



Sermon Discussion Guide: engage outsiders

Series: *here, there, everywhere: following the Spirit's lead*

Date: 05/10/2026

Scripture: Acts 1:1-8 (New Revised Standard Version updated edition)

Opening Prayer

Holy Spirit, widen our hearts. Where we have been quick to label, judge, or avoid, give us curiosity. Where we have been fearful or defensive, give us courage. Teach us to witness to Jesus with humility and love—especially across boundaries. Amen.

Introduction & Context

In Acts 1, the risen Jesus gives his disciples a map for Spirit-empowered witness: **Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.** “Samaria” isn’t just a location—it represents crossing deep relational and cultural boundaries toward people they distrusted or were taught to despise. This week’s message names a hard truth: we all have “Samaritans”—people we avoid, misunderstand, or have written off. The Spirit doesn’t only comfort us; the Spirit expands our concern and sends us across those boundaries as witnesses of Jesus’ new life.

Discussion Questions

Naming the reality

1. The sermon began by naming “people we don’t like” and people we tend to avoid. Without naming names, what kinds of people are easiest for you to dismiss, stereotype, or keep at a distance?
2. What do you think is underneath your avoidance when it shows up—fear, past hurt, disgust, anger, misunderstanding, exhaustion, something else?
3. When you hear “outsiders,” what do you typically picture? How might Jesus challenge that picture?





Scripture focus: Acts 1:8 and the widening map

4. In Acts 1:6, the disciples ask about restoring the kingdom to Israel (basically: “Is it our turn to win?”). Where do you feel that impulse in yourself or in our culture—wanting power, control, or “our side” to prevail?
5. Jesus responds with mission: “You will receive power... and you will be my witnesses...” What do you think Jesus means by “witness”? What is it *not*?
6. Why do you think Jesus intentionally includes **Samaria** in the map? What does it reveal about God’s heart?

Samaria: boundaries, bias, and bridge-building

7. The sermon noted that “Samaria” carried centuries of distrust and disdain. What are some modern-day “Samaria” dynamics—places where history, politics, culture, or trauma create a wall between groups?
8. The sermon reminded us Jesus *went toward* Samaritans (John 4; Luke 10). What do those stories suggest about what it looks like to engage outsiders with dignity and love?
9. In the Good Samaritan story, everyone is a neighbor, but only one acts like it. What helps you move from “theoretically caring” to “actually showing up”?

Jesus’ way: crossing boundaries without becoming what we resist

10. The sermon connected this to Jesus’ teaching to love enemies and respond with a surprising freedom rather than revenge or resentment. What’s hard about that for you? What feels possible?
11. Where do you notice the temptation to “win” instead of witness—especially with people you disagree with?
12. What might it look like to witness to Jesus without dominating, conquering, or “winning arguments,” as the sermon warned?

Making it personal: your Samaritan step

13. If you could name one “Samaritan category” in your life right now (a group you avoid, misunderstand, or feel defensive toward), what is it? (*Again—no naming individuals if that feels unsafe.*)
14. Which bridge-building action feels most doable this week: asking a sincere question, listening without fixing, offering an apology, or sharing a meal/coffee? Why?
15. What would “success” look like this week—not in changing someone else, but in being faithful as a witness?



Closing Prayer

Jesus, you crossed every boundary to bring us home to God. Forgive us for the ways we have othered your beloved children. Give us your compassion and courage. By your Spirit, make us witnesses—people who ask, listen, repent, and love—so that our neighbors may catch a glimpse of your kingdom. Amen.

Key Takeaway

The Holy Spirit empowers us to witness to Jesus across boundaries—especially toward the people we avoid, misunderstand, or have written off.

Next Step — P.A.R.

Pray: For curiosity, compassion, and courage to name the Samaritan you avoid. Ask God to make you aware of the ways you have “othered” people.

Act: Choose one “Samaritan” and take one bridge-building action this week:

- ask a sincere question (“Help me understand...”)
- listen without fixing (no advice, no rebuttal—just presence)
- offer an apology (own your part, no “but”)
- share a meal/coffee (no agenda, just relationship)

Reflect: At day’s end, ask:

Where did I notice resistance or defensiveness in me today? When did I cross a boundary in love—even a small one? What did I learn about the other person...and about God?

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