

## INTRODUCTION

This is the sixth message in the series called "Refresh: What to do when life crashes." When you're online and a web page doesn't load properly, or your screen locks up, you can try clicking on the refresh button and it often solves the problem. In life, when you experience a crash, or get locked up, you can also refresh by placing your life in the care of Jesus Christ. In Matthew 5 Jesus gives us a list of steps to take to experience personal refreshment. They are called the beatitudes. I've said they are attitudes that ought to be—and your attitude determines your altitude.

How many of you are old enough to remember the old Burma Shave signs that used to appear in sequence along the highways? Back in the 1930s and 1940s, Burma Shave pioneered the creative idea of using five signs in sequence to sell their product. The signs were placed several hundred yards apart, so they only made sense when you read all of them. They could be pretty humorous and they kept drivers and passengers smiling.

A peach looks good / with lots of fuzz. / But man's no peach / and never wuz. /  
Burma Shave

It would be more fun / to go by air / but we can't hang / these signs up there /  
Burma Shave

Have pity on / the mighty Caesars / They pulled their whiskers / out with tweezers /  
Burma Shave

Don't kiss your girlfriend / at the gate / love may be blind / but the neighbors ain't! /  
Burma Shave

Most of the highways were two lanes back then, and the cars weren't air conditioned so you can understand this one:

Don't stick your elbow / out too far / it might go home / in another car! /  
Burma Shave

The monkey took / one look at Jim / and threw the peanuts / back at him! /  
Burma Shave

Said Farmer Jones / who's bald on top / I wish I could / rotate the crop! /  
Burma Shave

Angels / who guard you / when you drive / usually retire at 65 /  
Burma Shave

Use our cream / and we betcha / girls won't wait / they'll come and getcha! /  
Burma Shave

These old Burma Shave signs can help us understand the beatitudes. To fully understand them, you must study and apply each one in the proper sequence. Each new one builds upon and adds to the previous beatitudes. That's why we've been studying them as seven steps spelling the word REFRESH. Let's refresh our memory on each step as we read Matthew 5:1- 8,

"Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. [Step one is to Realize that I'm not God.] Blessed are those that mourn, for they will be comforted. [Step two is to Earnestly believe that God exists and that I matter to Him.] Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. [Step three is to Fully submit my life and will to Christ's control.] Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. [In step four I must Receive God's righteousness as a gift of grace.] Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. [In step five we discovered we must Extend forgiveness to those who have hurt me.] Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

And our memory verse for our REFRESH series is: "Repent, then and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." (Acts 3:19)

What did Jesus really mean when He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God?" We're going to talk about that as we introduce Step #6: Seek Purity instead of Perfection. In order to take this step we must adopt this refreshing attitude: "I'll admit my faults and accept God's cleansing." So, let's answer three questions about being pure in heart.

## 1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PURE IN HEART?

What did Jesus mean when He spoke about being "pure in heart?" The Bible word for heart is *kardia*, from which we get our word "cardiac." We know the heart is a muscle in our chest pumping blood to all the areas of our body. Jesus wasn't talking about having a pumping heart pure from disease or cholesterol. In the Bible, heart is used to describe the control center of life—it's synonymous with what we often call the mind. The Bible teaches the heart is the essence of who we really are. The Bible says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." (Proverbs 4:23). So when Jesus spoke of being pure in heart, He was speaking about having inner purity. The idea of purity carries two meanings.

### (1) Purity means to be clean

The word Jesus used was *katharizo*, from which we get our word "catharsis." There is only one way to be spiritually cleansed, and it is by the blood of Jesus. The Bible says, "...the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies (*katharizo*) us from all sin." (I John 1:7) What a bath is to the body, salvation is to the soul. In John 13 Jesus washed the disciples feet and told Peter that he had already received a "bath" meaning he had already been cleansed from sin. There's a great old hymn that asks and answers one of the most important questions of life: What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

Sometimes Christians who struggle with sin carry a load of guilt and ask the question: Can I be perfect? Then they're even more confused when they read the words of Jesus in the last verse in Matthew 5, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) Purity is not the same thing as being perfect. The word that is translated "perfect" is the word *teleios*, which means to be "complete or mature." So, don't think God expects you to be perfect. You don't have a perfect body, but you can have a clean body. Your soul won't be perfect until you become like Jesus when you see Him, but you *can* stay clean!

## **(2) Purity means to have undivided loyalty**

A better meaning of purity means to be unmixed, undiluted. Pure gold doesn't have any mixture of other metals. To be pure in heart means to be undiluted in your commitment to Christ. Jesus taught there is only room for one #1 in your life. He said, "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." (Matthew 6:24)

I could have three bottles of water and they could all look identical. But if I mixed salt into one and sugar into a second one, you would realize upon tasting them they weren't pure. Only the third bottle without anything mixed in it could be called pure.

Ivory Soap used to advertise it was 99 44/100 pure, but the funny thing is, that's not pure at all. Only 100% is pure! To have a pure heart means to pray the prayer of Psalm 86:11, "...give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name." To be pure in heart means you have reserved first place in your life for Jesus Christ, and you don't allow any other person, purpose, or possession to dilute that commitment. You can't live for God by keeping one foot in the world and one foot in the church. Don't be like the guy from Kentucky in the Civil War. He couldn't decide whether to be for the Confederate Army or the Union Army, so he decided to be for both. He wore a grey shirt and blue pants. As a result he got shot at from both sides. Jesus said, "He who is not with me is against me." (Matthew 12:30)

## **2. HOW DO I MAINTAIN A PURE HEART?**

Each of us has a sin problem and a problem with sins (plural). When I came to Christ, He fixed my sin problem. But even though I don't want to, sometimes I still find myself doing the wrong thing. I don't have to beg God to forgive these sins again, but if I'm going to maintain a pure heart, I have to continually address these sins in my life. There are three things I must do to maintain purity.

### **(1) Continually open my heart to the searchlight of God's Spirit**

We are sometimes in the dark about our own unconfessed sins. But if we ask Him, the Holy Spirit will show us areas where confession and repentance is needed. A good prayer to pray is: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23) We tend to deny our faults and sins, but the Bible says, "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." (Proverbs 28:13)

## **(2) Remember that God's conviction is not condemnation**

The Holy Spirit doesn't convict us of sin to make us feel guilty. He convicts us so we'll realize the need to be clean. There is a huge difference between *conviction* and *condemnation*. The Bible says, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:17) According to Romans 8:1, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." When you are dirty and sweaty it's a reminder you need to take a shower. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin so we'll understand the need to confess our sin and experience God's cleansing power.

## **(3) Regularly confess my sins to maintain fellowship with God**

There is a very important truth taught in I John 1. The Bible says, "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ... if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:3, 9) The reason we need to regularly confess our sins is not to maintain our salvation. Once you come to Christ and place your faith in Him, God forgives every sin you've ever committed and every sin you'll ever commit—period. Forgiveness removes the penalty of your sin, which is eternal separation from God in hell.

The reason we must confess our sins is to maintain fellowship with God. Some people teach you can lose your salvation, but I don't believe that. Once you are part of God's family, you can never be out of God's family—you can fall out of God's favor, but you can't fall out of God's family.

It's the same with our earthly families. When I was seven or eight, I did something pretty awful. My best friend, Forest, told me his parents were letting him go to a camp where he would get to ride horses. I got excited and asked my mother if I could go. We probably couldn't afford it, or there might have been other reasons, but she told me I couldn't go. I remember being so angry I had a temper tantrum and as I ran off I said, "Mama, I hate you!" Now because she was my mother that statement hurt her, but she had already forgiven me, because that's the nature of moms. But I was miserable! I felt awful about it. I was still in the family, but I was out of favor. Later that afternoon, I came back and burst into tears and said, "Mama, I'm sorry I said I hate you! I don't really hate you." I can remember she took me in her arms and hugged me and said, "I know you don't hate me." When I came to her and admitted what I had done, she didn't have to restore me to the family; I never left it. But our fellowship was restored. When you are a child of God and sin against your Father, you'll feel miserable about it; that's conviction. And when you come to confess that sin, God doesn't have to put you back in His Family—you never left it. But your fellowship is restored.

It is the blood of Christ that purifies us from all sin, and once you become a Christian, you will have a desire to stay clean. I have a desire to live a holy, clean life—not so I can go to heaven, but in order to walk in fellowship with my Heavenly Father. Sin disrupts my fellowship with God.

There's an interesting animal that lives in Northern Europe and parts of North America called the ermine. It has long been prized for its lustrous fur. In the winter, the ermine's fur becomes snow white in order to protect it from predators. The ermine instinctively protects its fur from anything that would soil it and stain the white color. Hunters have learned of this instinct and used it against the ermine. Instead of using snares to catch them, a hunter first finds the ermine's home, usually a cleft in a rock or a hollowed out log. Then the hunter smears the entrance with dirty grime. Next the hunters set their dogs loose to chase the ermine. The frightened ermine flees to its home, but refuses to enter because of the filth. Rather than soil its white coat that allows itself to be captured. Some say that to the ermine, purity is more precious than life itself. That's a great parable for us. We would do well to hate sin and unrighteousness as much as the ermine hates that grime. If we loved purity of heart with the same passion, we would spend more of our lives walking in sweet fellowship with our Heavenly Father.

### **3. WHAT IS THE REWARD FOR HAVING A PURE HEART?**

Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The reward for a pure heart is that you will SEE God; that doesn't mean you'll look up into the sky and literally see the face of God. In fact the Bible says in John 1:18, "No one has ever seen God." When Moses was on Mt. Sinai God said to him, "You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." (Exodus 33:20) God passed by and Moses saw the glory of God, and it was so awesome, that when he came down from the mountain, his face was shining. Jesus isn't promising us we can gaze into the face of God. He means when I have a pure heart, I will see evidence of God everywhere. Here are three ways we can see God.

#### **(1) I will SEE God's grace and worship Him**

One the biggest obstacles struggling people face is their reluctance to really believe God has truly forgiven them. In other words, they have a hard time accepting forgiveness. Once you have placed your faith in God you must believe God has forgiven you and then forgive yourself. Psychiatrist Karl Menninger wrote: "If I could convince the patients in psychiatric hospitals that their sins were forgiven, 75% of them could walk out the next day."

The Bible calls Satan "the accuser," (Revelation 12:10) and one of his most destructive strategies is to try to make forgiven Christians feel guilt and shame. Satan sneaks up to blood-washed believers and whispers, "You're no good, you're no good, you're no good, baby, you're no good." How can you claim to be a Christian with all the terrible things you've done?" But the Bible says the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son cleanses us from *all* sin—not some of it! So, stop carrying the guilt of unforgiven sins and accept God's forgiveness.

Once you catch a glimpse of God's grace, the only proper response is to simply worship Him. That's why there are so many worship songs about grace. This week, a new movie will be released entitled "Amazing Grace." It follows the life of William Wilberforce, who led the fight for the abolition of slavery in 1807, exactly 200 years ago. The movie features the influence of the former slave trader John Newton who wrote "Amazing Grace." Newton was keenly aware of his evil, murderous past, and when he saw God's grace, the only words he could pen were these: "Amazing Grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me." Or think of these words,

"Marvelous grace of our loving Lord; Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt, Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured, There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt. Grace, grace, God's grace; Grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God's grace; grace that is greater than all my sin!" (Words by Julia Johnston)

## **(2) I will SEE God's power and trust Him**

Have you noticed some people see things others don't? You can look at the night sky and see only stars, but a trained astronomer sees things you don't. He sees constellations, planets, and galaxies. Some people look at creation and see a big bang and life coming into existence by pure chance. Others look at it and see the design of an intelligent God. When you are pure in heart, you'll see God's creative power, and you'll know you can trust Him.

In 1961, the first man in space was Soviet Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin. It was reported when he was in space he said, "I don't see any God up here." Actually, according to transcripts of the flight, Gagarin never said those words. Soviet Premiere Nikita Khrushchev said, "Gagarin flew into space, but didn't see any God there." The words were later attributed to Gagarin.

If you don't see God on earth, then you'll never see Him in space. But as scientists continue to explore the universe, they are amazed at the intricate design and its massive volume. In 1972 and 1973 NASA launched Pioneers 10 and 11. Pioneer 10 passed Pluto in 1983, and it's still flying at a speed of about 82,000 mph. It's now 7.6 billion miles from earth and is headed for a red star named Aldebaran. At its current speed, it should reach this nearby star in 2 billion years! (source: [www.spacetoday.org](http://www.spacetoday.org))

The atheist asks the question, "Where is God?" The Bible asks the question, "Where is God NOT?" The Psalmist sang, "I look behind me, and you're there, then up ahead and you're there, too...If I climb to the sky, you're there! If I go underground, you're there! If I flew on morning's wings to the far western horizon, you're already there waiting!" (Psalm 139:6-7 *The Message*)  
Where is God? Where is God NOT?!

## **(3) I will SEE God's work and join Him**

Jesus spoke of seeing God. He said, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working...the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does." (John 5:17-19) I used to think, "Sure, Jesus can see God. He can see into heaven." But after taking *Experiencing God* by Henry Blackaby I came to understand Jesus meant He saw God working the same way WE can see God working. When you are pure in heart, you have the ability to see where God is working and moving in the world. We don't have to figure out what we can do for God. We simply have to watch and see what God is doing, and then join Him in that work!

God is in the process of bringing men, women, boys and girls to Himself, and when we see that, we'll join Him in that work. A few years ago, it was obvious to me and many others that God was moving in China, bringing millions of Chinese people to faith in Jesus. The reason we've been working in China is because we saw God working there, so we just joined Him.

The reason some people can't see God is because they become so focused on their own problems or their own sin. If we allow it, a little thing can block our view of God. I heard Ken Brumley say once that a dime is a tiny coin, but if you hold it close enough to your eye, it can block out the mighty sun! It's the same with our Father. Let's take our eyes off ourselves and look to see what God is doing in the world. That song we often sing should be our sincere prayer, "Open the eyes of my heart, open the eyes of my heart—I want to see you!"

## **CONCLUSION**

Do you need to experience refreshing from the Lord? Just keep meditating on our memory verse: "Repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." Let Jesus cleanse your heart. Purify your motives and give Him your undivided and unmixed loyalty. Keep your sins confessed up to date so you can walk in fellowship with your Father. Jesus promised you will see God. And as I've just told you, you'll see evidence of God's presence everywhere. But there is one final promise in God's Word. One day our faith will turn to sight and the pure in heart will see God face to face! The Apostle Paul wrote, "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face." (I Corinthians 13:12) Back in Bible times, mirrors were made from polished metal, and the reflections were only blurry images of the real thing. When we try to see God now, it's like trying to see our reflection in the bathroom mirror when it's all fogged up. But one day, the Bible says we will see Him clearly face to face.

One of my heroes was Fanny Crosby, the blind poet who provided lyrics for over 8,000 hymns including "Blessed Assurance" and "All the way my Savior Leads Me." One day a well meaning minister said to Fanny, "It's a great pity that the Lord did not give you sight." Fanny responded, "Oh, if I could have only one request, it would be to be born blind." "Why?" asked the surprised minister? Fanny smiled and said, "Because when I get to heaven, the first face that these blind eyes will ever see is the face of Jesus."

Look around! You will see evidence of God everywhere. But one day, our faith will turn to sight, and we will see Him face to face! Indeed, how very blessed are the pure in heart!

## OUTLINE

Realize that I'm not God

Earnestly believe that God exists and that I matter to Him

Fully surrender my life and will to Christ's control

Receive God's righteousness as a gift of grace

Extend forgiveness to those who have hurt me

Seek purity instead of perfection

### 1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PURE IN HEART?

(1) Purity means to be clean

"...the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies (*katharizo*) us from all sin." *I John 1:7*

(2) Purity means to have undivided loyalty

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." *Matthew 6:24*

### 2. HOW DO I MAINTAIN A PURE HEART?

(1) Continually open my heart to the searchlight of God's Spirit

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." *Psalms 139:23*

(2) Remember that God's conviction is not condemnation

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." *John 3:17*

(3) Regularly confess my sins to maintain fellowship with God

"Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ... if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." *I John 1:3, 9*

### 3. WHAT IS THE REWARD FOR HAVING A PURE HEART?

(1) I will SEE God's grace and worship Him

(2) I will SEE God's power and trust Him

(3) I will SEE God's work and join Him

Jesus said, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working...the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does." *John 5:17-19*



**DISCLAIMER:** These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. There is no legal copyright on this material. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material to stimulate your own Spirit-driven imagination. Additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners. You have my full permission to use any of this material as long as you cite the source for any substantial amount used in your message.

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes