

Small Group Discussion Questions

// Week of March 24, 2024

LEADER INFO

- Easter is this weekend!
 - Saturday, March 30th - 2:30pm & 4:30pm
 - Sunday, March 31st - 8:00am, 9:30 & 11:15am

GROW This section is based on the sermon from Sunday. You can find it here: <https://www.southsidelife.com/>

ICE BREAKER What was one highlight of your week? One lowlight?

Creation, The Crown & The King

“Jesus already knew that the tree He had planted would one day be shaped into a cross He would be hung on.”

Read

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice, O people of Zion!

Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem!

Look, your king is coming to you.

He is righteous and victorious,
yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—
riding on a donkey's colt.

Mark 11:1-10

1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, **2** saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. **3** If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”

4 They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, **5** some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” **6** They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. **7** When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. **8** Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. **9** Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna! “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” **10** “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Luke 19:40

“...if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

John 14:6

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

1. Palm Sunday

- a. Palm Sunday marks the beginning of “Passion Week” - the events of the week leading up to Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection.

550 years before Jesus was even born, the prophet Zechariah prophesied that Israel’s king would come, riding on a donkey’s colt.

- i. As Jesus rides into the city, crowds gather, waving palm branches and laying their cloaks on the road, they cheer, “*Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*”

Basically what they’re doing is they are treating Jesus like a conquering King coming to set them free. They expect a war.

But culturally, the Jews of that time would have known that kings on their way to war rode war horses, but when they came in peace, they rode a donkey.

1. What do you think it says about Jesus that he chose to ride in on a donkey?

2. Creation

- a. Looking around us, all of creation cries out God's glory - the mountains, lakes, sun, trees, stones... every bit of God's creation exists to glorify God.

So, Jesus rides in and Creation shouts His praises....it was the best of times, but Jesus already knew in that moment that just days later, Creation would be used to do the unthinkable.

- i. Some of those stones had been melted down and made into iron, creating large nails, which would have been driven into Jesus' hands and feet when He was crucified. A tree He had created was fashioned into the cross where He suffered and died.

1. Jesus said that even "the stones will cry out" praising God. We live in a beautiful place on Earth. What have you seen in nature that made you thankful for God's Creation or awed you?
2. What must it have felt like to Jesus for pieces of the earth that He created to have been used to kill Him?

3. The Crowd

- a. Many in the crowds who were cheering Jesus on that day, were crying "crucify Him" later that week.
 - i. Pastor Mike reminded us of an oldy (but a goody) quote from 2009 when his wife Corinne said from the stage "People suck... and you can't kill them"
 1. When was the last time it felt like everyone was with you?
 2. When was the last time it felt like everyone was against you?

- ii. Jesus died for you. He loves you. He's with you. He's for you - when the crowd is cheering and when the crowd is jeering.
 - 1. Discuss

4. The King

- a. The Pharisees had so much power in first-century Judaism because they, and everybody else, thought they held "the secrets" to earning salvation. Then Jesus came and said "Oh you can't achieve salvation. There's no way to earn it."

When the Disciples (Jesus' friends and close followers) heard this they were shocked [Matthew 19:25-26]. Essentially saying "So there's no way then??"

Read:

Matthew 19:25-26

25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?"

26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Jesus looks at them and answers them, saying "I didn't say there was no way..."

Read:

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

- i. You can't perform your way to salvation... even on your best day. What does that mean to you?
- b. Jesus did everything for us and then said "Follow me" ... how has that invitation changed the course of your life?

- c. Who in your life needs to hear that invitation from Jesus at a Southside Easter service this weekend?

COMMUNION

Given that this week is "Passion Week" and the leadup to Easter, I want to suggest that it's a great week for you and your group to take communion together. All that is needed for communion is:

- Crackers or Bread
- Juice

Why Communion?

Communion is something God tells us to do as Christians, to remember the sacrifice that Jesus made by dying on the cross for us.

When He did that, he took our sin and made us spotless. So we don't have to be perfect... in fact, we were never going to achieve perfection in the first place... so instead Jesus lived a perfect life, died and rose again so that we could be made right.

The only "requirement" for taking communion this week for you and your group is that you believe that Jesus is the son of God, who died for your sins and rose again.

In other words, take part in communion if you have asked Jesus to be the Lord of your life, and are taking steps to follow Him, day by day!

Disclaimer: Matthew 5:23-24 instructs us to examine our hearts and our relationships with people before we thank God for His forgiveness!

If anyone in your group has it in their power to go and (safely) extend an apology or forgiveness to someone and hasn't yet, advise them to take care of that ASAP, skip taking communion with everyone this week, and come back to do it all together as a group again next week! As a group, pray for courage and grace for them as they take this step.

How do you lead your group through taking Communion?

If you have NO idea what to do, the good news is, it's simple! Traditionally, red wine has been used for communion, but for this week, just make sure you have juice on hand. It's not important what is in your cup: the important thing is that we remember that it represents the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross for our sins.

1. Lead your group in saying "**Jesus, with this cup, we remember that Your blood was shed for our sins.**" Then, drink the juice.

You'll also need a small piece of bread or cracker for each person who will be taking communion. This represents the body of Christ which was broken on the cross for your sins and mine.

2. Lead your group in saying "**Jesus, with this bread, we remember that Your body was broken, hung, and buried for us. And 3 days later, You rose again and stepped out of the tomb - defeating death for us, once and for all.**" Then eat the bread.

That's it! It's that simple but it's a meaningful pause, as we all take a moment to fix our eyes on Jesus and His sacrifice for us.

PRAY