

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Seeing God | Matthew 5:8 Sermon Discussion Participant's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To notice the things vying for God's supremacy in our hearts and to move our hearts to long to see God.

Sermon Refresher: Seeing God is far grander than we can imagine. But, seeing God requires a purity of heart—a heart that has God as his first love. Yet, none of us has a pure heart. We need to be given a pure heart by confessing our impure heart, realizing only God can make our heart pure, and meditating on God's Word to open our hearts to our need for him and his promises.

Icebreaker: What is a funny story where you tripped or fell?

Transition: As we work through the beatitudes, we need to remember that they want to re-orient the way we see our lives and the world. This is so that we won't be tripped up and so that we can live in the right way.

Discussion:

1. What are the things we are encouraged to love by our culture?
2. Read Matthew 5:8.

Matthew 5:8

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

What does it mean to be pure in heart?

Digging Deeper: Read the following verses. What do they tell us about the need for a pure heart?

Psalms 86:11

¹¹ Teach me your way, Lord,
that I may rely on your faithfulness;

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give me an undivided heart,
that I may fear your name.

2 Corinthians 11:3

³ But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ

Jeremiah 17:9

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?

Matthew 22:37-40

³⁷ Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

3. In order to be pure in heart, we have to **want** to see God, to be with him, more than anything else. What is hard about believing that seeing God will be more satisfying than what we see in the here and now?
4. Having a pure heart is hard. On our own, it's impossible. Our only hope is to ask God for a pure heart. Read these verses than ask: Why do we need to realize that only God can make our hearts pure?

Psalms 51:10

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Acts 15:9

⁹ He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.

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Titus 2:13-14

¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

5. While God gives us pure hearts through our faith in him, we are waiting to experience this pure heart fully when Christ returns. In the meantime, we now fight to dethrone the other loves that corrupt our love for him. To do this, we need to be willing to admit what is competing for our love for God. Why do we need to be aware of the things that are clouding our heart for God?
6. Our role in the fight to purify our hearts is to let God's Word with his promises to us redirect our hearts back to God. What are passages of the Bible that stir your heart to long to see him and be with him?
7. If we love God with an increasingly undivided heart, what ways will that change the ways we feel about his commands and his mission in the world?
8. What do you find challenging from this reflection on Matthew 5:8? What do you find comforting?

Sharing and Prayer: In lieu of a standard sharing and prayer time, consider using Psalm 16 to guide your prayer time. Have someone read the whole psalm and allow people to pray whatever prayers it inspires. Or, read a section, then allow people to pray short prayers in response, then read another section, and repeat.

Psalm 16

¹ Keep me safe, my God,
for in you I take refuge.

² I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing."

³ I say of the holy people who are in the land,
"They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight."

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⁴ Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.

I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods
or take up their names on my lips.

⁵ Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup;
you make my lot secure.

⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance.

⁷ I will praise the Lord, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.

⁸ I keep my eyes always on the Lord.
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,

¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

¹¹ You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.