



**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.

**THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT - SERIES C**  
February 28, 2016

**From C.P.H. About the Cover:** Our Lord Jesus reminds us that unless we repent, our sins are not forgiven. During this special season of Lent, we are especially reminded to repent and to seek His forgiveness as we think of and meditate on our Lord’s suffering and death for our sins. As we look forward to the joy of Easter, we do so each day through the repentant eyes of faith.

**First Reading; Ezekiel 33:7–20**

<sup>7</sup>“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. <sup>8</sup>If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup>But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

<sup>10</sup>“And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: ‘Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?’ <sup>11</sup>Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

<sup>12</sup>“And you, son of man, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness, and the righteous shall not be able to live by his

righteousness when he sins. <sup>13</sup>Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered, but in his injustice that he has done he shall die. <sup>14</sup>Again, though I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right, <sup>15</sup>if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die. <sup>16</sup>None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live.

<sup>17</sup>"Yet your people say, 'The way of the Lord is not just,' when it is their own way that is not just. <sup>18</sup>When the righteous turns from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it. <sup>19</sup>And when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he shall live by them. <sup>20</sup>Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways."

1<sup>st</sup> Reading Discipleship Notes: Ezekiel is called to proclaim judgement and righteousness. He was to speak judgement against sin and forgiveness to the repentant. Nothing has changed. The same truth is needed to this day. There is judgement against sin, but there is mercy in the blood of Christ which cleanses us from all sin. So what application can come from this reading for the modern disciple of Christ? Could an application be that the believer not tempt the mercy of God by continually sinning against Him expecting the righteousness of Christ to cover our sin but rather continually to find our hearts turning back to God in repentance and faith longing for that mercy to ours at all times. Knowing this mercy is ours should also lead us to live upright and godly lives seeking the willingness to share the love of God with others via our witness, our sacrificial gifts and our examples of Godly living.

### **Epistle Reading            1 Corinthians 10:1–13**

<sup>1</sup>I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup>and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup>and all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup>and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup>Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. <sup>7</sup>Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." <sup>8</sup>We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. <sup>9</sup>We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, <sup>10</sup>nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. <sup>11</sup>Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. <sup>12</sup>Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: Paul followed the concern of Ezekiel in the Old Testament Reading for today. He urged Christ's disciples not to follow in the ways of the world and even flee those sins of this world that are so strong or even to put God to the test so as to ignore His laws and merely feel as though He doesn't care if we sin or not since He is a loving God. Paul urged his readers not to follow examples of ungodliness. Here is where we find an appropriate application of the reading. Using the examples of ungodliness and the judgement placed on it, we should be encouraged not to live as them but rather to live as the baptized people we are. We are to remember that we live in the cloud of God's mercy and are therefore encouraged to be witnesses of that mercy with our lives. We are encouraged to look to God's goodness and seek His strength in our lives to become faithful examples of His people and for His people. That example takes us to the matter of witnessing faith, sacrificial giving for the work in His Kingdom, and lives of thanksgiving for the mercy of God at work in us.

**Gospel Reading:                      Luke 13:1-9**

<sup>1</sup>There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup>And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? <sup>3</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. <sup>4</sup>Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

<sup>6</sup>And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup>And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' <sup>8</sup>And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. <sup>9</sup>Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Gospel Discipleship Notes: God is merciful. Not all evil that happens is done to punish people for specific sins as Christ pointed out about the Galileans and about the people at the tower of Siloam. That doesn't mean there is not judgement against sin because there is! But what God desires is the repentance of sinful man. Like the man who had the fig tree in the parable, God is merciful. He is slow to anger and desirous of doing whatever necessary for man to turn from his sinful way and repent of all wrong-doing. Here is where the application of this reading as was the case for the other two for this Sunday can be found. Because of God's mercy we can be confident that confessing our sin, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Receiving that gracious promise of God give us cause to bear the fruit of repentance in our live by in the manner in which we live and how we conduct our lives. We are to be faith witnesses of God's mercy showing such mercy in our own lives toward others. This we can do because the Gospel of Christ empowers us to do so.

## Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

### Read Ezekiel 33:7-20

<sup>7</sup>"So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. <sup>8</sup>If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup>But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

<sup>10</sup>"And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: 'Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?' <sup>11</sup>Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

<sup>12</sup>"And you, son of man, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness, and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins. <sup>13</sup>Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered, but in his injustice that he has done he shall die. <sup>14</sup>Again, though I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right, <sup>15</sup>if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die. <sup>16</sup>None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live.

<sup>17</sup>"Yet your people say, 'The way of the Lord is not just,' when it is their own way that is not just. <sup>18</sup>When the righteous turns from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it. <sup>19</sup>And when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he shall live by them. <sup>20</sup>Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways."

1. How was Ezekiel made a "watchman for Israel" and what did that mean?
2. How seriousness is this calling shown verse 9?
3. How is the Gospel shown in this reading?
4. What is the danger we might face according to the words, "the righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses?"
5. How does verse 16 make you feel as you look back on your own life?
6. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

**Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-13**

<sup>1</sup>I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup>and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup>and all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup>and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup>Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. <sup>7</sup>Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." <sup>8</sup>We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. <sup>9</sup>We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, <sup>10</sup>nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. <sup>11</sup>Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. <sup>12</sup>Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

7. What is meant by being "baptized into Moses?"
8. In verse 6 and 11 Paul talked about things that should serve as examples for the Corinthians. Why should examples likewise be so important to us today?
9. How does verse 13 make you feel and why?
10. What would you say is a summarizing statement for this reading?
11. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

**READ: Luke 13:1-9**

<sup>1</sup>There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup>And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? <sup>3</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. <sup>4</sup>Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

<sup>6</sup>And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup>And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' <sup>8</sup>And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. <sup>9</sup>Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

12. What do our Savior's examples of the Galileans and the Tower of Siloam point to as a temptation we might have?
13. What is our Savior's primary point of encouragement for all His followers in this reading?
14. What does the parable of the fig tree teach us about our God?
15. Who is reflected by the characters in the parable?
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 Ezekiel 33:7–20

<sup>7</sup>"So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. <sup>8</sup>If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup>But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

<sup>10</sup>"And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: 'Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?' <sup>11</sup>Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

<sup>12</sup>"And you, son of man, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness, and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins. <sup>13</sup>Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered, but in his injustice that he has done he shall die. <sup>14</sup>Again, though I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right, <sup>15</sup>if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die. <sup>16</sup>None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live.

<sup>17</sup>"Yet your people say, 'The way of the Lord is not just,' when it is their own way that is not just. <sup>18</sup>When the righteous turns from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it. <sup>19</sup>And when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he shall live by them. <sup>20</sup>Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways."

1. How was Ezekiel made a "watchman for Israel" and what did that mean?

*Ezekiel was made a prophet according to the Lord's will in Chapter 2 and in Chapter 3:16-17 made a watchman for the Lord. This was a prophet's calling over a nation, to watch the culture and the ways of the people and pronounce either judgment or blessing accordingly, to warn and to instruct according to the Word of the Lord.*

2. How seriousness is this calling shown verse 9?

*Serious enough that if the watchman/prophet fails to fulfill the expectations of the office, he is judged accordingly as is also the case if he does fulfill his responsibility.*

3. How is the Gospel shown in this reading?

*In verses 14-16 God says that if a sinner turns from his ways which is an act of confession, God will not remember his sins any longer which means to totally forgive them.*

4. What is the danger we might face according to the words, “the righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses?”

*The danger is to think that since we live in the grace of God as His people, we can do whatever we want trusting in our own goodness for forgiveness when forgiveness comes solely by God’s grace, not our righteousness.*

5. How does verse 16 make you feel as you look back on your own life?

*It should offer great comfort knowing that God forgives and forgets. This is something we have difficulty doing.*

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

**Read: 1 Corinthians 10:1–13**

<sup>1</sup>I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup>and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup>and all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup>and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup>Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. <sup>7</sup>Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” <sup>8</sup>We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. <sup>9</sup>We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, <sup>10</sup>nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. <sup>11</sup>Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. <sup>12</sup>Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

7. What is meant by being “baptized into Moses?”

*Baptism is understood in a twofold sense in the Scripture. The first is what we understood as Christ’s command and commission. This is not to be understood as that where water and the Word are applied to a person, but using the symbol of the Red Sea and the salvation given the people of Israel as they passed through it, this is to be understood in the second sense of “consecrating or initiating into,” or “bringing oneself under” obligation to Moses.*

8. In verse 6 and 11 Paul talked about things that should serve as examples for the Corinthians. Why should examples likewise be so important to us today?

*We need examples for instruction and guidance. Without them, we ignore the realities of God’s judgment and grace.*

9. How does verse 13 make you feel and why?

*Answers will vary but to know that God gives us the way of escape from temptation to sin and the strength to endure it, should be very comforting. Whether we allow Him to work this in us is yet another issue.*

10. What would you say is a summarizing statement for this reading?

*Answers will vary.*

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

**READ: Luke 13:1-9**

<sup>1</sup>There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup>And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? <sup>3</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. <sup>4</sup>Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

<sup>6</sup>And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup>And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' <sup>8</sup>And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. <sup>9</sup>Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

12. What do our Savior's examples of the Galileans and the Tower of Siloam point to as a temptation we might have?

*It is the temptation to say that a particular happening to someone or some group of people is a specific judgment from God over some particular sin or some particular lifestyle.*

13. What is our Savior's primary point of encouragement for all His followers in this reading?

*The primary point is the need of repentance for all sin.*

14. What does the parable of the fig tree teach us about our God?

*It teaches us about the mercy and the long-suffering nature and patience of our God.*

15. Who is reflected by the characters in the parable?

*The man owning the fig tree reflects the heavenly Father and the vinedresser reflect the Savior.*

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

## **Discipleship Bulletin Blub**

What grace our God has for us in willingly forgiving all sin where there is true repentance. It is just that message from our readings today that can cause in us not only a desire to continuously repent of our wrong-doing, but to also willingly and joyfully serve God in our lives, becoming an example of godliness and a true servant/disciple of our Savior. That carries great responsibility, but because of the mercy of God, we receive the strength and blessings to do so.

## **Discipleship Prayer Thought**

Almighty God, Grant us grace to faithfully repent of all our sin and to graciously receive Your comfort and assurance of forgiveness. In Your mercy also allow us to become examples of righteous living before others and a testimony of Your goodness to them as well. Fill us with the Holy Spirit so as to joyfully serve You not only with our lives of witness but also with our sacrificial gifts for which we pray the blessing of bearing fruit in Your kingdom. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**