

Study Guide: Matthew Lesson 80: Are You an Adulterer?

Sunday AM-August 30, 2026

This study guide examines the teachings of Jesus Christ during the Sermon on the Mount, specifically focusing on Matthew 5:27-30. The lesson explores how the Jewish leaders of the time had a superficial understanding of sin and how Jesus Christ unmasked their hypocrisy by revealing that sin is a deep-seated issue of the heart. By setting a standard of perfection, the Lord drives His listeners to realize their own helplessness and their desperate need for a Savior.

Short-Answer Quiz

1. What is the primary purpose of Jesus Christ's message in Matthew 5:21-48?
2. According to the text, what was the "minimal definition of sin" held by the Pharisees and scribes?
3. What specific standard of righteousness does Jesus Christ demand in Matthew 5:48?
4. Why is it impossible to understand the meaning of the cross without understanding the evil of sin?
5. How does the lesson define "easy believism" or "cheap grace"?
6. According to the biblical model of evangelism, why must the Law be preached before grace?
7. What does the lesson suggest is the ultimate result for those who cannot fulfill the demands of a holy God?
8. How does Jesus Christ's teaching on anger and lust challenge those who have never physically committed murder or adultery?
9. What is the danger of defining holiness only by the places one does not go or the things one does not do?
10. Why must a person be driven to "desperation" before they can truly accept the salvation offered by Jesus Christ?

Answer Key

1. The primary purpose of the message is to provide a divine definition of sin and to unmask the hypocrisy of the people. Jesus Christ reveals the truth about the sinful heart of man, showing that it is a deep problem that people cannot fix on their own.
2. The Pharisees and scribes viewed sin as a superficial matter involving only outward actions and behaviors. Because they believed sin was merely what a person does, they also believed salvation was something they could accomplish through their own deeds.
3. In Matthew 5:48, Jesus Christ states, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." This command establishes a standard of absolute perfection that is impossible for any human to meet through their own efforts.
4. One cannot understand why Jesus Christ had to die or why He refused to call on legions of angels unless they see how deeply sin stains the human heart. The extreme nature of the cross was necessary because sin is so powerful and deep that only God could pay the price to unlock heaven.
5. These terms describe shallow gospel presentations that focus on emotional appeals or "happiness" rather than the reality of sin. This approach invites people to "sign on the dotted line" without first helping them understand the damning character of the sin they need to be saved from.
6. The Law must be preached first to reveal God's holy standards and to condemn unrighteousness, as seen in Romans 1:18. By presenting the Law and judgment first, people are confronted with their inability to meet God's standards, which prepares them to receive His grace.
7. The text explains that a helpless man who cannot fulfill God's holy demands faces the inevitability of punishment in an eternal hell. This reality is intended to drive the individual to seek the only escape, which is the transformation of their heart by Jesus Christ.
8. Jesus Christ teaches that having hatred in the heart makes one as vile as a murderer, and having lust in the heart makes one an adulterer. He shows that God is concerned with the internal thoughts and desires of the mind, not just the physical acts.
9. Defining holiness only by outward behavior can lead to the "ugly head of self-righteousness." While God is concerned with our actions, He is more concerned with the heart and the thoughts behind those actions, which external rules cannot change.

10. Desperation is necessary because it forces people to realize they are hopeless and unable to save themselves from judgment. Once a person recognizes they have a problem too deep for them to handle, they will cry out for the Savior who can deliver them and change their vile hearts.
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Essay Format Questions

1. Compare and contrast the "superficial view of sin" held by the Jewish leaders with the "divine definition of sin" presented by Jesus Christ. How does each view affect a person's understanding of salvation?
 2. Discuss the three areas the lesson identifies as being misunderstood if one does not have a proper grasp of sin: salvation, proclamation, and sanctification.
 3. Analyze the statement, "The deeper the disease, the greater the remedy." How does this analogy explain the relationship between human sinfulness and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ?
 4. Explain the role of the "Law" in evangelism. Why does the text argue that a person must understand the holiness and demands of God before they can truly appreciate the message of grace?
 5. Describe the concept of "sanctification" as presented in the lesson. Why is it a mistake to base one's holiness on "not doing" certain worldly things, and what should be the true focus of a transformed life?
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Glossary of Key Terms

- **Adulterer:** Traditionally one who commits a physical act of unfaithfulness in marriage; however, Jesus Christ expands this to include anyone who looks at another with lustful intent in their heart.
- **Blessedness:** A state of spiritual well-being or divine favor, described by Jesus Christ in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12).
- **Condemnation:** The legal or divine pronouncement of guilt and the resulting sentence of punishment for sin.
- **Evangelism:** The act of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ; the text emphasizes that this must include the preaching of the Law and the reality of sin.

- **Grace:** The unmerited favor and mercy of God offered to sinful man, which provides a righteousness that man cannot achieve on his own.
- **Hypocrisy:** The practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior or internal heart condition does not conform.
- **Piosity:** The quality of being religious or reverent, sometimes used in the text to describe outward behaviors used to impress others or hide an unchanged heart.
- **Proclamation:** The public announcement or preaching of the gospel and the truths of God.
- **Repentance:** A sincere turning away from sin and toward God; the text describes this as a primary call of true evangelism.
- **Righteousness:** The quality of being morally right or justifiable; Jesus Christ demands a perfection in righteousness that exceeds outward behavior.
- **Salvation:** Deliverance from the power and effects of sin, which the text notes is a miracle that only God can perform.
- **Sanctification:** The process of being made holy; the text warns against a shallow view of this that focuses only on external actions rather than internal transformation.
- **Self-Righteousness:** A feeling of smug moral superiority derived from the belief that one's own actions or "goodness" make them acceptable to God.
- **Superficial:** Existing or occurring only on the surface; used to describe the Pharisees' shallow understanding of sin and salvation.