

## SAC Small Groups Discussion Guide – Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

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 12:12-19*

*12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!" 14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: 15 "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." 16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him. 17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. 18 Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"*

### **Overview of Sermon**

*John 12:12-19 features a passage that we typically read on Palm Sunday but holds relevance for our lives every day. Jesus is seen pictured here riding on a donkey into Jerusalem just before the Passover Festival with the Jewish people coming out waving palm branches and praising him. This is a scene steeped in rich cultural images from both the Jewish and wider Roman context. Passover was a Jewish festival that celebrated the act of God rescuing the Jewish people out of Egyptian slavery and Jesus like any Jewish man was on His way to celebrate in Jerusalem even though the religious leaders had been plotting his death. The crowd from Jerusalem place palm branches, a symbol of royalty, in front of Jesus expecting that He would deliver them from Rome just as God had delivered them from Egypt. The crowd is not subtle in their declaration of Jesus as that sort of King when they reference Psalm 118:25-26.*

*Jesus did not come as they thought He would on a horse chariot with all the fanfare. Instead, Jesus came humbly riding on a donkey to fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. Even Jesus' disciples did not fully realize all that Jesus was coming to do until his death and resurrection from the cross. The crowd continues to share about the signs and miracles of Jesus to the point that the Pharisees will begin to set their ploys into action against Jesus. Expectations were and continue to be a point of conflict for those who encounter Jesus. Often, we have self-centred or unrealistic expectations of God that are contrary to His character and will. We often have great plans for Jesus' plans for our lives instead of coming to Him and seeking guidance for our lives.*

### 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)**

- Share a time when you expected one thing, but something else happened entirely.

#### **Connection to Head (Study/Knowledge Questions)**

- What does this passage teach us about Jesus' identity?
- What was the significance of Passover? How did it contribute to this scene of Jesus' coming into Jerusalem?

#### **Connection to Heart (Deeper Engagement)**

- What have been some the expectations or beliefs that you held in the past that you came to realize were inaccurate or false?
- How does understanding Jesus as King shape our relationship to Him as opposed to Jesus as my friend (which He still is)?

### 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:** How am I shifting my prayers from directives for Jesus to TRANSFORM OTHERS into personal invitations for Jesus to TRANSFORM ME?

- Are my prayers primarily focused on me or community? Do I spend more time asking for things that I want or that God would inform of what to do next?

- Am I praying for someone else to be more loving or that God would transform me into a more loving person?
- Am I praying for a big financial payout so I can be comfortable or asking Jesus to make me more generous with what I have been given to bless others?

**Prayer:** God our Father, You are good and Your love endures forever!

We ask that you would shift our eyes, focus, and attention towards Jesus. We invite You to challenge our assumptions and expectations. May we encounter the transforming work of Jesus through His Holy Spirit. 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.