**Briefing Document: Sermon on the Mount – "Liars" (Lesson 89)**

**Sunday AM-November 15, 2026**

Executive Summary

This briefing document synthesizes the sermon delivered at New Life Church titled **"Sermon on the Mount - 'Liars' (Lesson 89)."** The lesson centers on Matthew 5:33–37, where Jesus confronts the artificial, substandard ethics of the scribes and Pharisees regarding oaths and truthfulness.

The primary takeaway of the message is that human efforts to achieve self-righteousness through man-made religious systems fall short of God's divine standard. Jesus reestablishes the absolute biblical requirement of spiritual perfection, demonstrating that salvation and righteousness cannot be earned through human achievement, but must be received as a gift of grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

The sermon places Matthew 5:33–37 within the broader framework of the Gospel of Matthew, identifying three central themes: **The King Revealed**, **The King Rejected**, and **The King Returning**. Additionally, the document summarizes key congregational announcements, community prayer requests, and pastoral applications concerning modern spiritual complacency and cultural issues.

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1. Congregational Announcements and Community Care

The service included several announcements, prayer requests, and updates regarding the local church community:

- **Memory Verse:** The congregation reviewed 1 Thessalonians 5:18:
    - "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
- **Bereavement and Pioneer Recognition:**
    - **Arlene Rush:** A celebration of life service is scheduled for Dec. 4th at 6:00 p.m. at New Life Church.
    - **Historical Legacy:** Arlene Rush and Don Rush were recognized as foundational pioneers whose faith and testimony helped establish the church body through a unanimous decision to seek a new direction. Arlene also created the wooden plaque displayed in the church reading, "Go therefore and make disciples."
- **Health and Care Prayer Requests:**
    - **Emelda Rush:** Admitted to the Benson Hospital Emergency Room following what appeared to be a mini-stroke. Prayers were requested for both Emelda's health and the Rush family.

- **Scott and Becky:** Prayers were requested for Scott, who was in the final days of his life journey.
- **Cesolini Family:** The church continued providing meals for the family while Sunshine recovers from surgery.

- **Ministry and Event Schedule:**
  - **Operation Christmas Child (OC):** Final day for online shoebox registration, with a packing party scheduled for the following day at 10:00 a.m.
  - **New Life Kids Christmas Store:** Collecting items for an event on December 16.
  - **We Care Pregnancy Center:** Hosting a baby clothes giveaway on Adams Street at the park.
  - **Fellowship & Leadership Meetings:** New Life Women's Fellowship meeting on the 21st; Elders meeting on the 23rd at 6:00 p.m.
  - **Fifth Sunday Sing:** Scheduled for the evening of the 29th, featuring an ice cream social with root beer floats.
  - **Church Operations:** Bible tracts available in the information center; digital church directory available on Google Play and Apple; Christmas card drop-box opening in the foyer to save members stamp expenses.
- **Media Project Prayer:**
  - Prayer was requested for the speaker's son, who has spent 20 years writing a Christ-centered adventure movie script, with an estimated production budget of $100 million.

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2. The Threefold Structure of Matthew's Gospel

The sermon represents the 89th lesson in an ongoing exposition of Matthew's five major discourses. For context, the teaching series follows a 225-lesson study of Romans and a 325-lesson study of John.

Matthew is characterized as the **"Gospel of the King,"** written primarily to a Jewish audience to present Jesus as the Messiah and Monarch of God. The narrative interweaves three concurrent themes:

| Gospel Theme | Description & Key References |
|---|---|
| **1. The King Revealed** | Demonstrates Jesus' royal lineage and monarchical authority. Key evidence includes: His royal genealogy; wise men offering kingly gifts; royal herald proclamation; Satan offering world kingdoms during temptation; kingdom |

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|---|---|
| | manifesto; miracles as credentials; parables of kingdom mysteries; royal entry into Jerusalem; and His declaration that "All authority is given unto Me." |
| **2. The King Rejected** | Highlights the continuous and bitter opposition to Jesus. Key evidence includes: His mother's risk of rejection; Herod seeking to kill Him as an infant; weeping mothers in Bethlehem; 30 years of obscurity in Nazareth; the imprisonment and beheading of John the Baptist; having nowhere to lay His head; and His cry on the cross, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" |
| **3. The King Returning** | Emphasizes the Second Coming, ultimate triumph, and the day when full majesty and reign belong to Jesus Christ. |

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3. Exposition of Matthew 5:33–37: "Liars"

Background and Context

When Jesus entered His public ministry, His teaching stood as a direct antithesis to legalistic Judaism. Preaching on a hillside in Galilee to a crowd led by scribes (law copiers) and Pharisees (a legalistic sect), Jesus unmasked the hypocrisies of humanly devised religion.

Through rabbinical tradition, religious leaders created a subscriptural system with substandard ethics. By adhering to their self-defined rules, they mistakenly claimed self-righteousness and spiritual perfection.

Jesus did not alter, destroy, or add to the Old Testament law. Instead, He **reestablished** God's original divine standard against their substandard human system. Six times in Matthew 5, Jesus uses the contrast: "You have heard that it was said to those of old… But I say to you…"

[Man-Made Substandard Ethics] <--- Contrasting Standards ---> [God's Absolute Divine Standard]

(Pharisaic Self-Righteousness) (Imputed Righteousness via Grace)

Truthfulness and Oaths (Matthew 5:33–37)

In His fourth illustration, Jesus addresses the issue of truthfulness and oaths, branding the religious leaders' deceptive oath system as lying.

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one." — Matthew 5:33–37

The Fundamental Requirement of Perfection

Jesus highlights the impossibility of entering God's kingdom through human legalism by defining the core standard of the Sermon on the Mount:

- **The Exceeding Standard:** "Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." — Matthew 5:20
- **The Absolute Requirement:** "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." — Matthew 5:48

Because no human can attain perfection through self-righteous effort, perfection must be **imputed** to the individual as a gift of divine grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus summarized the failure of external, human-made religious systems by quoting Isaiah:

"These people draw near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." — Matthew 15:8–9

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4. Pastoral Application and Cultural Critique

The sermon concludes with an incisive application regarding contemporary spiritual dynamics:

- **Critique of "Easy Believism":** The speaker warns against nominal Christianity, where individuals profess belief in Christ but live in self-directed disobedience rather than submissive obedience.
- **The "Beatitude Mentality":** True faith is characterized by spiritual poverty and desperation:
    - Begging desperately for God's mercy.
    - Mourning over personal and national sin.
    - Remaining meek before a holy God.
    - Hungering and thirsting for true righteousness.
- **Cultural and Survey Data:** Citing data from the Pew Research organization, the speaker noted that 62% of Americans currently identify as Christians (down from 68% a decade earlier). The sermon contends that many within this statistic are "posers" rather than true possessors of the Holy Spirit, resulting in spiritual and moral decline across the nation.

- **Family and Spiritual Conflict:** Leaders shared personal accounts of intense family division and anxiety experienced during election week, emphasizing that humbling oneself in prayer brings peace and restoration against spiritual division.

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5. Lexical Reference: Greek Words

**No ancient Greek words were explicitly introduced, defined, or phonetically analyzed within the transcript of this sermon.**[^1]

| Term | Phonetic Pronunciation | Brief Definition |
|---|---|---|
| **N/A** | N/A | No direct ancient Greek terms were cited in the source text. |

[^1]: Footnote: The source transcript contains references to modern English translations, general theological concepts (e.g., Gnostics), and Hebrew-derived concepts (e.g., Messiah), but does not contain explicit ancient Greek vocabulary words requiring phonetic transliteration or lexical analysis.