

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.

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From C.P.H. About the Cover: We know that in this life we have trials and troubles. All we need to do is look at our lives and the lives of those around us. Jesus comforts us when He tells us that in Him we have peace because He has overcome the world. All of the troubles of this world have come about because of sin, but Jesus has overcome sin; therefore, we have peace in and through Him. Thank You, Jesus!

First Reading; Acts 16:9–15

⁹ A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

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¹¹So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, ¹²and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. ¹³And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. ¹⁴One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: People with real visions from God carry both a blessing and a challenge. For Paul, the blessing was that of carrying the Gospel to yet another corner of the kingdom and the challenge was that of finding the right people from whom the Word could take root and be received in faith which is the work of the Holy Spirit. As we give consideration to an application from this reading, it might be that we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us to those who are not only in need of the Gospel, but in whom the Holy Spirit can work faith and then to accept the challenge of making that Gospel known to them. Often such candidates are not going to as eager and willing as Lydia, but we never know until we speak the Gospel to them.

Epistle Reading Revelation 21:9–14, 21–27

⁹Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹²It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— ¹³on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

²¹And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

²²And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: John's revelation again depicts a most wonderful scene of the holy city of God, the bride and the Lamb. This is a glorious scene and a meaningful vision because it points to some most important truths. It points to the foundation of the marriage and therefore the kingdom of God which as Luther properly identified is based on the Word of God made known through the apostles and the prophets of old. Yet it is also an encouragement for modern disciples to make that Word known as well because it is solely through that Word that one can be drawn to the Lamb in His kingdom. How wonderful that we have the grace of God to make this wonderful truth known to the world around us.

Gospel Reading: John 16:23–33

²³In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. ²⁴Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

²⁵"I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; ²⁷for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

²⁹His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! ³⁰Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God." ³¹Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? ³²Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. ³³I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: Jesus here gives some encouraging words to His disciples about the blessing of being able to come to heavenly Father in prayer and knowing that in love for His people, God will both hear and bless those prayers. Further Jesus assures them once again of His peace which He is offering the disciples because He has overcome the world. These same blessings are ours today and as modern disciples we can, like the first disciples, believe that Jesus is the Christ and believing can utilize the blessing of prayer while experiencing Christ's peace in our lives. In addition, we can by God's grace willingly share these blessings with others as the first disciples would do once Christ had gone to the Father.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read Acts 16:9–15

⁹ A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

¹⁰And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

¹¹So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, ¹²and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. ¹³And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. ¹⁴One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

- 1. Who is included in the "we" of verse 10?
- 2. Why would Paul and company go outside the gate of the city to a place of supposed prayer?
- 3. What is significant about the product that Lydia sold?
- 4. What does it mean that Lydia was a worshipper of God?
- 5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read Revelation 21:9–14, 21–27

⁹Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹²It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— ¹³on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

²¹And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

²²And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

- 6. What is meant by "the bride, the wife of the Lamb"?
- 7. In describing the city, John described the foundation as being made of twelve portions named after the twelve apostles. What does this mean?
- 8. What is meant by verse 22 where it says that "the temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb?"
- 9. What does it means to have one's name written in the Lamb's book of life?
- 10. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

Read John 16:23-33

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²⁵"I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; ²⁷for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

²⁹His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! ³⁰Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God." ³¹Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? ³²Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. ³³I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

- 11. How is what Jesus said in verses 23-24 true when some things we ask in Jesus' name are not given to us?
- 12. What did Jesus say is the reason the Father will answer prayer?

- 13. What is the peace Jesus speaks about in verse 33?
- 14. How does the fact that Jesus has overcome the world offer us peace?
- 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 Acts 16:9–15

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1. Who is included in the "we" of verse 10?

Since Luke was the author of this writing, it obviously included him but probably also some disciples of from Antioch including Silas and Timothy. Some scholars think that Paul wanted Luke to join the team because he was a physician and Paul was experiencing health issues. This cannot be substantiated and since Luke authored this writing, he was certainly along to document the journey.

2. Why would Paul and company go outside the gate of the city to a place of supposed prayer?

This was a Roman colony which made the worship of God unlawful and therefore it had to be done in secret places such as this spot along the river outside the city gate.

3. What is significant about the product that Lydia sold?

Purple goods were sold to royalty. This particular region was especially famous for it's dyeing industry and particularly the colors of purple or crimson.

4. What does it mean that Lydia was a worshipper of God?

This was not a region heavily populated with Jews. They would have been a vast minority. But an awareness of the teaching of the Jews would have been known to some, including Lydia. Her knowledge would not have been full but enough to receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit through the power of the Gospel.

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

Read: Revelation 21:9–14, 21–27

⁹Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹²It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— ¹³on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

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6. What is meant by "the bride, the wife of the Lamb"?

This is the Holy Christian Church – the Communion of the Saints.

7. In describing the city, John described the foundation as being made of twelve portions named after the twelve apostles. What does this mean?

The Holy Christian Church is built upon the teachings of the apostles as we confess in the Apostles' Creed. This teaching is the foundation of the faith of the saints.

8. What is meant by verse 22 where it says that "the temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb?"

The temple was the physical representation of God's presence on earth as well as the place of sacrifice and worship. In heaven there is no need for such a place of sacrifice or worship because the physical presence of Christ is fully known in heaven.

9. What does it means to have one's name written in the Lamb's book of life?

Moses spoke of this book in Exodus 32:32. This book (whether real or symbolic) is the list of those who have become a part of the kingdom through faith in the promise of the Gospel.

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

READ: John 16:23–33

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11. How is what Jesus said in verses 23-24 true when some things we ask in Jesus' name are not given to us?

Jesus had just been teaching about spiritual things, all of which when asked in the name of Jesus are given to us. Forgiveness, faith, the fruit of the Spirit, etc. are all given to us because these are all a matter of God's will for us. When it comes to the matters of the world, such things are given solely according to the will of God.

12. What did Jesus say is the reason the Father will answer prayer?

In verse 27 Jesus explains that it is because of the Father's love for us.

13. What is the peace Jesus speaks about in verse 33?

This is the peace that comes by virtue that our sins are forgiven. We now have peace with God and that peace eliminates fears, guilt and all other results of sin and assures us of eternal life in Jesus' name. This is the peace that surpasses all understanding.

14. How does the fact that Jesus has overcome the world offer us peace?

Since we cannot overcome the world, the Savior has done this for us and then willingly sacrificed Himself so that His perfection and holiness atones for us. In this way He has secured peace for all who believe.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

The Kingdom of heaven belongs to those who have come to know the peace that is made known to us through Jesus Christ and the wonderful gift of forgiveness and eternal life. These are they whose names are written in the book of life and who know that they can come to the heavenly Father with spiritual requests which He desires to give us because of His love for us. As modern disciples we have the joy and privilege of sharing this marvelous blessing with others as Paul did in Macedonia. Through God's grace by the power of the Holy Spirit, the faithful witness of the saints can draw those who do not know the love of God into the family of believers.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Almighty God, grant us Your grace that we might fully know and appreciate the spiritual blessings You desire us to have. Give us joy and peace in willingly expressing the Gospel to others that they also might come to know the peace that only You can give. Make us instruments of Your mercy to those whose names are not yet written in the book of life that they might know Your love for them through us. In doing so may Your kingdom be extended and Your will be done among us. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**