



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 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER - SERIES C

April 24, 2016

From C.P.H. About the Cover: Jesus is truly compassionate! He has a great desire to calm the fears of all who believe in Him. He knows that we are afraid because we do not understand how He is able to secure our salvation. Just as His followers were fearful and He calmed them, so, too, He calms our fears when we listen to Him and have faith in Him. We will see Him in heaven, for that’s His promise to us.

First Reading; Acts 11:1–18

¹Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, ³“You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” ⁴But Peter began and explained it to them in order: ⁵“I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. ⁶Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. ⁷And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ ⁸But I said, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ ⁹But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ ¹⁰This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. ¹¹And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. ¹²And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. ¹³And he told us how he had seen the

angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; ¹⁴he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' ¹⁵As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" ¹⁸When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: If only all people would realize what Peter came to realize and ultimately the circumcision party as well, that we should not stand in God's way as the Holy Spirit does His work. They were all ready to condemn while God was unconditionally ready to forgive. Where repentance and faith in Christ leads to life, we ought to celebrate, no matter who receives this wonderful gift. As modern disciples of Christ, we also can glorify God by receiving and welcoming others into the household of faith. An application we might glean from this reading is one of welcoming and receiving those who are different from us into our midst. Perhaps a good look at how welcoming our congregations present themselves would be in order.

Epistle Reading Revelation 21:1-7

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

⁵And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

⁷The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."

Epistle Discipleship Notes: John's revelation again this week depicts a most wonderful image of our life with God in which again Christ testifies that the former things are gone and all things are made new in His eternal kingdom. Every tear is wiped away and death is not more. Pain and suffering are past and this promise is trustworthy and true. What a reason to rejoice. In the post Easter period, it seems we move more and more distant from the celebration of the Lord's victory over sin, death and Satan. Perhaps an appropriate application from this reading is that of rejuvenating our attitude of joy and rejoicing in the victory we have in Christ Jesus. That moves from worship to our everyday life. We can rejoice in the joy of salvation as we deal with every matter of life, from financial concerns to those of nurturing children, from job struggles to those of the political arena of our nation. Rejoicing in the salvation we have leads us to witness many wonderful things to the church and the world around us.

Gospel Reading:**John 16:12-22**

¹²"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

¹⁶"A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me." ¹⁷So some of his disciples said to one another, "What is this that he says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'; and, 'because I am going to the Father'?" ¹⁸So they were saying, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We do not know what he is talking about." ¹⁹Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'?" ²⁰Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. ²¹When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. ²²So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

Gospel Discipleship Notes: It is frustrating not to understand certain things. That was certainly the case for the disciples. They wanted to know and to understand the future, but that was not to be the case for them at that moment. Instead they were encouraged to be led by the Holy Spirit of God who would testify to them the truths of God's Word and lead them to make Christ Jesus known to others. That was a reason for their hearts to rejoice and that joy to remain with them. As modern disciples of Christ we have the same reason for our hearts to rejoice and realize the joy that remains with us as believers. While we might not understand everything about the future, we have the blessed assurance that the Holy Spirit is with us, guiding and comforting us so that we might make a joyful witness to the world around us. We belong to the eternally saved because of Christ, there is not better motivation for us to express joy, faithfully witness, and willingly sacrifice with thanksgiving in our time, talent and treasure.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read Acts 11:1-18

¹Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, ³"You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." ⁴But Peter began and explained it to them in order: ⁵"I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. ⁶Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. ⁷And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' ⁸But I said, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' ⁹But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has made clean, do not call common.' ¹⁰This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. ¹¹And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. ¹²And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; ¹⁴he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' ¹⁵As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" ¹⁸When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

1. What was meant by the "circumcision party"?
2. What were the various animals congregated together on this sheet to represent?
3. Peter's Jewish background had to overcome an obstacle that had been clarified earlier by the Lord. What obstacles from our background might we have to overcome?
4. What was it that was expressed which leads to life and what all does that include?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read Revelation 21:1-7

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will

wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

⁵And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

⁷The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."

6. What does it mean that "the dwelling place of God is with man?"
7. How is this played out in our understanding of heaven?
8. Often we hear in Revelation that God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. What does this mean to you personally?
9. What does the fact that Christ told John to "write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true" mean to you?
10. What does the fact that Christ told John that for the conqueror, "I will be his God and he will be my son" mean to you?
11. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

Read John 16:12-22

¹²"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

¹⁶"A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me." ¹⁷So some of his disciples said to one another, "What is this that he says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'; and, 'because I am going to the Father'?" ¹⁸So they were saying, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We do not know what he is talking about." ¹⁹Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'?" ²⁰Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. ²¹When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. ²²So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

12. If you knew the future as the disciples wished to know it, how might that affect the way you live and think today?
13. What did Jesus refer to in verse 16?
14. Why would the world rejoice while the followers of Christ would weep and lament and how does that play out in our modern world today?
15. This reading points to a time of joy for the followers of Christ. When does that begin and how long does it last?
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 Acts 11:1-18

¹Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, ³"You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." ⁴But Peter began and explained it to them in order: ⁵"I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. ⁶Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. ⁷And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' ⁸But I said, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' ⁹But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has made clean, do not call common.' ¹⁰This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. ¹¹And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. ¹²And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; ¹⁴he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' ¹⁵As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" ¹⁸When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

1. What was meant by the "circumcision party"?

These were they who were:

- a. Circumcised Jewish people*
- b. Converts to the Jewish faith who were required to be circumcised*
- c. Motivated still by Jewish rites and rituals that were no longer necessary since repentance and faith in Christ were the essential criteria to be a part of the followers of Christ.*

2. What were the various animals congregated together on this sheet to represent?

These animals were representation of all tribes and nations of peoples on this earth, both Jews and Gentiles.

3. Peter's Jewish background had to overcome an obstacle that had been clarified earlier by the Lord. What obstacles from our background might we have to overcome?

Answers will vary.

4. What was it that was expressed which leads to life and what all does that include?

Repentance is what leads to life and repentance also carries with it the concept of faith in Christ who is willing and ready to offer forgiveness. This is a gift of God the Holy Spirit granted to those who believe.

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

Read: Revelation 21:1-7

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

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⁷The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."

6. What does it mean that "the dwelling place of God is with man?"

God has always desired that man would live in complete harmony with Him. That was the plan in the beginning of time by placing man in the garden where there was complete fellowship with God. This will be fully and completely restored in heaven. Until then we have Christ's promise to be with us even until the close of the age and He is via the Word and the sacraments by which He comes to us with every grace and blessing.

7. How is this played out in our understanding of heaven?

Heaven is where the restoration of God's initial desire for man in fellowship with Him as it was in the garden is fully realized.

8. Often we hear in Revelation that God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. What does this mean to you personally?

Answers will vary

9. What does the fact that Christ told John to "write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true" mean to you?

Answers will vary.

10. What does the fact that Christ told John that for the conqueror, “I will be his God and he will be my son” mean to you?

To be a son is to be the heir of the father’s blessing and the significant recipient of all that the Father has. We conquer by being persistent in faith through the power of the Holy Spirit. As God’s son, we are blessed with the fellowship we have in Christ Jesus with our heavenly Father.

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

READ: John 16:12–22

¹²“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

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12. If you knew the future as the disciples wished to know it, how might that affect the way you live and think today?

Answers will vary, both negatively and positively.

13. What did Jesus refer to in verse 16?

He was referring to his death and resurrection.

14. Why would the world rejoice while the followers of Christ would weep and lament and how does that play out in our modern world today?

Satan is the prince of the world and rejoicing in the death of Christ and the sorrow which was brought upon those who had followed Christ would have felt like a victory. Of course we know it was not. The same plays out in the world today as Satan wins his numerous battles in this world, but the ultimate victory is still ours through Christ our Lord.

15. This reading points to a time of joy for the followers of Christ. When does that begin and how long does it last?

The time of joy will ultimately be experienced in heaven, but it has already begun for believers in Holy Baptism when we are buried with Christ so that we might be raised to a newness of life even in this world.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

Each reading for today points to a reason to rejoice and that is because of God's great desire to have full and complete fellowship with us as His children. He has also made it possible through His Son who willingly sacrificed His life as a ransom for sinful man. As modern disciples we can rejoice in this wonderful gift, but not merely in our worship experience. We can also rejoice in the manner in which we live out our lives, giving witness to this eternal blessing of fellowship with God. Furthermore we can witness our joy-filled lives through our giving of time, talent and treasures for the extension of the Gospel to all people.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Almighty God, You desire the eternal blessing of full fellowship with those You have created and redeemed. Grant us the gracious gift of the Holy Spirit so to live out our lives celebrating this fellowship that has been given to us in Your Son, Jesus Christ, and which will be fully known in the glorious resurrection to eternal glory. Fill our hearts with joy and our lives with joyful service in Your kingdom which has been extended to all who are granted repentance and faith. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**