





The Clean of Heart

Pure of Heart

The first three Beatitudes didn't really seem like blessings when we first started studying them. They were all about being empty and humble and broken before the Lord. Last week we learned that God starts to fill up that emptiness by giving us mercy. For a couple more weeks we will look at how God fills up the hunger we have in us for him.

Today's beatitude: *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."* Let's start by discussing what it means to be pure. (Write "pure" on the board.) What does pure mean? (Allow students to answer.) Pure means not contaminated, not mixed with any other substance.

I have a demonstration to help you understand purity a little better. I have here an unopened bottle of water. (Show the kids that the seal is still intact on the bottle.) This is pure water and is safe and good for me to drink. (Open the water bottle and take a drink. Before saying anything else, take out a clear cup of sand and add a few spoonfuls of sand to the water bottle. Put the lid back on and give it a good shake.) Is the water safe and good for me to drink now? Of course not. The water is no longer pure. It has been contaminated by sand.

This contaminated bottle of water is like our hearts when we fill our lives with things other than God. So a pure heart is one that is focused on God, and not filled up with the thoughts and desires of the world. (On the board next to "pure," write "focused on only God.")

(Draw a large heart on the board with the word "God" in the middle) Ask: What can make our hearts impure? (write them in the heart). The only thing that should be permanently in our hearts is God. (Erase everything except "God" in the heart. In order to see God and spend eternity with Him, we must become pure in heart by following Jesus.

Object Lesson: Clean Penny

Bible Reference: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10 ESV

Target Age: This object lesson will work for almost any age group. Older children may appreciate the symbolism better, but younger kids will certainly understand.

Materials:

4 tablespoons of white vinegar
1 teaspoons of ionized salt
several small mason jars or clear drinking glasses
enough dirty old pennies for each child, on shiny new penny for explanation
paper towels
either wooden spoon, salad tongs, or latex gloves to keep the vinegar off your fingers

Procedure: As the children come to class hand them each a dirty old penny—the more discolored the better. Then display the shiny new penny. You can talk about how hard it would be to make those old coins as clean as the new penny. Explain that those old pennies are like us before Jesus changes our lives. He is able to transform us very quickly back into what he first made us to be.

Display the vinegar and salt solution. Have the children gently drop their coins into the liquid. Allow for about a minute for the solution to work. Carefully remove the pennies and dry with paper towels. Then restate the meaning of the object lesson.

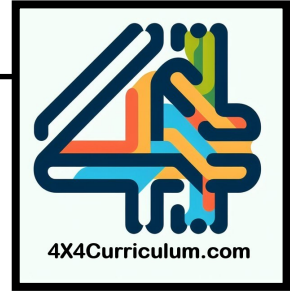
Power Point

We can let
Jesus purify
our hearts.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 5:7,
"Blessed are the
pure in heart, for they
will see God."





Game: Purify Your Heart

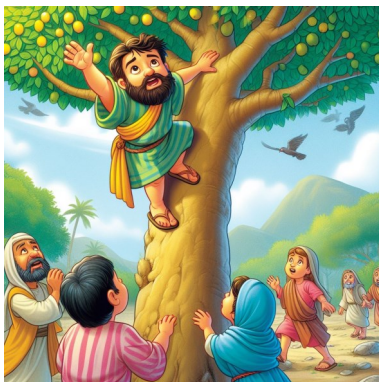
Have a bowl of dry rice or beans, with marbles mixed in. Include a small cross. A small cross pendant and about ten marbles in each bowl of rice will work. The children must sift through the rice using spoons in order to find all the marbles (or “distractions”) hidden within the rice. They must remove the marbles using only the spoon and transfer them to another bowl. They must leave the rice and the cross in the original bowl. This represents that the way to have a pure heart is to have only Jesus as our focus.



You can have the kids work in teams and run a relay, with children running to their team’s rice bowl, scooping up one marble, and carrying it back on a spoon to their team’s bowl. The first team to remove all the marbles wins.

Variation: Give the children each their own bowl and have them compete against everyone. Be sure to have the same number of marbles in each bowl, so it is easy for you to know when they have removed them all and to tell the kids how many they still have left to look for if they start to get frustrated.

Story: Zacchaeus’ Heart Change



Once upon a time, in a bustling town called Jericho, there lived a man named Zacchaeus. Now, Zacchaeus was not very tall. In fact, he was quite short! But what he lacked in height, he made up for in wealth. You see, Zacchaeus was a tax collector—a job that made people frown and grumble.

One sunny day, news spread like wildfire: Jesus was coming to Jericho! The whole town buzzed with excitement. People lined the streets, hoping to catch a glimpse of the kind Teacher who healed the sick and told stories that touched hearts.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus too. But there was a problem—the crowd was like a human wall, and he couldn’t peek over their heads. So, with determination in his heart, he dashed ahead and found a sycamore tree. Up he climbed, branches swaying, until he perched high above the ground.

And there, among the leaves, Zacchaeus waited. His heart raced as Jesus approached. When Jesus reached the tree, He looked up and smiled. “Zacchaeus,” He said, “come down quickly! I must stay at your house today.”

Zacchaeus nearly fell from the tree in surprise. Jesus wanted to visit him? The crowd gasped—they knew Zacchaeus wasn’t the nicest man in town. But Jesus saw something more—a heart ready for change.

Down climbed Zacchaeus, joy bubbling inside. At his home, he sat with Jesus, sharing stories and laughter. And then, something wonderful happened. Zacchaeus stood up and declared, “Lord, I will give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I’ve cheated anyone, I’ll pay them back four times!”

Jesus’ eyes sparkled. “Salvation has come to this house today,” He said. “For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.”

From that day on, Zacchaeus became a different man. His heart grew bigger than his wealth. He helped others, forgave debts, and spread kindness like wildflowers. And every time he looked at that sycamore tree, he remembered how Jesus changed his life.

And so, my friend, remember Zacchaeus when you feel small or unimportant. Jesus loves us all, no matter our size or mistakes. His grace can turn even the greediest heart into a garden of love. And as the stars blinked in the night sky, the town of Jericho slept, knowing that heart-change is possible—even for a greedy tax collector named Zacchaeus.

