



Worship Study Guide for the week of April 17, 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: *Stand Firm*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [1 Peter 5:12-14](#).

- In the beginning of this letter Peter wrote, "May grace and peace be multiplied to you." ([1 Peter 1:2](#))
- Here at the end he writes, "I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God, stand firm in it." ([1 Peter 5:12](#))
- Just before this in [1 Peter 5:10](#), he writes, "The God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself, restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."
- This grace is juxtaposed with words about a devouring lion (the devil) and suffering that will last 'a little while'.
- Grace does not mean we will not suffer, rather it means we have a place to be and live and stand firm.
- This grace is the state in which we are to stand firm.
 - We are able to stand firm because He will complete the work He has begun in us
 - We are able to stand firm because He establishes us in a solid place in solidarity with Christ
 - We are able to stand firm because He strengthens us
 - We are able to stand firm because He places us on a firm foundation of Truth
- If there were any summary for a leader to give the people following him, it would be, "Here is the grace of God, live in it." Why? Because Peter, the rock, is witnessing to the firmness of this truth.
- It is also important to note that what we are talking about is the truth, testified to by witnesses.
- "The word for 'declaring' is the word used elsewhere in the New Testament to describe the witnesses needed to validate the sale of property. Because Peter's witness is true, his encouragement is real. They cling, not to an impersonal moral code, nor to philosophical abstractions. They cling to the grace of God; not what they have done for God, but what God has done for them in Christ." (Ed Clowney)
- "I certainly don't mean we get up early every day for a long and substantial quiet time. It would be better if we did, but we don't. I do mean we cry out frequently, and we remind ourselves of what we know to be true: not the vague assurance that everything will be ok (it might not, not the way we want it to be), but the actual promises God makes to us. I mean our friends copy and paste from their devotional reading and remind us. Like the IV that gives Eliza the fluids and nutrition she needs, God works by his Word and Spirit to keep us. On Eliza's first night in ICU after her surgery the wheels were coming off for me. There was a point where they wouldn't let us in and we didn't know what was happening. It turned out not to be a problem, but it was the most scared I've ever been. Then her numbers just weren't as stable as they had been through the afternoon, and the stress of staring at them was driving me up a wall. I went outside and paced back and forth in the cool night air, reciting Psalm 46 out loud over and over. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. The Lord of Hosts is with us. The Lord of armies is with us. That was enough to calm me down enough for that hour. Nothing else was working. I memorized that psalm when I was in seminary, and however long it took has paid off richly in the last three months. God is always so eager to speak to us, to reassure us, to give us a firm foundation to put our feet on. His Word is so rich, so deep, so powerful and effective. And we are— I am— so eager to run to cheap things like the iPad I'm writing this on for fun. Please run to God's Word. Do it when it feels good and when it

doesn't. When the earth beneath your feet gives way, his truth is all you have to stand on. It's the only thing there is. It is sweet, solid." (Jake Hunt)

- The witness of the atoning work of Jesus is the only sure thing in the world.

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