

# beyond sunday

not a fan — 9.28.25

## The Open Invitation — Mark Turney

### Icebreaker / Connection Question:

"What's the greatest invitation you've ever received—who invited you, and how did you respond?"

**Memory Verse:** *"If anyone would come after me, let them deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow me."* (Luke 9:23, NIV 1984 — note the word *anyone*)

### 1. Anyone Is Welcome (Matthew 4:19)

Read Matthew 4:18–20. Jesus called Peter and Andrew — fishermen who hadn't "made the cut."

- Why do you think Jesus chose guys like them instead of the religious elite?
- When have you felt like you were "B-team material," and how does it encourage you that Jesus calls people like that to follow Him?

### 2. Matthew's Story (Matthew 9:9–13)

Read Matthew 9:9–13. Jesus invited a tax collector to follow Him.

- Why was this such a shocking choice in that culture?
- How does Matthew's story stretch our view of who Jesus really invites today?

### 3. Anyone Means Everyone (Luke 9:23; Matthew 9:10–13)

**Note for the group:** Do your best not to go off on a rabbit trail here that leads us down culturally divisive conversations, but rather stick to what the Scriptures are telling us.

Luke 9:23 says “If anyone would come after me...” Pastor Mark reminded us that Jesus really meant *anyone*.

- How does that little word challenge who you think belongs in the church?
- Pastor Mark told the story about John, the visitor in Yakima, and said, “*you can’t clean fish before you catch them.*” What does that illustration mean for the way we welcome people?
- Jesus said, “*It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick... I desire mercy, not sacrifice.*” What would it look like for our church, and our group, to live this out with the “anyones” who come through our doors?

### 4. No Custom Contracts (Luke 9:23; 1 John 2:3–6)

**Note for the group:** Discipleship isn’t about setting your own terms; it’s about becoming like Jesus.

Read Luke 9:23 again and also 1 John 2:3–6. Pastor Mark said discipleship isn’t just knowing about Jesus — it’s becoming like Him.

- What do you think “no custom contracts” means when it comes to following Jesus?
- Where do you find yourself tempted to say, “I’ll follow Jesus, but not here”?

## 5. Welcoming vs. Withholding

Pastor Mark contrasted two mistakes churches often make:

- Some say, “everyone is welcome,” but never call people to **biblical** transformation. In these places, grace is spoken of but discipleship is watered down — people are invited in but never taught to deny themselves, take up their cross, and actually follow Jesus.
- Others close the door on people Jesus has invited, expecting them to clean up first before they can belong. This makes church a place for the already “qualified,” which is the opposite of the gospel.
- Which of these errors have you seen in your own experience? Which one feels more tempting in your own background?
- How does holding both truths together — *everyone is welcome and there are no custom contracts* — give us a fuller, more faithful picture of the gospel?

## 6. Knowing vs. Becoming (1 John 2:3–6)

John writes that anyone who claims to live in Jesus must walk as He did.

- What’s the difference between knowing about Jesus and actually becoming like Jesus?
- How have you seen God slowly shaping you to reflect Jesus in your everyday life?

## 7. Personal Reflection

We don’t remember Matthew as a tax collector anymore — we remember him as a Gospel writer.

- What hope does his transformation give you about your own story?
- If friends looked at your life five years from now, what do you hope they would see that reflects Jesus more clearly?