



Worship Study Guide for the week of September 4, 2016

PSALMS

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: *His Grace*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Psalm 147](#).

Verses 1-9 and verses 12-20 tell us that our God is great, that there is none greater. Immense power belongs to our God. It should terrify us to see and hear and feel such great power whose only restraint is himself.

We are compelled to praise this power (1). And we are warned about this power (6b).

If this God exists (and He does) then we must ask the question what pleases Him and for what is this power used. The answers to these questions are related.

He gathers outcasts (2), He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds (3), He lifts the meek (6) He cares for his people (19-20), He casts the wicked to the ground (6).

So, I want to be "lifted and bandaged and healed and meek".

But do I?

We are repulsed often by weakness, meekness and suffering. We want to be powerful or at least we are attracted to the powerful.

Perhaps that is why we find so little power for our lives.

We are stewards of a King who sets captives free. Our crucified King shows us life comes through dying, strength is in sacrifice, as He meets hatred with pardon.

"But the things God delights in are not the things of human power. 'His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love (Psalm 147:10-11).' Holy Scripture consistently finds greatness not in the appearance of grandeur, the size of an army, or the wealth of a kingdom. It was a childless wanderer and his barren wife who became parents to a nation multiplied more than sand and stars can be counted. The younger son is lifted up above the elder. A boy slays the giant Goliath. A girl from an insignificant town becomes the virgin mother to the world's true king." (Christopher Esget)

The Lord finds pleasure in those that reverence him and those who hope in his mercy.

To reverence is to acknowledge what is.

To hope is to feel lack and weakness.

It is not that God takes no pleasure in 'the strength of the horse' or 'the legs of a man'. He made them after all.

It is the fact that

“God is not displeased with horses' strength and human legs. He is displeased with those who hope in their horses and their legs. He is displeased with people who put their hope in missiles or in make-up, in tanks or tans, in bombs or body-building. God takes no pleasure in corporate efficiency or balanced budgets or welfare systems or new vaccines or education or eloquence or artistic excellence or legal processes when these things are the treasure in which we hope or the achievement in which we boast. Why? Because when we put our hope in horses and legs, horses and legs get the glory, not God. And we are lost not saved.” (John Piper)

To stand before this powerful God and know that your only hope is to hope in his mercy is the ‘strongest’ place to be.

Because we recognize our weakness and his greatness.

God has pleasure in those who hope in his love because that hope highlights the freedom of his grace. When I cry out, “God is my only hope, my rock, my refuge!” I am turning from myself and calling all attention to the boundless resources of God.

The cross is the place where we see this most clearly.

This table today is not for the strong, the self-sufficient but for the hungry and thirsty and those who see that whatever other resources they may have, only mercy will do.

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.