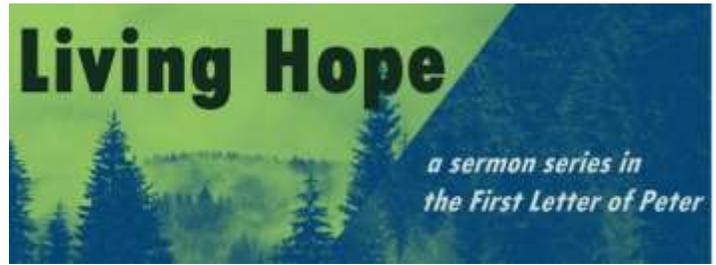




Worship Study Guide for the week of November 15, 2015



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: *Living Stones*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [1 Peter 2:4-8](#).

Stones

- The routines and rhythms of our life together can be a beautiful thing. Much of what we do in the next 6 weeks will be 'material', will be in our bodies.
- Peter uses images here in this text that as we have seen from our New Testament reading this morning he got from Jesus. In fact, he loves this imagery and uses it extensively ([Acts 4:11](#), "This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you the builders, which has become the cornerstone")
- See how he uses and extends the imagery in this text:
 - Jesus is the Living Stone to whom we come (taste His kindness, in the previous verses)
 - We (because of Jesus) are now living stones
 - We are not individual stones but are joined together in Jesus to build something (a spiritual house, a temple where God lives)
 - But not just stones, a holy priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God because Jesus is altar and the offering that makes our offerings acceptable.
- The Living Stone is the most precious because without Him there are no 'living stones'. He lives, we live. He is precious, we are precious. "Rejected" God is the determiner of value, not men. Therefore Jesus is precious because without Him there are no living stones, there is not spiritual house. There is only futile attempts at currying God's favor.
- There is activity of unity in this image. The beauty and utility of a stone by itself versus the value of being built together.
- But we are ultimately not a fixed building but an active priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. What are these sacrifices? Likely they are seen in two arenas. One is in praise and thanksgiving and the other is practical loving service. (See [Hebrews 13:15-16](#), "through him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.")
- What then are spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ? They are the deeds you do, the words you speak, the songs you sing—when you do them spiritually. That is, when you do them in reliance on the power of the Spirit, from faith, according to the will and work of the Spirit, and for a manifestation of the Spirit—which is a manifestation of Christ. (John Piper)

We are entering into the Season of doing and giving and I want to say a few words about that

- Is what you are doing, saying, eating, drinking, giving, (what you are doing in and with your bodies and your stuff) is it in faith and seen as a sacrifice that pleases God, because it is in faith in Christ and his work. Perhaps you shouldn't do less but more, but in any case, it must be in faith, relying on the work of Christ.
- How do you view the 'you' above? Is your faith primarily an interaction as an individual instead of as a building and a priesthood? The spiritual house is more than a stone, a priesthood is more than a priest.
- How can I please God, in all this activity? Am I even asking the question, is this acceptable and why?

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.