

**Monday**

Read Jonah... the whole thing, you can do it! It won't take long!

We have wrapped up our sermon series looking at Jonah. What are the key things you learned about the Book of Jonah?

What did you learn about God from the Book of Jonah? What did you learn about Jesus?

What did you learn about yourself?

What are you learning about how God wants you to live?

**Tuesday**

Read John 6:1-15, with focus on v. 15

John's recounting of the feeding of the five thousand is one of the key passages where we see Jesus resisting to be the type of messiah that the people expected. Jesus is concerned that the people, having just been miraculously fed by Jesus, were going to act as a mob and try to make him king, which would have led to either an odd political movement or a violent rebellion. Either way, it is likely the movement would have been violently quashed by the

Roman Empire unless Jesus miraculously and violently defeated the Empire... which is almost assuredly what the people want.

Why doesn't Jesus want to be this type of Messiah? Wouldn't it have been great for Israel and for Israel's God (Jesus' God... God the Father) to have Jesus overthrow the occupying government and make Israel the greatest, most powerful country on earth?

What is the plan? Read Matthew 25:31-46 and 2 Corinthians 5 for some insight!

**Wednesday**

Read Genesis 15

How can we love God first, love others second, and ourselves third as it relates to loving country? One way is to properly love our own home – the place we grew up, the folks who live there, the landscape, the sights and sounds, the food, and the way of life. Not everyone has a place of origin to call home that they feel fond of, but I think it is very common for us here at Cooks Creek. Many of our families have spent many generations in this area and we have strong connections to this place as it gives us a sense of belonging and pride. Appreciating the things that make your home area unique should, rightly ordered, help give you an appreciation for how others love their distinct places in the same way.

You might not have a passion for Charlottesville or New York City or London or the Nile River Valley or Baghdad, but tens of thousands if not millions feel about those places the way you feel about your place. That doesn't make one better or worse, but our own love of our place, if we are doing it in the context of loving God first, can help us understand what is great about our place and great about other places. Our love embraces our place and can be confident for others to love their place.

Can you love your home and also love people for whom somewhere else is "home" and also love those lands?

## Thursday

Read Jonah 4:1-11

We are all like Jonah in that we make people, ideas, and things our ultimate concern above God. The cliffhanger at the end of Jonah leaves us to wonder how things turned out for Jonah. We don't know if he truly made God his ultimate concern. For you and I, we can make our ultimate concern God, but the only way to do that is through the radical grace of God in Christ. Salvation is from the Lord. We are all undeserving, no matter where we come from, but we can all receive salvation through faith in Jesus' grace-filled sacrifice on our behalf, and we can get our priorities and love in order through discipleship to Jesus. God gives us hearts big enough to love many people, ideas, and things, but our hearts are only designed to love one thing ultimately and all our other love will flow from that ultimate love.

Make that ultimate love for God in Jesus Christ and watch your life and your world come into order.

## Friday

Please spend today in prayer for Iraq and the Christians in Syria.

You can get more info, and this info comes from, here:

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/>

What is life like for Christians in Syria?

Syria's ongoing civil war has turned the country into a breeding ground for the persecution of Christians. The economic crisis caused by COVID-19 has exacerbated the unrest, which was beginning to lessen until the pandemic hit. Many Christians are still internally displaced or remain as refugees in other countries as a result of war and rising Islamic extremism. In areas controlled by

Islamic extremist groups, public expressions of Christianity are banned; most churches have been seized or destroyed.

Areas for prayer:

- Pray for displaced Syrian Christians to return to their homes and livelihoods. Ask God for continued restoration for those who have already returned.
- Pray that Syrian believers would be the light of hope in Syria, providing comfort to those suffering from trauma or from a lack of food and resources.
- Pray for the Word of God to saturate the land of Syria and that people will find new joy, strength and hope through Scripture.