



Worship Study Guide for the week of February 28, 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: *If You Should Suffer*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [1 Peter 3:8-22](#).

Suffering

- Sometimes it is the will of God for us that we suffer for doing what is right ([v.17](#)). Sometimes we suffer for righteousness sake ([v.13](#)). Sometimes we are slandered and reviled precisely because we are following Christ ([v.16](#)).
- Peter is preparing the church to suffer for what is right and to help us do this, he includes the reason, "For Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous that he might bring us to God" ([v.18](#)).
- "For all the puzzling things in these verses we must not forget this main point—Peter's intention in this text is to help us arm ourselves with the faith to suffer for the sake of Christ and his kingdom." (*John Piper*)

A Word about Safety

- Remember we are aliens. Encouragement as we suffer persecution. From Jesus and the Gospel
- Jesus, who was the best man who ever lived, was persecuted
- Jesus' death accomplishes qualitatively and quantitatively more than anything else could: "...for sin, the righteous for the unrighteous, once for all bringing us ultimately to God" ([1 Peter 3:18](#)).

Encouragement from Noah as we Suffer

- There is a lot of controversy over what this refers to. I'll tell you what I think and how it relates to the main point. I think it refers to the time when people in Noah's day were disobedient, mocking him as a righteous man obeying God (like the situation in the lives of Peter's readers), and that Jesus, in the Spirit, was sent by God in those days to preach to those people through Noah.
- Just like in [1 Peter 1:11](#) the Spirit of Jesus was in the Old Testament prophets predicting His coming, so the Spirit of Jesus was in Noah preaching to the disobedient people of Noah's day.
- Being a minority (only eight persons, with God) might be the safest place to be.
- The flood and Noah reminds Peter of baptism. Peter wants us to know that the God who delivered Noah and his family will deliver us.
- This salvation and deliverance is sealed to us in Christian baptism, not that the outward application saves us but the new existence we have as the people of God through the resurrection of Jesus.
- Note: Why does Peter not say, that Noah and his family were saved 'from' water and not 'through' or 'by'?
- The water delivered Noah from the wickedness and the violence of their generation.
- Christians are brought through the waters of death, the flood of destruction, in order that they might be established upon Christ and His resurrection. So, Jesus died to bring us to where He is now: Ruling. So, the suffering that comes to the Church is not out of His control.
- What of the persecuted church? What of the 'safe' life we have? Who, or what, are the strongest and biggest things that would undo us?

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.