

*Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. (Psalm 24:3-4)*

The psalmist has just declared that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. Now he poses two questions: "Who shall ascend?" and "Who shall stand?" These questions would not be of interest to everyone. They would concern only those who desire fellowship, communion with their Creator. For those who are interested only in the "earth and the fulness thereof," who refuse to believe it all belongs to God, and who have no interest in communion with our heavenly Father, these questions mean nothing, for they have no thought of ascending to the hill of the LORD or standing in His presence.

The answer to these questions follows. He who walks with God in a visibly holy life. He has clean hands. He does not live a dirty, lawless, immoral life.

But there are those hypocrites who live an outwardly clean life, but are inwardly full of lust, selfishness, and covetousness. Shall these be included in that number? Not at all. For those are they that have a pure heart. In fact, the heart is more pure than their acts. Their inward holiness is always more than they can perform with their hands.

They who stand in God's presence are they whose hearts are not set on the vain, empty delusions of this present life, of this unstable world. They are not ruled by the lusts of the flesh. Their lives are not occupied with empty pursuits, but the pursuit of God and righteousness. Their minds are not clouded and confused with drunkenness and cares of this life.

They are those whose communication is pure. These are not liars and perjurers, but they who speak truth faithfully whatever the personal cost. These are not deceivers, those who mislead people in order to exploit and plunder them. Nor are they mockers and railers. They do not spend their time in idle or malicious slander of others.

Only one person has filled these requirements fully. That is the Lord Jesus Christ. But because He has fulfilled all those requirements, and has ascended and now stands in the presence of God for us, we who do fully trust Him are also risen and ascended with Him. And we stand in God's presence fully cleansed of all our sins through Jesus Christ our righteousness.

-C.M.