

**THANK GOD,  
HE'S A  
COUNTRY BOY**



**TEACHING JESUS  
IN A RURAL  
CONTEXT**

## **SPRING WEBINAR SERIES**

**Hosted by Hinton Rural Life Center**

This webinar explores the rural setting of most of Jesus' ministry and how we can apply that to our rural settings in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Country music will help us feel our way into the rural. The series is taught by Dr. Jonathan LeMaster-Smith,\* who has regularly taught rural ministry webinars and served as a rural ministry resource for Hinton Rural Life Center for the last few years

This series can serve as a live, small group study opportunity for local churches or as an educational opportunity for individuals. The recorded sessions and accompanying resources will also be available as a study resource.

Each session will come with an outline of the session, copy of the slideshow, and a playlist of songs grounded in theme.

Virtual 1-hour sessions will be offered at 12:30pm and 7pm – Thursday, March 31, for the free Invitation Session, and on Wednesdays for the 5-week series.

### **Thank God, He's a Country Boy: Teaching Jesus in a Rural Context**

**FREE INVITATION SESSION: Thurs, March 31, 12:30pm & 7pm; online registration required by March 30, at [www.hintoncenter.org/training](http://www.hintoncenter.org/training) .**

#### **Out in the Boondocks: The Parable of the Friend at Night and Image of Rural Life**

We've often heard the saying "If the light's on, come on in," and while that may be more myth than truth, it holds a grain of biblical and rural wisdom. Jesus' parable of the friend at night illuminates an image of rural hospitality and community that subverts expectations. Just like Little Big Town's "Boondocks," rural life might be a little different, but it's a beautiful life.

#### **5-WEEK SERIES, Wednesdays, April 27 – May 25; 12:30-1:30, 7-8pm; \$35 for the series**

Online registration and payment required by April 20, at [www.hintoncenter.org/training](http://www.hintoncenter.org/training)

#### **Week 1: April 27**

##### **Where I Come from: Rural Life Then and Now**

Just as Alan Jackson's hit song, "Where I Come From" describes rural life, this session explores the rural realities of Jesus' day and how they compare to our day. This will include historic, demographic, and cultural realities of then and now.

## **Week 2: May 4**

### **Famous in A Small Town: Jesus' Life and the Ministry of Relationships**

Miranda Lambert's "Famous in a Small Town" reminds us that while the big city is great, our small towns are full of relationships, stories, and potential. Jesus spent most of his life traveling from small town to small town spreading hope to people. This session explores country life and the opportunities small town relationships offer our ministry.

## **Week 3: May 11**

### **Coat of Many Colors: Teachings and Parables**

For Jesus and Dolly Parton, teaching the Bible is not an academic affair. Jesus' teaching of scripture, telling of parables, and offering new ways of life offer us a blueprint for teaching faith in the rural community. Dolly's "Coat of Many Colors" provides our first lesson plan.

## **Week 4: May 18**

### **Do the Watermelon Crawl: Miracles**

When the first miracle is turning water into wine, you know God is up to something. The miracles of Jesus take place in the villages and homes of country folk trying to get by in life. "The Watermelon Crawl," Tracy Byrd's slightly tacky country tune, reminds us that for parties and miracles, context matters.

## **Week 5: May 25**

### **We Are Seeds - Death, Resurrection, and the Kingdom**

Rural life is not a stranger to death. The reality is . . . country living involves a lot of death. But more than that, it involves the hope of new days, new seasons, and new stories. Rissi Palmer's "Seeds" is a resurrection proclamation that, like Christ, we can be reborn and live into God's story in our own red dirt.



**Dr. Jonathan LeMaster-Smith** is a graduate of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary with a PhD in Christian education and congregational studies. The focus of his work over the past ten years has been rural ministry. He also has interests in faith formation, Methodist studies, and postmodern thought. He serves as adjunct faculty for several institutions, including Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston (Chicago), IL, and Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC.

Jonathan is currently a scholar in residence at First United Methodist Church in Newton, NC, and teaches a series of rural ministry certification courses through BeADisciple.com; he also teaches webinars focused on rural ministry for Hinton Rural Life Center.

