



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.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES C

JUNE 26, 2016

From C.P.H. About the Cover: Jesus is sincere as He says, “Follow Me.” He called His disciples by saying, “Follow Me,” and they followed. In this text, Jesus says, “Follow Me,” knowing just how difficult a thing He asks. He says to us, “Follow Me.” In faith, we follow, always looking toward our eternal salvation. We follow Him, and He is faithful in leading those who believe.

First Reading: 1 Kings 19:9b–21

⁹There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁰He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” ¹¹And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹²And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. ¹³And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁴He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” ¹⁵And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu

shall Elisha put to death. ¹⁸Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

¹⁹So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. ²⁰And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” ²¹And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: It is so easy for God’s people to become discouraged as did Elijah in this reading. They feel alone and defeated in whatever they do for God’s great purposes. People say things that discourage them, do things that discourage them and stand in the way with things that discourage them. When that happens, it is easy to feel alone in God’s work and disappointed with God’s plan. But God’s plan is not without His help and grace to accomplish it. Elijah was asked twice, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” God could very well be asking us, “What are you doing here, (your name)?” In reality God continues to desire our response to His will in spite of how we feel about the responses we get from doing it. And by His grace we can continue to make known the love of God to others through our witness, the way we fulfill our vocations in life, our generosity to the work of the Lord and our faithfulness and willingness not to become discouraged in the Church.

Epistle Reading Galatians 5:1, 13–25

¹For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: Life in the Spirit sounds so refreshing when we are bombarded with so many oppositions to that kind of life. Paul listed so many of those oppositions in this reading and like Elijah experienced “idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,” etc., he undoubtedly experienced the other matters on that list as well. But like Elijah and Paul we are blessed with the Holy Spirit who is able to work in us that refreshing

list of fruit in our lives. And by God's grace we can put into practice each of them. They are a gift of God for us and they bless us and others who are blessed by God to walk by the Spirit. What a marvelous witness they also make to this dark world in which we live.

Gospel Reading: Luke 9:51–62

⁵¹When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. ⁵³But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.

⁵⁴And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶And they went on to another village.

⁵⁷As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ⁵⁹To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ⁶⁰And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶²Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: It seems that each of our readings for today deal with those obstacles that prevent us from willingly and gladly serving the Lord. For Elijah it was discouragement. From Paul's perspective it was all the works of darkness. From those who expressed a willingness to follow Jesus in this reading, it was giving up some comforts in life, burying the dead, and making a willing separation from family and loved ones to follow Christ. Whatever our obstacle for doing the will of the Lord and following after Him as a disciple, we are blessed by God's grace to overcome those obstacles and do our Lord's bidding. When we rely on God's grace to motivate us to express the love of Christ to others, we are blessed to do whatever God would have us do and without obstacles causing us to fail.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read 1 Kings 19:9b–21

⁹There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹¹And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹²And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. ¹³And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁴He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹⁵And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. ¹⁸Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

¹⁹So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. ²⁰And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" ²¹And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

1. In what ways do you feel like Elijah at times?
2. What does the manner in which God made known His presence to Elijah suggest to you?
3. How is verse 18 evidence of God's grace?
4. The anointing of Elisha happened in a rather unorthodox fashion behind a plow, but it also happened a second time. When was that and how was it also unorthodox?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read Galatians 5:1, 13–25

¹For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

6. What does it mean that we have been set free?
7. What is the purpose of our having been set free according to verses 13 and 14?
8. How is this different from the view of the Jews at the time of Christ and many in our world today?
9. What empowers us to live and serve in this freedom of Christ according to verse 25?
10. Talk about implementing the fruit of the Spirit in your own life.
11. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

Read: Luke 9:51–62

⁵¹When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. ⁵³But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.

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12. How was the reaction of the disciples to the lack of reception for Christ similar to Elijah's reaction to the discouragement he faced with regard to how people failed to listen to the Word of God?
13. Is this kind of reaction unfamiliar to the way we might react in the church today? If so, how is it shown in us?
14. Three individuals wished to follow Jesus but had some immediate concerns. How is that like us at times?
15. What did Jesus mean in verse 62 and does that somehow reflect at all on the way in which Elisha responded to Elijah in the Old Testament reading for today?
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 1 Kings 19:9b–21

⁹There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹¹And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹²And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. ¹³And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁴He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹⁵And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. ¹⁸Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

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1. In what ways do you feel like Elijah at times?

Answers will vary.

2. What does the manner in which God made known His presence to Elijah suggest to you?

Answers will vary but it is good to direct the response to the fact that we often want God to speak loudly and mightily like in the wind and fire, but God communicates with us most commonly through the quiet and contemplative Word.

3. How is verse 18 evidence of God's grace?

The subject of the sentence is God who would "leave seven thousand in Israel" who would not show any allegiances to Baal. It was God who would work this, not man or any of the seven thousand individuals mentioned. It is by God's grace we are called, gathered, enlightened and kept in the one true faith.

4. The anointing of Elisha happened in a rather unorthodox fashion behind a plow, but it also happened a second time. When was that and how was it also unorthodox?

After following Elijah for seven years, when he was taken by the Lord in the chariot of fire, Elisha asked for and received a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Both anointing experiences were done unorthodoxly without any ritualistic use of oil or pomp or ceremony.

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

Read: Galatians 5:1, 13–25

¹For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

6. What does it mean that we have been set free?

We have been set free from the curse of the Law. The Law only condemns and kills, from that we are freed in Christ Jesus. Now the Law of God is not some set of mandated rules required for us to follow in order to be saved, but rather a guideline for us to follow in love for God and one another that becomes a privilege and a joy for us in our lives of service.

7. What is the purpose of our having been set free according to verses 13 and 14?

The purpose is so that we can love and serve our God and our neighbor.

8. How is this different from the view of the Jews at the time of Christ and many in our world today?

The Jews at the time of Christ and many today believe that we are only acceptable to God by means of fulfilling the Law of God. Quite the contrary is true. Christ has redeemed or bought us back from this requirement and given us grace to love and serve Him and our neighbor.

9. What empowers us to live and serve in this freedom of Christ according to verse 25?

The work of the Holy Spirit in us who gives us the fruit of the Spirit to implement is what empowers us to live and serve. This is God's grace in action in our lives.

10. Talk about implementing the fruit of the Spirit in your own life.

This is an opportunity for important discussion.

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

READ: Luke 9:51–62

⁵¹When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. ⁵³But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.

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12. How was the reaction of the disciples to the lack of reception for Christ similar to Elijah's reaction to the discouragement he faced with regard to how people failed to listen to the Word of God?

They were angry and discouraged and wanted revenge which is what Elijah desired as well because of his own personal discouragement to the way in which he had been treated and God's Word rejected.

13. Is this kind of reaction unfamiliar to the way we might react in the church today? If so, how is it shown in us?

It is not at all unfamiliar. The Church is made up of sinful people in need of God's grace and mercy. How it is shown can be seen in any numbers of ways that the participants can identify.

14. Three individuals wished to follow Jesus but had some immediate concerns. How is that like us at times?

Answers will vary

15. What did Jesus mean in verse 62 and does that somehow reflect at all on the way in which Elisha responded to Elijah in the Old Testament reading for today?

When one desires to follow the Savior and live as His disciple, it is both vital and necessary not to look back on the former way of life and desire something other. Instead, by God's grace it is vital and necessary to look ahead and discover what by God's grace is ahead of us and is needed for service in Christ's kingdom. Elijah looked back and was discouraged when by God's grace

he could and should have been able to look ahead and see God's desire for him in service in the Kingdom.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

It is so easy to become discouraged in serving God and one another. Often little is seen in response to the service we offer. Often obstacles of sin and a lack of desire stand in the way of our willing and joy-filled service. But God gives us the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit to accomplish great things out of love for God and one another.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Eternal God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant us the mercy to seek Your will through Your Word that our lives might be a reflection of the love You have for sinful man. Help us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to implement the fruit of the Spirit in our lives to express love both for You and for one another. Fill us with a willing desire not to accomplish the deeds of the law expecting some reward, but to reflect a willing spirit of joy-filled response of Your love for us. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**