

Influence Ministries

THE END OF ME

LESSON 3

TITLE: BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART.

In a world that is increasingly centered around social media, it can be challenging to live authentic and transparent lives. We tend to post pictures and make comments that leave the illusion that our lives are better than they really are.

A t-shirt that said, “May your life someday be as great as you pretend it is on Facebook.” And I get it. Of course, we are going to put out the best version of ourselves. The problem is, it’s not real.

Social Media may be new, but this preoccupation with what other people think, that’s not new at all. In fact, when Jesus came on the scene as a rabbi, the religious leaders of His day were especially known for this.

Matthew 23:5, Jesus says of them, “that everything they do is for others to see; they are constantly putting on a show.”

And so, my guess is, the Pharisees would have loved Social Media. They would have loved to post, “Hey, I’m fasting today” or “This is my 5,000th day of keeping the law of Moses.” They would be able to read people’s comments about how great they are. That’s all ‘religion.’

See, religion puts this huge focus on outward appearance, but Jesus was constantly looking at the heart. Religion says it’s all about keeping some rules and following some rituals, but Jesus was looking for a relationship.

Religion says you need to put on a show, you need to pretend. But Jesus says, I want you just the way you are.

I want you to be authentic. I want you to be honest about struggles and challenges. When you experience some kind of failure, or you’re overwhelmed by some kind of challenge, if you have a week when everything kind of falls apart on you, there’s a tendency to try to keep that a secret.

We don’t want people to see us for who we really are because we’re afraid of rejection. So much of our identity comes from what other people think that we’re scared to death of people discovering our struggles and who we really are and then rejecting us.

But Jesus says in His Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Jesus doesn’t say that God reveals Himself to those who are perfect or to those who can put on a good show but to those who are pure in heart. That’s authentic language. It’s the real you who He’s looking for.

So, there’s this tendency, when I get to the end of me to want to hide. I don’t want anyone to see me in my most vulnerable moment. And maybe you understand that. It’s as old as Adam and Eve. We’re afraid of what other people might think or what God might think, so we hide.

But because of Jesus, there is so much freedom that can be found when we finally just quit pretending and get real. It turns out, God blesses the pure in heart. When we humble ourselves, when we’re vulnerable, and when we’re transparent, that’s when we’re truly loved and accepted.

Influence Ministries

I don't need to fear those different things because I already know I'm accepted. But also, I realize my standing is not based on what I do, but how God sees me.

"Religion is man searching for God. Christianity is God searching for man," which is why salvation is freely mine. Forgiveness is my own, not based on my merits but Jesus'. Because He took the crown of thorns and the blood dripped down His face. He took all that we deserve. I guess that's why you call it GRACE.

And while being murdered, He cried, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do." Because when He was dangling on that cross, He was thinking of you.

When you study the Scriptures, just by what we see in the text, we should be the most vulnerable, transparent, and honest people out there. Because we're the only people in the whole world where our standing doesn't depend on us.

When the Christian faith, the Christian gospel, or the Good News – that is the Good News, that it doesn't depend on you. Jesus has done something for you and for us.

And that's that anchor in time.
That's where it was achieved.
That's where victory was won.

If you look at the harshest words of Jesus, they're always for the most religiously devout people. And I think the reason Jesus is so harsh against that, there's no joy in it and it actually doesn't work.

Sure, when you're in a bad place, you don't have joy, you don't have life. You're in basically a spiritual desert.

So how do we get from religion to a genuine faith? Well, it begins by taking off the mask and telling the truth which is hard to do.

The Bible says in 1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, that God is faithful to forgive us of our sins and to purify us from all unrighteousness."

So, here's what we find, as we come clean with God, He purifies our hearts and then as we move towards Him in authenticity, we discover the opposite of what we were so afraid of.

See, we were sure that if we came clean, if God knew the real us, if other people knew who we really were, that we would be rejected but instead we find that in that moment we are accepted.

James 4:8 says,

"Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands and purify your hearts."

That's the Bible's promise to you, that as your heart becomes pure, that you'll receive the most incredible blessing. You'll see God.

It's the relationship that's not based on performance or pretense, but it's authentic. I can't think of a greater blessing that I've experienced than knowing God that way. To authentically know Him and to authentically be known by Him, that's what our souls were made for.

So, when you finally get real and come to the end of yourself, you'll find that Jesus meets you right there.