who are pure on the inside.

The heart doesn't refer to the physical organ that pumps blood, but to the inner center of a person. It encompasses what we might otherwise think of as the heart, the mind, and the soul or the spirit.

When we speak of the heart in English, we often mean the emotional center of a person, the seed of our emotions, our faculty of feeling. The heart does include our emotions.

[6 : 53] For example, Deuteronomy 28, verse 47 says that we ought to serve the Lord our God with joyfulness and gladness of heart. The heart is where we feel joyfulness and gladness.

So it does include our feelings, the heart. But it is not less than that, but it's also more than that. It's more than our feelings. It includes what we would normally call the mind.

The seed of our thoughts, the intentions, the moral intentions, our will. For example, in Hebrews 4.12, it says that the word of God discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Later in Matthew 9.4, Jesus says to the scribes, why do you think evil in your hearts? The heart thinks. The heart thinks. It has thoughts.

This is why the terms heart and mind are often used interchangeably in Scripture. In 1 Chronicles 12.38, acting with a whole heart is in parallel with acting with a single mind.

[7 : 59] They're one and the same thing. So the heart encompasses what we would think of as the heart and the mind, and also in Scripture, what we might think of as the soul or the spirit.

Proverbs 24.12 says that God weighs the heart of man and that he also keeps watch over his soul. Proverbs 16.2 says, all the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit.

Almost identical proverb in Proverbs 21.2, it says, every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart. Interchangeably used. Over and over again, the Bible mentions heart and soul together, not to refer to two separate, distinct faculties, but to refer to the whole unified inner person.

Heart and soul. I am with you, heart and soul, meaning I am with you as a whole being. In summary then, the heart is the emotional and mental and spiritual center of a person.

It is the inward fountain from which flows everything in life. All our thoughts, all our actions, all our attitudes, all our affections and desires are downstream from our heart.

[9 : 23] This is why it is erroneous to think that emotional care and soul care are separate, unrelated, disparate issues.

Both of them have to do with the heart. This is why it is unbiblical to think of mental health and spiritual health as discrete, non-overlapping categories.

Apart from a small fraction of issues that are primarily neurological and can be traced to its origin in the brain, most mental health issues are actually matters of the mind, the soul, and the heart.

They are spiritual matters that the Bible addresses. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible focuses relentlessly on the heart. And in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus focuses relentlessly on the human heart.

In Matthew 5, 28, Jesus says that not only a man who commits physical adultery with a woman that is not his wife, but also a man who looks at a woman lustfully commits adultery with her in his heart.

[10 : 33] That raises the bar of obedience, doesn't it? You see, if what matters is purity of heart, not just purity of appearance, purity on the outside, then the mentality that, well, as long as I don't have extramarital sex or as long as I don't have premarital sex, then I'm in the clear, is wrong.

Refusing to cross that clear line in the sand that the Bible draws is the bare minimum of obedience. A man who has been married to his wife for 40 years without ever sleeping with another woman can actually be a serial adulterer who has committed adulteries 100 times over in his heart by looking at porn regularly.

Maybe you don't look at porn. But you have wandering eyes. Lustful glances at passersby. Maybe you don't scroll through porn, but you scroll through those suggestive photos of influencers on Instagram.

If what matters is not outward purity, but inward purity, then these things that nobody else sees, these things that nobody else condemns you for, matter.

Because they betray an impure heart. This is why Jesus condemns the scribes and the Pharisees in Matthew 23, 25 to 27.

[12 : 05] Woe to you, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, then the outside also may be clean.

For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. True purity is from the inside out, not outside in.

This is a revolutionary truth. Again, in Matthew 6, 19 to 24, Jesus speaks of the heart when warning against the alluring power of money in our lives.

He says, no one can serve two masters. Either he will love the one or hate the other, or he'll hate the one and love the other. You cannot serve both God and money. So he says, because of that, he enjoins us to choose our treasure carefully.

He says, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. If you treasure money and the things of earth, then you will perish along with your money. But if you treasure righteousness and the things of heaven, then you will have eternal rewards in heaven.

[13 : 15] What matters is, where is your heart? Where is your heart this morning? What do you treasure with your heart? Because you can be a billionaire who has donated a million dollars to a good cause, even to a church, but still be an idolater of the heart who worships money.

Likewise, you can be a poor widow who gives two small copper coins as an offering to God, which is the equivalent of not quite even two measly dollars.

And yet Jesus said of that poor widow in Mark 12, 43, 44, truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box.

For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on. What kind of math is this? It's the mathematics of the heart.

What matters is the heart. In Matthew 15, 10 to 20, the Pharisees and the scribes challenge Jesus, saying that your disciples don't wash their hands before they eat.

[14 : 27] They don't go through the Jewish ritual cleansing before they eat. And then Jesus teaches his disciples, it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person.

Do you not see? Whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled. But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone. Again, it's not what comes from outside in, but things that come from the inside out that either defile or purify us.

This is important for us, and I'm hammering it home, because when we sin and when we fail, it's our automatic impulse to blame other things that are on the outside. If it weren't for those people, I wouldn't have acted that way.

If it weren't these circumstances, then I would not be this way. And that's one of the persistent delusions of the modern age, that all the problems that we face are outside problems, problems external to us, when in reality, the root problem of it all is inside of us humans.

[15 : 48] This is why the historical practice of Christian asceticism and monasticism, though well-intentioned, are very misguided. They thought that, well, this world is full of temptations and sins, so if I withdraw myself from this and isolate myself and go into a monastery, or if I withdraw myself and go into the desert, into the wilderness, then there I shall be clean, and there I shall be pure in heart.

The problem is that impurity is in here, and you take it with you wherever you go. That's why James 1.14 says, each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire, the desire of the heart.

Here's my obligatory D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones quote. He says, the terrible, tragic fallacy of the last hundred years has been to think that all man's troubles are due to his environment, and that to change the man, you have nothing to do but to change his environment.

That is a tragic fallacy. It overlooks the fact that it was in paradise that man fell. It was in a perfect environment that he first went wrong. So to put man in a perfect environment cannot solve his problems.

No, no. It is out of the heart that these things arise. Having defined heart, let's not consider what it means to be pure in heart.

- [17 : 15] Psalm 24, verse 4 defined someone with a pure heart as the person who does not lift up his soul to what is false and who does not swear deceitfully. Lifting up one's soul to something is the Hebrew idiom for worship.

So someone who is pure in heart worships the true God only and worships no other gods and no idols. And likewise, a pure in heart is someone who does not swear deceitfully.

Whenever he makes an oath according to the name of God, the God who is truth, whose word is truth, they keep all their oaths. They do not swear deceitfully. There is no authority or fear or desire or pressure that can make them renege on the promises that they made to God because they serve God alone.

To be pure in heart is to worship God alone. That's why, in fact, the greatest commandment is to love God with all our hearts.

Look at Deuteronomy 6, 45. It begins with, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And then it proceeds to the commandment, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.

- [18 : 28] Those two things, that declaration of, that confession of faith, that God is one, the Lord is one, is directly and intimately related to the command to love God with all your heart.

Because if there are multiple gods and multiple lords, then our hearts would rightly be divided. They would have to be divided. If you have multiple masters, then your allegiance has to be split.

However, if the Lord is one, then your worship and your devotion and your obedience must be single. We must love him with all of our hearts, not just part of it.

The unrivaled God demands and deserves undivided worship. That's why David prays in Psalm 86, verse 11, Unite my heart to fear your name.

The New International Version translates it this way, Give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name. It's a beautiful image.

- [19 : 42] To summarize then, to have a pure heart, is to have an undivided heart. James 4, 8 confirms this, Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. What happens when sinners purify their hearts?

They go from being double-minded to being single-minded. Instead of being of two minds and two wills, instead of having a mixture of what God wants and what I want and what they want, the pure in heart have one mind.

They have a single purpose. They have an undivided heart that desires to please God. That's why 19th century Danish philosopher, who was a believer, Soren Kierkegaard, hit the nail on the head when he wrote the book entitled, Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing.

To Will One Thing. To Will One Thing. And that one thing must be God.

- [20 : 54] The purity of heart is to will, to desire, to trust, and to love, and to worship the only true God. That's what it means to be pure in heart.

Blessed are the pure in heart. But this presents us with a big problem. Because our hearts do not will one thing.

At least not on our own. There's a similar beatitude to this in the Old Testament in Jeremiah 17, 8. It says, Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord.

That's the man who's pure in heart. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord. And that's contrasted with this statement of this curse. Cursed is the man who trusts in man.

To be pure in heart, you must trust in God and not in man. Unfortunately, Jeremiah 17 is given in the context of denouncing the idolatry of God's people. And it spells out the reality that the sin of God's people are written, and it says, written with a pen of iron, with a point of diamond, it is engraved on the tablet of their heart.

[22 : 12] Sin is indelibly engraved on the hearts of God's people with the point of diamond, it says. And it says, going on in chapter 17, verse 9 to 10 of Jeremiah, it describes the default condition of the human heart.

And it says this, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick. Who can understand it? I, the Lord, search the heart and test the mind to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

The heart of a sinful man by default is divided and defiled. It's deceitful. We have other allegiances.

We have run after other gods. It's as if the human heart as worship ADD can't focus on one thing, distracted and divided.

So much so that we deceive ourselves. It says, our hearts are deceitful. Who can understand it? Our own hearts deceive us. So who can understand and know the heart?

[23 : 26] Only the God who searches the heart and tests the mind. This is why Proverbs 20, verse 9 asks a rhetorical question. Who can say, I have made my heart pure.

I am clean from my sin. Who can say that? How many of you in this room can say that? I have made my heart pure. No one, not a single person in the world can say that.

because no one is perfectly pure in heart. No one in all of history, among all of humanity, except for Jesus.

And Jesus is the solution to our problem. He gives us a new heart. To a people who are despairing of their deceitful, desperately sick hearts, God makes a wonderful promise in Jeremiah 31-32.

He says, Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts and they shall be my people and I will be their God.

[24 : 38] I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me forever for their own good and the good of their children after them. God promises that one day he will give his people a single heart, one heart that will worship the one true God and he, instead of our sins being in them being engraved with a point of diamond on our hearts, he says he will inscribe with the finger of God his law onto our hearts so we obey him from the heart.

Ezekiel 11-19-20 echoes this promise, and I will give them one heart and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them and they shall be my people and I will be their God.

How can it be that an idolatrous people will be the Lord's people and the holy God will be their God and Lord only if they can have a single heart, one heart, heart of flesh.

This is what we read about in the assurance of pardon from Ezekiel 36, same promise. God says, I will sprinkle you with clean water and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses and from all your idols I will cleanse you and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you.

He will remove the heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh. When is this promise fulfilled and how is this promise fulfilled? Has it already been fulfilled? Is it soon to be fulfilled?

[26 : 14] The author of Hebrews in Hebrews 10 makes the case that this promise has already been fulfilled in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and in the subsequent gift of the Holy Spirit that Jesus sends after his death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven.

He cites Jeremiah 31's promise that I just read a short while ago. He cites it in Hebrews 10 of the new covenant and how God will write his law on our hearts and then he says that that promise is fulfilled by Jesus in verses 19-22 of Hebrews 10.

Therefore, brothers, since we have a confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain that is through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

by offering himself as the once-for-all atoning sacrifice for our sins on the cross and dying in the stead of sinners and by shedding his own blood which cleanses us of all of our sins, he, Jesus, then enters into the holy of holies, the most holy place in the heavenly temple before God and there serves as our great high priest and our advocate and our intercessor so that we can be assured that our cleanses, that our conscience is cleansed, that our hearts are purified.

I've often run into people, Christians, who persist in their thinking that and relate more to the description of Jeremiah 17, my heart is deceitful and desperately sick and then they forget the spiritual reality that they have received new hearts.

[28 : 20] I know I'm quoting a lot of scripture but I'm going to give you a few more because I want to demonstrate this conclusively not on my own authority but on the authority of scripture that this promise really has been fulfilled for every single believer in Christ.

Acts 15, 9 has God made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles having cleansed their hearts by faith? That's happened already. He has cleansed our hearts by faith.

Purified through faith in Jesus Christ. Romans 6, verse 17 Thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.

Here's the difference between the Pharisee and the Christian. Here's the difference between people of the law and the people of the gospel, the people of the spirit. We do not merely obey God outwardly but inwardly.

We are not merely obedient out of fear with the external enforcement of God's law but we are obedient from the heart because we have a new heart. After all, didn't Jesus assure us in John 7, 38-39, whoever believes in me as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

[29 : 43] Now this he said about the spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive. After Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, he sends the Holy Spirit to us into our hearts to make our hearts flow with rivers of living water.

That has happened to us. 1 Peter 1, 22-25, having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart since you have been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God and this word is the good news that was preached to you.

How do our souls get purified? How do we get pure hearts? By our obedience, but it's not what you think, not our obedience to the law, our obedience to the truth.

And what is this truth? It says the living and abiding word of God. What is the living and abiding word of God? It tells us the good news that was preached to you, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That Jesus died as the atoning sacrifice for our sins on the cross so that sinners with adulterated and defiled and divided hearts can be clean and can be pure, can be forgiven, and be pure in hearts so they can enter into the kingdom of God and stand up in the presence of God and see God in his glory.

[31 : 21] The gospel, it's the gospel that gives us pure hearts. So in John 15 3, Jesus says already you are clean, already you are pure because of the word that I have spoken to you.

You can think of it this way. I'll share two and I'll just explain why then. If I have a new heart, if I have a new spirit, why is there still sin in my life?

Why do I still wrestle and struggle with my sinful flesh? You can think of it this way. When you graft a plant, an unhealthy plant that is prone to disease and death, and you cut it off and you graft it into a more solid rootstock, a healthy rootstock, and when you graft the plant in that way, it grows healthy.

It doesn't succumb, it's not susceptible to the same diseases that plant in its native form is when it's grafted into that rootstock. That's what God has done for us in Jesus.

He takes dead branches and he grafts us into the healthy rootstock of the vine of Jesus Christ. He says I am the vine, you are the branches, abide in me and then you will bear fruit.

[32 : 43] already we are new, already we have new life, already we have a new heart. But just as it takes some time for that newly grafted plant to start to derive life more and more and more and more from that source, it takes us some time.

And that's what our present life of sanctification is. we have a couple members, one member and one baby in the church just recently go through heart surgery.

Jenny's right here with us which we praise God for. And we experience first hand that even when you repair a broken heart, the heart doesn't just automatically start, the body just doesn't start automatically functioning in a perfectly healthy way along with that fixed new heart.

It takes time for the body to get adjusted. When you give someone a heart transplant surgery, they don't just start using that heart right away, they're still on a ventilator and they're on various catheters because it takes time for the body to acclimate to the new heart and for the blood to start pumping from that new and healthy heart into the rest of the body to restore life to it.

It takes time for that to happen. Our flesh in this life is still accustomed to the old life. It still operates like it has a defective heart sometimes and it takes time for us to be weaned off of that.

[34 : 10] But we already have a new heart. We already have a new spirit. We are already holy.

That's why we are called saints and we are being made holy, becoming holy. Sanctification, you might even say, is becoming what we already are in Christ.

This is why purity of heart is not a pipe dream but a reality for us. 1 Timothy 1.5, the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart.

2 Timothy 2.22, so flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. this is possible. And how do we become more and more pure in heart?

How do we work out the purity of heart that's already ours in Jesus Christ? Not by trying to be pure in our own strength. Not by beating ourselves up in the flesh and trying to force ourselves to be more pure.

[35 : 26] when we live under the law, it says in 2 Corinthians 3, there's a veil that remains over our faces.

We cannot see God. But when we turn to Jesus with unveiled faces, we get to behold the glory of God. It says in 2 Corinthians 3.18, and we all with unveiled faces beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. And then a few verses down, 2 Corinthians 4, Paul says that beholding the glory of the Lord is, once again, seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

For God who said let light shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Again and again, the answer from the scriptures is the same.

How do we become pure in heart? By letting the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ shine in our hearts. By beholding Jesus Christ, by believing in Jesus Christ, by abiding in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who died for our sins to purify our defiled and divided hearts, to give us new hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[36 : 48] it's when our faith in Jesus Christ is worked out in our lives that we become people with undivided hearts who will one thing.

It's only when we see Jesus in his true glory and in his true grace and mercy that our hearts are transformed and our hearts are captivated by him and we will one thing.

To please him. 19th century English pastor J.C. Ryle puts it in a much better way than I can. Zeal in religion is a burning desire to please God, to do his will, and to advance his glory in the world in every possible way.

It is a desire which no man feels by nature, which the Spirit puts into the heart of every believer when he is converted, but which some believers feel so much more strongly than others that they alone deserve to be called zealous men.

This desire is so strong when it really reigns in a man that it impels him to make any sacrifice, to go through any trouble, to deny himself to any amount, to suffer, to work, to labor, to toil, to spend himself and be spent, and even to die if only he can please God and honor Christ.

[38 : 14] a zealous man in religion is preeminently a man of one thing. It is not enough to say that he is earnest and hardy, uncompromising, thoroughgoing, wholehearted, fervent in spirit.

He only sees one thing. He cares for one thing. He lives for one thing. He is swallowed up in one thing, and that one thing is to please God.

whether he lives or whether he dies, whether he has health or whether he has sickness, whether he is rich or whether he is poor, whether he pleases men or whether he gives offense, whether he is not wise or whether he is not foolish, whether he gets blame or whether he gets praise, whether he gets honor or whether he gets shame.

For all this, the zealous man cares nothing at all. he burns for one thing, and that one thing is to please God and to advance God's glory.

If he is consumed in the very burning, he cares not for it. He is content. He feels that like a lamp, he is made to burn, and if consumed in burning, he has but done the work for which God appointed him.

[39 : 38] when you see Jesus in his glory, that's how you burn, and you will one thing.

And the person who wills one thing is blessed because God is so gracious to give him or to give her the one thing that he seeks, to see God.

Like all the promises in the Beatitudes, this promise has both present and future dimensions. There is a sense in which we as Christians presently see God by faith.

Hebrews 11, 27 speaks of how by faith we endure as seeing him who is invisible. By beholding the glory of Jesus in the gospel with unveiled faces, we are in a real spiritual way seeing God.

Isn't that why Jesus said during his time on earth in John 14, 9, whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Jesus is the one who makes the Father known.

[40 : 56] And if you have seen Jesus and if you behold the light of his glory, then you have in a real spiritual sense seen God the Father. It's only when our hearts are enlightened, it says in Ephesians 1, 18, that we can truly see God.

We can have hope and faith in God. So this is a present reality for all those who profess faith in Jesus now. Yet there is also a sense in which we do not yet see God.

And it shall be fulfilled in the future. That's where it says they shall see God. Because we see him in a real way, but we do not yet see him fully. We do not see him face to face.

In Exodus 33, if you remember, Moses, pleased with God, show me your glory, and God amazingly, he condescends to grant him that request, says, yes, I will show you my glory.

I will make my glory pass before you. But he says, you shall not see my face, for no man shall see my face and live. Instead, you may see my back as my glory passes by.

[42 : 06] There's this longing, the cry that we see all throughout scripture of sinners who know that their sin hides the face of God from us, saying, how long, oh Lord, how long will you hide your face from me?

Because we cannot see God face to face. even the angels, the seraphim in Isaiah 6, it says they hide their faces before God because they are not worthy to behold him in his glory.

That's why in this life, our vision of God, our seeing God is always mediated by something else. It's always indirect. And we long for that direct and immediate vision of God.

face to face. And we are promised that in 1 Corinthians 13, 12, for now we see in a mirror dimly, like seeing through like a darkened wine glass, you see something through that, you can still see stuff, but it's darkly.

We see in a mirror dimly in the present age, but then in the future, face to face, now I know in part, then I shall know fully even as I have been fully known.

[43 : 22] that's the promise, that's what we get to long for. And there's something about this immediate and direct and personal full access and seeing someone face to face that we already know and experience in this life.

Think about why, some of you guys have done this, why so many dedicated fans of athletes, artists, actors, spend hours and sometimes days in line to be at a movie premiere or a concert venue or a sporting event.

Why do they do that? They look better on TV than in person. You can see them and stare at them to your heart's content on TV.

Why do people do that? Because there's something about an unmediated encounter that offers a sense of personal intimacy and knowledge and access that's just unmatched, unparalleled by a mediated view of that person.

So we already have this vision but we shall have this vision fully 1 John 3 2-3 says, Beloved, we are God's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared but we know that when he appears, when Jesus returns, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is.

[45 : 05] This is the vision of God that was promised to us when we were in Revelation 22, 3-5. No longer will there be anything accursed but the throne of God and the Lamb will be in it and his servants will worship him.

They will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads and night will be no more. I think of it like back in the day with arranged marriages wives used to wear veils.

I know that people do it again, do it nowadays too because they think it looks good. It does. But back in the day it had served a more practical function. You wore the veil because the husband should not see your face especially in an arranged marriage until you're right about to get married because he might back out otherwise.

You wear the veil and you wear the veil. But imagine the wife is beautiful. Imagine they're going and she has veiled faces.

She has veil over her head and then finally at the altar as you say the vows you unveil and imagine the ecstasy of first time seeing your bride or seeing your groom through unveiled faces.

[46 : 31] All that is good and all that is beautiful and true in this life they are they show us something of God. We see God in some real way in a spiritual way by eyes of faith but it is veiled.

We see him through the veil but that day we shall see face to face the one we have longed to see our entire life.

How many times have we hung our heads in defeat in this life? Discouraged by our own sinfulness and then has he graciously lifted up our heads and pointed our heads up to the cross where he made satisfaction for our sins?

How many times when our shoulders were slumped with the weight and the burden and the worries of our responsibilities in life and he has braced us up and strengthened us and spoken truth into our hearts?

How many times has he applied the balm of his grace and mercy to comfort our wounded soul? how many times has he gently taught us when we are going astray and corrected our course and led us into the path of righteousness?

[47 : 44] How many times has God defended us from the false accusations and slander of the enemy? How many times has God graciously provided for all of our needs and fulfilled our truest and deepest desires?

others, when you think of Jesus and all that he means to you, do you not long?

Is this not the strongest desire of your heart to see him? Charles Spurgeon, we own to none so much, we talk of none so much, we hope and we think of none so much, at any rate, no one so constantly thinks of us.

We have, I believe, all of us who love his name, a most insatiable wish to behold his person, the thing for which I would pray above all others would be forever to behold his face, forever to lay my head upon his breast, forever to know that I am his, forever to dwell with him.

I, one short glimpse, one transitory vision of his glory, one brief glance at his marred, but now exalted and beaming countenance, would repay almost a world of trouble.

[49 : 21] But we are not promised one brief transitory glance, we are promised an eternal vision of God. Let me close with a couple stanzas from this hymn.

Oh, how the thought that I shall know Jesus who suffered here below, to manifest God's favor for me and for the saints I love, both here and with himself above, doth my renewed nature move and that sweet word forever.

Forever to behold him shine, forevermore to call him mine and see him still before me, forever on his face to gaze and meet the full assembled rays.

heavenly father, I thank you for this promise that we shall see you face to face, that we shall see our savior Jesus face to face.

Oh, God, we see you but in a mirror dimly now. Oh, but even that sight is entrancing and glorious.

[50 : 54] Lord, we long for that day when we will see you face to face in the fullness of your glory. So, Lord, thank you for making us pure in heart in Christ.

Continue to sanctify us and purify our hearts that we may see more of you even in this life. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen.