

## 2026-03-29 Small Group Guide

### Small Group Guide: From Crowing to the Cross

#### Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word, and to help the group move from self-focus to Christ-focus during this time together.

#### Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: Share about a time when you wanted recognition for something you did, but didn't receive it. How did that make you feel? Looking back, what does that reveal about your heart at that time?

#### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

**The Contrast of Palm Sunday:** People quickly moved from praising Jesus ("Hosanna!") to demanding His crucifixion ("Crucify Him!") within five days—a warning against following the crowd rather than knowing what we believe.

**The Problem of "Crowing":** We have a natural tendency to boast about ourselves, seek greatness, and want recognition—even the disciples repeatedly argued about who would be the greatest.

**God's Upside-Down Kingdom:** Jesus taught that true greatness comes through humility, service, and becoming like little children—trusting, dependent, and humble.

**The Call to Die to Self:** Following Christ requires denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, and actually following Him—not just claiming His promises while living for ourselves.

**The Example of Jesus:** Before going to the cross, Jesus washed His disciples' feet, modeling servant leadership and calling us to do the same.

## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Message (15-20 minutes)

Read Matthew 18:1-5. Why do you think the disciples kept asking about who would be the greatest? What does this reveal about human nature?

The pastor mentioned we need Jesus "just to go to Walmart." What do you think he meant by this? How does this challenge our view of self-sufficiency?

Read 2 Timothy 4:6-8. What is the "crown of righteousness," and what does it mean to "long for His appearing"? Do you honestly long for Christ's return, or would you prefer He wait a while?

### Personal Reflection (15-20 minutes)

The pastor asked: "If we all knew each other's sins, wouldn't that be nice?" How would knowing everyone's struggles change the way we relate to each other in the church?

Jesus said we must "become like little children" to enter the kingdom. In what specific ways are children humble that adults often are not? Which of these qualities do you most need to develop?

Read John 13:12-17. Jesus washed His disciples' feet as an example. What is the modern-day equivalent of foot-washing in our culture? When was the last time you served someone in a way that felt genuinely humbling?

### Going Deeper (15-20 minutes)

The sermon mentioned people in Iran growing in faith despite persecution, while American Christians often struggle with commitment. What do you think causes this difference? What does this challenge us to do?

Read Mark 9:33-35. The disciples argued about greatness right after Jesus taught about His coming death. How do we similarly miss Jesus' point by focusing on our own status or comfort?

The pastor said, "How come church has become 'What's the least amount I got to do?'" How have you seen this attitude in yourself? What would it look like to approach church with a servant's heart instead?

## Practical Application

Individual Commitments (10-15 minutes)

Choose one or two of the following to commit to this week:

**Prayer Focus:** Pray daily for leaders (local, national, and international) as instructed in Scripture, asking God to use them according to His purposes rather than complaining about them.

**Service Challenge:** Each day this week, do one act of service that no one will know about except you and God. Keep a private journal of how God works through these acts.

**Humility Practice:** Identify one area where you've been "crowing" (bragging or seeking recognition). Consciously choose to deflect praise and give credit to God or others this week.

**Childlike Trust:** Choose one worry or area of control you're holding onto. Practice giving it to God daily, trusting Him like a child trusts a parent.

**Foot-Washing:** Identify someone who would never expect service from you (someone difficult, someone "beneath" your status, or someone who can't repay you). Serve them in a meaningful way this week.

**Easter Preparation:** Before Easter Sunday, pray specifically: "God, who am I to serve today?" and "Prepare my heart to worship You." Write down what God reveals.

Group Accountability (5-10 minutes)

Share which commitment you're choosing with at least one other person in the group

Exchange contact information to check in mid-week

Agree to share results at your next meeting

Closing Reflection

Read together Psalm 34:1-8 (the passage referenced in the sermon's opening song)

Final Questions:

What is one specific way you will "taste and see that the Lord is good" this week?

How will you shift from "crowing" about yourself to proclaiming Christ?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Invite group members to pray sentence prayers focusing on:

Confession of self-focus and pride

Thanksgiving for Jesus' example of humility

Commitment to serve others this week

Preparation for celebrating Easter with authentic worship

For Next Week

Read the Passion narrative (Matthew 26-28, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24, or John 18-21)

Reflect on where you see yourself in the story—are you like Peter, Judas, the crowds, the religious leaders, or the faithful women?

Come prepared to share how God has worked through your service commitment this week

Leader Notes

**Sensitive Topics:** This sermon touches on pride, which can be difficult for people to admit. Create a safe, non-judgmental space for honest sharing.

**Encourage Authenticity:** The pastor's transparency about his own struggles should set the tone for the group.

**Balance Grace and Challenge:** While the sermon is convicting, remember that growth happens in an atmosphere of grace, not shame.

**Watch for Quiet Members:** Some may feel condemned rather than convicted. Check in with them privately if needed.