



THE INCARNATION & HOW IT REFLECTS EMPATHY

A Counselor's Look at Christmas

In this study, we will explore a dynamic and experiential interpretation of the Incarnation. Because of sin, we are separated from our real self, from one another, and God-Himself. This separation increases our longing to be seen, known, and valued. What we most desperately need is empathy.

"Empathy is the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that understanding to guide your actions." — Roman Krznaric
In the finite person of baby Jesus, the Infinite entered our broken world and put on flesh. He didn't just *imagine* our life; he *experienced* it, firsthand.

Christmas can become even more meaningful for each one of us as we are willing to receive the gift of empathy through the birth of Jesus.

Highland Colony Men's Roundtable

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A Counselor's Look at Christmas – Session #1

December 05, 2024

Scripture: John 1:14; Hebrews 4:15; Isaiah 53:1-3

Music: Chris Tomlin - Emmanuel God With Us - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mt_xfOutfSQ

Video: It's Not About The Nail - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAhrOg>

Resources - *Why I Believe* by Henry Cloud

INCARNATION & EMPATHY: What's the Connection?

1. _____: **A CORE CHRISTIAN ATTRIBUTE –EMPATHY EXPRESSED WITHIN THE TRINITY & INCARNATION OF CHRIST**
 - To live incarnationally is to display empathy to those around us –to live and love like Jesus.
2. _____: **TO SHARE IN ANOTHER'S EXPERIENCE, TO "WALK A MILE IN ANOTHER'S SHOES."**
 - *The very thing* Jesus did for us through the Incarnation.
 - God chose to identify with us, put himself "in our shoes" by becoming a human. (John 1:14; Hebrews 4:15).
3. **EMPATHY IS NOT** _____.
 - Sympathy is feeling sadness for someone without personally connecting with them. –"sad at a distance"
4. **EMPATHY IS** _____.
 - _____to enter the person's experience and *express* our understanding of their feelings back to them.
 - _____our opinions, our perspective, and value system.
 - _____the other a safe place to open up without fear of condemnation, blame, or rejection.
 - _____"I am paying attention. I see you. I hear you. You are important to me. You matter."

INCARNATION & EMPATHY: "That Ain't Empathy!"

1. **DON'T OFFER ADVICE.**
2. **DON'T RUSH IN TO FIX IT.**
3. **DON'T OFFER RELIGIOUS PLATITUDES.**

"I know just how you feel."	"You really have a lot to be thankful for."	"God has a plan."
"He lived a good long life."	"It could have been worse."	"Just have faith."
"God won't give you more than you can bear."	"Look on the bright side."	"Everything happens for a reason" (quoting Rom 8:28).[6]
Maybe God needed to get your attention."	"You need to move on."	

INCARNATION & EMPATHY: What Empathy Looks Like.

1. HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

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| 1. "I'm so sorry this has happened to you." | 5. "That stinks." |
| 2. "Wow, that sucks. How has this impacted you?" | 6. "That must feel incredibly lonely. What has it been like for you?" |
| 3. "That sounds really hard. Tell me more about..." | 7. "You seem really upset about that. I'd like to know what you're thinking." |
| 4. "Tell me what you're feeling right now. I'm here to listen." | 8. "It sounds like you're really hurting. Tell me more." |

2. LIKE JESUS, YOU CAN WEEP WITH THOSE WHO WEEP.

Responding like this acknowledges the hurt and invites the person to share. As they do, you can continue to convey compassion and do your best to resonate with their experience.

ACTION: Journal This!

1. Look up Isaiah 53:2-3 and consider how Jesus empathizes with you.
2. Tell a time when you received empathy, and how it was healing.
3. Name a time where you missed an opportunity to give someone empathy who really needed it.



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SCRIPTURE – The Message

John 1:14 - 14 The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

Hebrews 4:15 – 15 We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all - all but the sin.

Isaiah 53:1-3 - 1 Who believes what we've heard and seen? Who would have thought God's saving power would look like this? **2** The servant grew up before God - a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look. **3** He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand. One look at him and people turned away. We looked down on him, thought he was scum.

"Emmanuel God With Us" By Chris Tomlin

<p>Go tell it on the mountain The one that we've been waiting for The king of our salvation Born on this day our savior Christ the Lord Go tell it on the mountain Over the hills and everywhere That we can be forgiven The weight of all our sin He came to bear Emmanuel, God with us Emmanuel, King Jesus The Savior of the world is born Emmanuel, God with us</p>	<p>Emmanuel, King Jesus The Savior of the world is born Go tell it on the mountain Humbly in a manger lay Mercy sent from heaven Angels fill the sky with highest praise Emmanuel, God with us Emmanuel, King Jesus The Savior of the world is born Emmanuel, God with us Emmanuel, King Jesus The Savior of the world is born</p>	<p>Go tell it on the mountain This baby born of virgin birth The ruler of all nations The glory of our God has come to earth Emmanuel, God with us Emmanuel, King Jesus The Savior of the world is born Emmanuel, God with us Emmanuel, King Jesus The Savior of the world is born The Savior of the world is born The Savior of the world is born</p>
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