



## A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of January 1, 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.

### Ruth 3:1-5, "Go"

<sup>1</sup>Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? <sup>2</sup>Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. <sup>3</sup>Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to

the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. <sup>4</sup>But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do."<sup>5</sup> And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

1. In this life, we will walk through dark times and sweet seasons of encouragement. Over the course of Ruth's story, we have seen Naomi move from bitterness ("*The Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me*", [Ruth 1:20](#)) to hope ("*His kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead*" [Ruth 2:20](#)). Reflect on a time when God led you from a dark season to a hopeful one. What did God use to restore you?
2. What did Naomi tell Ruth she sought for her (v.1)? Remember that the story of Ruth occurs in the time of the Judges, an era in which "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6, 21:25). Do you think Naomi is driven by love or self-interest?
3. When we are hopeless, we are particularly susceptible to sin. How are you tempted when you are hopeless?
4. What were the things Naomi advised Ruth to do about her plan (vv.2-4)?
5. What was Ruth's response to the plan (v.5)? Why does she respond in this way?
6. What risk will Ruth take by sleeping at the threshing floor where Boaz sleeps? Was this wise?
7. Hopeful people take risks. How has that proven to be true in your life? What faithful risk is God calling you to take in this New Year?
8. The Scripture is the story of redemption in which God Himself is truly the only Righteous One. Does this challenge the way you have read Scripture, especially the Old Testament?
9. Pray for one another, the Church, and the World in light of the sure hope we have in our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

## Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on *Ruth 3:1-5*

- “I have learned that with creatures one loves, suffering is not the only thing for which one may pity them. A rabbit who does not know when a gift has made him safe is poorer than a slug, even though he may think otherwise himself.”  
(Richard Adams, *Watership Down*)
- The movement from “The Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me” (*Ruth 1:20*) to “His kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead” (*Ruth 2:20*)
- What begins to happen when someone moves from depressed hopelessness to expectant hope in the Lord and his goodness, kindness and grace
- Hope helps us move in integrity and joy. Not only does hopelessness make us ‘stuck’, it also is a root of sin
- “My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well for you” (*Ruth 3:1*)
- Hope has lifted Naomi’s eye from herself only to actually serving Ruth in the way she was supposed to all along.
- “But Naomi said, ‘Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me.’” (*Ruth 1:11-13*)
- So she sends Ruth on this mission. Is it risky? What might Boaz do or say?
- Naomi hopes and she trusts in the goodness of God that will also supply the integrity in Boaz that is required
- “You were made for a life of love, love received from God, love shared with His creatures. You number your days, you order your life in this way, whether you have many more years or just a few more hours. And when your last hour comes, when your days are numbered, you die in the strength of God’s promise: ‘Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died’ (*Romans 8:33*). Risen from the dead, He intercedes for you. Don’t be confident in your youth or strength. Don’t despair when they fail. Don’t worry about the coming year. Live each day in the wisdom of God. Do the work of your vocation, forgive your neighbors, rejoice in Christ crucified for your forgiveness, rejoice all the more at His resurrection and His coming at the last day. For in His hands is every hour, day, and year, even unto the ages of ages.” (*Christopher Esget*)