

Briefing Document: Matthew Lesson 75-Are You a Worshiper?

Sunday AM-July 19, 2026

Executive Summary

This briefing document analyzes a teaching on the Sermon on the Mount, focusing on Matthew 5:23–24. The central theme shifts the discussion from the sin of murder to the requirements of being a true worshiper. The primary takeaway is that God rejects outward religious rituals, such as worship and offerings, if the worshiper has unresolved conflict or bitterness with others. True worship requires an inward heart of obedience and active reconciliation with one's fellow man before seeking reconciliation with God. Additionally, the document touches on the importance of community and the church's responsibility to engage all age groups through intentional outreach.

The Requirement of Reconciliation

The core of the message centers on the transition from discussing anger to the act of worship. While previous lessons equated anger and slander with the guilt of murder, this teaching highlights how these internal states affect one's relationship with God.

- **The Command to Pause Worship:** Based on Matthew 5:23–24, if a person is at the altar ready to give a gift to God and remembers that someone has something against them, they must stop. The instruction is to *“leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”*
- **Prioritizing Relationships:** The text emphasizes that man-to-man relationships must be settled before man-to-God worship is acceptable. It is not enough to simply not feel anger; if a person has offended someone else, they have the responsibility to make it right.
- **Worship as a Sham:** Worship performed while holding onto bitterness or ignoring a broken relationship is described as a "sham" and "hypocrisy." The presence of such conflict within the heart or the community hinders the power of the Holy Spirit.

Inward Heart vs. Outward Ritual

The document explains that for many, including the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' time, worship was built around external sacrifices and laws. However, the teaching argues that these outward signs are meaningless without the proper inward attitude.

- **Obedience Over Sacrifice:** Drawing from 1 Samuel 15:22, the text notes: *“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.”*
- **The Symbolism of Animals:** In the Jewish sacrificial system, the animals were never the primary issue. The sacrifice was meant to be an outward symbol of a repentant and obedient heart.

- **No "Drive-Thru" Religion:** The teaching warns against seeking a quick, superficial "McDonald's-style" reconciliation with God. True reconciliation requires pausing, considering God's expectations, and manifesting brokenness and repentance.

Historical and Prophetic Warnings

The teaching uses various Old Testament scriptures to show that God has historically rejected the worship of those whose lives were not right.

- **Isaiah's Rebuke:** In Isaiah 1:11–17, God expresses his weariness with sacrifices, new moons, and Sabbath assemblies because the people's hands were "full of blood." He instructed them to *"Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow."*
- **Jeremiah's Warning:** Jeremiah 7:9–10 questions those who commit sins like theft and murder and then *"come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations.'"*
- **The Barrier of Sin:** Psalm 66:18 provides a clear warning regarding the heart's state: *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear."*

Practical Application for the Church Community

The message concludes with a call for the modern church to evaluate the sincerity of its worship based on its internal unity.

- **Personal Responsibility:** Every individual is responsible for seeking peace. Even if the other person refuses to reconcile, the worshiper must make the effort so the "anger becomes their anger" and not their own.
- **The Role of Joy:** It is difficult to be a joyful Christian while harboring anger. Reconciliation is necessary to reach the level of true worship that God desires.
- **Church Purification:** True worship is enhanced not through better music or aesthetics, but through the purification of the congregation. When members are of "one mind and one heart," the power of the Holy Spirit is most evident.

Community and Youth Outreach Initiatives

The briefing also addresses the church's strategic plans to grow and serve its community, particularly the youth.

- **Expanding Youth Focus:** While previous efforts focused on young children (the "itty bitties"), the church is now expanding facilities for teenagers and "intermediates" who often feel detached as they grow older.
- **New Facilities:** To create an inviting, family-style environment, the church is adding athletic facilities, including:
 - A batting cage with a pitching machine.

- A volleyball court (with excavation beginning immediately).
- A pickleball court.
- A basketball goal.
- **Mission of Engagement:** These facilities are intended to give neighborhood children a safe and positive environment, showing them that the community cares about their interests and well-being.

Scriptural References (NKJV)

- **Psalms 46:10:** *Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!*
- **Colossians 3:2:** *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*
- **Psalms 108:5:** *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, And Your glory above all the earth.*
- **Exodus 15:11:** *Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?*
- **1 Corinthians 13:12:** *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*
- **Matthew 5:23–24:** *Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*
- **1 Samuel 15:22:** *Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.*
- **Isaiah 1:11:** *“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?” Says the LORD. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats.”*
- **Jeremiah 7:9–10:** *Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations’?*
- **Psalms 66:18:** *If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.*