

Daily Discipleship

All Saints Sunday (B) – Matthew 5:1-12

Living in Christ: *See God*

Focus Question: *What does it mean to see God?*

word of life

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Matthew 5:8 (NRSV)

Read Matthew 5:1-12

During the Old Testament times, not all followers of God wanted to see God. They feared death would come to anyone who set his or her eyes on God. The prophet Isaiah is one example of a person who cast his own eyes on God *and* lived to tell others.

1. *Who else in the Old Testament saw God and lived?*
2. *Tell the story of that person.*

Since Jesus was God made flesh, people could see God and live. Yet not all who walked with Jesus, heard his sermons, or witnessed his miracles believed they were seeing God. Instead, they looked for hidden meanings, trickery, and false motives.

3. *What prevented people from seeing God in Jesus?*
4. *What were people looking for?*

Nevertheless Jesus blessed people through his deeds and words. Those who were healed and transformed by Jesus told others of the good news. Despite Jesus asking them to keep quiet, they simply could not, but they were compelled to tell others of the ways Jesus had blessed them. Sometimes this blessing came in unexpected ways.

5. *Give examples of times when Jesus surprised someone with a blessing.*
6. *Describe characteristics of those whom Jesus blessed.*

Early in his ministry, Jesus taught the crowd about God’s way of blessing. This collection of blessings, the beatitudes, is found in Matthew 5:1-12 and Luke 6:20-26. Blessings come to the least. Blessed are those who are in poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger, the merciful, the peacemakers and those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake. How can this be? Most would not choose such a path, yet those who find themselves embracing those characteristics can experience a deep, resounding and unmatched blessing from God. Their spirit can be buoyed and lifted by the grace of God in such a way that often defies description. The blessing is not reserved for the future.

7. *What do you hear in these blessings?*
8. *What is surprising about the beatitudes?*

On All Saints Sunday, we remember those faithful who have died as well as those faith-filled who still walk on this earth. Each year, many churches read this text as part of the lectionary. We give thanks for the ways God has blessed us through others. For each person of faith who has shared life’s journey, we are blessed and are invited to see God more clearly. When our hearts are pure, we catch a glimpse of God through those around us.

9. *What does it mean to have a pure heart?*
10. *What does it mean to see God?*
11. *What does God look like?*

word among us

Tension mounted at the congregational meeting. Some people were scowling at one another and voices were rising. The division in the congregation had been brewing for some time, but most of the heated conversations were held behind the scenes or on the edges of the parking lot. Finally, those with strong convictions were gathered in the same room. The president of the congregation looked nervous, unsure of how to facilitate the discussion.

1. *Have you ever been with a divided congregation?*
2. *What advice do you have for the president?*

Just before the room was about to erupt, a man hesitantly stood up to speak. All eyes turned to him. He was a new member of the congregation and had been unaware of the conflict. Thus he was taken by surprise at how quickly the meeting had disintegrated into mean-spirited comments. He could not believe these were Christians in action.

Most knew the speaker was an earthy man who made a living with his hands. His long hair was a remnant from his hippie days. When he spoke, his voice was calm, clear, and sad. His love for his new-found church family was evident. How could such good people be tangled up in such a disagreement? Where was Jesus Christ in their words? Where was Jesus Christ in their actions? He spoke with clarity of purpose, but his disappointment came through his voice. He spoke with a pure heart.

3. *How did the man reflect a pure heart?*
4. *Describe persons you know who have pure hearts.*
5. *How does a person acquire a pure heart?*

The beatitude states, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” (Matthew 5:8 NRSV) Those who are pure in heart cannot help but see God in others and in all situations. So often, their presence in a circumstance points to the company of God. Consequently the pure in heart see God at work where others cannot because they expect to be joined by God.

6. *What is it like to be present with someone who is pure in heart?*
7. *When you are with someone pure in heart, what changes in you?*

To be pure in heart does not necessarily mean to be quick to speak. Many times, the pure in heart need time to focus on the voice of the Spirit to serve as a guide. While others are talking or venting their frustrations, the pure in heart are listening intently, discerning, clearing their hearts of self-serving motives and selecting words to reflect the goodness of God. Sometimes, they appear to be burdened by the weight of the moment, struggling to offer words or actions to reflect God. If we look carefully, we can see God through the pure in heart.

8. *What would it mean for you to have a pure heart?*
9. *If having a pure heart were a goal, what would be the first steps?*

Prayer

Mighty One, send your fire on my spirit and purify my heart. Amen

Dig Deeper

Luke 6:20-26

last word

Throughout your day, place your hand on your heart and pray for God to make it pure.



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All Saints Sunday (B) Page 2 of 2