

Briefing Document: Matthew Lesson 80-Are You an Adulterer?

Sunday AM-August 30, 2026

Executive Summary

This document analyzes a teaching on Matthew 5:27–30, focusing on the true nature of sin as defined by Jesus Christ. The central theme is that sin is not merely an external action but a deep-seated problem of the heart. By setting an impossible standard of perfection, Jesus unmasks human hypocrisy and shows that people cannot achieve righteousness on their own.

The analysis highlights three critical areas affected by the understanding of sin:

1. **Salvation:** One cannot understand the need for a Savior without recognizing the depth of their own sinfulness.
2. **Proclamation:** True evangelism must present the holiness of God and the reality of judgment before offering grace.
3. **Sanctification:** Genuine holiness is a transformation of the heart by God, not just a list of avoided behaviors.

The ultimate goal of this teaching is to drive individuals to a state of "desperation" where they recognize their inability to save themselves and turn to the righteousness offered only through Jesus Christ.

The Divine Definition of Sin

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus provides a divine definition of sin that goes beyond surface-level behavior. While the religious leaders of the time (the Pharisees and scribes) focused on external obedience to the law, Jesus reveals that God judges the inner motives and thoughts of the heart.

- **Unmasking Hypocrisy:** Jesus uses the law to show that even those who have not committed physical acts like murder or adultery are still guilty of sin if they harbor anger, hatred, or lust.
- **The Standard of Perfection:** In *Matthew 5:48*, Jesus states, *"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."* This standard is impossible for any human to meet through their own efforts.
- **The Purpose of the Law:** By presenting a standard that no one can keep, Jesus faces His listeners with a "sin problem" for which they have no personal remedy. This is designed to drive them toward the righteousness found only in Him.

Sin and the Understanding of Salvation

A superficial view of sin leads to a superficial view of salvation. To understand why the cross was necessary, one must first understand the atrocity of sin.

- **The Depth of the Disease:** The more a person understands the "disease" of sin, the more they can appreciate the "remedy" of salvation. If sin is seen as a minor issue, salvation is treated as a minor thing.
- **The Necessity of the Cross:** Jesus had to die because sin is so deeply stained into the human heart that only His sacrifice could pay the price. As the teaching notes, "There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin; only Jesus could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in."
- **The Role of God:** Because sin is a profound and unchangeable part of human nature, only a miracle from God can bring about true salvation.

The Biblical Approach to Proclamation

The document argues that modern "easy believism" or "cheap grace" fails because it ignores the reality of sin. Biblical evangelism must follow a specific order: Law before Grace.

- **Preaching the Law:** Effective proclamation begins by confronting people with the holiness of God and His demands for righteousness. This includes preaching on judgment and condemnation.
- **The Reality of Wrath:** Evangelism should reflect *Romans 1:18*: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."
- **Driving to Desperation:** Jesus frequently preached about hell—a place where "the worm never dies and the fire is not quenched"—to make people realize their desperate need for a Savior.
- **The Call to Repentance:** True faith is preceded by repentance. Before an individual can accept the "peace and joy" of the gospel, they must first understand they are standing in fear of judgment.

Sanctification vs. Self-Righteousness

Understanding sin is also vital for the process of sanctification (being made holy). Without a clear view of sin, "holiness" often turns into self-righteousness.

- **The Trap of Externalism:** Many people believe they are holy because they do not go to certain places or say certain things. However, if the heart remains unchanged, this is simply "the ugly head of self-righteousness."
- **Heart Transformation:** God is more concerned with what a person thinks in their mind and heart than with their outward appearances.

- **Gratitude for Change:** A person cannot truly thank God for their transformation unless they understand how vile their heart was before God changed it. While humans can modify their behavior due to peer pressure or pride, only God can change the heart.

Greek Word Glossary

Greek Word	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
None	N/A	No specific Greek terms were used in the source context provided.