



**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.

### **THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR - SERIES B**

November 22, 2015

**From C.P.H. About the Cover:** Through the rise and fall of nations, through heartbreak and tragedy, through suffering and pain, the people of God have not lost hope. The One who was Raised from the dead, the Son of Man whose blood forgives our sin and whose resurrection guarantees our own, will come again. We will see Him coming in the clouds. So our constant prayer remains: Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!

#### **First Reading;      Isaiah 51:4–6**

<sup>4</sup>“Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation;  
for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.  
<sup>5</sup>My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out,  
and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait.  
<sup>6</sup>Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath;  
for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment,  
and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever,  
and my righteousness will never be dismayed.

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading Discipleship Notes:** Isaiah’s prophetic call for His people is to give ear to God. There would one day come God’s justice and salvation in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. The application of this text lies in that call to give attention to God. We do that by paying attention to His Word, being reminded over and over again of God’s justice and

salvation. That is especially true as we anticipate the final appearance of our Savior when the heavens will vanish like smoke and the earth wear out like a garment.

**Epistle Reading            Jude 20–25**

<sup>20</sup>But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; <sup>21</sup>keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. <sup>22</sup>And have mercy on those who doubt; <sup>23</sup>save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

<sup>24</sup>Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, <sup>25</sup>to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen

Epistle Discipleship Notes: Once again we have a reading with some specific applications for the life of a disciple. We are called to:

1. Build ourselves up in the most holy faith
2. Pray in the Holy Spirit
3. Keep ourselves in the love of God
4. Have mercy on those who doubt and
5. Snatch people out of the fire of Satan and thus save them.

These things can all be done by the mercy of God at work in our lives who not only empowers us to do these works of discipleship but who also keeps us from stumbling and presents us blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy.

**Gospel Reading:            Mark 13:24–37**

<sup>24</sup>[Jesus said:] "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup>And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

<sup>28</sup>"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup>Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>31</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>32</sup>"But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup>Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. <sup>35</sup>Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning— <sup>36</sup>lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. <sup>37</sup>And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: As the end of time comes, Christ's call for us in the life of a disciple is to be on guard and keep awake in the faith because that time is coming at an unexpected time and suddenly. We stay awake by heeding the truths of God's Word and not compromising the truths it teaches. We stay awake by not ignoring the signs of the times. We stay awake by making the most of the time we have before us in sharing the love of God with others. This is all possible because the grace of God is already at work in our hearts and lives.

## **Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline**

### **Read            Isaiah 51:4–6**

<sup>4</sup>"Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation;  
for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.  
<sup>5</sup>My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out,  
and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait.  
<sup>6</sup>Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath;  
for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment,  
and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever,  
and my righteousness will never be dismayed.

1. What is meant by the law that would go out from God?
2. How do we know that this law would be for all people and not just the chosen people of God?
3. What is meant by the "arms" of God that will judge the people and for whom people wait?
4. To what is verse 6 making reference?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

### **Read            Jude 20–25**

<sup>20</sup>But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; <sup>21</sup>keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. <sup>22</sup>And have mercy on those who doubt; <sup>23</sup>save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

<sup>24</sup>Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, <sup>25</sup>to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen

6. How does one build yourself up in the most holy faith?
7. What does it mean to "pray in the Holy Spirit"?
8. What specific ways are you and your congregation having mercy on those who doubt?
9. What does it take to "snatch them out of the fire"?
10. What is meant by "show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh"?

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

**READ: Mark 13:24–37**

<sup>24</sup>[Jesus said:] “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup>And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

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<sup>32</sup>“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup>Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. <sup>35</sup>Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning— <sup>36</sup>lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. <sup>37</sup>And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

12. What did Jesus mean by “after the tribulation”?
13. What specific point was Jesus making in the lesson of the fig tree?
14. What is the primary point of verse 31 with regard to the concern of Jesus’ discourse in this reading?
15. Three times Jesus encourages his disciples to “stay awake” in this reading. What exactly does that mean?
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 Isaiah 51:4–6

<sup>4</sup>"Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation;  
for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.

<sup>5</sup>My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out,  
and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait.

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for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment,  
and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever,  
and my righteousness will never be dismayed.

1. What is meant by the law that would go out from God?

*This is a reference to the New Covenant God would make with His people while not negating the Old Covenant which required complete fulfillment of His Law. This new law or covenant however, would be fulfilled by One who could do it. God Himself would set justice for a light to the people. His Son Jesus would complete the Law and then sacrifice Himself for the sins of the world. This is the Law that would go out – in a sense it is the Law or covenant of the Gospel.*

2. How do we know that this law would be for all people and not just the chosen people of God?

*Most translations read "the nations" not "my nation". Those translations are better understood in the light of the whole Scripture which assures us that Jesus is the Light to the Gentiles. God certainly holds all nations in His hands, and His nation can certainly be understood to include all of what we consider nations. But going on from that concern, however, we can also point to the coastlands that hope for God and that await His arm. This certainly incorporates all people and not merely the chosen people of God.*

3. What is meant by the "arms" of God that will judge the people and for whom people wait?

*This is a reference to Christ Jesus. The arm is an extension of oneself and the arm of God will judge the peoples and be the One for whom the people of the coastlands await. Ironically the arms of Jesus would also be those which were stretched out on the cross for us.*

4. To what is verse 6 making reference?

*This is in reference to the great and final day of judgement when Christ comes again.*

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

**Read: Jude 20–25**

<sup>20</sup>But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; <sup>21</sup>keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. <sup>22</sup>And have mercy on those who doubt; <sup>23</sup>save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

<sup>24</sup>Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,

<sup>25</sup>to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen

6. How does one build yourself up in the most holy faith?

*This is done solely by the aid and assistance of the Holy Spirit who works through the Means of Grace, that is the Word of God and the Sacraments. Only through these means can our faith be built up as we receive God's grace for faith.*

7. What does it mean to “pray in the Holy Spirit”?

*This simply means to pray as a believer. As one who believes in Jesus Christ we have already received the Holy Spirit. At the time of our Baptism we received the Holy Spirit. Therefore we pray in the Holy Spirit. Some people think this means to use some sort of spirit-filled prayer language, but it is simply not so. To pray in the Holy Spirit means to pray in the Christian faith we have received by God's grace through the Gospel.*

8. What specific ways are you and your congregation having mercy on those who doubt?

*Answers will vary, but it is a good time to do some brainstorming about what in which this can be done both personally and corporately as a congregation.*

9. What does it take to “snatch them out of the fire”?

*This takes consistency and persistency in faithful witness. It is not something that comes about by our own works, but the Holy Spirit calls them by the Gospel that we make known to them. Only through that Gospel can people be snatched from the everlasting fires of hell.*

10. What is meant by “show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh”?

*This is an encouragement to witness Christ to the world without falling into the patterns of sin in the world. We are to hate the darkness of sin while at the same time showing forth the light of Christ.*

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

**READ: Mark 13:24–37**

<sup>24</sup>[Jesus said:] “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup>And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

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12. What did Jesus mean by “after the tribulation”?

*This was reference to that which Jesus had just previously taught pertaining to the signs of the things to take place before the end of time. It will be a time of fear and persecution and “tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be.” (verse 18)*

13. What specific point was Jesus making in the lesson of the fig tree?

*The specific point is that of simply being aware of the signs that are before our eyes. We know what season it is by the appearance of the fig tree. Likewise we know what season it is for the end of time by the appearance of the world in which we live where we see and experience wars, rumors of war, pestilence, violence, unrest, chaos, etc.*

14. What is the primary point of verse 31 with regard to the concern of Jesus’ discourse in this reading?

*The Word of God will be the sole comfort and support and strength for the believer in the great and final days. Nothing else will matter. It is to this Word that we must cling.*

15. Three times Jesus encourages his disciples to “stay awake” in this reading. What exactly does that mean?

*It simply means to remain faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ always in anticipation of His return.*

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



## Discipleship Bulletin Blub

This is the last Sunday of the Church year. There is an end to all things, except the Gospel. Our readings for today all point to the great and final day of God's judgement on this world and encourage the reader to live a life of confidence and hope in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We can do that because the Grace of God empowers us to believe and the Word of God remains alive in us forever. As modern day disciples, it furthermore encourages us to show the same mercy we have received to others so that they too might live in confidence and hope for the eternal future which God has given to this whole world because of His love.

## Discipleship Prayer Thought

O Lord, grant us Your grace to remain faithful to the Gospel of salvation which is ours in Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Fill us with confidence and hope for eternity because You have sent forth Your arm of mercy to fulfill the entire law for us. Help us to show mercy to those who have not yet come to know the love You have for sinful man and grant us grace to stay awake in the faith at all times as we await Your great and final coming. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**