



## Worship Study Guide for the week of January 31, 2016



### 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: *Wounds*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [1 Peter 2:18-25](#).

- 1 Peter 2:18 may be one of the most difficult verses in the Bible. Let's place it in context.
- Peter has written, "Submit yourselves to every created human institution on account of the Lord...Live as free people, not as those using your freedom as a cover for evil, but as God's slaves. Honor everyone; love fellow-Christians; reverence God; Honor the emperor." He now addresses this to particular kinds of people in the church; The first group is slaves.
- It should be noted first and foremost that the fact that slaves are addressed and that they have moral responsibilities is unique in its time and it elevates slaves to the status of human beings and not property. In society at large slaves were not full persons and thus could not have moral responsibility. In the church slaves were viewed as full persons and are addressed as such.
- A thing to note: In Ephesians and Colossians where Paul addresses slaves, he addresses masters as well.
- "Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him." (*Ephesians 6:5-9*)
- No masters are addressed in 1 Peter. Slaves and free men are addressed by Paul
- "Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men. So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God." (*1 Corinthians 7:21-24*)
- "I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self." (*Philemon 10-19*)
- In Christ all are slaves and all are free.
- In Christ all are brothers and sisters.
- In Christ I can bear up under the unjust (crooked) knowing that I am living to the one who actually owns me.
- What makes this even more challenging is that this Peter says is to what we have been called (v.21)

- Why? Because Christ suffered for us.
- “JoAnne Terrell wrote about how her mother was murdered by her mother’s boyfriend. “I had to find a connection between my story, my Mom’s story and Jesus’s story. She found it understanding the cross- namely that Jesus did not only suffer for us but with us. He knew what it was like literally to be under the lash, and to refuse to be cowed by those in power, and to pay for it with his life. He voluntarily took his place beside those who were without power and suffering from injustice. Therefore the cross, when properly understood, cannot possibly be used to encourage the oppressed to simply accept violence. When Jesus suffered for us, he was honoring justice. But when Jesus suffered with us he was identifying with the oppressed of the world, not with their oppressors. All life-changing love entails an exchange, a reversal of places, but here is the Great Reversal. God, in the place of ultimate power, reverses places with the marginalized, the poor, the enslaved and the oppressed. The prophets always sang songs about God who has “brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the poor”, but never could they have imagined that God himself would come down off his ultimate throne and suffer with the oppressed so that they might be lifted up. This pattern of the cross means that the world’s glorification of power, might, and status is exposed and defeated.” (Tim Keller)

## 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.