

Sermon Handout: *For Us or Against Us*

9/28/25

Text: Mark 9:38–50

Theme: *Jesus expands our view of who belongs. Outreach begins when we stop drawing lines and start seeing allies.*

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Key Scripture Summary (Mark 9:38–50):

The disciples try to stop someone casting out demons in Jesus' name because “he was not one of us.” But Jesus responds: “Do not stop him... Whoever is not against us is for us.” He teaches that even small acts of kindness in His name matter, warns against causing others to stumble, and urges radical self-examination. He ends by calling His disciples to preserve what is good and live in peace with one another.

Summary of the Message:

Jesus challenges our tendency to divide the world into “us” and “them.” When John points out someone casting out demons without the disciples’ approval, Jesus redirects their thinking. He’s not interested in defending turf—He’s expanding the mission. Discipleship means recognizing that the Kingdom is bigger than our comfort zones and that people we consider outsiders may already be faithfully serving Jesus.

Even the smallest act done in Christ’s name—a cup of water—matters. Jesus moves from power to tenderness, from exorcisms to quiet compassion. And He warns strongly: don’t let your pride, control, or self-righteousness cause someone else to fall away. Be salty, not judgmental. Be people of peace, not division.

This isn’t about lowering the bar on faithfulness. It’s about raising our awareness of how God works in unexpected people and places. Outreach begins when we stop drawing lines and start seeing allies.

Reflection Questions:

1. Where have I drawn lines that Jesus might be asking me to erase?
 2. Have I mistaken “not like us” for “not of Christ”?
 3. How can I celebrate small acts of service in others—even those outside my circle?
 4. What needs to be cut away from my own life to protect the faith of others?
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Quote to Remember:

“Jesus doesn’t need us to patrol the borders of His Kingdom. He invites us to witness—joyfully, faithfully, generously. His mission will stretch us. People we wouldn’t have chosen will become co-laborers.”

Next Steps:

- Practice radical welcome: seek one person outside your usual circle and affirm their faith or service this week.
 - Invite a conversation with someone from another denomination or background. Ask what Jesus means to them. Listen.
 - Reflect on any parts of your life—habits, language, pride—that could cause others to stumble. Bring it to Jesus in prayer.
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Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You welcome those we overlook and bless the ones we’d ignore. Help us see with Your eyes. Widen our hearts so we may serve with grace, humility, and love. Remove whatever draws lines between us and others, and draw us nearer to You. Let Your Kingdom come—through hands like ours and voices not our own. In Your holy name we pray, Amen.