



Worship Study Guide for the week of August 7, 2016

PSALMS

WEPC Small Group Network

Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org

WEPC's Small Group Network meets 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.

Sermon: *Refuge & Strength*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Psalm 46](#).

The Way I Think about God as my Refuge

- After I have expended all of my energy in making sure I and mine are safe, then whatever else is out of my control, I entrust to God expecting him to protect me against those things which seem outside of my control.
- "Do you live as a member of the body of a resurrected Christ? Or are you like the disciples? At the end of John's account of the Resurrection, Mary Magdalene reports back to them that the Christ is risen, that she has seen the living body of Jesus. Yet the next verse — the next verse! — it's a few hours later and the disciples have got the doors locked 'for fear of the Jewish leaders' (John 20:19). Jesus comes and tells them 'Peace be with you' — and he speaks the same words to us, over and over — but do we believe it? Or do we live in fear of a death that has already been defeated, a death that Paul testifies will be swallowed up (I Corinthians 15:54)? Now, death is real. And it's unjust, cruel, and rapacious. Death is real. The most reasonable response to such a precarious existence is fear. But there is nothing reasonable about the resurrection, and so we hope. By contrast, concentrating our formational energy in places of physical safety and economic security allows more opportunities for otherwise good American values to become idols. Late modern capitalism and the technology it has brought about has incredible potential to be corrosive to faith and family; by consciously placing ourselves and our families into situations where our trust in God for our safety and security is evident (and our love for others is costly) we rebuke the powers of this age in a way that frugality, simplicity, and isolation cannot." (Matt Loftus)
- "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe." (Proverbs 18:10)

A Few Observations

- In this Psalm there is nothing about our own virtue, courage or wisdom. We never will know what strength is till our own weakness drives us to trust Jesus' omnipotence and power. The peace that this psalm speaks to does not come to us simply by what God is, but what and who God is to me.
- God is my refuge and strength. This God is my God. The image of mountains and the image of water.
- God is not simply a passive refuge, but an active disarmer. The glory and the exaltation of our God is the hope of the world.

The Two Commands

- "Come and behold" and "Be still"
- "One of the reasons we invest our lives in some insignificant ways is that we never become still enough to let the great realities hit us. We are always on the move. Always in a hurry. Or when we do stop, we flip on the radio or the TV and let somebody else's hurry fill our minds." (John Piper)
- "The most reasonable response to such a precarious existence is fear. But there is nothing reasonable about the resurrection, and so we hope. As children we learn to say, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.' We learn that, after his resurrection, Jesus told his disciples, 'Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.' Christ is a gracious, abiding presence in all reality, and in him history will finally be resolved." (Marilynne Robinson)

Going Deeper in God's Worship

Reflect on the text together. [Hear the sermon here.](#)

- 1.) What is true about God's character, promises or work?
- 2.) What does the Scripture teach you about yourself or others?
- 3.) Are you encouraged to follow Jesus in His mission? How?

Reflect on the whole of Sunday's liturgy together. Locate this week's [Order of Worship here.](#)

- 1.) Was there an element of the worship service that you would like to share with the group?
 - *A Scripture verse that was read?*
 - *A prayer that was prayed?*
 - *A song that was sung?*
 - *A sacrament that was administered?*
 - *A way that glory was given to God?*
 - *A way that someone encouraged you?*
- 2.) Did the Holy Spirit convict, change, or encourage you in any way you wish to share with the group?
- 3.) Is Jesus leading you or the group to take a specific risk to minister the Good News to Richmond? Your neighbors? Your co-workers? Your family and friends?

Going Further in Christ's Mission

- 1.) Have the Scripture text open in front of you as a guide to your prayers.
 - Spend time thanking God and giving Him glory.
- 2.) Ask the Lord for vision, strength and faith as followers of Jesus Christ.
 - Count on the work of the Holy Spirit for change.
 - Ask for God's forgiveness and grace to repent of sin and trust Jesus.
 - Pray for the world, our country, Richmond, and the Church.
 - Pray for members of your group, family members, or co-workers, neighbors and friends.

Kevin Greene, 2016