

## Grow Group Resources

### Sermon Summary

- This week's sermon on John 18 centers on "**the power of purpose**," contrasting Jesus' steady confidence with Peter's inconsistency under pressure. The speaker begins with Jesus before Pilate, where Jesus declares that He came into the world "to bear witness to the truth." From this statement, the sermon explores how knowing one's God-given purpose produces courage, clarity, and consistency, even in difficult circumstances.
- The sermon then walks back through the events of John 18. After praying His high priestly prayer, Jesus crosses the Brook Kidron and enters the Garden of Gethsemane, fully aware of what awaits Him. The garden becomes a picture of pressure and surrender. Jesus knows He is about to be betrayed, arrested, beaten, and crucified, yet He deliberately steps forward to meet the soldiers. Rather than acting like a helpless victim, Jesus remains calm, intentional, and completely in control. When the soldiers arrive with weapons and torches, Jesus initiates the conversation by asking whom they seek. When He answers, "I am He," the crowd falls backward, revealing His divine authority and power. Even in arrest, Jesus protects His disciples and ensures their safety.
- In contrast, Peter responds emotionally and inconsistently. He impulsively cuts off Malchus' ear in an attempt to defend Jesus, only to deny Jesus moments later when questioned by a servant girl. John intentionally weaves the stories of Jesus and Peter together to highlight the dramatic difference between them. Jesus remains composed before religious leaders and Roman authorities, while Peter swings between boldness and fear. The sermon argues that the key difference is that Jesus clearly understands His purpose, while Peter does not yet fully understand his own.
- Jesus repeatedly speaks of His purpose as something given by the Father. He knows why He came into the world and therefore walks confidently into suffering. Peter, however, creates his own purpose in the moment. He assumes his role is to protect Jesus physically, but Jesus rebukes him because God's kingdom is not advanced through violence. The preacher emphasizes that many people act like Peter by inventing purposes based on emotion, convenience, recognition, or self-protection rather than receiving purpose from God.
- The sermon then outlines several characteristics of a purpose-filled life. First, purpose must be **God-given**. Jesus consistently submits Himself to the Father's will, even when it involves suffering. Likewise, believers are reminded that God has designed meaningful works and callings for them. Second, purpose must be **personally understood**. Jesus clearly articulates

His mission—to seek and save the lost and bear witness to the truth. Without clarity about purpose, people become reactive to circumstances rather than grounded in conviction.

- Third, true purpose must be **others-focused**. Jesus washes His disciples' feet, protects them in the garden, and ultimately gives His life for humanity. Peter, the religious leaders, and Pilate all demonstrate the opposite tendency: self-preservation. Peter seeks personal safety, the priests protect their power, and Pilate compromises justice to preserve his political position. The sermon warns that self-centered purpose always shifts according to convenience and fear, while godly purpose produces consistency and courage.
- Finally, the preacher explains that purpose must be bigger than specific tasks (**beyond tasks**). Jesus understood His mission broadly—to reveal truth and glorify the Father—not merely as a checklist of actions. The sermon uses motherhood as an example: being a mother is not simply about completing daily chores, but about shaping and nurturing a child into the person God created them to be. In the same way, believers should see their lives as part of a larger calling that influences everything they do.
- The sermon closes with encouragement rather than pressure. Discovering purpose is not meant to create anxiety but freedom and confidence. The preacher encourages listeners to seek their purpose by walking closely with Jesus, identifying their spiritual gifts, listening to wise mentors, and paying attention to how God has uniquely wired them. Ultimately, the message is that every believer has a God-given purpose that extends beyond personal success and individual tasks. Like Jesus crossing the Brook Kidron into His appointed mission, Christians are called to step confidently into the purposes God has prepared for them, serving others and glorifying God through their lives.

## Discussion Questions

1. Start this small group time with a word of prayer, inviting God to lead and guide you into truth and transformation.
2. Take turns reading sections of John 18 out loud.
  - A. Stop as questions arise or interesting points come to mind.
3. The sermon contrasts Jesus' confidence with Peter's inconsistency in John 18.
  - B. What differences stood out most to you between the way Jesus and Peter responded under pressure?
  - C. Where do you see yourself responding more like Peter?
4. Jesus said, "For this purpose I was born." How does knowing your purpose shape the way you handle fear, conflict, criticism, or uncertainty?
  - A. Can you share a moment when clarity about your purpose helped you stay faithful?
5. The sermon emphasized that true purpose must be God-given rather than self-generated.
  - A. What are some ways people today create their own purpose apart from God?
  - B. Where have you seen churches pursue purpose apart from God's values or mission?
  - C. How can we better discern the purposes God actually has for us?
6. Peter's actions shifted depending on the situation—bold in one moment, fearful in the next.
  - A. Why do you think our convictions can become inconsistent when circumstances change?
  - B. What helps build consistency in following Jesus?
7. The message taught that purpose is bigger than tasks and should ultimately serve others.
  - A. In your current season of life, how might God be inviting you to live with a broader, others-focused sense of purpose rather than simply completing responsibilities?
8. Close this time with prayer as you pray for needs represented in the group, the church, or the world.