

EASTER

with Calvary

Week 28 Discussion Questions

Text: John 18-20

Icebreaker: In what ways have you witnessed or experienced the Gospel this Easter?

1. What stood out from the Good Friday or Easter sermons this week?

Read: John 18:33-40

2. Why does Pilate ask Jesus if he is "King of the Jews"?

Pilate is Roman governor and an enforcer in the Roman empire under the emperor Caesar, who is considered King. While Pilate is not concerned with upholding Jewish law, and in fact seems maybe reluctant to be involved in their business at all, he questions Jesus on a charge that could be brought against him for violating Roman law: claiming to be King. If Jesus is making this claim, he could be in real trouble for challenging the authority of Caesar.

3. How does Jesus' response provide an answer to Pilate's question without falling into the trap that has been set?

Jesus does implicitly imply that he is a King, but by claiming his Kingdom is not of this world, he bypasses the territorial claim of Kingship in Rome. So while the answer is "yes," he avoids the trap the Jewish officials were trying to set for him. Jesus is King, but his reign and rule is greater than they can even imagine.

4. Jesus told Pilate that His Kingdom was not of this world. Take some time in your group to talk about what matters most to kings of the earth (land, people, taxes, etc.). What is Jesus' primary focus in His Kingdom?

While in an ideal or perfect world, kings' rule would benefit their kingdom and they would hope for the flourishing and well-being of their subjects. However, history shows us that the reputation of kings' motivations are not always selfless or outward. Instead, they're often motivated by selfish power, greed, status, and pride. Jesus' rule and reign are focused on God and his glory, redeeming the world back to God, and ruling over the creation as it was meant to be—to flourish and live in relationship with God forever.

5. What does it look like for Jesus to reign in his kingdom today and what impact does that have in your life?

Read: John 19:16-30

6. We know from all of Jesus' previous references to his "hour/time" (throughout John's Gospel), that he has anticipated this moment and has been in complete control of its arrival. How does that affect the way you view him on the cross?

Jesus is not helpless or weak as he goes to the cross. Jesus has proven over and over that all things have happened according to the will of God and that he is fully surrendered to God's will. He is faithful and strong to follow through, not weak and helpless. The cross is brutal and humiliating, yet Jesus, fully aware of it all, willfully accepts it for our sake and the sake of God's glory.

7. What does Jesus' imply when he says, "I thirst"? (Psalm 69:21; John 4:10)
Amidst all of his claims for equality and unity with God, Jesus reminds us that he is simultaneously fully human in this moment. Though he's willfully chosen to be here, he yearns for God's presence in the same way we all do—longing for living water. Amidst the tragic suffering, Jesus needs the sustenance only God can provide to him.
8. In what ways do you find rest and peace in the "finished" work of Christ, in the here and now? Is there any area where it is hard to believe that Jesus conquered your own sins on the cross?

Read John 20

9. What details surrounding Jesus' resurrection stand out and what questions do you have about its significance?
10. Compare the various eyewitness accounts of Jesus' resurrection and discuss what we can learn from each of their responses.
Mary: Saw and witnessed the resurrected Jesus with her own eyes and left to tell everyone what she'd seen.
Disciples: Witness Jesus resurrected and are sent to proclaim.
Thomas: Struggles to believe the witness of the disciples telling them of Jesus' resurrection but believes the evidence once he sees it with his own eyes.
Witnessing the truth can/should lead us to respond by sharing the good news with others. Jesus says, "blessed are those who believe without seeing"—which in many ways are ALL of us. Yet, we also have witnessed Jesus' work in our world and can proclaim his truth because we have the Holy Spirit.
11. What is the significance of the resurrection for the Gospel? (Reference: 1 Corinthians 15:12-34).
Paul tells us that our faith is meaningless and sin and death still reign over us if Jesus has not been raised from the dead. The good news is not good news, it is not complete if we only account for Jesus dying for our sins. If he died for them, but remained dead, then death will have won. But Jesus' resurrection is the precursor to our own rising and defeat of death. That is the good news, that we will be raised with Jesus to renewed relationship with God.
12. As witnesses who must believe without seeing, what does it look like for you to respond to the truth of Jesus' resurrection in your life right now?

