# Sunday 2nd March – Connect Group Notes

## Embracing the other

**Read Jonah 1:1-10**

1. People often describe themselves in different ways—by their job, family, nationality, beliefs, or interests. What are some common ways people find their identity today? What aspects of identity are especially important in our society?
2. When the sailors interrogate Jonah, they likely want to know which god he has offended to cause the storm. While our culture doesn’t believe in many gods, in what ways do people today "worship" certain things—whether success, money, relationships, or something else? What do people sacrifice in pursuit of these things?
3. Jonah identifies himself as "a Hebrew" rather than an Israelite. Why might race or nationality have been so central to his identity? How might this have influenced his refusal to go to Nineveh? Where do we see national identity being prioritized today, sometimes in ways that conflict with faith?
4. If our most important identity is in Christ, how should we think about other parts of who we are—such as nationality, culture, job, or family? Are they unimportant? Do they still have value? What role should they play in our lives?
   * Optionally: Read Philippians 3:1-14. Paul also calls himself a Hebrew—how does his perspective on identity challenge us?
   * Optionally: Read Revelation 21:22-27. What does this passage suggest about national identity in God’s kingdom?
5. In what ways can our identity as Christians become too focused on external things—our devotion, sacrifice, or even just church attendance? How can we guard against this?
6. Timothy Keller writes:  
   *"Shallow Christian identities explain why professing Christians can be racists and greedy materialists, addicted to beauty and pleasure, or filled with anxiety and prone to overwork. All this comes because it is not Christ’s love but the world’s power, approval, comfort, and control that are the real roots of our self-identity."*
   * What are some signs that our identity might be shaped more by the world than by Christ?
   * How can we better root our identity in Christ’s love for us? What practical steps can help?
   * How does recognizing Jesus’ love change the way we see others, especially those who are different from us?