



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of February 26, 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 1:8-11, "Rely"

⁸ For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises

the dead. ¹⁰ He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. ¹¹ You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

- In this passage Paul gives a specific example of being comforted in affliction (*cf. II Corinthians 1:1-7*). We don't know the details or exact location of these events. But Paul does tell us about the personal and ministry impact of what he suffered...
 - Why does Paul want the Corinthians to be aware of his afflictions (8a)?
 - What internal trials did Paul experience as a result of his afflictions (8b-9a)?
 - What purpose does Paul now see in his afflictions (9b-11)?
 - What spiritual convictions about God were developed in Paul as a result of his suffering?
- What kinds of temptations do you experience in suffering? On what created things do you tend to rely when you are afflicted?
- Paul talks about our hope and God's deliverance. Think about a way you are currently afflicted. What tends to be the ground and goal of your hope?
- Has God increased your faith through suffering? How so?
- Help the afflicted in prayer. Pray for one another and for our world. Pray for our church to "rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead".
- The Word of God, the sacraments, and prayer are always a means of grace for God's people who need deliverance. Consider worshipping together as a family or small group at...
 - The [Ash Wednesday Communion](#) Service on March 1 @6:30PM in the Sanctuary
 - The [Sunday Evening Communion Services](#) throughout March @6PM in the WEPC Chapel
 - The [Lenten Personal Retreat](#), Saturday March 4, 8:30am-12:30pm

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 1:8-11

What exactly happened to Paul in Turkey? Interpreters differ. In any case he feels so burdened and so pressured that he would die.

Paul points us to two things in this terrible trial that give him purpose.

The first is that God has brought this to Paul to bless him by removing his self-reliance and causing him to trust all the more (because he has no choice) in the One “who raises the dead” (9).

So a couple of things to note and correct our glib theology.

“So utterly burdened beyond our strength” (8); There is no other place to turn when you are in this kind of situation. Paul thus speaks of the fundamental and determinative question concerning the human being according to the Scriptures- namely, whether one lives in trust in the divine Word (the Gospel of Jesus Christ) or in unbelief and idolatry.

These little deliverances are pointers to the big deliverance in the resurrection of Jesus.

The Bible is full of laments about dying.

“For in death there is no remembrance of You; in Sheol who will give You praise?” (*Psalms 6:5*)

“What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it tell of Your faithfulness?” (*Psalms 30:9*)

“Do You work wonders for the dead? Do the departed rise up to praise You? Do You work wonders for the dead? Do the departed rise up to praise You? Is Your steadfast love declared in the grave, or Your faithfulness in Abaddon? Are Your wonders known in the darkness, or Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?” (*Psalms 88:10-12*)

“For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, ‘I have made you the father of many nations’—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, ‘So shall your offspring be.’ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was ‘counted to him as righteousness.’ But the words ‘it was counted to him’ were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.” (*Romans 4:13-25*)

The second thing Paul points to is the call to pray. We actually participate in the work that God is doing.