



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.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES B
November 8, 2015

From C.P.H. About the Cover: God does not measure matters as we do. So the widow lovingly placed her two small copper coins into the treasury of the temple in the confidence that she literally lived from God’s sacrificial mercy. She caught our Lord’s attention. He saw the truth: her giving outweighed the gifts the rich tossed in God’s direction. She gave from her poverty, yet she knew she could not out-give the God of Israel.

First Reading; 1 Kings 17:8-16

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him, ⁹ “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” ¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” ¹¹ And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” ¹² And she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.” ¹³ And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son.” ¹⁴ For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, “The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.” ¹⁵ And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶ The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: This familiar account of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath offers a number of applications for the believer's life as a disciple. The first and foremost is of course the matter of listening to God's Word and responding as He gives direction. That's what Elijah did and it is also what the widow did. But another application is that of recognizing the truth of God. The widow identified that Elijah's God lives and that His Word is truth. She didn't doubt that even though she was not an Israelite, nor a follower of the prophet, yet she was convinced that Elijah's confession of who God is and what God would do for her and her son was truth. This comes solely by the work of the Holy Spirit in one's heart and life. By the same Spirit, we too can recognize the significance of the Living God at work in the world around us and respond to Him with faith like that of the widow, relying on His sustenance and protection no matter what.

Epistle Reading Hebrews 9:24-28

²⁴ For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: The writer of Hebrews in this reading once again points to the sole way of salvation which is by way of Jesus. The reading is clear Gospel and seems to have little application and once again it seems we must import it. Clearly we can by the grace of God as we associate this reading with that of the previous one and the Gospel for today. Both deal with living and active faith, trusting in the providence of God no matter what. This reading speaks to our eternal providence which is ours because of Christ and when that is held like a banner before the eyes of our hearts, we can find assurance of God's providence and care for us even now, no matter what. God loves sinful mankind and cares for His creatures. We are recipients of His love and as such we can trust He will provide for us in all things and especially our salvation. That application extends to how we respond to Him in our sacrificial giving and living because it is a response of the heart as we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to trust entirely in God's care for us.

Gospel Reading: Mark 12:38-44

³⁸ In his teaching [Jesus] said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces ³⁹and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, ⁴⁰who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

⁴¹And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ⁴³And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. ⁴⁴For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: Jesus offers a warning in this reading pertaining to those who assume a posture of arrogance and honor. "Beware" of them Jesus says because they might look honorable, but they are also capable of doing great injustice on others. He also pointed to a widow who looked like someone incapable of any recognition, but in our Savior's wisdom He recognized her for her faith in the providence of God. We can take both applications to heart as we realize in our own lives the sins of arrogance we possess and the need of God's grace in our own lives to give of ourselves when we make sacrificial gifts to God. With His grace we can trust Him boldly and respond to His mercies completely confident that He will care for us no matter what.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read **1 Kings 17:8-16**

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him, ⁹ "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you." ¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." ¹¹ And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." ¹² And she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die." ¹³ And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son." ¹⁴ For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'" ¹⁵ And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶ The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.

1. What was similar about the widow and Elijah in their response to God's will for their lives?
2. What thing did the widow identify about Elijah's God and why is that important?
3. What should the final phrase of this reading mean to us?
4. What does it take to trust in God's providence as this woman did?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read **Hebrews 9:24-28**

²⁴ For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

6. What is significant about Christ now having returned to or entered heaven itself?
7. Why was this something done on our behalf?

8. Why is our Lord's sacrifice able to put an end to all other sacrifice?
9. What comfort does the final verse offer you?
10. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

READ: Mark 12:38-44

³⁸ In his teaching [Jesus] said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces ³⁹and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, ⁴⁰who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

⁴¹And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ⁴³And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. ⁴⁴For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

11. What does the warning Jesus made of the scribes say to us in this modern age?
12. What does the widow's mite tell of her faith?
13. How is what she gave more than all those who contributed greater sums?
14. What might this teach us about our own giving to the Lord?
15. 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 1 Kings 17:8-16

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him, ⁹ "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you." ¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." ¹¹ And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." ¹² And she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die." ¹³ And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son." ¹⁴ For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'" ¹⁵ And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶ The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.

1. What was similar about the widow and Elijah in their response to God's will for their lives?

They both trusted the Word of the Lord as God's will for their lives. People can often assume God's will for their lives but it is not necessarily based on God's Word.

2. What thing did the widow identify about Elijah's God and why is that important?

The fact that God is a Living God – not merely some inanimate object of faith, but a living and active God who personally cares for His people.

3. What should the final phrase of this reading mean to us?

The Word of God does come to us by way of the mouth of His prophets even of the modern day.

4. What does it take to trust in God's providence as this woman did?

It takes the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and lives to trust as she did.

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

Read: Hebrews 9:24-28

²⁴ For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

6. What is significant about Christ now having returned to or entered heaven itself?

The significance is the fact that the work of our salvation and the ultimate sacrifice of God for the sins of the world is now complete. There is still more to come, but nothing more is needed from God for the salvation of sinful mankind.

7. Why was this something done on our behalf?

It is done in our behalf because we are incapable of offering a complete sacrifice for our sins, let alone the sins of the whole world. Thus once offered and completed, Jesus could properly assume His rightful position once again in heaven.

8. Why is our Lord's sacrifice able to put an end to all other sacrifice?

His sacrifice was the only holy and completely pure sacrifice that could be made. All other sacrifices are blemished because of the sin of the one who makes the sacrifice. But because there was no sin found in the Savior, His sacrifice was holy and pure thus putting an end to all other sacrifices. They all pointed to this one.

9. What comfort does the final verse offer you?

Christ's return is not to deal with my sin. That has already been dealt with on the cross of Calvary. When He returns it will be to take me to Himself. That is great comfort because the judgement will not be a day of reasoning, but rather a day of rejoicing.

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

READ: Mark 12:38–44

³⁸ In his teaching [Jesus] said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces ³⁹and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, ⁴⁰who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

⁴¹And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ⁴³And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. ⁴⁴For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

11. What does the warning Jesus made of the scribes say to us in this modern age?

There are many in every age in the Church who are like those whom the Lord warned about that appear outwardly to be good and honorable, are actually corrupted and ungodly. It is therefore a vital matter for the modern day disciple to discern the spiritual leaders on the basis of their teachings which ought to be solely according to the Word of the Lord.

12. What does the widow's mite tell of her faith?

She trusted in the providence (complete care) of God for her in her life.

13. How is what she gave more than all those who contributed greater sums?

Proportionately it was 100 % of all she had even though in actual amount it was considerably less. Therefore it was the greater sacrifice and gift to God given out of faith in God's willingness to take care of her.

14. What might this teach us about our own giving to the Lord?

It ought to teach us the importance of willingly trusting in God's providence. We have a constant temptation to think that we need to provide for times when we might be in need but in truth, God provides for those times as well as for the time of plenty. We are simply called to trust the truth of God's promises that He will provide.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

God's provision is something that we can often doubt. They widow to whom God sent Elijah initially doubted that she and her son could live much longer until she heard the word of the prophet of the Living God and trusted in His providence. The widow in the temple who gave her mite did the same. As modern day disciples of the Living Lord Jesus Christ, we too, can trust in God's care for us even in the times of deepest need, because God has promised in His Word never to leave or forsake us.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Grant, O Lord, Your Holy Spirit that our hearts might be set to trust in Your never ending mercies and Your promise to provide all that we need in this body and life. Fill us with the trust and confidence we saw in the widow of Zarephath and the widow in the temple who gave all she had trusting in Your mercy. Make us faithful witnesses of the fact that we hold confidence in the Word of the Living God. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**