



Discipleship

Ideas for the Iowa District West

Introduction

The following “Discipleship Ideas” from the readings are not intended for any other purpose than to provide ideas of application from each reading that may be included in the taught and preached Word for this particular Sunday to help teach a life of discipleship. L.C.M.S. pastors are gifted at preaching Law and Gospel, but often lack in the matter of personal applications to the Word. This tool is for no other reason than to offer some seeds of thought to do that.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES A

August 30, 2015

From C.P.H. About the Cover: “Hear Me!” our Lord calls. He teaches us that defilement doesn’t come to the human being from the outside, but from the inside. Our Lord sets aside kosher food laws and all such things to teach us that our defilement arises from our own hearts, our wayward desires, our lusts. The problem with us isn’t something we can fix. It will take nothing less than the Spirit’s miracle of rebirth.

First Reading

Deuteronomy 4:1–2, 6–9

¹“And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

²You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you...

⁶Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ ⁷For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?

⁸And what great nation is there, that has statutes and just decrees so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

⁹“Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children...

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: Coming into that land of promise, God had some obvious expectations for the people of Israel. None of those expectations were overly difficult to follow and as Moses recalls, they were all righteous and beneficial. So what is the big hang up here? It had to do with what the Israelites would do with those laws and how they would chose to view them. They weren't expectations that were to be changed or added to or detracted from. They were simple, concise, clear and righteous. Furthermore these laws and expectations were wise and understanding and so to view them differently somehow was to play with foolishness. So what can we glean in so far as application to this text? Well, let's look at the way that we view God's laws. Do we view them as the righteous laws they are or do we view them as burdens and blocks to our desired life that we wish to change or ignore? Because of the grace of God we are blessed to be able to view God's Laws in light of His desired will for us to view them, as righteous, holy and as laws which reflect the fact that we have a God who is near to us.

Epistle Reading Ephesians 6:10–20

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: This reading continues from last week's encouragement about how husbands and wives are to live together in marriage. Now Paul works out from that central social establishment of marriage to our life in this world in which we need to realize that we are always engaging in a spiritual battle with evil. The applications here are obvious. We need to find ourselves putting on the whole armor of God in order to find ourselves fit for battle against evil and the spiritual forces that work against the people of God. We can do that because the mystery of the Gospel has been made known to us. The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God is there to support and guide us in this effort to armor our lives with God's grace. When such armor is employed in our lives, we are empowered to stand against the schemes of the evil one and we are empowered to engage in and support the spiritual battles the Church faces daily and also empowered to make it possible for the Church to carry on where we live and elsewhere.

Gospel Reading:**Mark 7:14–23**

¹⁴And he called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." ¹⁷And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ²⁰And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: Continuing on from the encounter with the scribes and Pharisees about not washing hands before eating, Jesus clarifies with the people something that today's two other readings point to. First of all, that which defiles someone is not the restrictions that man places on man and which are not always able to be fulfilled. That which defiles someone is what comes out of the heart of man. Adding to God's Law only complicates and distorts God's true will, and failing to take up the full armor of God only leaves one helpless in fighting against the forces of evil which invade the lives of all people. The application we can glean from this reading is one of seeking the proper understanding of God and His will for our lives. This reading comes at a time which Christian Education in the congregation is moving into full swing. What a wonderful time to concentrate on what that is all about so that the people of God are not like the disciples in this reading who failed to understand what the Lord was teaching. By God's grace God's people in our congregations can grow in grace and understanding in order to properly understand God's Word and will and they can be enabled to put on the full armor of God in order to fight the good fight of faith. Then people can know that our God is near to us.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read Deuteronomy 4:1–2, 6–9

¹"And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

²You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you...

⁶Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' ⁷For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?

⁸And what great nation is there, that has statutes and just decrees so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

⁹"Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children...

1. What was being done with the statutes and rules and what does that mean for the modern Church?
2. Give an example of what God was talking about in verse 2.
3. How are God's statutes and rules wisdom and understanding?
4. How does the promise of verses 7 and 8 come true?
5. How can the concern of verse 9 not have to become a reality?
6. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read Ephesians 6:10–20

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my

mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

7. How does one become strong in the Lord?
8. What is meant by the whole armor of God enabling one to stand up against the schemes of the devil?
9. Of all the armor pieces of God, which is perhaps the most important and why?
10. What is the aspect of prayer in verse 18 that is perhaps overlooked in our personal prayer life most often?
11. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

READ: Mark 7:14–23

¹⁴And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.” ¹⁷And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ²⁰And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

12. What had happened with the Scribes and Pharisees that caused Jesus to bring the concerns of this reading before the people which was identified in last Sunday’s Gospel reading?
13. Why was this such a difficult thing for the disciples and for people in the modern age to understand?
14. What was meant by Jesus’ words, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him?”
15. Where does that originate and how only is it overcome in our lives?
16. What application of this Gospel reading will you apply to your life as a result of hearing it today?

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline (Leader's Guide)

Read Deuteronomy 4:1–2, 6–9

¹"And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

²You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you...

⁶Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' ⁷For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?

⁸And what great nation is there, that has statutes and just decrees so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

⁹"Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children...

1. What was being done with the statutes and rules and what does that mean for the modern Church?

They were being taught to the people and it means for the modern church that they also be taught today. Laws of God are important for obvious reasons as this reading testifies.

2. Give an example of what God was talking about in verse 2.

Answers will vary, but one that could be drawn to the attention would be that which was the Gospel reading for Pentecost 13 where the Scribes and Pharisees had imposed their own regulation about washing before eating on the Lord's disciples.

3. How are God's statutes and rules wisdom and understanding?

They first of all make sense and are the moral code of mankind in all places. Paul said in Romans 2 that this law is written on man's heart. God has placed this natural understanding of His will in our hearts for a purpose and as a result it is also observed by others when God's people live according to it. Unfortunately today, the reality is that God's people are not showing themselves to be much different than the rest of the world, therefore the Laws of God are not seen as wisdom and understanding.

4. How does the promise of verses 7 and 8 come true?

People see and respect those who are godly in their behavior and in spite of their own lack of convictions to God's Laws, do have to respect them and those who live according to them.

5. How can the concern of verse 9 not have to become a reality?

By making the will of God known to each successive generation and encouraging successive generations to rely on the grace of God for guidance in doing so.

6. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read: Ephesians 6:10–20

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

7. How does one become strong in the Lord?

This happens only by the grace of God through our continued use of His means of grace (Word and sacrament). It is in this that we are enabled to put on the whole armor of God.

8. What is meant by the whole armor of God enabling one to stand up against the schemes of the devil?

These are the tools that God gives us to stand up against the evil schemes of the devil which include the truth of Jesus Christ who is the truth, faith, salvation, the Spirit's work in us through the Word, and prayer.

9. Of all the armor pieces of God, which is perhaps the most important and why?

Answers will vary, but perhaps the most powerful is the means of grace in the Spirit's work through the Word.

10. What is the aspect of prayer in verse 18 that is perhaps overlooked in our personal prayer life most often?

Supplication for all the saints is something we all need to work at more diligently.

11. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

READ: Mark 7:14–23

¹⁴And he called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." ¹⁷And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ²⁰And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

12. What had happened with the Scribes and Pharisees that caused Jesus to bring the concerns of this reading before the people which was identified in last Sunday's Gospel reading?

The disciples had eaten without washing their hands in a ceremonial fashion. The reality is that the Jewish leaders had developed all sorts of rubrics and regulations for people to follow which were unassociated with the Laws of God. These regulations had gotten out of hand and they were judging others according to these manmade regulations, having overlooked the things of God's Word.

13. Why was this such a difficult thing for the disciples and for people in the modern age to understand?

The Jews and modern day unbelievers were convinced that our salvation depends on what we do and not what the Messiah would do and has done for us. The disciples saw their defilement of failing to fulfill all the requirements of the Law all around them. They felt guilt and shame, and what Jesus was teaching them is that this defilement and sin is not from what goes in to them from the rules and regulations established by man, but what comes out of them which comes from the sinful nature of man which is born into us. We are only cleansed of this spiritual fault by the forgiveness of sins offered us in Christ Jesus.

14. What was meant by Jesus' words, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him?"

What a man is in his heart is what he truly is! This is obvious therefore in the manner in which that man conducts himself in the world. It is not so much in the fulfilling of manmade regulations but in the manner in which we view God's and abide by them. When our lives witness as disregard for God's will, or a lack of understanding of God's will, what comes out of us is sin and what is really in our hearts. Sin lurks there and it is bound to surface, but our lives are to be a testimony of the work of God within us.

15. Where does that originate and how only is it overcome in our lives?

It originates in us in what we call "original sin" or the condition of sin into which we were born having inherited it from our original parents, Adam and Eve. It is only overcome as Luther says through daily contrition and repentance with faith in the loving forgiveness that comes to us through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

16. What application of this Gospel reading will you apply to your life as a result of hearing it today?

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

Obedience to God's ordinances is a difficult thing for sinful human beings and even for those of us who do love God. That's because of the sinful human nature that we inherited from Adam and Even. But armed with the full armor of God, we are empowered to fight off the evil one whose influence still lurks within our own hearts. Empowered by the grace of God for us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we can be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. As modern day disciples of Christ this can mean a whole lot when it comes to the witness we make to others.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Eternal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, grant us the gift of Your grace that we might be strong in You and in the power of Your might to overcome all evil from without and within. Help us, by the power of the Holy Spirit to be faithful witnesses of Your will to those around us. Help others see through the good fight of faith that we maintain, that You are near to us and that Your will is good and wise. Grant this, O Lord, so that others might also come to a greater awareness of Your love for Jesus' sake. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**