



Worship Study Guide for the week of October 4, 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: *The Outcome*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [1 Peter 1:3-9](#).

Peter says Five Things about his Christian Readers & About Us (vv.8-9)

1. we love Christ;
 2. we believe in Christ;
 3. we rejoice in Christ;
 4. through all this we are receiving the salvation of their souls; and
 5. we are experiencing this even though they have never seen Christ in person.
- This is true Christianity: God is saving our souls by working in our hearts a love and confidence and a joy that is against the stream of secularism and godlessness and worldliness in our society and in our own hearts and lives.
 - "True Christianity is loving Christ and trusting Christ and enjoying Christ. In other words, Christianity is first and foremost a matter of the heart (love, trust, and joy), not a matter of external performances. And Peter adds in verse 9: in this you are now (progressively) receiving the goal of it all, the salvation of your soul. The final full salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (v.5) we are now receiving for our souls (in part) as we love Christ, trust Christ, and rejoice in Christ now." (John Piper)
 - So we are staking everything on someone who is invisible (largely) to us. In a sense, what we do not see is more real to us than the very real struggles we experience. This seeing what is 'invisible' (Jesus has saved us, is saving us and will save us) is what life is all about.

There is a Deep Irony in This

- "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, "You shall not eat of any tree in the garden"?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die."' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.'" ([Genesis 3:1-12](#))
- This 'eye-opening' experience led only to catastrophe and destruction.

The Kind of Seeing That Only God Gives

- “And thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else’s foundation, but as it is written, ‘Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand’.” ([Romans 15:20-21](#))
- “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ’.” ([II Corinthians 4:6](#))
- What is it exactly that we see?
- In the gospel (Gospels) we see His character, we hear His words, we see His heart and we experience His power.
- All of this leads to joy because Jesus provides hope in the middle of very hard circumstances.
- Can people be changed?
- Can I experience joy even as I lament?

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.