



## WEPC Small Group Network

Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, [kevin@wepc.org](mailto: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: *God is Blessing Us*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Acts 3:22-26](#).

### Sent...To Bless...By Turning Us From Our Wickedness

- "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord." ([Luke 2:11](#))
- "God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness." ([Acts 3:26](#))
  - 1.) Sent. In Advent we wait for the sending. In Christmas, we see the One who was sent. From us, for us. John tells us that He "pitched his tent among us", that He dwelt with us ([John 1:14](#))
    - He sees, hears, smells and feels what we feel. He challenges and comforts.
  - 2.) To Bless. At Christmas, it seems that often what we celebrate is an understanding of the Incarnation that is more like Pedro, than a Savior; "Vote for Pedro and he will make all your dreams come true".
    - However, what if I have the wrong dreams? What if my desires are flawed and what I spend my time desiring is not necessarily a good thing, a life-giving thing?
  - 3.) By turning us from our wickedness. These words must be for someone else, wickedness is not something I am very acquainted with. Who gets to determine what is wicked?
    - Wickedness is the desire, the inclination and the action of living life independent of God.
    - How will he do that when, left to my own devices I will choose independence from God?
    - God does this by convincing me of his kindness, that in turn convicts me of my sin, and redirects my desires.

### Jesus Sees That

- "We believe that our good God, by marvelous divine wisdom and goodness, seeing that Adam and Eve had plunged themselves in this manner into both physical and spiritual death and made themselves completely miserable, set out to find them, though they, trembling all over, were fleeing from God. And God comforted them, promising to give them his Son, born of a woman, to crush the head of the serpent, and to make them blessed... So then we confess that God fulfilled the promise made to the early fathers and mothers by the mouth of the holy prophets when he sent the only and eternal Son of God into the world at the time appointed. The Son took the 'form of a slave' and was made in 'human form,' truly assuming a real human nature, with all its weaknesses, except for sin; being conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, without male participation." (*Belgic Confession, 17 & 18*)
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes from a Nazi prison, "In me there is darkness, But with You there is light; I am lonely, but You do not leave me; I am feeble in heart, but with You there is help; I am restless, but with You there is peace. In me there is bitterness, but with You there is patience; I do not understand Your ways, But You know the way for me.... Lord Jesus Christ, You were poor And in distress, a captive and forsaken as I am. You know all man's troubles; You abide with me When all men fail me; You remember and seek me; It is Your will that I should know You And turn to You. Lord, I hear Your call and follow; Help me."

- If you are not tired of your independence, then today the coming of the Savior into the world is of little consequence, but if you are tired of your independence, then Christmas is indeed good news because there is a solution to your problem.
- “Far as the curse is found”

## 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.