



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of November 25, 2018

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.

John 10:11-15 *The Good Shepherd*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [John 10:11-15](#).

- We often think of the shepherds imagery in the Bible as a quaint attempt at using agricultural metaphors to describe the love and care God demonstrates to His people.
- While there is some truth in this, first century Jewish people would have had a more nuanced view.
- On November 11, 2010, CNN ran a story about the public's divided opinion of former President George W. Bush's legacy. Describing the positive take, the article reads, “Supporters see a good man... a natural-born leader who... shepherded the country through some of its most difficult moments.” Doesn't it seem remarkable that more than a decade into the second millennium AD, In a culture where the pastoral lifestyle is about as familiar to the average citizen as the feudal lifestyle; that a leader of our Republic would be said to “shepherd the country” when his positive leadership qualities are being emphasized? It is an indication that one of the most ancient memes-- that of the shepherd-king-- is still finding purchase in the modern mind, long after the culture that first put it into writing has turned to dust.
- It would make sense that a shepherd (king) would defend his own. However, the concept of sacrificial death would have been a new twist on this concept.
- In many circles, it is viewed as quaint to recognize and call out the fact that the flock has enemies.
- They are real and destructive. Their activity (snatches = kills) and scattering. This effect essentially destroys the flock which in this case is the goal of the wolf.
- And make no mistake about it, the wolves are scary, deadly. Why else would the hired man take off?
- The shepherd owns the sheep; The shepherd knows the sheep; The sheep also know the shepherd.
- This is part of what makes the shepherd different from the hired hand.
- “Knowledge” In the bible most often equals “love”
- There are many ways to demonstrate love but the primary way God demonstrates both love and power is in sacrifice.
- It is important to note that Jesus lays down His life willingly, and out of love: “The Father did not compel Him to suffer death or even allow Him to be slain against His will, but of His own accord He endured death for the salvation of men. So precious a life... given with such willingness... the Son freely gave Himself to the Father. For thus we plainly affirm that in speaking of one Person we affirm the whole Deity, to whom as Man He offered Himself. And, by the names of Father and Son, a wondrous depth of devotion is excited in the hearts of the hearers when it is said that the Son supplicates the Father on our behalf. The Son had agreed with the Father and the Holy Spirit that there was no other way to reveal to the world the height and depth of His omnipotence, than by His death.” (*Anselm of Canterbury*)
- What to make of this?

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.

Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org
To hear sermons and access past study guides visit www.wepc.org/archivedsermons