



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of April 2, 2017

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

II Corinthians 3:12-4:6 "Faces"

¹² Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, ¹³ not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. ¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

¹ Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. ² But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

- This passage describes things that impede our spiritual vision and what God does about them. Have you come to the place in your life where "the veil has been removed" (3:16) and you see God clearly? Have one or two members of the group share how you came to know "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (4:6).
- Read II Corinthians 3:12-16. Paul has been talking about the glory of the New Covenant—the hope of the Gospel (3:1-11). This "hope" (12) is the reason for Paul's boldness in ministry and he explains his boldness by comparing the people involved in the ministry of each covenant. Compare the messengers and recipients of Old and New Covenants.
- Read II Corinthians 3:17-4:1. Ministry can seem to be far from "glorious". We are tempted to be ashamed, afraid, feel discouraged, overwhelmed, and doubt the truth and power of the Gospel. What privileges do we receive in the New Covenant? Why is Paul encouraged to "not lose heart"?
- Read II Corinthians 4:2-6. What does Paul renounce? What is the essence of Paul's ministry? What keeps people from responding to the Gospel? How are we tempted to "proclaim ourselves" in ministry to others? What do you see when you behold the face of Jesus Christ?
- Pray for our church and for one another: For freedom, clarity and boldness in Gospel ministry; For the veil to be removed for those that cannot see Jesus.

Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org
To hear sermons and access past study guides visit www.wepc.org/archivedsermons

Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on II Corinthians 3:12-4:6

- This passage is first and foremost about how people change.
- Getting “veils” removed
- Being transformed into the same image form one degree to another.
- How in the world are we going to get veils removed? After all, “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (4)
- The first thing we do is in verse 5, “What we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.”
- We hold up for people a faithful picture of Jesus and we serve them. And then we pray.
- The same Power that created light in the first place gives light to the dark human heart now so that Christ is seen for who He really is. That is how you became a Christian. That is how those you love will become Christians. You give them a faithful portrait of Jesus, and God gives them eyes to see.
- This sounds hard. It is, Paul goes on to say in verse 10, “We always carry about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.”
- This sounds like a lot of blah, blah, blah church talk.
- “In the mainline churches (and I would add in many others as well), there is no lack of exhortation to a life ‘worthy of the calling to which we were called’ (Ephesians 4:1). Countless sermons are built around the phrase, ‘we are called to be more...’ What is often missing from such exhortations is the proclamation of the One who is actually doing the calling, who has ratified our calling in his own blood, who has entered our life in order to defeat from inside human nature the work of our enemy.” (*Fleming Rutledge*)
- Frankly, this seems like a lot of work, and I don’t think I am up to it, or there is the temptation to think by doing, we measure up.
- This will be true of you if what happens in verses 14-18.
- “What the people saw, by and large, as they looked through this veil was a kind of law that enslaved them rather than freed them. They interpreted the law as commandments of God loaded on them from outside without any spiritual, transforming power inside of them to give them the desire to do the commandments. And that’s the meaning of slavery. Slavery is when you get commandments from outside that you don’t want to do on the inside. The result is either rebellion or legalism. You can say, ‘I reject the burden of your commandments.’ Or you can say, ‘I will try to measure up with external compliance,’ when inside there is no real delight in the commandments—no real ‘want to.’ That is slavery. And the antidote to that kind of slavery is the internal transforming power of the Holy Spirit. ‘Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.’ This is what the new covenant is all about—the enabling power of the Holy Spirit transforming us from the inside out so that we love the law of God. So Paul says in verse 17 that the reason this enslaving veil is taken away when we turn to the Lord is that ‘the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.’ The reason the Spirit gives freedom is that the Spirit gives internal transformation that gives us the desires to do what God wills for us to do. Freedom is wanting to do what you are commanded by God to do.”
- This freedom (transformation) comes from looking at Christ.
- We become what we observe.