



Worship Study Guide for the week of July 10, 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: *My Shepherd*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Psalm 23](#).

The Presence of My Shepherd

- The power of simple words to bring reality to bear in one's life. Especially when we are bound up in anxiety.
- "However, my thesis is always the same, and it is very simply stated, though it has two parts: first, contemporary America is full of fear. And second, fear is not a Christian habit of mind. 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. These are larger, more embracing terms than contemporary Christianity is in the habit of using. But we are taught that Christ 'was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made....The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' The present tense here is to be noted. John's First Letter proclaims 'the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.' We as Christians cannot think of Christ as isolated in space or time if we really do accept the authority of our own texts. Nor can we imagine that this life on earth is our only life, our primary life. As Christians we are to believe that we are to fear not the death of our bodies but the loss of our souls." (*Marilynne Robinson*)

He Restores our Souls

- Note the very personal nature of the Psalm. See the pronouns. Also note he begins by talking about God and then moves to talking to God.
- "Why does David switch from 'he' to 'you' precisely at verse 4? Why didn't he just go on to say, 'Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, he is with me; his rod and his staff, they comfort me'? I think the switch to the more intimate "you" precisely when he enters the valley of the shadow of death is a universal experience among God's people, indeed among all men in one form or another. The crises of life draw us closer to God. We are more prone to talk about God when we are in the green pasture and more prone to cry out to God when we enter some fearful ravine." (*John Piper*)

Want?

- I will not lack anything that the sovereign shepherd knows I need. Even when I walk (am led) through the valley of the shadow. Paths of righteousness may lead me through the valley of the shadow.
- He is with me there and he is still leading me.
- He takes me there to lead me to a better place.

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