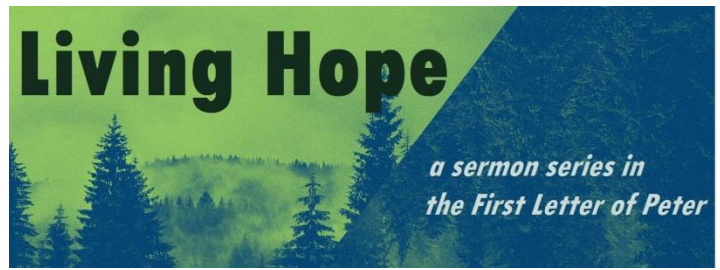




## Worship Study Guide

for the week of September 20, 2015



### 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: Perseverance & Preservation

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [1 Peter 1:3-5](#).

#### God's Keeping

- Last week we looked at the inheritance that God is keeping for us based on the work of Jesus for us. Peter calls it an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading. He ends verse 4 with the words 'for you'.
- All this is for you and yet it seems 'out there', not here where I am threatened by pressures, temptations and 'fiery trials'.
- How am I going to get there seeing as how I am an exile and a wanderer. It is like I have this vast treasure waiting for me, but I have to go through this terrible gauntlet to get it and I wonder if I can hold on until the end.
- My resources are so small. My love is so weak, my faith, up and down.
- I cry out with the Psalm-writer, "Who will bring me to the fortified city?" ([Psalm 108:10](#))
- (Being guarded is the same words used in [II Corinthians 11:23](#) of Paul's imprisonment.) It is like God has placed me in protective custody.
- How does God's promise to keep me, matter right here and now?

#### 1.) I Am Where I Am by the Purpose and Selection of God

- Peter says we are elect exiles.
- God has caused me (in and through and by his great mercy and love) to be 'born again' to this living hope.

#### 2.) This Keeping Depends on Love, Not My Love but the Love of God.

- "My heart is steadfast, O God! I will sing and make melody with all my being! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn! I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. For your steadfast love is great above the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the clouds." ([Psalm 108:1-4](#))
- "God's love is beyond human love, in that it rises beyond our sphere, surpassing our domain on the ground. More important than the greatness of God's love, though, is the quality: God's love is no emotion or experience. The synonym [Psalm 108](#) chooses for God's love tells us how He loves: He is faithful. 'Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.' Which means He doesn't go back on His Word. He does not tire of us, find us boring, or grow disgusted with our stench or our surliness. God does not love as we love. We may experience a glad friendship with someone, but have it ruined through misunderstanding or a conflict over power. We may experience lust, but abandon the person when our desires are sated." ([Christopher Esget](#))

### 3.) **Though we are Kept, Peter Knows that Jesus is Active & He Knows we Lack the Power In & Of Ourselves to do This.**

- “There is danger on the way to salvation in heaven. We need ongoing protection after our conversion. Our security does not mean we are home free. There is a battle to be fought. And in this battle we need protection and help far beyond what we can supply for ourselves. Our protection comes from God.” ([John Piper](#))
- Peter knew this by experience: “On the night when Peter betrayed Jesus, the Lord said to him, ‘Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat [in other words to press Peter through a sieve of temptation to try to strain out his faith; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers’. ” ([Luke 22:31–32](#))
- Jesus prayed that Peter's faith not fail utterly. That is why Peter wept bitterly and returned from his sin. But to whom did Jesus pray? To God, his Father. And what did he ask God to do? To not let Peter's faith come to an end. So who forged the link of faithfulness in Peter that awful night? God did. And who brought him back from the precipice of unbelief and gave him tears of remorse? God did.
- Jesus is active right now interceding for you.
- The world is a harsh and hard place and people are fickle.
- God has a bigger goal for me than I do for myself.
- Contrary to how I might feel God is ‘all in’ for me.
- This is the source of my joy.

## 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.