

## Weekly Study of Sunday's Message

June 7, 2026 *"I Think You're Wrong (But I'm Listening): A Guide to Grace-Filled Political Conversations"* *"Curiosity over contempt"*

### I Intro.

We're in June now, and headed towards full on summer. Our schedule will slow down a bit, but there are still things happening. You'll want to keep up with everything that's happening at NCC. Stay connected through our social media to keep up with everything that's going on. This is our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey. We don't want you to miss out on anything. We consider you part of our community. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are fully committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family. If there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know.

### II Sunday.

We're coming in hot. Brace yourself. Take a guess whether you think each statement is made by a Republican or Democrat.

***"They need to put prayer back in schools."***

***"When I was at the protest march last month."***

***"I wish they would make recycling mandatory."***

***"We can't just let everyone into this country."***

***"The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun."***

***"We need to raise the minimum wage."***

***"We need a government that can help those who struggle."***

***"We need a smaller government that stays out of our lives."***

***"You're either with us or against us." "If THEY win, America is finished."***

***"If you're not outraged you're complicit."***

***"I want politicians on both sides to work together. But I don't want my side to compromise."***

My guess is that the last four may apply to all of us. See— we do have some things in common! But I want you to fully feel your reaction to each one of those statements. Whether you supported and agreed with it or not. You had this visceral response to each of these statements. And— own this next step we all take. We then add additional thoughts and beliefs to people who believe and hold to these values. We have to admit, when we hear people say these specific things, we even add stories to who they are. Because you hold this belief, have this opinion, I will fill in the rest of what I THINK about you.

We're in an election year, and we feel a responsibility as a faith community to give us a foundation to navigate these choppy waters. Not to push political positions, or make you take a certain stand on specific issues. You work that out yourself between you and God.

But we have to learn how to live out our faith in community with people who believe, look, vote differently than us. The book we will be drawing our information from is- ***“I Think You’re Wrong: But I’m Listening”*** It is political, because it’s caring about things that affect people we love. But we hope, and will do all we can, to build unity through this. To be a loud voice of the unity Jesus prayed for, in a world that relishes division and disunity. Not to suppress or judge whether your beliefs, values, opinions (and we have to first admit we mash all of those together) are correct. But to place Jesus at the center of who we are, what we do, and then find unity in him and not in our agreement.

This will be about being able to be fully ourselves. With all we believe, issues we have passionate opinions on. And not be afraid to do life with, worship with, those who do not hold to the same beliefs we do. To create an environment where we can talk about hard things. That may even stretch the limits of our ability to get along. But to lean into the teachings of Jesus, that can help us hold what feel like conflicting issues at the same time. Let Jesus be what holds this body together, rather than everyone being the same. And I know you appreciate what a challenge this will be.

**Curiosity over contempt.** (This is where we will begin this journey) To be able to choose curiosity over contempt, we have to discover and admit we don’t know everything.

**Can we say this out loud? *“I don’t know everything! Even when I act like I do!”***

This can only come out of genuine humility. Dropping the desire to win. To be right. Think about some issue, political, theological, or even a silly one, (crunchy peanut butter vs creamy, ketchup on a hot dog, mayo or Miracle Whip, coffee or hot tea, crunchy Cheetos or Cheese puffs, white or wheat bread) that you don’t get. You can’t understand why someone holds the position they do. Think of questions you could ask to get some kind of understanding.

Learning to cultivate a heart of curiosity will take the focus off ourselves. Protecting our beliefs and of course our ‘rightness’. Having to win. And move us to focus on getting to know others. Rather than placing them in a category that excuses us from judging them. So, for our first Sunday in pursuing a community that embraces and celebrates who we are as NCC, and in The United States of America, we want to intentionally and deliberately cultivate within each of us a heart towards curiosity. Getting to know others better, on a deeper level. Not writing others off because we disagree with what they believe. Learning to not allow differences to divide us. Know this. Diversity will make you uncomfortable. And know this also. That discomfort is good for you. So, be curious and lean into it. I fully believe there are Jesus centered truths and values that will be the common place where we gather, and find our unity.

All of scripture speaks to this practice of embracing a Spirit-filled life embracing the mystery and unknown of God. Which should naturally move us towards a curiosity approach to life. Especially towards others. Seeking and discovering God and others, rather than holding people in contempt. These scriptures will also push us to do our work to continually practice being the Spirit-filled people of God, who live in a way that builds this kind of community. **Where does this journey begin?**

**Proverbs 18:1-3. Unfriendly people care only about themselves; they lash out at common sense. Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their own opinions.**

**Doing wrong leads to disgrace, and scandalous behavior brings contempt.**

So, **Any questions?** Contempt is defensive. It’s for our felt need for protection. Contempt is when God isn’t our primary focus. It’s when we are our primary focus. Our faith must be outwardly focused—maybe even—curious. Our beliefs and values should form within us a tendency to move towards others. No matter who that other person is. And the only way to do that is to be curious.

**So, where does this curiosity come from?**

**Proverbs 25:2-3. It is God's privilege to conceal things, and the king's privilege to discover them. No one can comprehend the height of heaven, the depth of the earth, or all that goes on in the king's mind!**

This is the heart and driving force behind choosing to be curious. God has created a world that should provoke within us a desire to seek and search. It's a designed delight, joy, greatest adventure EVER, to seek the things God has concealed. And to provoke this thing we call curiosity. We often want the folder with all the notes and info, so we don't have to do anything. But God wants us to experience the thrill and satisfaction of seeking AND finding. And God has placed within each of us that same mystery, that should provoke that same kind of curiosity to learn about others.

**What if the person you know who believes differently is a mystery worth exploring?**

**If so, then how do we practice seeking the mystery contained within others?**

**James 1:19-20. Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness<sup>h</sup> God desires.**

[h] justice. Personal righteousness is always described as justice, and visa-versa. This is the prescription for how we practice our curiosity. Listen without reacting. Don't speak over others, or story top. This practice is the heart of curiosity. And our anger, contempt, for others who are different does not produce righteousness or justice, that God is wanting for our world.

**What should this practice focus our attention on?**

**Colossians 3:1-2. Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. <sup>2</sup> Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.**

Contempt is bondage to the values of earth. Curiosity is born out of things from above.

Plain and simple. When you think about things from above you see everyone as an image-bearer of God first. Their political positions second. **So, what would this look like lived out in our daily life?**

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**Colossians 3:12-17. Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.**

This is our goal for this series. A curiosity, desire to seek, that grows an attitude, a lifestyle, a transforming person within us. This entire passage is the wardrobe of curiosity.

**Compassion** = I care about why you think what you do. **Humility** = I might be wrong. Say it again.

**Meekness** = I don't need to dominate this conversation. **Patience** = I'll give you time to explain.

**Bearing with one another** = I'll stay at the table even when you frustrate me. **Forgiveness** = Your vote doesn't disqualify you from my love. Contempt is the opposite wardrobe: judgment, pride, aggression, impatience, abandonment, grudge-holding.

### **III Challenge.**

Practicing curiosity over contempt is recognizing the inherent sacredness in each other.

We HAVE to start at this place. A couple of weeks ago I was talking to a parent who was opening a window to who they were to their kids. And their kids were beginning to 'see' and be curious to why their parent were the way they were. The parent was revealing how they were raised, what that had done to them. And why their own kids were experiencing from them what they were. It wasn't a justification for however they responded in the moment. But it was a personal journey by the parent of self-discovery of why they were the way they were. And a beautifully genuine confession to let their own kids know that what they had experienced from them wasn't their fault. The kids got to see a two-fold process. What becoming self-aware should look like. And teaching their child the much needed skill of looking past how you experience someone. To be curious, ask questions, develop the ability and desire to be open to why others are the way they are.

No matter how wrong you believe someone else is, and how awful they are for what they believe, in their mind they worked through whatever steps to get where they are. This does not mean you agree with, or even tolerate their actions. Sometimes we have to confront the things Jesus confronted. But we don't make the other person the enemy in the process. It means you take the time, and make the effort, to practice curiosity to see how they got to where they are. Don't force them into a category, pigeon hole them because they have a certain belief.

We are all very complicated people. Belonging to a community, a church, where people have different beliefs is difficult. We've had people leave because they just weren't able to do that. No judgment. We all have our lines we draw that we just can't move past. But we've also had many people intentionally choose to be a part of this community, because they were looking for a place that allows and encourages a variety of viewpoints and perspectives. We celebrate that.

Honestly, in our area, or really anywhere, there aren't a lot of places that you'll find the kind of across the board diversity we have here. We celebrate our uniqueness as a community of faith also. The only way we can continue to be this kind of people of God, this kind of church, is if we're willing to be open and honest with ourselves. And that's what all of these scripture passages pushed us to do.

Close with this scripture. *"God Is My Security, Not Being Right"*

**Psalm 18:1-3 *"I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge..."***

Contempt is defensive - it protects my identity by destroying yours. When God is my fortress, I don't need to defend myself by attacking you. Curiosity becomes possible when your opinion isn't a threat to my security *"I can afford to listen to you because my foundation isn't up for debate"*

This is the first in this series; ***"I Think You're Wrong, But I'm Listening"***. We are to be the people of God, to celebrate and encourage the growth of diversity, we must FIRST choose curiosity over contempt. It seems to be built into the nature of God, how it's designed into the nature of relationships, and we are called to pursue this life.