

SAC Small Groups Discussion Guide – Mar. 22nd, 2026

This guide comes with the expectation that even if someone has missed the Sunday service, they have watched the sermon before coming to their small group.

Fellowship Time

Make sure to have time where people can chat and catch up. This section could include a dinner together, having a potluck, preparing snacks, etc. The key to this section is make people feel welcomed and seen.

Read the Scripture & Overview Aloud Together

This section contains the text and a brief summary of the sermon that was preached on Sunday. It will have the main point explained as a way to help those remember the sermon. This is not an in-depth overview because the expectation is that everyone will take the time to listen to the sermon. Make sure to read this aloud for everyone to hear.

Text

John 19:1-27

1 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. 2 The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe 3 and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face. 4 Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." 5 When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" 6 As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." 7 The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." 8 When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, 9 and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." 12 From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." 13 When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). 14 It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. 15 But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. 16 Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.

17 Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in

the middle. 19 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. 20 Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. 21 The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." 22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." 23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. 24 "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." So, this is what the soldiers did. 25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," 27 and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Overview of Sermon

As we approach Easter, we come to the narrative of Jesus' final moments on the cross. In chapter 19, we find Pilate ordering that Jesus be mocked and beaten in a hopeful attempt to appease the Jewish crowds so that he can release Jesus who is innocent. The crowds who have been whipped up by the religious leaders into a frenzy are unrelenting in their desire to see Jesus executed even though there is no legitimate claim. The Jews are unwilling to execute Jesus themselves because of the Passover feast and continue to push Pilate to do it on the basis that Jesus claimed to be God's son. Pilate wrestles with Jesus' true identity and attempts to use his power to get a response from Jesus, but Jesus knows the Father's plan that has been set into motion. There is no turning back. Pilate's pressure point for change comes when the Jews point out that any man who claims to a king opposes Caesar which is what they argue Jesus has claimed to be. Willard Swartley offers this description of the chief priests, "They rapidly spiral downward into the depths of anguish and apostasy. The Jews' duplicity is exposed: they align themselves with Rome, disowning their Lord God as King. They value the preservation of their nation and law more highly than they value their covenant pledge to revere alone the Lord God's kingship."

Pilate then orders Jesus to carry his cross and be crucified at Golgotha, just outside the city of Jerusalem. Atop Jesus' cross read a sign titled, King of the Jews, which was intended to mock the Jewish people but instead was a prophetic word to all those who witnessed the death of Jesus. Every act, intended to discredit Jesus is, instead, underlines His divine nature and ultimately points towards God's redemptive plan. Even the guards dividing up Jesus' garments is a part of God's redemptive work. Jesus' last actions before His death was to give a new model to His followers where they would become family when Jesus made the beloved disciple to be Mary's new son. This is the shift from the physical body of Jesus to the metaphorical body of Christ as the Church. Jesus is anchoring Christian community in His death and resurrection. What we recognize as we read the development of the early church in the Book of Acts, is that this is exactly what happened as the community of Jesus-followers entered into this new way of community living.

Discussion Questions

These questions are prompts to help the group have meaningful dialogue over the sermon this past weekend. Do not feel the need to ask all these questions. You are more than welcome to create your own questions or mix the questions together.

Connection to Other (Icebreaker/Light)

- What book, other than the Bible, do you think every person needs to read?

Connection to Head (Study/Knowledge Questions)

- Read the passage in John 19. Is there any repetition of words, phrases, concepts that help us to understand the passage better?
- Consider the exchange between Jesus and Pilate in verses 8-11. What does this teach us about human authority/power in comparison to Jesus?

Connection to Heart (Deeper Engagement)

- The chief priests declared, "We have no king but Caesar," abandoning their covenant with God for political preservation. When are you most tempted to compromise your faith commitments for comfort, acceptance, or security?
- How does Jesus' care for His mother and the beloved disciple from the cross demonstrate what our priorities should be even in our most difficult circumstances?

Reflect and Discuss the Practice and Prayer.

This is an opportunity for accountability and formation in your group. Accountability to ensure people are practicing the practices and formation because we believe that these practices will shape and form us into the people that God intended us to be. Take time to practice this together and reflect on each person's experience of these practices.

Practice: What is one action that could help someone in my circle of influence shift from:

- Stranger to Neighbour? Take a meal to a new family. Sit with someone for lunch or coffee. Sit in a new spot on Sunday. Learn a name (write it down!).
- Neighbour to Family? Remember the name. Ask the questions that move beyond the surface. Ask about something that happened during their week. Invite them into your home and into your small groups.

Prayer: Father, we come near to the cross this evening and acknowledge that we have been welcomed into Your family by the loving sacrifice of Jesus. Help us to extend that invitation and welcome to those around us, regardless of their background and situation. Grant us courage, compassion, humility. May we serve and love well in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Prayer Together.

Take some time to pray with each other. This is not a time for gossip or to be cynical, this is an opportunity to share with each other our burdens, to celebrate and praise God together, and to pray expectantly that God would move.