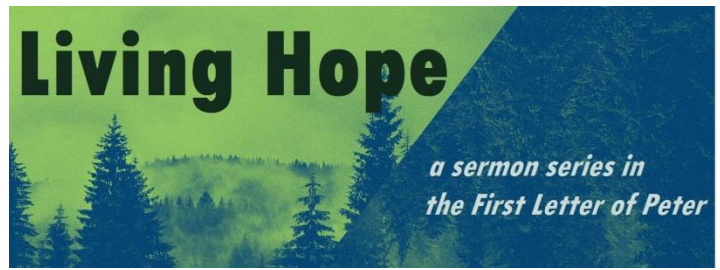




## Worship Study Guide

for the week of September 6, 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: *Living Hope*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [1 Peter 1:2-3](#).

### Hope that is living, while living in the midst of.....

- "How can we have the power of soul in times of great stress and anxiety not just to endure the evil day, but to be joyful and to fill our lives with the fruits of righteousness (Philippians 1:11), with deeds of kindness, with projects of mercy, with labors of love? How, when your life is in jeopardy, or your job, or your marriage, or your health, or your respect in the community—how can you rise up with joy and bless those who abuse you and devote yourself to labors of love? To busy yourself for love's sake takes power in the very best of circumstances. But to spend yourself in love to others when your own life is falling apart, that takes a power of soul which is utterly beyond us. If that is what we are called to do, then the power has to come from some source greater than the human soul." (John Piper)

Light dawns in the darkness for the upright;  
he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.  
It is well with the man who deals generously and lends;  
who conducts his affairs with justice.  
For the righteous will never be moved;  
he will be remembered forever.  
He is not afraid of bad news;  
his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.  
His heart is steady; he will not be afraid,  
until he looks in triumph on his adversaries.  
He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor;  
his righteousness endures forever;  
his horn is exalted in honor. (Psalm 112:4-9)

### How can we experience hope, when our desires seem to go unanswered and so often unfulfilled?

- What is Peter getting at and how does this work? Is hope just another burden? Is it wish fulfillment? A fond hope? Is it fragile? Is it stoic acceptance and bitter trust? Tomorrow is another day? Or something else?
- Peter's answer is that hope is not a thing, or a feeling, or even good theology, it is living, and if it is living it must be more than words, and it is actually a person.
- Peter's experience is the key to get at this.
- "But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are talking about.' And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:60-62)

- “When Jesus died on the cross, it was the end of all Peter’s hopes. He knew only bitter sorrow for his own denials. The dawn could not bring hope; with the crowing of the rooster he heard the echo of his curses.” (Ed Clowney)
- But Peter saw the risen Christ. In a unique way: “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” (Luke 24:34) and “he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.” (1 Corinthians 15:5)
- What did this mean?
- The resurrection did more than restore Jesus to Peter. It meant victory.
- Peter could say: “Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,
- “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” (Acts 2:30-36)

### **If Jesus is alive and ascended then:**

- I am justified, “He was raised for our justification”; I belong to him
- I await the renewal of all things that began on the first Easter.
- “So what does this mean for us? If Light shines in the darkness through Jesus, and we need fear no bad news, then we realize that everything we have—money, time, friendship—is not something to cling to but give away. This is not by way of commandment, but love. Happiness and hope is there, not in clinging to something but in giving it away. Don’t be afraid, then, of bad news. For you have the good news that triumphs over all bad news, the Light that no darkness can overcome: Jesus is risen from the dead, and He is generous to mankind.” (Christopher Esget)

## **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.