

Week 1 (Jan. 25th) – Stop Forbidding: When Control Dresses Up as Discernment

Source Scripture: Luke 9:49–50 (NKJV)

Core Truth: Control often comes from insecurity; Jesus calls us to unity and humility in His work.

Opening + Setup (5–7 min)

Family, one of the easiest traps in church life is thinking God only works through our circle, our style, our label.

John saw somebody casting out demons and said, “We told him to stop... because he does not follow with us.” That sounds spiritual—until Jesus corrects it.

Luke 9:49–50 (NKJV)

⁴⁹ Now John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we **forbade** him **because** he does not follow with us.”

⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him, “Do not **forbid** him, for he who is not against us is on our side.”

Four Main Points (30–33 min)

1. Control can sound like discernment

1) Control can sound like discernment (Luke 9:49–50)

Notice what John doesn't say. He doesn't say the man was using **the wrong name**. He doesn't say the man was preaching a **false gospel**. He doesn't say the man was working **against** Jesus. The issue wasn't the **fruit**—it was the **fellowship**.

John's concern was not, "Is this true?" His concern was, "Is this ours?" And that's where control hides. It puts on the clothing of discernment, but underneath it is ownership—the need to **manage** who gets to **represent** Jesus, who gets to be **used**, and who gets to be **included**.

But Jesus corrects it plainly: "Do not forbid him." In other words, don't confuse loyalty to your group with loyalty to the Kingdom. Don't treat "not with us" like it automatically means "against us." Because when control is driving, we start shutting down what we can't supervise—even when God is the One working.

2. Jesus measures fruit, not affiliation

Jesus doesn't respond by asking, "Is he one of the twelve?" He doesn't ask, "Did he get permission?" He doesn't ask, "Is he connected to your circle?"

Jesus goes straight to the principle: "**Do not forbid him.**" Why? Because what mattered in that moment wasn't his affiliation—it was the fact that the work being done was consistent with the authority of Jesus' name.

Jesus has told us this is one of the signs that follows believers. Listen to what Jesus says,

Mark 16:17

17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

So that means when you see deliverance happening in the name of Jesus, you're not watching a personality, you're seeing a Kingdom sign."

In other words, Jesus is teaching them: don't reject what is bearing Kingdom fruit just because it isn't coming through your preferred pipeline. If the name of Jesus is being honored and the enemy is being driven back, then you're not watching competition—you're witnessing confirmation.

So the question isn't, Are they with us? The question is, "Is Jesus being lifted up. And here's the safeguard for discernment: Listen to what Paul says,

1 Corinthians 12:3

³ Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

So that means we're not celebrating everything that looks spiritual—we're honoring what truly exalts Jesus as Lord.", and is the work aligned with Him?"

Now let's talk about why we do this—because control doesn't come from strength. It usually comes from insecurity.

3. Insecurity creates gatekeepers

John's words expose something subtle: "We **forbade** him because he does not follow **with us.**" That's the language of insecurity. When people feel unsure of their own place, they start trying to control everybody else's place.

Insecurity doesn't always show up as fear—it often shows up as policing. It starts appointing itself as the **doorkeeper** of what God can do, who God can use, and where God is allowed to move. And the tragedy is: you can be walking with Jesus and still be **threatened** by what Jesus is doing through someone else.

That's why Jesus corrects them quickly. Because gatekeeping isn't protection—it's **pride** trying to stay in control. And Jesus will not let His disciples turn ministry into a **private club.**

4. Kingdom unity is bigger than our preferences

Then Jesus gives them a line that resets their whole mindset: "He who is not against us is on our side." Now, you might say, 'But didn't Jesus also say, listen to what he says,

Matthew 12:30,

³⁰ Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

So that is why we have to read Scripture with Scripture. In Matthew 12, Jesus is dealing with people opposing Him; in Luke 9, this man is using His name and pushing back darkness—so Jesus says, ‘**Don’t forbid him.**’

The issue isn’t whether he’s in your group—the issue is whether he’s against your King.” Jesus is widening their vision. He’s teaching them that the Kingdom is bigger than their group, bigger than their methods, bigger than their comfort zone.

The disciples were drawing lines based on association—Jesus draws lines based on opposition. If a person is not fighting the mission, not resisting the name, not working against the Kingdom, then don’t treat them like an enemy just because they’re not in your circle.

Because the moment we make the Kingdom equal to our preferences, we start shrinking what Jesus is building. And Jesus is saying plainly: don’t make enemies out of helpers. Don’t divide what Heaven is using.

Practical Application (3–5 min)

- Celebrate God’s work even when it doesn’t look like you
 - Thank God for the fruit before you critique the form—style, method, personality
 - Speak honor when you see Jesus being lifted up—especially outside your circle.
 - **Train** your heart to rejoice when God uses someone else in a way He doesn’t use you.

- Refuse the need to control outcomes, people, or platforms
 - Release the “need to manage” and choose obedience over manipulation.
 - Stop trying to own what God is doing—serve it, support it, and stay submitted to Christ.
 - Let God open doors and elevate people; don’t compete for **influence or visibility**.
- Ask the heart-check question: “Am I protecting truth—or protecting my ego?”
 - When you feel irritated, ask: “What exactly is being threatened—doctrine or my **preference**?”
 - Check your motive: “Am I correcting to restore, or correcting to be right?”
 - Look at the fruit of your response: humility and peace, or pride and control.

Family, this is what it means to stop forbidding. Not just in ministry—in our hearts.

Transition to Altar Call (connects to the text)

- Family, Jesus is not just correcting what we do—He’s correcting what we are. And the truth is: control is a heart issue. If we can’t rejoice when God moves outside our preferences, we’re not just struggling with people—we’re struggling with pride.
- But the good news is this: the same Jesus who corrects us is the Jesus who saves us. He doesn’t expose to shame—He exposes to heal.

Altar Call (Salvation + Rededication) + Prayer (5–7 min)

- If you're here today and you know you need Jesus—this is your moment. And if you're here and you've drifted, grown cold, or you've been living more for your own way than His—this is your moment too.
- Father, we repent of pride, competition, and control. Give us humble hearts that celebrate Your work wherever You choose to move. Save the lost, restore the wandering, and make us one in Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.