



Part 11 – Who Is In, Who Is Out?

In a world that seems to always find reasons to divide, Jesus calls us to unity. That sounds great, but certainly isn't easy. Jesus shows us what it looks like to powerfully challenge the status quo when it comes to defining who is part of our community.

Scripture: Matthew 9:9-13, Mark 7:17-23

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think that Christianity is inclusive or exclusive? Why do you think the way you do? Are there ways in which both are true?
2. Read Matthew 9:9-13 and Mark 7:17-23. Study the passage and try to articulate what the main point(s) of each passage are. Note your observations and use them to help you think through and answer the following questions:
 - Why do the Pharisees get upset about the kinds of people Jesus chooses to eat with?
 - What does that tell us about how they viewed the boundaries of their religious community?
 - How does Jesus approach to 'tax collectors and sinner' differ? What does that tell us about the heart of God?
3. Discuss the tension between the grace and forgiveness that God invites us to live in and the responsibility we have to live accountably before God? What are some of the ways that people abuse grace? What are some ways that people abuse an emphasis on morality apart from grace?
4. Can you describe (from the sermon) the difference between a 'bound set' and 'centre set' approach to community? What is comforting about each and what makes you uncomfortable?
5. What are some of the social, moral, political or ethnic boundaries that you have seen used by churches to construct boundaries?

Moving Forward

By viewing our community as a group of people who are seeking to move closer to Jesus, who is at the centre of our community, how does that help us when we have disagreements, differences of opinion or differing lifestyle choices?