

## Tending Ancient Paths

### The Paradigms, Posture, and Practices of Jesus

#### The Way of Right Motive

One of the riveting numbers of the musical 'Phantom of the Opera' is about a Masquerade party: *Masquerade! Paper faces on parade . . . Masquerade! Hide your face, So the world will never find you!* We all love to dress up - just look at what Halloween has become, and not just that day look at the billion dollar fashion and make up industries....promising what it can never actually deliver. Examples of our modern masks. Forty years ago as a young insecure pastor I was challenged to 'dress the part' and that meant show up in a suit and tie with briefcase in hand and degrees hung on a wall. But was that the real me? You could say 'how silly no one does that today do they?' I would submit that now we simply curate the image we want the world to believe through images posted on social media. Truth be told we don't need to attend a party to put on a mask - we could list a number of ways we choose to live out those chilling words *every day*, 'Hide your face so the world will never find you'.

The masquerade party started long before we got here didn't it? It started in the Garden with Adam and Eve when they chose to eat from the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil...and felt shame. Feeling their own lack they chose to run and hide in an attempt to cover and control their own image. I mean, what will God do if he sees the real me? God who makes man as His image bearers....what will He do if He is confronted with my weakness and failure? Adam and Eve chose to embrace a mask because **in their shame they made God their enemy and judge**. So they lived with the illusion that they could cover and control what had happened in their heart. **Shame drives them to pretend**. Beloved, shame is the tool of hell to hide the true revelation of Heaven. While Adam and Eve are attending a masquerade party God comes and asks the question 'where are you'? Just for clarity that is not because God couldn't locate them - it was because of the fact that they had hid themselves and made a judgement about who God was as a result of their shame!

**Where are you?** And here we begin to encounter what it means to live with purity of heart. I am likely not the only one who read Matthew 5:8 and concluded that Jesus was commending the person whose heart was absent of wrongdoing - *blessed are the pure in heart - for they will see God*. So we turn this thing into an invitation to 'make ourselves pure'. Not only is that impossible - its opposed to the revelation of the Gospel. You see, the profound truth of that original masquerade party is plain as day - Sin did not remove God from Adam and Eve - He comes to man! **Here is the truth of the Gospel - 'God removes sin' - sin does not separate God from man. God came to separate us from sin and give us life. He came to invite us back into a world absent of the mask of cover and control - and into the secure arms of Love so that we could once again occupy our original job description as Image bearers who are capable of seeing Jesus in the face of the poor and needy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. That, Beloved, is Good News!**

The truth is we all have a temptation to join the masquerade and wear a mask. But *Blessed are the pure in heart*. Here is the interesting thing, we can choose to wear the mask of 'having the right answers' or of using truth as a weapon to control my life or to attempt to control those around me or at the very least to control the narrative. It is still a mask. So what does it mean to be pure in heart? I think about the life of Jesus as recorded in the gospels, He knows the truth of who will betray Him, who will deny Him, and even who will kill Him but never uses that truth as a power lever. Purity of heart is not about absence of wrongdoing or having the correct answers to questions. **Purity of heart, Beloved, is about the right motive. It is about whole hearted Trust.**

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And the secret is simply this: **Christ in you!**

Yes, Christ in you bringing with him the hope of all glorious things to come. Col 1:27b, JB Phillips

As I was meditating on this passage I was thinking about Peter and his attempts to make sense of Jesus in His final days on the earth. Peter, according to Matthew 16, has the right revelation given to him by the Father: *'flesh and blood did not give you this revelation but my Father who is in Heaven - upon the rock of this confession I will build My Church'*. Peter had the right conclusion about Jesus- He is the Christ the Son of the Living God who is going to reveal another Kingdom! Then just a few verses later Peter is rebuking Jesus for talking about dying and being raised from the dead. John records Jesus washing the disciples' feet and when He comes to Peter in John 13 Peter says no way - and shortly after this Jesus reveals that Peter will deny Him. Peter is powering up and eventually he is called Satan and told he will deny Jesus. When Peter is walking with Jesus in the Garden and Jesus is about to be arrested, Peter turns and asks Jesus, according to Luke 22:49, *'shall we strike with the sword'* - at least he asked before he swung. Jesus reply is *'stop'*. Here is Peter with the right truth powered by the wrong motive! By the way Peter exemplifies what happens to all of us -what he has rehearsed in his heart was what he lived out in his actions. **What is in you will come out of you.** *In essence Peter was saying, 'Jesus none of this makes sense' I keep trying to force what I believe is true and it ends poorly ever time'*. EXACTLY - *because Jesus will never be about anything but love.* Just so we are clear here - Church history is filled with examples of people who have the right truth empowered by the wrong motive and it has wrought untold amounts of harm. Truth can become a weapon if the motive is force, power, and control! Here is the fascinating reality of Jesus' leadership in Peter's life - He is never off put or washes His hands of Peter - Jesus knows when Peter is going to get it wrong but there is no 'gotcha'. Don't miss this - Peter's denial is not what defines him! The Feast of Epiphany is the celebration of the Revelation of Christ to the world. I have lived long enough to have participated in all kinds of expressions of 'revealing Christ to the world' - parades in the Jesus movement - march for Jesus in our city - stadium events around the world - silent protests in Washington DC, etc.. My conclusion, Beloved, is that revealing Christ is not about a public announcement as much as it is about the posture of my heart. Blessed are the Pure in heart - those who live in open-handed trust - *will see God* (will have an Epiphany). Here is what this means to me. Love at work in my life is a more powerful testimony than any of my collective strength or wisdom! It also means I have to choose to be honest about the 'control' freak in me and lay aside my masks of cover and control- it is an illusion anyway. Blessed are the Pure in heart who, living in dependent trust in the power of Love to reveal Heaven more than 'our' collective power and strength, will see God. Amen.

### El Salvador Outreach—2023

- We will again be sending a team to El Salvador in April of 2023!
- Over the last several years we have partnered with Pastor Louis Alvarado to minister to some of the poorest and most needy of El Salvador.
- Our annual offering has helped to rebuild homes, pay medical expenses, pay funeral expenses, provide seed and fertilizer and food for some of the most needy people of San Pablo Taco Chico.
- As a result we have a regular monthly gathering in San Pablo Taco Chico that has reached hundreds.
- Last year we were able to help over 55 families and continue our on-going monthly work.
- The Good News is Preached to the Poor...
- Please pray about participating in El Salvador this year as we send a team—this offering is a combined effort of Praise International—IHOP Fort Wayne and Pastor Luis Alvarado.
- Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

With gratitude and integrity we steward your gifts. Thank you for partnering with the mission the Lord has given us in this hour as we partner with Him for His kingdom to expand.

Please make your **tax deductible** contribution to:

**IHOP Fort Wayne**  
**5907 West Wallen Road,**  
**Fort Wayne, IN 46818**

Ben and Denise, Please agree with us over these prayer needs for the next month...

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