

**Briefing Document: "THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - Happy Are the Holy: Matthew
Lesson 31"**

Source: Excerpts from "THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT-Happy Are the Holy: Lesson 31, "
(Audio/Transcript of a church service and sermon)

Date of Sermon: July 13, 2025

Key Speaker/Preacher: Steve (also referred to as "Brother Steve")

I. Main Themes & Core Message

The central and overriding theme of this sermon is the **absolute necessity of a "pure heart" for seeing God and entering His kingdom**, as presented in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:8-10). This internal purity is contrasted sharply with external religious observance and "human achievement." The sermon emphasizes God's divine accomplishment through Christ as the sole means of salvation and spiritual cleansing.

A. Purity of Heart as the Ultimate Goal ("Sum Bonum"): The sermon directly addresses Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." This is presented as the "sum bonum," the "highest or ultimate goal of all things." The preacher stresses that seeing God in glory is the ultimate human aspiration, and it is exclusively attainable through a pure heart.

B. The Insufficiency of Human Achievement vs. Divine Accomplishment: A significant portion of the sermon critiques what is termed "human achievement" in religion. This refers to the belief that one can earn their way to heaven through good works, rituals, or outward obedience. The preacher states:

- "The world is full of legalists. They think they're going to go to heaven because of what they've done."
- He dismisses actions like "not kick[ing] cats," "lending a shovel," or being a "pretty good father" as irrelevant to salvation, emphasizing, "It ain't got nothing to do with you. It's all about him."
- This is juxtaposed against the "religion of divine accomplishment," which states: "you can't do it. God did it by Christ." Christianity is presented as the *only* religion that aligns with this truth.

C. The Beatitudes as a Sequential and Interconnected Path to Purity: The sermon explains that the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12) are not isolated principles but a "beautiful magnificent sequence" where each leads to the next, culminating in the pure heart:

- It begins with being "poor in spirit" (acknowledging one's utter inadequacy before God, like a "cowering beggar").
- This leads to "mourning over sin," then "meekness," and a "hunger and thirst for righteousness."
- God then grants "mercy," which enables one to be "merciful to others."
- This process ultimately results in a "cleansed heart" and, finally, a "pure heart," which then leads to being a "peacemaker" and enduring "persecution for righteousness' sake."
- The crucial point is that "a kingdom person is one who fulfills all of the beatitudes. You don't get to pick. You don't get to choose." This fulfillment is made possible "by the spirit of God in your life."

D. The "Inside" vs. "Outside" Focus of True Religion: Jesus' teachings are presented as a direct challenge to the "hypocrisy" and "external obedience" of the religious leaders of His day (Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes). They focused on "superficial works," while Jesus was "after the pure in heart." The sermon argues that this is not a new teaching, citing Psalms 51:6 ("you desire the truth where in inward parts") and Psalm 24:3-4 ("He who has clean hands and a pure heart"). The problem with the legalists was not a lack of knowledge, but being "hard of hearing and they were hard of heart."

E. Christ's Sacrifice as the Sole Means of Purification: The sermon unequivocally states that pure hearts are achieved *only* through Christ's "divine accomplishment":

- "When Jesus Christ died on the cross... He paid the penalty for all that sin. And then He took that sin from you and me... and He gave you His righteousness."
- This is described as a "magnificent exchange," whereby faith, "God makes you pure."
- The "blood of His son" covers believers, so "God looks at me, He sees a pure heart because He cannot see you in any other condition because you are covered by the blood of His son."

F. Call to Surrender and Obedience: The message is an urgent call for individuals to "come and declare your allegiance to Jesus Christ" and to "submit" their lives to God, allowing Him "lordship" over all aspects. This is framed as a critical choice: "Do I want to attempt to get to heaven by my achievements or do I want to call upon the name of the Lord to accept me as a sinner and to purify my heart and to take me to His kingdom with Him? Take your pick."

II. Most Important Ideas & Facts

- **Matthew 5:8-10 is the core scripture:** "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
- **"Sum Bonum":** This Latin phrase is used to describe the "pure in heart" beatitude, signifying it as the "highest or ultimate goal of all things."
- **Two Types of Religions:** The sermon distills all religions into two categories:
 1. **Human Achievement:** "You earn your way to heaven." (Satan's lie, includes all cults and legalistic practices).
 2. **Divine Accomplishment:** "You can't do it. God did it by Christ." (Christianity).
- **Isaiah 59:1-20:** This passage is extensively quoted to illustrate humanity's sinfulness ("your iniquities haven't separated you from God and your sins have hidden His face from you") and God's unique role as "the redeemer" who "saw that there was no man and wondered what there was that there was no intercessor. Therefore, His arm brought salvation for him and his own righteousness it sustain him." This is explicitly identified as Jesus Christ.
- **Ezekiel 36:** Mentioned as a prophecy known to the Jews concerning the Messiah washing "the inside of His people."
- **Three Approaches to Religion:** The sermon distinguishes:
 1. **Head Religion:** Believing a creed or system.
 2. **Hand Religion:** Doing good deeds (which *should* flow from a relationship with God, but are not the means to salvation).
 3. **Heart Religion:** The desired outcome, "based upon the purity that you receive from God."
- **The "Magnificent Exchange":** Christ took humanity's sins and gave His righteousness, making believers "pure" in God's sight.
- **The Power of Baptism:** A live baptism is performed, described as a "display of obedience" and a recommitment of life to the Lord. The person being baptized (Tim) affirms belief in Christ's sinless life, death, burial, resurrection, and intercession.
- **Communion as Reflection:** The communion service is presented as a time for self-reflection and "searching our hearts" to ensure "purity of heart" before partaking,

warning against inappropriate participation leading to sickness or even death (referencing Paul's teaching).

- **The Pastor's Commitment:** Steve, the preacher, states he is 71 and will continue "preaching the word" "as hard and fast as I can for as long as I can."
- **Community Announcements/Events:** Includes "Fundamentals of Faith" class, outreach team activities, a women's retreat, requests for volunteers (vacuuming chairs), and birthday/anniversary announcements.

III. Supporting Details & Rhetorical Elements

- **Informal & Engaging Tone:** The sermon starts with casual banter, jokes, and audience interaction ("What do you call a hippie's wife? miss Hippie").
- **Repetition:** Key phrases like "pure in heart," "divine accomplishment," "human achievement," and "It's all about him" are repeated for emphasis.
- **Personal Application:** The preacher frequently uses "you" and "we," making the message highly personal and even admitting his own struggles: "When I speak to you, I speak more to me because I'm as guilty as anyone."
- **Call and Response:** The audience frequently responds with "Amen."
- **Music and Worship:** Integral part of the service, with congregational singing ("Days of Elijah," "Old Rugged Cross," "Now is the Time to Worship," "River of Life," "Our God is an Awesome God") and a song during the altar call ("Calling Today").
- **Prayer:** Multiple prayers are offered for various needs, including loss, first responders, and specifically for purity of heart and salvation.
- **Direct Appeals:** The preacher directly asks the audience to stand, signify agreement, and consider their spiritual state.
- **Vivid Imagery:** Descriptions like "cowering beggar in a corner" and "step on the same landmine over and over again" are used to illustrate spiritual concepts.

IV. Gaps/Further Questions (Not explicitly covered, but implied or relevant)

- Specific denominational affiliation is not stated, though the practices align with many evangelical Protestant churches.
- The exact nature of "tragedies in Texas and New Mexico" is not detailed.
- The specific context of "Lesson 31" within the broader "Sermon on the Mount" series.