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**The Gospel of John: That You May Believe**

"No One Like Him"

John 7: 40-52

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**Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:**

*"It is high time that Christians should rediscover that the very heart of their faith is that Jesus Christ did not come to make a contribution to the religious storehouse of mankind, but that in him God reconciled the world unto himself." - Dr. W.A. Visser't Hooft, first General Secretary to the World Council of Churches.*

*"The uniqueness of Christ is not a peripheral teaching of the Christian faith. If we lose our sense of absolute dependence on what Jesus did, it will erode away the whole of the faith until little remains. But equally important to holding to the uniqueness of Christ is not acting arrogant or superior to those who do not agree or who are not Christians. Nothing so quickly discredits this biblical claim than if we make it without love, or in pride, defensiveness, conceit, or if we refuse to discuss it at all . . . This introduces the important issue that part of the persuasiveness of the Christian faith includes factors that are not, strictly speaking, cognitive - a point too often neglected in discussions of apologetics. It raises the matter of who we are as we try to defend the truth of God and persuade others. What looms large is our own character, the quality of our love, and our ability to relate to other people with both courage and sensitivity." - Dick Keyes*

*"The people who hanged Christ never, to do them justice, accused him of being a bore - on the contrary, they thought him too dynamic to be safe. It has been left for later generations to muffle up that shattering personality and surround him with an atmosphere of tedium. We have efficiently pared the claws of the Lion of Judah, certified him "meek and mild" and recommended him as a fitting household pet for pale curates and pious old ladies." - Dorothy Sayers*

*"There is no other stream." - Aslan, The Silver Chair*

**Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:**

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered? What is God showing you about Himself and yourself in this passage?
- Why must we regard Jesus as the "only" rather than merely a "great"?
- What is the uniqueness of Jesus that convinces you and, perhaps, leads to divisions with folks who don't see Jesus as all that unique or compelling?
- What do you make of Dick Keyes' distinction in the quotation above between holding firmly to the uniqueness of Christ yet not acting in arrogant superiority? He prescribes relating to other people "with both courage and sensitivity". Which side of the horse are you more prone to fall off - lack of courage or lack of sensitivity? How do we embody this humility and confidence?
- Have you ever felt that sense of urgency and ultimacy that Jesus requires in this passage for yourself or for someone else? How have you stewarded that experience? What came of it?