



Worship Study Guide for the week of May 15, 2016



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: *Spoke from God*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [II Peter 1:20-21](#).

On Pentecost the Holy Spirit enabled the Apostles to preach the Gospel and enabled everyone present to hear it in their own language.

This is helpful to us, because any interpretation of any text in the Bible that does not take the whole of the Bible into account and its focus on the redemption we have in and through the work of Jesus Christ is doomed to be false.

"The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them." (*Westminster Confession of Faith I*)

But for many of us, either the Bible is not enough, or we want to put God's seal of approval on what we want to do.

"WARAW, IN—Don Farmer, 43, reported Tuesday that he was recently "led by God" toward several things he really likes—and in fact, as a general rule, everything he feels spiritually moved to do he coincidentally enjoys very much. For instance, last week Farmer was considering whether he should go to the Men's Golf Outing or volunteer at the city food pantry, when he says, miraculously, he knew just what to do. "You could say I really just felt led to lend my support to the church event," Farmer confirmed to reporters. "It would have been great to be a volunteer over at the food pantry, but I had to say, 'Here I am, send me, Lord, even to the ends of the fairway. Plus I recently purchased a new driver, which I took as a definite sign.'" Additionally, he felt led to attend the church's Super Bowl Party last year, which it just so happens he thoroughly enjoyed. The next Sunday, Farmer was unable to sign up for the church outreach visit to the senior home or the juvenile detention center due to the lack of a "nudge" from the Holy Spirit, but did feel moved to participate in the Men's Group's Annual Chili Cook-Off. He was also able to fend off several invitations by the church's leadership to attend the new discipleship class, sorrowfully noting that not only would the time interfere with his Tuesday TV viewing lineup, but that he just didn't feel as if he was being led to a diligent study of the Word "in that season."

"It isn't always easy, listening for that still, small voice that just so happens to send me to do things I want to do," admitted Farmer. "Would I like to volunteer for the house-building project? Sure, but what can I do if the Spirit is leading me to come alongside Frank and fellowship by going to the game instead?" (*Babylon Bee*)

2 Peter 1:20–21, "First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." This passage teaches that when you read Scripture, what you are reading does not merely come from a man but also from God. We must ask the question, What does God want me to believe about Jesus and myself in this passage. The Bible is the writing of many different men. But it is also far more than that. Yes, men spoke. They spoke with their own language and style to a specific group of people at a specific time, but also with a view toward succeeding generations as well. But Peter mentions two other dimensions of their speaking.

They spoke from God. What they have to say is not merely from their own limited and human perspective. They are not the origin of the truth they speak; they are the channel. The channel has an effect on what passes through it, but it passes through and achieves that for which it was sent. The truth is God's truth. Their meaning is God's meaning.

I think verse 20 is a warning not to play fast and loose with the meaning of Scripture. I opt for this view is that the false teachers which Peter has in mind did apparently not deny the inspiration of the prophets, but rather twisted the prophetic writings to suit their own false teaching. We know that Peter had false teachers in mind here because the very next sentence in 2:1 says, "False prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you." And the key text for understanding how these false teachers interpreted Scripture is found in 2 Peter 3:16. In 3:15 Peter says that the apostle Paul has written about similar things in his letters. Then he says, "There are some things in them hard to understand which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures." These last words show how the false teachers related to the Old Testament Scriptures. They don't reject them. They don't deny that prophecies came from God. They twist them to suit their own private purposes. Therefore, since Peter is concerned in this letter with false teachers who twist the meaning of Scripture to fit their own personal desires, the most likely meaning of verse 20 is that the prophetic Scriptures may not be handled that way. "No prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation," means then, "no individual is entitled to interpret prophecy, or Scripture generally, according to his personal whim" (*Doug Kelly*)

Two principles to keep in mind:

Humility

If you believe that the Bible is the Word of God with authority over your life, it takes a good deal of humility to interpret it correctly. The reason is simple: the Bible often requires of us that we feel and think and act in ways that go against our natural inclinations. Therefore, the only person who will own up to these uncomfortable teachings is the humble person who is broken and open.

At the heart of this is submission.

Second, we should pray for the Spirit of God to help us.

The work of the Spirit is not to add new information to the Scripture, but to make us sensitive and submissive to what is already there. It was through men moved by the Holy Spirit that God spoke of old in the Scriptures. So today it will be people yielded to the Holy Spirit who hear his voice most clearly in the Scriptures.

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