

PURE IN HEART WILL SEE GOD
Psalm 24:3-6; Matthew 5:8

Int. There are many things I would like to see- the Holy Land where Jesus lived, the rice terraces in Banaue, some of the great cathedrals in Europe. I want to see my children grow physically, mentally, and spirutally, and some day become establish in some useful works in the world. I want to see my home happy and peaceful. Most of all I want to see God.

But all people have not the same ability to see. Many people have limited vision. Some are cross-eyed, the eyes of some are weak and off vision. Some people have a growth called a cataract, which shut color-blind, others have blind spots in their eyes.

There are least three ways in which we see. St. Paul tells us that "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him"(I cor. 2:9). Here I can point out three kinds of sight. There is the sight of the natural eye, with which we can see flowers and mountains, the printed words on the pages of the hymnal and people's faces. That is physical vision.

A teacher may explain to a boy a problem in matematics or chemistry. As the teacher talks, the boy hears and his mind takes hold of what he hears to the point of understanding. After he understands, he may see, "I see it." That is mental sight. Thus in studying Botany a student can reach the point of learning the various kinds of flowers and of their culture and development. Then he can see flowers with both his physical and mental eyes. So if one understands what he reads, he sees with both his eyes and his mind.

But there is still a third sight, as when a truth has "entered into the heart of man". The heart has eyes, too. A famous Scottish poet Robert Burns saw the beauty of flowers with his physical eyes, which challenge him to study and understand the growth and culture of flowers. Beyond that he also felt their message, thus he was able to write poems on the message of flowers.

Yes, a person sees God through the eyes of the heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." Jesus said: "He that has seen me has seen the Father"(John 14:9). certainly not every person who saw Him with their physical eyes saw God. Mere physical sight of Him revealed only a man. It is not even enough to understand His teachings and His life. Many scholars have studied his words without seeing Him. Really to see God in Christ one must experience Him in the heart.

As the poet and hymn writer said:

What a wonderful change in my heart has been wrought,
Since Jesus came into my heart,
I have light in my soul for which long I have sought
Since Jesus came into my heart.

When the heart sees Christ, then we see God. To see God is to realize Him, to feel Him, to center the affection of the heart in Him.

Let us not forget too that the pure in heart shall see God literally. How is that? St. Paul said "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12a). This clearly promises that the pure in heart will see God in the end. All the doubts and your questions will be answered. However, it is true even now that it is the pure minded, singled hearted man who is best able to see God in his work, to see God at work and therefore can better understand the sign of the times as God leads him to.

The text however is clear, how we see God depends on the condition of our hearts.

We must note, first of all that "heart" here should not be understood literally as the vital organ of the body, but figuratively referring to the seat of spiritual and mental life. Furthermore "heart" here also means, the self, the whole person, his whole being.

Now the word "pure" here does not mean literal "cleanness", nor does it mean ceremonial or ritual purity." It does mean however being free from sin, and therefore has reference to the moral and ethical dimensions of a person's life.

So what do we mean then when we say that a person is pure in heart? Let me point out that this verse should be understood in the perspective of Psalm 24:4 which asked and answers:

"Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?

Who shall stand in his holy place?

He who has clean hands and pure heart,

Who does not lift up his soul to what is false

And does not swear deceitfully.

All of the above should be included in the meaning of "pure in heart". "Clean hands" this would mean innocence of all evil, of any wrongdoing. "Does not lift up his soul to what is false" would mean a lack of desire or intention to participate in any deceit or to fabricate in any lie, or to live by any thing less than the truth. The word "Does not swear deceitfully" would refer to that characteristic which presents a person from using even God in order to get what he wants.

So on the whole then the "pure in heart" is characterized by cleanness of mind, sincerity of purpose, purity of intention, with no desire whatsoever to offend either God or man.

Now the question that many person ask is this: Suppose one has lost purity of heart, can it be regained? Can a prostitute become a virgin again? Yes, St. Augustine refers to Mary Magdalene as "the arch-virgin." Not content to call her merely a pure woman he lifts her far above other women. Of she was a common prostitute of the streets. She was both vile and vulgar. But one day she came in

contact with Him who was the purest of heart. she loved Him with her heart that all her affection was poured out on Him. She so completely took Him to heart that her evil desires were cast out. Being filled with the purity of Christ, she herself became pure.

In just a little while we see her standing at the foot of Jesus' cross. Who was by her side? It is Mary, the Lord's mother, the blessed Virgin as many Christians call her. The two are standing together. Purity has been regained. And on Easter morning Mary Magdalene became the first vessel or instrument by Christ Himself in which to send forth the blessed Gospel.

Now if Mary Magdalene could become pure again, then there is a hope for every one of us to regain the purity we have lost. She saw Christ with her heart, and she regained her purity of life.

As the song once again said:

What a wonderful change in my heart has been wrought,
Since Jesus came into my heart,
I have light in my soul for which long I have sought,
Since Jesus came into my heart.

Yes, blessed are you my brothers and sisters who are pure in heart for you shall see God even now today and in the life beyond.
Amen.