



US VS THEM

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Key Texts: Mark 9:38-41; Numbers 11:26-29; Colossians 3:12-13

Big Idea: It is painful to feel like an outsider, especially in places and among people who we expect to make us feel welcomed and loved.

1. What is your earliest memory of feeling like an 'outsider'?
2. In what ways do Christians, like John (Mark 9:38-41), practice versus in many areas of life and ministry?
3. Reflect on this statement: "Contrary to the approach of many of us who have rigid doctrinal requirements and expectations, Jesus appears remarkably ecumenical and accepting." Spend time thinking about the challenges of being clear about beliefs and yet welcoming to people. For example, when does rigidity build walls rather than bridges? When does rigid doctrine (think Craig's mom's communion experience) become too divisive? In what ways do we need to clarify the limits of acceptance? How do we hold to beliefs while encouraging others to belong?
4. Look at this statement: "The best communities are open, safe, growing, learning, flexible, empathetic, and compassionate." Think of a community you were involved in and felt completely accepted within. Do these descriptions describe your experience? How easy was it for your community to welcome others?
5. Pastor Craig suggested that if we stand against people who are 'for Jesus', we find it easier to stand adversarially against those who don't view critical issues similarly. Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?
6. Read Numbers 11:26-29. How prevalent is jealousy in life and ministry? What does Moses's response tell us about his attitude to his ministry?
7. "Self-criticism may be a strategy for addressing personal shortcomings, but it does not support psychological flourishing." In what ways have you seen this proven true in your life or the lives of others?

8. Removing the “Us V/S Them” mindset requires that we:
 - a. Blur the lines
 - b. Look for similarities
 - c. Be intentional
 - d. Practice self-compassion

Which of these four traits is the hardest for you to do? Why?