

1. In the ancient world, salt not only enhanced the flavor of food, it was also a preservative, a healing agent and sign of the covenant. Jesus may have all of these in mind. When we are present in the world with the heart and character described in the beatitudes we will be a healing agent, a preservative, add flavor and zest to life, and serve as a visible sign of God's covenant with us.
 - b. How might a believer lose their saltiness?
 - c. What happens when we do?
2. While Jesus does not describe exactly what he has in mind by salt, he does describe what it means to be light. What does Jesus tell us will happen when we are properly functioning as light in the world?
3. In 5:16 Jesus tells us, "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." In 6:1 he tells us, "'Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them."

What is the difference between the two?

PAUL'S ENCOURAGEMENT: CLOTHE YOURSELF WITH CHRIST

ROMANS 13:14 Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

EPHESIANS 4:20-22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

COLOSSIANS 3:9-10 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

1. How does the image of clothing ourselves with Christ shape our understanding of what it means to walk in grace?
2. Our old self describes who we were in Adam, deeply broken and wounded by the fall. Our new self describes who we are in Christ "created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness," and "being renewed in knowledge in the image of our Creator."
 - a. What are some



The goal of the Christian life is to be so overwhelmed and transformed by the grace of God that we become a model of grace and an invitation to grace for a world that desperately needs a touch from God.

Grace is far more than an abstract theological construct, it is the active presence of Christ in our lives enabling us to be and do everything he has called us to be and do.

And while grace involves the power and presence of God, it also calls for active engagement on our part. Dallas Willard reminds us, "Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning." In other words we neither earn our standing before God, or God's affection through our performance. But walking in God's grace calls for discipline and effort on our part.

Paul encouraged the Philippians, "Work out your salvation in fear and trembling because it is God who works in you both to will and to act according to his good pleasure."

Paul encouraged Timothy "Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come (1 Timothy 4:7-8).

The Rhythms of Grace are those activities that bring us into the presence of God and enable us to experience his transforming power in our lives. We'll consider five critical rhythms—corporate worship, private devotions, authentic community, biblical stewardship and missional living.

Before we talk about the rhythms of grace we will talk about two invitations to walk in grace—Jesus' invitation to follow him and Paul's encouragement to clothes ourselves with Christ.

JESUS' INVITATION: FOLLOW ME

A. JESUS' INVITATION

MARK 1:16-18 "As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people.

18 At once they left their nets and followed him."

MARK 2:14 "As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

MARK 8:34 "Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

MARK 10:22-24 "Jesus looked at [the young man] and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth."

1. How do these passages shape your understanding of what it means to follow Jesus?
2. What kept the rich young man from following Jesus?
3. What are some other things that might keep us from following Jesus?
4. Alister Stern takes us behind the scenes in first century Palestine to describe exactly what following a rabbi involved.

"In the ancient world of Judaism, when a rabbi invited a disciple to follow them, the goal wasn't merely instruction but transformation. A disciple was expected to sit under their rabbi's teaching and know their take on a life with God. But they were also to become like their rabbi; think like your rabbi thinks, do what your rabbi does. When Jesus called his first disciples, this would have been the mutual understanding. If we follow Jesus and move in his direction, the expectation is that we will become like him (Rhythms for Life: Spiritual Practices for Who God Made You to Be)."

John Mark Comer builds on the same idea. In his book, "Practicing the Way," He suggests that apprenticeship to Jesus might be a better way of understanding discipleship.

"To follow Jesus is to become his apprentice. It's to organize your entire life around three driving goals: to be with Jesus, to become like him, to

do as he did. Apprenticeship to Jesus—that is, following Jesus—is a whole-life process of being with Jesus for the purpose of becoming like him and carrying on his work in the world."

5. How do these ideas expand and enlarge your understanding of what it means to follow Jesus?

B. OUR HEART AND CHARACTER

MATTHEW 11:28-29 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

MATTHEW 5:3-10 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

1. There are some striking similarities between the way Jesus describes his own heart and character in Matthew 11, and the way he describes the heart and character of those who will experience and embody the kingdom in Matthew 5.
 - a. How does Jesus describe his own heart and character?
 - b. How is Christ's character reflected in the beatitudes?
2. How will walking in grace transform our heart and character?
3. How does a transformed heart and character enable us to walk in grace?

D. OUR INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD

MATTHEW 5:13 -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 underfoot. 14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 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. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."