



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.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT - SERIES C

March 6, 2016

From C.P.H. About the Cover: Jesus tells the story of the young son who demands his share of the inheritance. He then leaves and spends it wastefully. He returns to his father, for he has nowhere else to go. The father welcomes him home with open, loving, and forgiving arms. He loves his son beyond all measure. Our heavenly Father loves us beyond all measure, and we are always with Him.

First Reading; Isaiah 12:1–6

¹You will say in that day: “I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. ²“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.”

³With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. ⁴And you will say in that day: “Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. ⁵“Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. ⁶Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: Isaiah clearly identifies that because of God’s grace in our lives we have reason to give thanks to the Lord. Twice he identifies that on the day we come to know that grace of God in our lives, we will give Him thanks and praise. That day is today. We know

the grace of God for us because of our Savior, Jesus who paid in full for our salvation. Our salvation is therefore expressed not only in words of thanksgiving, but also in the manner in which we live. Our lives will express praise and that will be witnessed in the midst of the Church. Thanksgiving is carried out in numerous ways, including our sacrificial offerings.

Epistle Reading 2 Corinthians 5:16–21

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: Paul calls us ambassadors for Christ. This means that we are to administer the policies and desires of our Lord which is the ministry of reconciliation. Because of God's grace we can offer peace and forgiveness to others and especially to those who sin against us. God has established peace with us through His Son, and has thus empowered us to do the same with others. This is an incredible gift and blessing in the Church and the world in which we live.

Gospel Reading: Luke 15:1–3a, 11–32

¹Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [Jesus].
²And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."
³So he told them this parable:
¹¹And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. ¹³Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.
¹⁷"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" ²⁰And he arose and came to his

father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵"Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Gospel Discipleship Notes: God is merciful. He receives sinners and eats with them. So can we! Like the three previous readings for today, this one once again speaks of the peace and love of God given to us in forgiveness of all our sins and acceptance in God's family as His sons and daughters. The application from this text is that because of God's love for us, we can also extend His love and acceptance to others. That is shown in who we welcome into the Church and the fellowship of faith along with us, how we extend the words and actions of forgiveness to others, and finally how we long with compassion for the forgiveness and eternal life for the world to be extended to all people everywhere.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read **Isaiah 12:1-6**

¹You will say in that day: "I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. ²"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation."

³With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. ⁴And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. ⁵"Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. ⁶Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

1. What "day" was Isaiah talking about in verses 1 and 4?
2. What is meant by drawing "water from the wells of salvation?"
3. What might happen as a result of the actions encouraged in verse 4?
4. How does the world around us see that God is in our midst?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read **2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6. What does it mean that "we once regarded Christ according to the flesh?"
7. What does it mean that a person in Christ is a "new creation?"
8. What does it mean to "reconciled?"
9. How do you see yourself as an "ambassador for Christ?"
10. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

READ:**Luke 15:1-3a, 11-32**

¹Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [Jesus].

²And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

³So he told them this parable:

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¹⁷"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" ²⁰And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

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11. How might we see ourselves as the Scribes and Pharisees in verse 2?
12. What is our Savior's primary point of the parable?
13. Which brother do you most closely associate with and why?
14. How are we all like both brothers?
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 **Isaiah 12:1-6**

¹You will say in that day: "I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. ²"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation."

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1. What "day" was Isaiah talking about in verses 1 and 4?

This was a reference to the day of redemption when the Messiah would establish His kingdom of grace and forgiveness for all the world.

2. What is meant by drawing "water from the wells of salvation?"

The "salvation" granted to the Church shall be like an inexhaustible well, from which all comers may draw continually. Compare our Lord's promise to the woman of Samaria in John 4:14.

3. What might happen as a result of the actions encouraged in verse 4?

Answers will vary but the thought should be encouraged that others will witness the blessings in a person's life in giving thanks to God, call on His name, making known His deeds in our lives and lifting up His name rather than dragging it into the filth of our language as it is so callously done in our world today.

4. How does the world around us see that God is in our midst?

Answers will vary.

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

Read: **2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of

Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6. What does it mean that “we once regarded Christ according to the flesh?”

Christ was known merely as an historical person who lived, preached, suffered and was crucified under Pontius Pilate. This is the way in which the majority of the world views Christ even today. Yet Christ is true God, not merely true man. As such, before becoming a believer in Christ, one would have only perceived Jesus as a mere man. The same can be true for people today.

7. What does it mean that a person in Christ is a “new creation?”

A change takes place in the soul of that man. His understanding is enlightened, his judgment corrected, and he has new ideas and conceptions of things. His conscience is informed, awakened, and freed from guilt by the blood of Jesus, Hebrews 9:14. His will is subjected to the will of God, his affections moved from earth to heaven, and his dispositions, words, and actions, his cares, labors, and pursuits, are all changed because he is in Christ Jesus.

8. What does it mean to “reconciled?”

Mankind was, by means of their sin, burdened with God’s holy wrath, but through God’s causing Christ to die as the substitute sacrifice for sin, He accomplished the destroying of their sins, and because of this God’s wrath ceased. The same thought is contained in Romans 5:10. Mankind now has peace with God.

9. How do you see yourself as an “ambassador for Christ?”

Answers will vary.

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

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11. How might we see ourselves as the Scribes and Pharisees in verse 2?

Answers will vary.

12. What is our Savior's primary point of the parable?

With God there is forgiveness and a new life for all which is also something that we can and should express to others.

13. Which brother do you most closely associate with and why?

Answers will vary.

14. How are we all like both brothers?

Answers will vary.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

We are ambassadors of Jesus Christ, sent to carry the message of the Gospel to all people. This great privilege is ours because God has made peace with us and brought us into not only His family by faith but into His business of reconciliation with the sinful world. By God's grace in our lives we can live as modern disciples sharing the peace and love of Christ with the world around us and through our gifts of thanksgiving share that peace and love with people around the globe.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Almighty God, Grant us grace to be faithful ambassadors of Your love and peace. Move us to express our lives in thanksgiving for all Your benefits to us. According to Your Holy desire, move us to practice the ministry of reconciliation with the world around us and through our tithes and offerings, offer resources to be used in Your kingdom to extend that ministry of reconciliation to people around the globe. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**