



## A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of July 9, 2017

WEPC small groups meet 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: "As a Fool"

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [II Corinthians 11:16-33](#).

- What do we depend on and in what is our boast?
- No one in their right mind seeks out suffering and difficulty and degradation. The false apostles-- the super-apostles-- in Corinth are the kind of people we most often willingly follow.
- They are strong and impressive and gifted. They are so strong that the people willingly allow themselves to be made slaves, to be devoured, taken advantage of. They put on airs and they strike people in the face!
- So who is wise?
- Paul then goes on to give his qualifications as an Apostle: a list of achievements: How much scripture has he memorized and written? How many converts? How many churches has he planted? How many disciples? How many elders and deacons has he trained? How much money has he raised?
- Rather, Paul's credentials lie not in what he has accomplished but in what he has suffered. He has been humiliated, that is why he mentions being let down the city wall in a basket most often used for carrying salted fish.
- A word of caution: We might be tempted, again, to use our sufferings for the Kingdom of God as some kind of qualifier in and of themselves.
- We might think Paul is saying we have to listen to him, give him respect simply because he has suffered so much. Rather, Paul knows that suffering in itself cannot change us for the better. What kind of fruit does all this suffering produce in us? Look at how much I have suffered. I have earned your respect. But that is not what he is saying. These experiences could be helpful in our understanding of the Gospel or they could be detrimental. It depends on what it makes us depend on.
- "Pastor, consider all the things God has done to break your pride. Look at all the ways He's brought you to the end of yourself so that you would cling to Him more tightly. Let all your failures and disappointments and weaknesses drive you like a nail into the love of God. It's only by embracing them that you're ever going to become a true minister and make it to the finish line." (*Tim Keller*)
- In what or whom do I boast? How has success or failure shaped how dependent I am?
- What has driven me like a nail into the love of God?

## 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](mailto:kevin@wepc.org)  
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