



## Sermon-based Guide for Reflection and Discussion

**Week of  
September 19**

**Scripture:** Acts 6:1-6, John 4:19-26

**Sermon Title:** *The Slippery Slope of Christian Community*

### **Key Points:**

The Book of Acts – the history of the early church – is a story about the church as a community but also the church ever expanding. To be a part of this church is to be woven into the common life of a faith predicated on Jesus, but it is a community that is always expanding beyond boundaries of class, ethnicity, gender, and national identity.

This simple and seemingly innocuous story from early in Acts is actually pretty revolutionary. It shows that from the beginnings the church was called by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to care for and fully include those who had been marginalized. We want and seek to be that church too.

Jesus's encounter with the woman at the well (a Samaritan and the definition of an "outsider") demonstrates that for Jesus our worship is to be expansive (not geographically based) and focused (on the spirit and truth). That too is a widening of the community.

### **Questions:**

1. Share a time where you were included in a group that you were surprised to be a part of?
2. Wikipedia defines empathy as "the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their frame of reference, that is, the capacity to place oneself in another's position."
  - a. Give an example of how Jesus showed empathy.
  - b. Give an example of how you have demonstrated empathy or seen empathy in the church (our church or other churches you have been a part of).
  - c. Do you think that those outside the church think of those in the church as empathetic? What are the implications of that for us and for the Kingdom of Jesus?