

# The Character and the Culture

## Chapter 9

### Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 9



Objective: To understand the role of the Christian in the culture through four metaphors Jesus used to describe His disciples' witness. (Text: Matthew 5:11-16)



*"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."*

—Matthew 5:13

The Beatitudes were the essence and central part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. With these eight attitudes, He has described a godly character that can change the world. In this next section, He provides commentary and application on His sermon.

After Jesus gives His profile of the beautiful attitudes, He provides us four powerful metaphors to describe what happens when Christians become part of God's solution for the world. Believers become the salt of the earth, the light of the world, a candle on a candlestick, and a city on a hill.

The first metaphor Jesus used for his disciples was that they were like salt. Salt is a preservative that keeps meat from spoiling, and Christians with the attitudes of Jesus are like salt to the world. When disciples with Christ-like attitudes are "rubbed into" the people of the world as salt is rubbed into meat, their influence will keep the world from total corruption. They become a valuable commodity that Jesus uses to transform the culture and society in which they live.



1. **True** or false? Many people believe that the Beatitudes are the primary teaching of the Sermon on the Mount and the rest is application.
2. **True** or false? The Beatitudes tell us the values of God's kingdom.
3. True or **false**? The main purpose of Jesus' teaching was to give people a lot of knowledge, not to show His followers how they ought to live.
4. True or **false**? The word "Christian" is used often in the Bible.

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

5. How did Jesus relate to the culture?
  - a. He always tried to fit in.
  - b. He always made sure He did not fit in.
  - c. He isolated Himself so the culture would not affect Him.
  - d. He came into conflict with the culture and wanted to revolutionize it.**
6. Which of the following illustrations did Jesus use to describe those who follow Him? (*choose all that apply*)
  - a. Salt**
  - b. Sand
  - c. Lightning
  - d. Light**
  - e. City on a hill**
  - f. Candlestick**
  - g. Fish
7. What was Jesus' method for changing the culture?
  - a. To give new commandments
  - b. To change believers' hearts and send them into the world**
  - c. To reform governments
  - d. To give people more education
8. What uses of salt might Jesus have had in mind with the metaphor of salt? (*choose all that apply*)
  - a. A preservative**
  - b. A something valuable that substitutes for money**
  - c. An irritation for sores**
  - d. A cause of thirst**
  - e. A cleansing agent**
  - f. A healing substance**
  - g. A seasoning for food**



What specific steps can you take to be more effective “salt” in your community?

---

---



Thank God for His ability to change your heart and His desire to send you into the world as His ambassador. Ask Him to use you to impact your culture and the people around you.



## Going Deeper

1. When a person has a Christ-like character, what kind of character does he have? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

2. Is Christian teaching meant to adapt to culture or change culture? How? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

3. Explain Jesus' metaphor about salt in Matthew 5:13. Why does He use "salt"? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

4. What needs to be done with "salt" to make it an effective change agent? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

5. What specific steps can you take to be more effective "salt" in your community? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

6. In what ways did Jesus intend for His people to be a "city on a hill"? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

7. In what ways might you be an example and a light to others in your community? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---