



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.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT - SERIES C

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From C.P.H. About the Cover: Because of sin, we live in a world of doubt. The devil tried to bring doubt into Jesus’ world by taking Him to the highest place of the temple and saying, “If You are the Son of God.” We are to have no doubt that Jesus is God’s dear Son, sent to be our Savior. God’s love for us erases all doubt that the devil tries to bring our way.

First Reading; Deuteronomy 26:1–11

¹“When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it, ²you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. ³And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, ‘I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.’ ⁴Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.

⁵“And you shall make response before the LORD your God, ‘A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. ⁷Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders. ⁹And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a

land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O LORD, have given me.' And you shall set it down before the LORD your God and worship before the LORD your God. ¹¹And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: Each reading for today finds an association with the first commandment. God is to be first in our lives. For the Israelites, He was to come first when they entered the promised land and when they received their first harvest. There is a clear application in this reading that has to do with our response to God's goodness and mercy. That is to "thank, praise, serve and obey" God as Luther encourages us to do in the meaning of the First Article. This response to God's mercy is something that should come naturally, not just because it is the right thing to do, but because God is the giver of all things and He actually makes it a joyous thing for us to respond to His goodness as it was a joyous thing for the first inhabitants of the promised land to bring the first fruit of the ground which the Lord had given to them.

Epistle Reading Romans 10:8b–13

^{8b} "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Epistle Discipleship Notes: How important it is for all of God's people to recognize the blessings of God who does indeed bestow His riches on all who call on Him. Riches are certainly measured in much more than bank accounts. We can see the greatest wealth we possess is that of the salvation won for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore it is our duty and privilege to thank and pray, serve and obey Him. It comes naturally.

Gospel Reading: Luke 4:1–13

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ²for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. ³The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" ⁵And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸And Jesus answered him, "It is written,

“You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.”

⁹And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written,

“He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’

¹¹and

“On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”

¹²And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ¹³And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Gospel Discipleship Notes: In the temptation of our Lord we find Him responding to each temptation by quoting the Word of God. This is the only way we can overcome temptation to do evil as well. God’s Word is powerful and it does enable us to overcome the wiles of the evil one. It especially helps us to overcome our times of doubt and despair. That is because God’s Word is truth and it is powerful and it is a blessing to the believer since it is so near to us (as today’s second reading reminds us).

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read Deuteronomy 26:1-11

¹“When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it, ²you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. ³And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, ‘I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.’ ⁴Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.

⁵“And you shall make response before the LORD your God, ‘A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. ⁷Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders. ⁹And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O LORD, have given me.’ And you shall set it down before the LORD your God and worship before the LORD your God. ¹¹And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

1. What might we associate the first fruit offering to in the early chapters of Genesis?
2. What was this particular first fruit offering supposed help the Israelites recall?
3. Today we talk about first fruit giving which means what?
4. What might our first fruit giving help us recall?
5. What specific attitude did God desire of the Israelites in verse 11?
6. Is it still true of us today?
7. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read Romans 10:8b-13

^{8b} “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹For the Scripture says, “Everyone

who believes in him will not be put to shame." ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

8. When Paul says that the word is near you, what does that mean?
9. Twice Paul used the word "confess" connected to faith. Why are they connected?
10. According to verse 11, those who believe in Christ will not be put to shame. How is this associated with confessing Christ?
11. What does verse 12 teach concerning God's desire for salvation?
12. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

READ: Luke 4:1-13

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ²for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. ³The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" ⁵And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸And Jesus answered him, "It is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."" ⁹And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you," ¹¹and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."" ¹²And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

13. What does the fact that Jesus had been fasting for this long period of time before the temptation experience suggest about Satan's wisdom in his desire to tempt mankind?
14. With what did Satan tempt Jesus in verses 10-11 and how is that like his first temptation in the Garden of Eden?

15. Did the devil have the ability to offer Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would but bow down and worship him?
16. What did Jesus call the devil in John 8:44 and how does that meaning play out in these temptations?
17. 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 26:1-11

¹"When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it, ²you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. ³And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, 'I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.' ⁴Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.

⁵"And you shall make response before the LORD your God, 'A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. ⁷Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders. ⁹And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O LORD, have given me.' And you shall set it down before the LORD your God and worship before the LORD your God. ¹¹And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

1. What might we associate the first fruit offering to in the early chapters of Genesis?

We might associate this with the offerings of Cain and Abel recorded for us in Genesis 4

2. What was this particular first fruit offering supposed help the Israelites recall?

How God had delivered the Israelites from the hand of the Egyptians and gave to them what He had promised to the forefathers.

3. Today we talk about first fruit giving which means what?

It means that we joyfully give first to the Lord from what we receive and then live on the rest.

4. What might our first fruit giving help us recall?

That which first fruit giving might help us recall is the goodness and mercy God has given to us in the gift of forgiveness, life and salvation paid in full for us on the cross of Calvary.

5. What specific attitude did God desire of the Israelites in verse 11?

The attitude of joy and rejoicing as Paul encourages in 2 Corinthians 9:7 "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

6. Is it still true of us today?

Yes!

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

Read: Romans 10:8b–13

^{8b} "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

8. When Paul says that the word is near you, what does that mean?

God's Word is near to us as Christ is with us. We cannot separate Christ from His Word and as He promised, He is with us always, even to the close of the age.

9. Twice Paul used the word "confess" connected to faith. Why are they connected?

The word "confess" in this reading is equated with "testify" or to make known to others what you believe. It is imperative that believers make known what they believe because as Jesus said in Matthew 10:32, "'Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.'" Unfortunately the opposite is also true that failure to do so ends in our Savior's refusal to make us known as one of His own before His heavenly Father.

10. According to verse 11, those who believe in Christ will not be put to shame. How is this associated with confessing Christ?

In this life, confessing Christ might bring about martyrdom. It has for countless numbers of people throughout the ages. But the end is not shame, but salvation for the one who believes.

11. What does verse 12 teach concerning God's desire for salvation?

God desires the salvation of people regardless of race, color, or creed. The gift of His salvation is for all people who will believe in Christ as Savior.

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

READ: Luke 4:1-13

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ²for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. ³The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" ⁵And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸And Jesus answered him, "It is written,

"You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."

⁹And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,'
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"On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."

¹²And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

13. What does the fact that Jesus had been fasting for this long period of time before the temptation experience suggest about Satan's wisdom in his desire to tempt mankind?

After a long period of fasting, Jesus would have been in his most weakened condition, in need of food, desiring it without having to work for it, etc. Satan knows when we are the weakest at which time he gladly and willingly utilizes the opportunity for temptation.

- 14 With what did Satan tempt Jesus in verses 10-11 and how is that like his first temptation in the Garden of Eden?

He was tempting Jesus with God's very own Word which in the Garden of Eden, he tempted Eve to question, now he was using God's Word to tempt God Himself.

- 15 Did the devil have the ability to offer Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would but bow down and worship him?

No! All things belong to God. Satan certainly works the world, but the world belongs to God.

- 16 What did Jesus call the devil in John 8:44 and how does that meaning play out in these temptations?

He called the devil the "father of lies" and in each of these temptations, the devil tried to create and element of deceit.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

God has called us to make Him known in our lives and in doing so, rejoice in His mercy. This has always been a difficult matter for believers because we fall into constant and continuous temptation to sin. God in His infinite mercy has rescued us from that condition by granting us the success and victory of His Son over sin, death and the devil. Now we can boldly confess our Savior and rejoice in His mercy for us even offering the first fruits of our lives to work in His kindom.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Almighty God, Grant us grace to rejoice in Your mercies new to us each day. While we fail miserably at keeping and fulfilling Your will for us in our lives, our Savior gladly and willingly accomplished all things for us. Help us to rejoice in that mercy, to look to Your Word which is near to us for strength and help in overcoming temptation in our own lives, and move us to willingly and joyfully respond to Your mercy with the first fruits of all we receive from You. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**