



Elastic Hearts
October 4, 2020
John 17:13-18

Connect:

- Everyone's had the experience of having to start a weighty conversation. Name such a weighty conversation you once had to have. How did it feel? What was your approach?

Engage

- Read **John 17:13-18**. Read this passage through twice. Upon a second reading/hearing, pick a word or phrase from this power-packed prayer of Jesus that stands out to you. Why are you drawn to that word or phrase at this time in your life?
- In these five passages alone, Jesus names the "world" nine separate times. What is the significance of this? Do you pick up a theme of how/why he's naming it here? How does this contrast to the famed statement earlier in John's Gospel: "For God so loved the..."? (3:16).
- Jesus is clear, in his prayer to God, that he's not asking God to "take them *out* of this world" but that he's "sending them *into* the world as you sent me." What are the implications of this for followers in 2020? What are we called to do as those who are *sent*?
- Mark says in his sermon that, "Someone cooler than me said, 'Comparison is a punk.'" Do you struggle with an attitude of comparative living? What does this do to/for your spirit?
- The classic Hindi greeting, "Namaste" has been defined in this way: "The image of God in me honors the image of God in you. I recognize that you and I are equal in God's eyes. I greet you in that place where you and I are one." Do you believe you can practice such a greeting even with your greatest enemy?
- Given the nature and tension of the world right now, it can be tempting to harden our hearts toward others. What does it mean to live with an elastic heart – particularly in this season in America?

Next Steps:

- Listen to the song, "Shelter" by Jars of Clay. Reflect on its meaning at this time in your life.
- Practice *caring*. That might sound strange but if care is not intentionally practiced, we can quickly become hardened to the needs and opportunities around us to serve. Practice in your home, in your neighborhood, and wherever you encounter other people God loves just as much as you.
- Pick a neighbor or two this week for which you'll do something kind. Find out their favorite ice cream and drop them by a pint some night. Learn what they care about right now. *Listen. Care. Support.*

Pray:

- "Lord, from your heartfelt prayer, we feel your passion and love for us. We trust in your desire to send us into the world, as challenging as it is some days. We know you don't send us empty handed but equipped with unique gifts, talents, and enough grace to make a positive impact on all we encounter. Give us the courage to go humbly and with a spirit of caring help for our neighbors. Amen."