

Handout 1: Matthew Lesson 8

“Blessed are the clean of heart”

Psalms 24:3-6 defines those of pure hearts (to *seek the face of the God* in verse 6 is a euphemism for seeking communion with God through the sacred meal that restores fellowship with God (Lev 7:11-15).

- They can stand before God and offer Him worship.
- They do not worship idols (material or spiritual).
- They do not lie or make false promises.
- Their reward will be blessings and justice.
- They love God and “seek His face” through confession of sin and restored peace with God through the sacred communion meal.

Scripture teaches:

1. God knows the depth of each human heart (Ps 17:3).
2. The heart represents the center of religious/spiritual awareness and morality (Ez 36:26-27).
3. It is from the heart that we must seek God (Dt 4:29).
4. It is from the heart that we listen to God and to hear Him speak to us (1Kng 3:9).
5. It is from the heart that we must serve Him, praise Him, and love Him (Dt 6:5-6).

Purity of heart cannot come simply from our own internal cleansing. Jesus told his disciples: *You are pure because of the word which I have spoken to you* (Jn 15:3). **We can only have a clean heart through the supernatural grace of God: ... the Holy Spirit enables one whom the water of Baptism has regenerated to imitate the purity of Christ** (CCC 2345), and purity is maintained through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (CCC 1421, 1432-33).

“For they shall see God” ... the Holy Spirit enables one whom the water of Baptism has regenerated to imitate the purity of Christ (CCC 2345). St. John promised the faithful: *Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him. For we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he [Christ] is pure* (1 Jn 3:2-3). It is Christ dwelling in us who makes us pure sons and daughters who have the promise of one day seeing our Father face to face in heaven, of recognizing God the Son in the Eucharist, and in seeing His image in the faces of those with whom we share His love.

The sixth step on the road to salvation and the sixth promise:

Blessed are the pure of heart:
our old hearts are replaced
with the pure heart of
Jesus our Redeemer →
we will see God’s face in the
faces of everyone with whom
we share His love, and we will
recognize Him in the Sacrament
of the Eucharist.

Handout 2: Matthew Lesson 8

“Blessed are the peacemakers.” Peace, or *Shalom* in Hebrew, is the traditional Semitic salutation. Jesus’ usual greeting was the typical Semitic, *“Peace be with you”* (used five times in the Gospels and twice in the Mass).

Jesus defines the concept of peace by linking “peace” to His mission:

- John 14:27: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.* This is the promise of peace defined as the gift of salvation.
- John 16:32-33: *Behold, the hour is coming and has arrived when each of you will be scattered to his own home and you will leave me alone. But I am not alone, because the Father is with me. I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have troubles, but take courage, I have conquered the world.* This passage promises the peace that comes from faith in Christ.
- John 20:19-29: *On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ [...]. “Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ [...]. Blessed are those who have not seen and believed.* This is the typical greeting again, but it takes on a message of rejoicing in the miracle of the Resurrection of the Messiah and the promise of salvation as it is given through the breath of Christ from which the Apostles receive the Holy Spirit (Jn 20: 22).

“For they will be called children of God.” In the seventh beatitude, peacemaking is linked to divine son/daughtership.

-But to those who did accept him, he gave power to become children of God, to those who believed in his name who were born not from human stock or human desire or human will but from God himself (Jn 1:11-13). The legitimate right derived from the authority of the Word, and it is only through the Word that we have this power.

-Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God (1Jn 5:1).

-In Galatians 5:22-23 St. Paul speaks of “peace” as the third fruit of the Spirit. The “fruits of the Spirit” are perfections that God the Holy Spirit forms in the children of God as the first fruits of eternal glory. The 9 “fruits of the Holy Spirit are ...*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.* The “fruit” or works we bear is an outpouring of the gifts the Holy Spirits imparts to us. The peace we generate is part of that outpouring.

The seventh step on the road to salvation and the seventh promise:

Blessed are the peacemakers:
with Christ living in us we
become conformed to His
image of peace and love→
in the image of Christ we
become divine children of
His Father