

# Moved as Everyone

by Stewart Ruch

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*God's love is not limited by human boundaries, and everyone is invited to receive his transforming love through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 15:51

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Spiritual Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the inclusive nature of Jesus' work and his message. Jesus said that he came to draw all people to himself and that everyone who seeks, asks, and knocks will receive. The preacher highlights the significance of the church's beginnings, which was not started by religious leaders but by a Japanese-American dentist in West Chicago. The preacher also shares personal experiences of feeling excluded and emphasizes the importance of being included. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that Jesus is moved by individuals and extends an invitation to receive the Holy Spirit and Jesus himself.

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## Transcript

When I was in eighth grade, my family made a geographical move that was incredibly difficult for me and changed a lot of how I understood myself and understood my life. I grew up in Indiana, so you have to kind of scale towns and cities. The largest city in Indiana is about 700,000 at that point compared to where we live, which is about 7 million.

So 700,000 is large in Indiana, and we moved from large 700,000 to a town of or a kind of small city of 120,000. That may not sound much to you if you don't understand smaller places and smaller states, but that was a huge move. The kids dressed differently, they spoke differently, they actually worked on farms.

We just went to the Indiana State Fair and saw farmers where I grew up. And all of a sudden, this massive question for me at a time when you're already in eighth grade and longing to be included was, would this new community, would this new school, would these new kids include me? It was the driving emotional question I had. It was kindergarten through eighth grade, and so I actually went from a junior high school where I'd been to an eighth grade where these kids had all grown up together, and the answer got pretty clear pretty quickly as to whether or not I would be included in particularly three areas that I came to hate.

First of all, they still had recess in eighth grade, and recess was a thing when you're brand new to hate. What do you do by yourself on recess when you're in eighth grade and no one includes you in anything? What do you do? Swing on the swing set? What do you do in a lunchroom when you walk in and you realize no one is going to invite you to sit with them, and your only chance are those that they rejected in their system long ago who sit over there? I came to hate the weekends, where before that I had always been included and invited into all kinds of things, because I'd grown up with all the kids in my former city, but now I knew stuff was going on, but I knew that I was not invited anywhere for the entire school year. There's a huge human thing about being included.

If you've ever been in that moment where teams are being picked, and you watch the first third roll by with everybody around you, and then the second third, and you realize, ooh, I'm going to hit the last third of those picked for this team. You're at a work conference, free time comes at night, and you actually realize that others have been texting each other for dinner arrangements, and you didn't get texted. You actually weren't invited.

Brain scientists have actually done work, and they publish this in a journal, Science. Well, they did work that when a person experiences exclusion in a very specific and poignant way, the brain activity is extraordinarily similar to when a bone breaks. There's actually this profound correlation in the brain to the experience you have emotionally when you're excluded, and when you actually have a physical trauma to the body, it's that intense, it's that poignant.

And here is the good news about God. He never initiates exclusion. It's actually so much a part of our lives at some point or another, and so much a part of culture, who's in, who's out, who's up, who's down, that it's almost impossible.

You need a revelation. You need something to be shown to you from outside that in God, he never initiates exclusion. It is impossible for you to imagine a human being who God is not seeking out to reach with his transforming love.

You cannot imagine someone who's the wrong race. You cannot imagine somebody who's the wrong nationality. You cannot imagine someone who's the wrong gender.

There's no way you could imagine somebody who is too young or too old, too intelligent or not intelligent enough, too seemingly perfect or too obviously in some capacity disabled, too rich or too poor. We are not in our narrow thinking prepared to accept the breathtaking inclusivity of the invitation of God to the transforming love of Jesus. That is exactly the message of all saints, is that all are invited by Jesus into the life of walking with him, of knowing him, a breathtaking inclusivity.

This was Jesus's work. This is what Jesus said in the Bible. He said, for example, I have come to draw all people to myself.

He said everyone who knocks, the door will be open. Everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks will find.

Everyone, everyone, everyone lined up in his language. He said, God, my father, so loved, let's see, what's the most comprehensive thing he could say? The world that he gave me. He gave his only son.

I love how Church of the Resurrection was started with this kind of breathtaking inclusive invitation from God. This church was not started in 1954 by a priest. It was not started by a deacon.

It was not started by a bishop. It was actually started by a Japanese American dentist in West Chicago. If you know anything about this area, you'd be hard-pressed to find sushi in West Chicago.

Tostadas, yes. We've lived there for almost 20 years. But there's not a large Japanese population.

I don't know where the Japanese American neighborhood is in West Chicago. What was Dr. Watanabe doing in West Chicago? I don't know. But here's somebody who God was radically including.

And in his being included by the Lord in the gospel, he then wanted to plant a church to include as many as could possibly be included. That's the heritage of resurrection. To be remembered on this All Saints Day.

To be remembered for those who've gone ahead of us, who've gone before us. The church has a feast like all saints. Because she wants to make absolutely clear that a saint, which simply means it comes from a specific word that means holy or holy ones.

When you hear all saints, hear all holy ones. When you hear all holy ones, hear all who are filled with the Holy Spirit. All saints is a Holy Spirit feast.

It's a Holy Spirit happening. It's when the Holy Spirit comes upon all. Young and old.

Male and female. Slave and free. The Holy Spirit is coming to all that would receive the presence and the person of Jesus.

That's the heart of all saints. Let that adjective sink in. There's a great picture of the all saints church in the book of Acts.

When you hear the book of Acts, take that title literally. It has to do with actions. The book of actions.

It has to do with the actions of the early leaders. The acts of the apostles. But it has to do with more than that.

It has to do with the acts of the church. It has to do with the actions ultimately and primarily of the Holy Spirit. When you open the book of Acts, it's like looking at the church family album.

And when you open it up, you go page by page into the book of Acts, you actually get more and more shocked at just how huge and stunning your family is. You think certainly the family can't get bigger. Certainly the family can't spread more.

But you go, they're in our family. They're in your family. They're in our family.

They're in your family. This is an amazing family album. One chapter after another in the book of Acts breaks down one barrier after another.

Barriers that you start thinking, well they'll never break down that barrier. Then they break it down. The Holy Spirit will never do that.

Then the Holy Spirit does that. The first barrier that's broken in the book of Acts is absolutely stunning. It's the barrier that God, His Holy Spirit, is given to humanity.

In Acts chapter 2, we see that the Holy Spirit is given to human beings. It would rest upon human beings in the former era. It was called the Old Testament era.

But now it's being given inside of every human being that names the name of Jesus. This barrier between God and humanity is ultimately and completely broken because of Jesus' cross and resurrection. And it's applied.

It actually happens and the Holy Spirit is given to humanity. If that wasn't enough, then we see that the way that's going to look, some of the leaders of the church in Acts chapter 3, is that the apostles or the followers of Jesus start doing exactly what Jesus did. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.

They raised people from the dead. Jesus put His hands on people's eyes and they could see. They put their hands on people's eyes and they can see.

The barrier between what Jesus' ministry was and what the church's ministry would be is utterly broken down by the Holy Spirit. If that wasn't enough, they go, wow, that's stunning. Then these leaders, these apostles, begin to spread out their leadership.

They begin to give it away. In Acts chapter 6, they say, we need deacons. We need other leaders.

And they give their leadership away. And these deacons go all over the place, throughout the fields, ministering the power of the Holy Spirit. They start reaching people that they didn't expect they would ever reach.

They reach Africans, who at that point, that was not part of what was happening within this early, early church. It spreads out beyond that. You go, okay, wait, this is spreading so quickly.

Is anybody in control? But the Holy Spirit isn't finished yet. Now the Holy Spirit wants to reach those who are far from God, who are actually persecutors of the church. The Holy Spirit wants to reach Isis.

And so it picks a key, top persecutor of the church, and a man named Saul. And the Holy Spirit says, it's not enough that I reach deacons. It's not enough that I reach leaders.

I'm going after everyone. And literally, a man who is an accomplice to the murder of Christians, who was working on a mission of the murder of Christians, and the taking down the church, is converted by the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ. And it spreads out to unbelievers being brought in.

If that wasn't enough, then in a staggering moment, it moves out of just the call of the Jews to know God, and to follow him, and to love him. But the Holy Spirit breaks out beyond that call, and a man named Cornelius. And now all of a sudden, the center, that was kind of this Jewish Hebrew center, starts shaking, and shaking, and shaking.

And then in a moment, in Cornelius's conversion, it just explodes. And all of a sudden, we're not staying in Jerusalem. In Acts chapter 13, we're moving out from Jerusalem.

But the church of Antioch is established. And they go, let's send people to Europe. Let's send them to Africa.

Let's go to Asia. Let's go to the Arabs. Let's go absolutely everywhere that we can physically get to.

Let's go out. The Holy Spirit goes, boom, boom, boom, boom, and just expands and multiplies. And a kind of breathtaking, inclusive invitation.

That's your family album. That's your family. That's who you come from.

More than your original family, as important as they are. That's your deepest family. Equipping everyone for transformation is one of our key family mottos in the church.

That's the vision phrase that we're using now to come to this new life at resurrection. Everyone is what I want you to hear clearly on this All Saints Sunday. Now that everyone can sound vague, but it's actually entirely personal as well.

Jesus is moved, not only by the crowds, as we've read the last two weeks, but he's moved by one individual, Lazarus. He's moved by his sisters, Mary, Martha. He's moved personally.

So Jesus is moved by you. And it might be that Jesus' invitation to you is to receive the Holy Spirit for the first time, to receive Jesus for the first time. Maybe you have been a persecutor of the church, but you have not been a believer in Jesus.

And I would like you to hear very clear an invitation from Jesus to receive him. You don't get to say, he doesn't want to reach me in Christianity. You don't get to say, I'm too XYZ to be reached.

You're able to say, I don't want to choose Jesus yet. You're able to say that. But I need to be very clear with you as I represent what's been taught in the Bible, that God desires that none should perish, but that all should reach repentance of their sins.

When I say everyone, I'm not saying that everyone is saved. That's not what the Bible teaches. But I am saying that everyone is invited.

Everyone is encouraged. Everyone is being sought out to be brought in. And it might be that the invitation Jesus to you is to receive him.

It might be that you receive Jesus and the invitation is come deeper in the Holy Spirit. Be renewed in the power of the Holy Spirit. Maybe a place where you're stuck.

You need greater healing. You need greater transformation. It might even be coming clear right now.

You just need another ministry of the Holy Spirit to help you. And come. There'll be people praying.

We'll be praying during the service. Come and receive that invitation from Jesus for a deeper healing from him. Finally, Jesus' specific invitation to you might be, you've known me and you're walking deeper and deeper in me.

I need you, like the church in Acts chapter 13, to now spread out. I need you to be free to go out. I need you to follow in the footsteps of your Father in Christ, Dr. Watanabe, and receive not only God's including invitation, but give it out to others.

Everyone who seeks shall find. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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