

A Turtle on a Fence Post

Chapter 8

Audio lesson: New Testament 8



Objective: To further examine the beatitudes and to discuss four pictures Jesus used to describe His followers.



“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

—Matthew 5:14-16

The first four beatitudes are the “coming” attitudes—the mindset of a person who comes to God. The second four beatitudes are the “going” attitudes—the mindset of a person who is sent into the world by God. Together they describe those who are God’s solution for the problems of humanity.

Jesus follows His profile of Christ-like character with four pictures, four profound metaphors that show us what happens when that character impacts pagan culture. He taught His disciples that they are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, a city on a hill that cannot be hidden, and a candle on a candlestick (Matthew 5:13–16). These four metaphors begin the application of the sermon.

No followers of Jesus can have all of these attitudes and do the kind of works He commands apart from the Spirit of God working in and through them. Christians should always be filled with humility and gratitude for the power of God that enables them to serve Him well. Only in His strength can we impact the culture we live in for Christ.



1. **True** or false? The Sermon on the Mount is about the crises, the character, and the challenges of being a Christian.
2. **True** or false? Many people feel that the beatitudes and the illustrations that follow them are the main teachings of the Sermon on the Mount.
3. **True** or false? The only way to be the salt of the earth is to live among the people of the world.
4. **True** or false? Though the disciples thought they had chosen Jesus, in reality He had chosen them.
5. True or **false**? Though Jesus chooses His followers, it is up to us to come up with a strategy and position ourselves like a candle on a candlestick.
6. **True** or false? If you truly have the attitudes and characteristics of a Christian, you will not be able to hide it.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

7. Why did Jesus compare His disciples to salt? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. **They would be like a preservative rubbed into the corrupt world**
 - b. **Salt is necessary for life, and the disciples would bring life to the world.**
 - c. They would work as hard as salt miners.
 - d. Salt makes water impossible to drink, and the disciples would be impossible for people to accept.
8. How are the disciples like light?
 - a. They burn out quickly.
 - b. They turn on and off very easily.
 - c. They use up a lot of energy.
 - d. **They shine the light of truth into a dark world.**
9. Which of the following are true statements about the role of Christians as God's solution? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. **"I cannot, but God can, and He is with me."**
 - b. **"I do not want to, but God wants to, and He is with me."**
 - c. "I can, so God can use me."
 - d. "If I could not, God would not be with me."
 - e. **"I am not, but God is, and He is with me."**
 - f. "I did because God told me to."
 - g. **"I did not, but God did because He was with me."**

10. How should we respond when God uses us for His work?
- a. With great pride for what we have done
 - b. With humility, realizing what God has done**
 - c. With indifference because it was not our concern
 - d. With loud words that direct attention to our church
11. Whose character and ministry are described by the beatitudes and the four illustrations of Matthew 5?
- a. Those who believe and follow Jesus
 - b. Jesus Himself
 - c. Both a and b**
 - d. Neither a nor b
12. How are disciples like a turtle on a fence post? (*choose all that apply*)
- a. The disciple is strategically placed.**
 - b. The disciple is stuck and really helpless.
 - c. The disciple did not get where he or she is without God.**
 - d. The disciple is to have the character of a turtle and hide in his shell.



Have you accepted God's call to be part of His solution for the world? What kind of disciple, salt, light, city on a hill, and candle on a candlestick are you? What has God accomplished in your life that you could not accomplish yourself? What do you want Him to do in you and through you that you cannot do on your own?



Thank God that it is His power that works in those who believe. Ask Him to accomplish His purposes in you and through you as you trust and depend on Him. Ask Him to help you be salty salt, a bright light, and part of His solution for the world.



Going Deeper

1. In what ways do these attitudes make the disciple the salt of the earth? _____

2. What are several possible applications of this salt metaphor, and which one do you believe is the correct one? _____

3. In what ways are the disciples with these attitudes like a candle on a candlestick, or a city on a mountaintop that cannot be hidden? _____

4. How do these eight attitudes relate to the coming experiences and the going experiences of a disciple of Jesus Christ? _____

5. Precisely what context do you think Jesus had in mind when He taught His seventh blessed attitude, "*Blessed are the peacemakers.*"? _____

6. How do the first 16 verses of this fifth chapter of Matthew challenge us to look in, to look around and to look up? _____

7. How can these eight blessed attitudes get from the paper and ink of our Bibles into our minds and hearts? _____
