



## THIS IS US. THE **REAL** US

People looked at life through a different lens after the resurrection. After the last year, we certainly have a different lens because of COVID. Honesty, Empathy, Vulnerability, Humility – these are some of the positives to come out of this pandemic. During this series, we'll look at what to take with us when we move out of pandemic.

### Week 1 **Reaching Out – Empathy** **Empathy (Find the Forgotten)**

John 21

Peter felt entirely unworthy. Three days ago, he denied his Savior. Now he's caught fishing with his shirt off and standing on that beach is Jesus. While the world called Peter unworthy and had forgotten him, Jesus stood on the beach and offered him breakfast. It's been a really long year – trauma, chaos, political divisions. Who has been forgotten in your life? To whom does Jesus want you to reach out.

### Week 2 **Your Story Matters – Vulnerability** **Vulnerability (Share your story.)**

Luke 24:13-34

Once in a lifetime event. My grandchildren and great-grandchildren will ask me to tell them stories of the “red phase” of 2020. To help get our children through the last year, we've reminded them that this story, their story, will be historic. Every ‘ordinary’ person will have a story from the year of the pandemic. God's story is filled with ordinary people sharing their story. A few walking on a road are changed by the story that they hear.

Songs: My Story by Big Daddy Weave or Write Your Story by Francesca Battistelli

### Week 3 **Unfinished Business – Honesty**

John 20:24-30

When we feel left out, we doubt and go to a negative place. This has been a hard year for our faith and the doubts have crept in to our very soul. Many people in a hard doubting place in our faith. Once you are on the hamster wheel of doubt, it's hard to get off. Name your doubt as the first step to get off the hamster wheel. Give people permission to acknowledge our doubts. God can handle the doubts. Jesus doesn't chastise Thomas for doubting. Thomas has courage. There's a little bit of Thomas in all of us. Doubt is a question: faith is an ongoing process.

[To Be Honest Song](#)

### Week 4 **Leaning In – Humility**

Philippians 2:1-11; Ephesians 4:1-4

March 16, 2020 everything seemed to shut down. Non-essential businesses closed and millions were out of work. Suddenly we focused upon those who had the greatest need and those who were serving and risking their lives every day. Our attention turned to helping the least, the last and the lost. As every American has the ability to get a vaccine, it is important to remember that, as Jesus said, ‘the poor will always be among us.’ In humility, let us listen to the story of others and in humility serve and give.

Week 5      **The Pod – Community**

Colossians 3:1-11

When the world shut down in March 2020, our 'pods' were created. For months we only saw the same few people or zoom-ed with just those closest to us. Going to the grocery store was hard enough that we only talked to the very few in our pod. When life changed, our pod became very important. Who is in your pod moving forward? How can you expand your pod to include others, yet keep that close connection?

Week 6      **The Little Things – Gratitude**

**Gratitude**-grateful even for toilet paper, postured for joy, grateful for the things we used to take for granted  
When there was only 3 days left of toilet paper in the closet, my chest started to pound. When I snagged the Charmin and the hand sanitizer at the Costco, I practically leapt for joy. In everything, God wants us to give thanks. No matter where we are, what we face, we can still give thanks. What gives you a heart of gratitude?