



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of March 5, 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 1:12-22, "Yes & Amen"

¹² For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you. ¹³ For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand— ¹⁴ just as you did partially understand us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

¹⁵ Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace. ¹⁶ I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from

Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea. ¹⁷ Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time? ¹⁸ As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. ¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. ²⁰ For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. ²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²² and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

- Paul clarifies his purposes to the church at Corinth. What do you think the church might have been saying about Paul's motives and ministry?
- What reactions might you have if your spiritual mentor had a conflict with you, said he was coming to visit you, but then didn't, choosing instead to first visit elsewhere? Why?
- What is Paul's boast in v.12? What is Paul's goal in defending himself in vv.13-14?
- Paul recounts ways that God has been faithful in vv.15-22? What are those ways?
- How do the points about God's faithfulness relate to Paul's claim to faithfulness?
- Why does Paul direct their attention away from his travel plans (15-18) to the unqualified "Yes" of the Gospel (19-22)?
- What courage and comfort do you draw from God's unwavering faithfulness to His promises? Paul is strengthened to love the Corinthians in light of God's faithfulness. How is God's faithfulness strengthening you to love others?
- Paul's response to God's "Yes" in Christ is to "utter our Amen to God for His glory" (20). In prayer, recount God's faithfulness to you, your family, to our church, to our world. Give Him glory for what He has done and pray with courage for Him to fulfill all He has promised.

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 1:12-22

“What is the context of this passage. Is Paul fickle? Is Paul double-minded? Does he vacillate? Does he say one thing, mean something else and do yet another thing? No. And he illustrates this by going to the Gospel. So Paul is saying: My heart is not divided toward you because God's heart is not divided toward you. If you belong to Christ by faith, then everything God could possibly give you for your good he has signed over to your account in Christ. You hear the same answer at every point: Is this promise in my account? Yes. Is this promise in my account? Yes. Is this blessing in my account? Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. All the promises of God are YES in Christ.” (John Piper)

“All the promises. Why, here is a grand granary full! Who can sort them all out? Promises of pardon to the seeking sinner! Promises of justification to the believing child! Promises of sanctification to him who is struggling against sin! Promises of the supply of all kinds of spiritual food to the flock of Christ! Promises of guidance! Promises of preservation! Promises of holy education! Promises of peace and joy! Promises of hope! Promises of the sustenance of our love! Promises for death! Promises for judgment! Promises for glory! Promises that reach to all eternity! All the promises. What a range of vision this expression opens up! Go forth and lift up your eyes and gaze upon the stars. See whether you can number them all—do they not far exceed all your powers of mathematics? Yet, if you could count the stars, weigh them in scales and tabulate the measure of their light, you could not count the promises of God, or estimate their true value, or know how infinitely precious is the Divine Light which streams from them into a believing soul!” (Charles Spurgeon)

The evidences for this are these: Anointing; Sealing; The Spirit. We are marked out in these three ways to be the recipients of these promises.

So, if this is true why is my life so hard?

“Jesus said, [promised] ‘In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart, I have overcome the world.’” (John 16:33)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.” (John 16:20-22)

We don't merely soldier on, stoically enduring, hoping things one day will be better. Jesus is risen from the dead, and that's the sure and certain pledge that God is going to make all things new—all things, new heavens and a new earth, new bodies, new hearts free of anxiety and anger, lust and sorrow. The resurrection of Jesus is our joy, and the joy of the Lord is our strength.

You may have lost children.

You may not have been able to have children.

You may have children who rebelled and turned away.

You may live in a prison of fear and tyranny, a loveless home, a thankless job.

You may have a body full of pain, a mind full of fear and uncertainty.

You may struggle with sin deeply, sins you commit and sins committed against you.

But to every one of you, the LORD repeats His promise: “You now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.” (John 16:22)