



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: *For You, From You*

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

Advent

- "Spicy and sweet with hints of comfort and joy"
- "God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay; Remember Christ, our Savior was born on Christmas day to save us all from Satan's power when we had gone astray. Oh, tidings of comfort and joy!"
- "Thus the churches I visited, I approached not just as an interested, detached observer, a professional clergyman, but just a dying man hoping to find some good news. The thing is, I'm a sinner. Worse than you can really imagine. Down to the core, I'm a rebel, a son of Adam, filled with lusts and resentments, grudges and anxieties, fearing the world and not fearing God, loving what I shouldn't and hating the things I should love. I know all this about myself and I detest it. So what I really have been needing from all these preachers the last three months was to hear, 'Yes, Christopher, you are a wretched man, not worthy of God's grace, but the whole point of God's grace is that it's free, precisely for sinners not worthy.' You see, in Advent, we see the determination of God to bless and bring comfort to His people." (*Christopher Esget*)
- I want to look each Sunday of Advent at this text to draw out what God has for us in it: God is faithful; God is truthful; God is full of good things for His people
- Advent is a time of waiting and longing and this text (referring to a sermon preached by Moses) tells us that what we are waiting for is blessing. For the Lord to bless His people.
- This text in Acts comes to us, in the context of the healing of a beggar in the Temple in Jerusalem, who had been crippled from birth. Peter and John healed him in the name of Jesus and this caused quite a stir.
- In the words we read this morning, Peter is quoting from Deuteronomy 18, to explain what is going on.
- Contrary, often to all the evidence, God's ongoing, constant intention is to bless His people.

What does it mean to Bless?

- How do the words 'for you, from among you' bless us this morning?
- To bless: To incur divine favor. To get the comfort we are craving. In this we see the heart of God. His promise to Abraham was that through him, God would bless all the peoples of the earth.
- Everyone is blessed in some way or other by the work and plan of God. We get blessed by His teaching and the exercise of His prophetic calling. But we get blessed by more than that.

For Us, From Among Us

- "But in our flesh He came into our world of sin. He came into solidarity with us. He lived a life of involvement. He lived where he could see human sin, hear human swearing and blasphemy, see human diseases and observe human mortality, poverty and squalor. His mission was fully incarnational because he taught us by coming alongside us... Temptation, rejection, misunderstanding, disdain, coldness, death." (Donald Macleod)
- In the beauty of the Incarnation, we must understand the 'earthiness' of God in His determination to bless us.
- You cannot bless if you are insulated or separated.

- Our God raises up exactly what we need in Christ. There is no comfort in a false gospel. Only one with a real Savior, for real sinners.

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.