

SAC Small Groups Discussion Guide – Mar. 8th, 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 18:1-27

1 When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. 4 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" 5 "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) 6 When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they said. 8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go." 9 This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me." 10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) 11 Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" 12 Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him 13 and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. 14 Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people. 15 Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, 16 but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in. 17 "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" she asked Peter. He replied, "I am not." 18 It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself. 19 Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. 20 "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple,

where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. 21 Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.” 22 When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded. 23 “If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” 24 Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. 25 Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, “You aren’t one of his disciples too, are you?” He denied it, saying, “I am not.” 26 One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, “Didn’t I see you with him in the garden?” 27 Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

Overview of Sermon

This week, we began the final section in the book of John starting in chapter 18. Pastor Nick led us through Jesus’ arrest and Peter’s denial in a winding narrative that demonstrates Jesus’ sovereignty over his suffering that will lead to his death. What seems out of control is actually the redemptive plan of God in action. The story begins with Jesus and his disciples travelling through the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus frequently withdrew to. The Passover Festival was in full swing and the garden was one of the few places where there would be limited people and distractions so that Jesus could be with the Father in prayer. Judas leads a detachment of soldiers and religious leaders to arrest Jesus. While Jesus could’ve been afraid or hiding, he goes out to meet the mob. In a brief exchange with them, Jesus declares himself to be God (I AM) and ask that they spare his disciples. Jesus longed for his disciples to be safe while also continuing to proceed with the mission the Father had given him (John 10:11, 18).

Peter lashes out in anger cutting a man’s ear off to try to protect Jesus, but Jesus sharply rebukes him for attempting to derail the plan. This sets up the contrast between Jesus’ confidence in the Father’s mission while Peter sees the situation as out of control & clearly not what he expected of the Messiah. Jesus is then arrested and taken to Annas, the High Priest emeritus, for questioning and the beloved disciple and Peter trail them. In the first instance of Jesus being on trial, it’s clear that the religious leaders have no case/evidence against Jesus which highlights the innocence of Jesus and the sham of the trial that will ensue. Jesus is then slapped which further illustrates the injustice of the trial. Meanwhile, Peter continues to spiral by denying Jesus three times. The Gospel of Mark notes that when the rooster crows, Peter immediately remembers Jesus’ words and then begins to break down and weep. While a tragic moment for Peter, it would not be the end of his story.

Peter and Jesus acts as foils to each other in the story. Peter demonstrates our human tendency to grasp for control while we suffer whereas Jesus trusts in the Father’s love and plan. Suffering is a part of the human experience regardless of the worldview you hold. But the Christian worldview holds the foundational belief that God entered into our suffering and experienced it himself. We have hope in Jesus because He did not stay dead on the cross, but was raised from the dead three days later. Jesus’ example shows us that while we suffer, we need to continue God’s mission of redemption by loving others well

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 was one of your favourite days this past month and why?

Connection to Head (Study/Knowledge Questions)

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

Connection to Heart (Deeper Engagement)

- In the first garden (Eden), Adam hides from God out of fear. In this garden (Gethsemane), Jesus steps forward and identifies himself to those seeking Him. What does this teach us about Jesus as the New Adam?
- Peter tries to solve the problem with a sword (v. 10), but Jesus chooses the cup of suffering instead. In what ways do we still try to use “swords” (power, control, aggression) today when we should be accepting a difficult cup?
- In what ways do you relate to Peter's experience of confidently declaring loyalty to Jesus but then failing when faced with real pressure and suffering?

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: As you pray this week, take time to name the things that hurt in your life and surrender them to God.

- Try squeezing your hands as you name the things that hurt, and then when you surrender them release and open your hands to God.

Prayer: God of Gethsemane, who experiences and knows the pain of our condition, help us turn to you in the ache of our emotions when the day has turned to darkness, that we may know the liberation of your transforming love, not only by the calm waters' edge, but when we're traveling on the waters of the storms that life brings.

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.