

SAC Small Groups Discussion Guide – Mar. 15th, 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 18:28-40

28 Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. 29 So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" 30 "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you." 31 Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. 32 This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die. 33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" 34 "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" 35 "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" 36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." 37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." 38 "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. 39 But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?" 40 They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

Overview of Sermon

This week, we continued in John 18 with the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate. The dramatic narrative of God's redemptive work is building in a scene where loyalties and allegiance are at the thread that runs through. Pilate is a prime example of an individual of someone who is playing the political game of appeasing his Roman authorities while trying to keep control over

Judea and dealing with the Jewish customs. The Jewish leaders have brought Jesus to Pilate with charges of insurrection because they cannot bring capital punishment on Jesus for they do not have the authority, and they do not want to become ceremonially unclean during Passover. Pilate goes out to meet the Jewish who want him to judge Jesus because they cannot do so. When Pilate asks for charges, they simply tell him that if he were not a criminal, then they wouldn't have brought him.

Pilate heads inside to find out the truth of the matter from Jesus himself and asks him if he is the King of the Jews. Jesus and Pilate go back and forth with Jesus claiming two things that are true of him: he is in fact a king of a kingdom that is not of this world and that if it was "of the world", then his servants would be fighting back (which is supported by Jesus' response to Peter's act of violence). Pilate looking for an out, zeros in on Jesus' response of kingship but is met with Jesus' claiming that He came into this world to testify to the truth and that everyone on the side of truth listens to him. Pilate attempts to release Jesus and to save the Jewish leaders' shame for putting an innocent man on trial. But the crowds are in a frenzy and demand that Barrabas, a known insurrectionist, be released instead of Jesus.

Throughout John 18-19, the theme of Jesus' kingship comes to the forefront in a way that has not been in the Gospel so far. Pilate exemplifies the wavering response to truth that many of us find ourselves in where we ultimately are trying to balance competing allegiances in a way that benefits us first, instead of Jesus. Am I allowing Jesus His rightful place on the throne in my life or am I more prone to follow the wishy-washy and inconsistent path like that of Pilate; one moment attributing kingship and the next swayed by the voices around me.

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 is a place that holds significant meaning to you and why is it so special?

Connection to Head (Study/Knowledge Questions)

- Read the passage in John. What does this passage teach us about Jesus? What does it teach us about humanity?

Connection to Heart (Deeper Engagement)

- How does Jesus' statement 'My kingdom is not of this world' challenge our expectations of what it means for Him to be King in our daily lives?

- The Jewish leaders prioritized ceremonial cleanliness while orchestrating the death of an innocent man. What modern inconsistencies exist between our religious practices and our treatment of others?
- How does taking communion serve as a declaration of loyalty to Jesus, and what might it cost us to live out that loyalty in our current 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: This week, audit one area: How you spend your time, money words, etc. Ask, "Does this reflect citizenship in Jesus' kingdom or somewhere else?"

- If someone examined your calendar, bank statements, and text messages, what kingdom would they say you're a citizen of?
- Choose an area of life that feelings in tension with the statement to focus on for the next week.

Prayer: King Jesus, we proclaim you as Lord and Saviour over the earth and heaven. May your reign become a visible reality in our lives and communities. Spirit, we ask that you would come and fill us anew to be able to accomplish kingdom work. May we have confidence and courage to boldly proclaim your gospel to those around us. We pray this in your name, 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.