

How Big Is YOUR Circle?

N.I.M.B.Y. Christians?

THE PASSAGE: *John's Way-Too-Small Circle*

Mark 9:38-41

THE JESUS CIRCLE: *Three Important Questions*

"For whoever is not against us, is for us"

(1) Who is **OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE**? ("Against Us")

- ✓ Those who **REJECT** Jesus
John 14:6/ Romans 1:18-31
- ✓ Those who claim to be inside but...
 - Preach a **DIFFERENT GOSPEL** (*You can't be saved unless...*)
Galatians 1:8-9/ 1 Timothy 4:1-9
 - Love to **ARGUE AND DIVIDE**
Titus 3:9-11
 - Defend and set up camp in **HIGH-HANDED SIN**
1 Corinthians 5:9-13

(2) Who is **INSIDE THE CIRCLE**? ("For Us")

- ✓ Those who get their **POLITICS** wrong
Matthew 10:3-4
- ✓ Those who don't **KNOW** what you **KNOW**
1 Corinthians 8:1/ Philippians 3
- ✓ Those who **STRUGGLE WITH SIN**
Galatians 6:1
- ✓ Those who have **MIXED MOTIVES**
Philippians 1:15-18/ James 4:11-12

(3) How should we respond when we're sure that some **OUTSIDERS** have sneaked inside the circle?

- ✓ Let **GOD** be **GOD**
Matthew 13:24-30

Food for Thought for the week of August 4, 2019
(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

(NIV – New International Version)

1. This weekend Larry reminded us that we draw circles in all areas of our lives where people are either in or out of our circle. Jesus also drew circles but always included more people than anyone else would. As you read through the following stories, how do you see Jesus bringing someone into his circle that most people would leave out?

Luke 19:1-10 - Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. ⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. ⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." ⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Mark 5:25-34 - And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. ³⁰ At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹ "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" ³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

Luke 18:35-42 - As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶ When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷ They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." ³⁸ He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ³⁹ Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁰ Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹ "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied. ⁴² Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you."

What might be some modern-day equivalents to the people we see Jesus reach out to in the verses above?

Are there any needy people you find it easier to bring into your circle? Are there any you tend to leave out?

2. It can be hard to avoid "playing favorites," especially when there are certain co-workers, family, children, friends, etc. who we get along with better than others. What can we learn from God's view on favoritism that could help us when we're tempted to play favorites?

Acts 10:34-35 - Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right."

Romans 2:6-13 - God "will repay each person according to what they have done." ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. ⁹ There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹ For God does not show favoritism. ¹² All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous."

Romans 10:12-13 - For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Ephesians 6:9 - And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him."

How do you feel you're doing in this area of not playing favorites?