

Day 35 Are We There Yet?

If you have ever travelled an extended amount of time with small children, you inevitably have heard this famous question: "Are we there yet?" The answer, "Not yet, sweetheart." To be followed up with: "When will we be there?" To be answered by: "Very soon; just be patient!" To be responded to: "Why is it taking so long?" To be retorted with: "We will be there when we get there!!!" Then with exasperation, "Why is Daddy so mean to me?" Then with a pensive tone, "Daddy is not trying to be mean; it just takes time to get there, but you are going to have so much fun when we get there." Then the diversion tactic: "I am hungry. I am thirsty. I really need to go potty...DAD, are you listening!!!" "Dad, I am tired..." With a final answer of: "Then take a nap, and we will be there when you wake up!"

Are we there yet? Parents dread this question. All kids think they are the first ones to ask this question. But this question has been asked for a very long time. I imagine the Israelite children in the wilderness asking, "Are we there yet?" They probably had a legitimate concern because they weren't traveling, they were wandering. **When it comes to developing a pure heart, we might feel the same sentiment as a child: "Are we there yet?" Do we ever arrive at a place called "a pure heart"? Is a pure heart a destination, or is it a lifetime journey? How long is it going to take? What does it look like?** Is there any standard of measure that we can use to tell us we are close, or at least in the vicinity, or the same State? A pure heart, much like a mature adult, takes time to develop.

We do not suddenly arrive at a place called "a pure heart." It is a continual process as we grow into the image and likeness of Christ. ***"This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ."* (Ephesians 4:13 NLT)** Christ is both the standard and the instrument that our hearts must be measured by. **The purest heart is the heart of Jesus.** So, we look at our lives, not compared to how much better we are than others, (that is Pharisaical) we only measure our lives and hearts according to the standard that Jesus set for us. Are we there yet? Are you like Jesus yet? If your heart does not reflect the heart of Jesus, you have some growing to do. If your heart chases after every new thing, then you have some growing to do. If you cannot discern the truth from something that sounds like the truth, then you have some growing to do. ***"Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth."* (Ephesians 4:14 NLT)**

Can you handle the truth? If not, you have some growing to do. Do you speak the truth only from a heart motivated by love? If not, you have some growing to do. Is your life, meaning all your actions and motivations, like Christ? If not, your heart is still being perfected and purified. Do you work in harmony with your other brothers and sisters, jointly fit together, bringing your part for the community of faith to grow? If not, you are not there yet. Do you help others to find their place in Christ's Body as you function in the Body? If not, you are not there yet. ***"Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."* (Ephesians 4:15-16 NLT)** Is love your highest goal and your only motive? If not, you are not there yet!

Has your heart been completely purified from the infection of a hypocritical spirit? If not, you have not arrived yet. We must embrace the truth so we can see the light. Then God's light always reveals God's

love. **The highest expression of a pure heart is that we do everything out of love.** Whatever is not motivated by God's love, actually weakens our hearts; yet, when we act from a motivation of love, our hearts are being made strong, blameless, and holy, or pure. ***"And may the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows. 13 May he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people. Amen."*** (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 NLT)

How do I know my heart is being purified? A purified heart always expresses itself in love. ***"May the Lord lead your hearts into a full understanding and expression of the love of God and the patient endurance that comes from Christ."*** 2 Thessalonians 3:5 (NLT) Paul takes this even further and explains to Timothy that he (Paul) had a very specific purpose in mind when he taught the believers. He wanted them to be filled with love that is birthed in a pure heart. ***"The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith."*** (1 Timothy 1:5 NLT)

This theme is inescapable in the whole of the New Testament. Jesus warned us about hypocrisy; that even the smallest amount can have a devastating effect on our hearts and lives. Jesus made sure that the disciples understood the subtlety of hypocrisy by using the example of leaven. Because a little goes a very long way, and it affects everything it touches. He gives us clear instruction on how to identify it and how to rectify it. The mouth reveals the heart and the heart reveals the man. **So, Jesus speaks truth to the hypocrites and grace to the sinners. Ever wondered why He was so hard with the Pharisees? Because they were hiding their true corruption and yet, claimed God as their Father.**

Do you desire a pure heart? Then you will need to only walk in the arena of truth. Any lies in our lives open the door for hypocrisy, which pollutes our hearts. Polluted hearts have a great difficulty to allow the love of God to flow through it to others. Why do you think Jesus addresses mercy before He addresses a pure heart? Then He talks about being peacemakers. Mercy from a pure heart that is rooted in truth, leads to peace. Watch what Peter says: ***"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."*** (1 Peter 1:22-23 NKJV)

The question for us is not "How pure are you?" The two questions we have to answer are: "How truthful am I with myself and others?" And secondly, "How loving am I to others because that reveals the purity of my heart?" ***"If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead. 15 Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them. 16 We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters."*** (1 John 3:14-16 NLT)

A pure heart, according to Jesus, is: Truth to overcome our own hypocrisy, and love for my fellow believers. The love we have is the love we have seen modeled in the One we measure our pure hearts by, Jesus. It is a sacrificial, laying-down-our-lives kind of love. It is a love beyond an emotional moment or a heart-tug feeling. **It is a love that costs. It is an expensive love, because it cost Jesus His life.** So we say, "I desire to have a pure heart." So the Father says, "Then be like Jesus." Then Jesus shows us, by laying down His life for all, and then He invites us to do the same, for others.

So we ask the Father, "Are we there yet?" The answer, "Not yet, sweetheart." To be followed up with: "When will we be there?" To be answered by: "When you look and act like Jesus!" To be responded to: "Why is it taking so long?" To be retorted with: "Because it took you so long to decide to take the journey." Then with exasperation: "Why is Daddy so mean to me?" **Then with a pensive tone: "Daddy is not trying to be mean; it just takes time to get your selfish heart turned into a selfless heart, and you have to be willing to die for that to happen. So let me ask you child, 'Are you dead yet?'"** Then the diversion tactic: "What about John? What about my wife? What about my husband? What about all those hypocrites at church? I feel like I am further along...DAD, are you listening!!!" "Dad, I am tired..." With a final answer of: "Then why don't you finally submit completely and let me do what needs to be done, and create in you a pure heart, so you can look and act like Jesus!"

"Are we there yet?" might not be the question we need to ask. We might need to ask, "Am I dead yet?" **Because in dying, we live. In giving, we gain. In serving, we rise. In seeking, we find. And above all, in loving, we reflect a pure heart!**

Reflection and Prayer:

- Paul gives us a picture of actively reflecting a pure heart. A heart that is not moved by trial or difficulty, but that is steadfast and unmovable in its trust and pursuit of God's purpose; a heart that is being perfected and purified, through demonstrating patience, kindness, understanding and sincere love. Read and meditate on these verses and allow the Holy Spirit to build Jesus' pure heart in you!
- ***"We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry. 4 In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind. 5 We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food. 6 We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us, and by our sincere love. 7 We faithfully preach the truth. God's power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense. 8 We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors. 9 We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed. 10 Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything."* (2 Corinthians 6:3-10 NLT)**