



# That Sounds Hard, Would You Tell Me More?

## SERMON NOTES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### **John 1:14–18 (NIV)**

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup>(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ”) <sup>16</sup>Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

### **Hebrews 4:15-16 (NIV)**

<sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

## **Sermon Outline**

### **Introduction**

**Empathy: Sensing others’ emotions, understanding their perspective, and taking active interest in their concerns.**

**The Cost of a Lack of Empathy: Steve’s Story**

## Let's Pay It Forward

1. **Embrace the Incarnational Approach of Jesus**
2. **Recognize that Empathy is the way of real friendship**



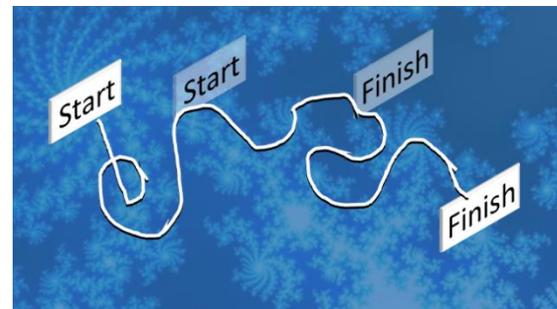
## Acknowledge the Challenges

1. **Accept there is more that unites us across generations than separates us.**
2. **Recognize that today's challenges are different.**

The Three Big Questions

I'm Wondering	It's About	God Responds with..
Who am I?	Identity	Grace
Where do I fit?	Belonging	Love
What difference do I Make?	Purpose	Mission

A table with three columns: 'I'm Wondering', 'It's About', and 'God Responds with..'. The rows contain: 'Who am I?' / Identity / Grace; 'Where do I fit?' / Belonging / Love; 'What difference do I Make?' / Purpose / Mission.



## Take Your Next Steps Towards More Empathy

1. **No More Stereotypes**
2. **Commit to asking Questions**
  - a. **Impact**
  - b. **Seeing through the Eyes of Others**
3. **Go deep with someone not in your generation**

## Conclusion

**Even more than Empathy...**

## Discussion Questions

### Sharing Life Together

1. Who was someone in your life as you are/were navigating towards adulthood who really listened and empathized with your struggles?
2. When you think of the big three questions—Who am I?, Where do I belong?, What should I do?—which one of these questions is one you have grappled with most recently and why?

### Reflecting on the Message Together

1. What stands out to you about “Steve’s story?”
2. Why is it easy to become “grumpy” and “lacking-empathy” with younger generations?
3. While there are differences between generations, there is more that unites us than divides us. What are things that can unite us across generations? What are possible reasons that older generations have tended to only view younger people as a problem but a problem that they cannot relate to at all?
4. What do you think are reasons that “15 is now like 25” and “25 is now like 15?” If you are over 30, what do you think it would feel like to be facing life with an earlier starting line and a later finish line?
5. A recent study has showed that 13-to-17-year-olds are more likely to experience “extreme stress” than adults. What do you think are possible sources to this new reality?
6. In seeking to grow in empathy, we are encouraged to:
  - Stop stereo-typing young people
  - Commit to asking questions, listening and learning about their experiences and struggles
  - Try to see the world through their eyes
  - Go deep with someone not in your generation

Which of these seems most attractive? Why? Which seems most challenging? Why?

Where do you think you should begin in growing in empathy with younger people?

7. How did God speak into your life through this message?

## **Meditating on the Scriptures**

### **Read John 1:1-18**

We get to know people through the relationships they indwell (for example: wife, husband, daughter, son, friend and neighbor). We can also learn about a person through the work they perform (teacher, cashier, nurse, engineer, etc.).

- 1. What relationships do these opening verses ascribe to Jesus?**
- 2. What roles do these opening verses ascribe to Jesus? What is his work among us?**

John opened his account of Jesus by calling Jesus “the Word,” literally in the Greek he called Jesus *“logos.”* This was a powerful picture for both Jews and non-Jews. For Jews, it called upon the rich and powerful activities of God’s word in the Old Testament. The word of God was active in God’s creation of the universe (Gen. 1:3ff., Ps. 33:6). The word of God communicated God’s will (Amos 3:1, Isaiah 9:8; Ezek. 33:7). The word was also God’s agent of salvation, delivering God’s people from enslavement and death (Ps. 107:20; Is. 55:1). The word *logos* also would have associated Jesus with God’s wisdom and God’s law. Further, for the Greco-Roman world the term *logos* referred to the “divine reason” or the “ideal pattern” by which everything exists. Because this term could mean so many things but at the same time it immediately symbolized God, creation, purpose, ideal, and plan—it is assumed that John chose this word not so much to define Jesus but that Jesus could redefine what people thought of in reference to the Word of God.

- 3. How does Jesus help to transform the way you think about the following?**

(Your response to this question is dependent upon your own familiarity with Jesus. Answer based on where you are at. Spend some time thinking through each one, but don’t worry if you don’t have responses to some of these. One of the benefits of small group discussion is to hear where others are at.)

- **The purpose of the universe –**
- **What we know about God –**
- **The way God saves us from enslavement and death–**
- **What it means to be wise –**
- **The purpose of God’s commands –**
- **The ideal human being –**

In the opening four verses, John relates that the Word of God is our creator and is the source of our life. Beginning in verse five, there is a shift from describing Jesus as our creator to also identifying Him as a savior. “The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome/understood it.” The word translated by either “overcome” or “understood” is best seen to have a double meaning. With “overcome,” it looks back at the initial creation when God made the light and the darkness was unable to overcome it. With “understood,” the verse is looking forward, in Jesus the light of salvation has entered the world but the darkness has not understood it.

**4. Why do people have a hard time understanding the light Jesus shines upon our world?**

**5. How does John 1:1-18 describe our salvation?**

In John’s Gospel, we are saved by believing that Jesus truly reveals God’s glory—we will learn that Jesus reveals God’s glory on the cross, when he dies for our sins. Where the law was given through Moses, Jesus has given us an even greater salvation—adoption as children and making the Father known. John describes this process of making the father known as giving us His grace and truth. Grace and truth are rich with meaning. The words pick up a number of themes: first they are equivalent to Old Testament themes of God’s steadfast love and faithfulness; second, “grace” implies the free gift of salvation; and the “truth” also implies that Jesus is real and authentic. As we witness Jesus throughout John’s gospel, we will see Jesus exhibiting grace and truth.

**6. How have you recently experienced Christ shining the glory of God into your life?**

**A Special Relationship**

John introduced a special word to describe the relationship that exists between God the Father and God the Son. In Greek, the term is *monogenes*. Translations have most commonly translated it with the literal English equivalent, “only begotten.” The NIV followed by more recent translations have rendered it “the One and Only,” or “God the One and Only.”

The problem with rendering the word “only begotten” is that it implies that in some way God the Son was begotten through sexual intercourse. John, however, has been very careful to show that Jesus has existed from eternity and we are dealing with the God of Israel—who is the only God, having no equals and does not copulate or beget other gods.

The intended significance of the word does not fall towards the begetting but the type of relationship. Again, the Old Testament provides the backdrop of understanding (Gen. 22:2). Isaac is referred to as Abraham’s “only begotten,” but he had other children. Isaac, however, was his especially loved son, the son whom he cherished. Here we find John’s intended meaning and the reason why the NIV has chosen “the One and Only.”