



A SERVE DEVOTIONAL

*For the Lord is good
and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues
through all generations.*

Psalm 100:5

Text:

Matthew 5:8-9

*⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God.*

*⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called sons of God.*

Summary:

Blessed are the pure in heart ... Blessed are the peacemakers ... These two beatitudes seem to fit together particularly well. As we prepare for one last day of SERVE, we begin today focused on God's calling for us to be sincerely devoted to his story and his kingdom to the point where we see God clearly, and from there move out as peacemakers according to God's master plan of redemption and restoration. This is what it means to be children of God, redeemed by Christ, joining in the Spirit's work.

Personal Quiet Time:

"Blessed are the pure in heart" and... "Blessed are the peacemakers" seem to fit together really well.

Having a pure heart does not mean we are perfect or sinless, rather a pure heart means we focus on Christ and live our lives centered around him!

To be a peacemaker we are not asked to just resolve conflict but also to be participants in resolving the Great Conflict: a world out of rhythm with God. You and I through the power of the Holy Spirit are invited to be a part of that restoration.

I've been called a "peacemaker." It is easy for me to see both sides of an argument and I tend to run from conflict. I've noticed there are people who look for an argument or a conflict to satisfy their ego and be right. To be a peacemaker means we should lay down our judgments because we usually don't understand the whole picture of other people's circumstances.

Recently, I've learned a peacemaker is much more than staying away from conflict. True peace is God's *shalom*. *Shalom* is more than not fighting, it is working together for the benefit of another. *Shalom* is taking what is broken and restoring it to wholeness. Christ is our *shalom*; He is the link that restores us to the Father in this broken sinful world. Romans 5:1 says "Therefore since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

To be "pure of heart" has always been a struggle for me. I did not like the teacher's pet, doing everything right, "the goody-two-shoes." I was the one throwing erasers. Being pure of heart is greater than the outward struggle to do the right thing. To be pure of heart involves having a single-minded heart toward God. To be "pure" means we are clean and blameless in God's sight. Our heart

refers to the spiritual center of our life. It is where thoughts, desires, and understanding resides. A pure heart has no hypocrisy, no guile, and no hidden motives. Psalm 51:10 says “Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” God is the one who makes our hearts pure by the sacrificing of His Son and His sanctifying work in our lives. James 4:7-8: “Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you, cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double-minded.”

Purity of heart implies a change of heart and it is the way we are called to live in community and ultimately in the world. 1 Peter 1:22: “Having purified your souls by the obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.” It also implies a purity of our thoughts and desires. It should be one of our greatest longings to have a pure heart. With pure hearts, we can be God’s agents of his peace, His *shalom*, in this chaotic world.

Reflection Questions:

Reread Matthew 5.8-9, and spend time reflecting on these questions:

- What does this verse reveal about who God is?
- What are you hearing about who you are?
- How does this impact the way you live into God’s story today?

Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow charity;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is error, the truth;
Where there is doubt, the faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
and Where there is sadness, joy.
O, Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying to ourselves that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

—*St. Francis of Assisi*