



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of December 18, 2016

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 2:19-23, "Redeemer"

¹⁹And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." ²⁰And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our

redeemers." ²¹And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'" ²²And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted." ²³So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

- What is "kindness" (*hesed*, v.20a)?
- What kindness is shown to Ruth?
- What kindness has the Lord shown you lately?
- What does it mean to be a "redeemer" (v.20b)?
- Why is Boaz considered a redeemer?
- How has Jesus shown Himself to be your Redeemer?
- In a time of prayer, thank God for His kindness and redemption.

- **This is the fourth Sunday of Advent.** Advent is a time that helps us to remember Christ's first coming and reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation. It also teaches us to look eagerly for His second coming when He will return to redeem His creation and exercise His rule with all power and authority. **Read this week's *Call to Worship* from [Isaiah 65:17-19, 24,25](#).** Your redemption is drawing near, and Jesus is the Redeemer. What exactly does Jesus redeem?
- Each Sunday in Advent, the congregation joins our voices in a ***Declaration of Faith*** at the beginning of the worship service. **This week, we read responsively from the [Belgic Confession](#).** This statement is a summary of Christian belief written in 1561. Read this statement together as a group. What does it say Christians believe the scope and impact of sin? About the scope and impact of God's grace and mercy?
- Each Sunday in Advent, we read a passage from the Gospel of Luke in anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ. **This week's *Gospel Reading* is [Luke 2:36-38](#).** This is the account of the prophetess Anna. What was Anna's life like? How does she respond to hearing the testimony about Jesus, and seeing the Christ Child?
- As a part of worship **[we sing songs and hymns](#)** that further amplify each Sunday's message. **This week, we sang the Christmas carol, "O Come All Ye Faithful",** which calls worshippers to wonder at the Incarnation of God and adore Him as Lord. **[Read, listen to, or sing](#) the hymn,** and enter into a time of prayer and adoration of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*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 Ruth 2:19-23.

Can you see the Kindness of God?

- “The Lord's kindness has not forsaken the living (Naomi and Ruth) or the dead (Elimelech and Chilion). It was the Lord who stopped the famine. It was the Lord who bound Ruth to Naomi in love. It was the Lord who preserved Boaz for Ruth. Ruth did not just happen to come to Boaz's field. The light of God's love has finally broken through bright enough for Naomi to see. The Lord is kind. He is good to all who take refuge under his wings. So let us fall on our faces, bow before the Lord, confess our unworthiness, take refuge under the wings of God, and be astonished at his grace.” (*John Piper*)
- Can you see God's kindness even as it comes to us through others?
- For Naomi this scene means nothing short of a return to life.
- Look at all this food and all of it from a redeemer.
- ..with the advent of this understanding comes an upward surge in her spirit. (see verse 2, “Go”)
- A lifting from the depths of despair, one who was essentially dead now lives.
- But the story is not over yet.
- “gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests” (7 weeks).
- And she lived (settled down) with her mother-in-law.
- The future is still uncertain. Clouded really with what will happen next.
- Have things really changed?
- Naomi and Ruth still are widows.
- They still rely upon gleaning.
- The harvest will be done and then what?
- It really is unclear what will happen next.
- This small passage of scripture is an outline of life for the believer, so appropriate for Advent.
- “The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight”
- “A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices”
- Things have shifted dramatically for Naomi internally.
- The relationship between the kindness and committed love of a redeemer and the hope it brings even in the midst of difficulty.
- Can we see the kindness of God? If we can't, then there is no hope, really, no reason for hope.
- “This whole town does look like whatever hope becomes after it begins to weary a little, then weary a little more. But hope deferred is still hope. I love this town. I think sometimes of going into the ground here as a last wild gesture of love—I too will smolder away the time until the great and general incandescence.” (*Marilynne Robinson*)