



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.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES C

JULY 17, 2016

From C.P.H. About the Cover: Jesus calms Martha’s concerns about Mary’s seeming lack of help when He reminds Martha that “one thing is necessary.” Being busy about the Lord’s work is good, but even more important is the faith we have in and through Christ Jesus. Jesus teaches us that the faith we have in Him counts above all else in this life and in the life to come. Thanks be to God for our faith.

First Reading: Genesis 18:1–10a

¹ The LORD appeared to [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.

²He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth ³and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” ⁶And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes.” ⁷And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. ⁸Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.” ¹⁰The LORD said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him.

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: Abraham was able to recognize the Lord. He had a personal relationship with God so unlike that of most people. He was also anxious to welcome to the Lord into his life and his home and to serve the Lord gladly and willingly. What an example for us today, to know God personally, to welcome Him into our lives and to gladly and willingly serve Him. We can do so because, like Abraham, we have received God's grace and favor through His Word. We have God's promised presence in our lives in the Word and the Sacrament. He is present in our lives as He was in Abraham's with promise and with hope for our future.

Epistle Reading Colossians 1:21–29

²¹ You, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

²⁴Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, ²⁵of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: Paul was eager to make known the truths about God's salvation. This was his "stewardship" (a term used only four times in the New Testament each time in reference to managing the mysteries of God in the pastoral ministry) he said from God. While every pastor has this same stewardship of the mysteries of God, the matter of making known the love of God is something all people of God are to do. The final verse of the reading tells us how we can which is through the energy of God that powerfully works in us. That is His grace at work in us.

Gospel Reading: Luke 10:38–42

³⁸Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴²but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: This account of Mary and Martha gives Martha a bad reputation. Mary chose the good portion while Martha was anxious about many things. As modern disciples we can all relate. We want to serve God, but sometimes at the expense of growing in the faith. We are more than willing to help out in a church dinner, but not at all anxious to attend Bible Class with fellow believers. Serving God is wonderful and certainly an expectation of a believer, but not at the expense of growing in the faith which we are also called to do. Amazingly, when we do grow in faith and understanding, we also grow in service to our Lord in a multitude of ways.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read **Genesis 18:1–10a**

¹ The LORD appeared to [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.

²He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth ³and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." ⁶And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." ⁷And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. ⁸Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." ¹⁰The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him.

1. How was Abraham able to recognize the Lord so easily?
2. What does the willingness of Abraham to make a meal and serve the Lord say about the nature of our service to the Lord?
3. The meal prepared by Abraham, Sarah and the servants was prepared for the comfort of the guests. What meal from the Lord is prepared for the comfort of guests and how is it for the comfort of the guests?
4. The Lord reaffirmed His promise to Abraham that prior to His return in a year Sarah would give birth to a son. What reaffirmation promise does the Lord give to us?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read **Colossians 1:21–29**

²¹ You, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

²⁴Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, ²⁵of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his

saints. ²⁷To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

6. What does it mean that we are now “reconciled in his body of flesh by his death”?
7. What did Paul say was the purpose for being reconciled in his body of flesh?
8. What did Paul mean by his reference to his sufferings in the flesh filling up what was lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of His body?
9. The word “stewardship” is used four times in the New Testament, all in reference to the same thing which has nothing to do with church finances. What is the concern of this term in the reading?
10. What responsibilities do modern disciples have to serve in the Church and how are we enabled to do so?
11. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

Read: Luke 10:38–42

³⁸Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴²but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

12. The “Martha syndrome” is stark reality in the modern Church. How is this so?
13. How are we distracted and anxious in the Church today?
14. What causes people to be like either Mary or Martha in this situation?
15. Why is Mary’s portion something that will not be taken away from her?
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 Genesis 18:1–10a

¹ The LORD appeared to [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.

²He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth ³and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." ⁶And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." ⁷And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. ⁸Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." ¹⁰The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him.

1. How was Abraham able to recognize the Lord so easily?

We must remember that Abraham had encountered the Lord on previous occasions. See Genesis 12:7, 15:1, 17:1.

2. What does the willingness of Abraham to make a meal and serve the Lord say about the nature of our service to the Lord?

Abraham's desire to serve the Lord came about because of his joy of having the Lord in his presence. We also have the Lord in our presence who is with us always, even to the end of the age. Our desire to serve Him comes from knowing the Lord is with us.

3. The meal prepared by Abraham, Sarah and the servants was prepared for the comfort of the guests. What meal from the Lord is prepared for the comfort of guests and how is it for the comfort of the guests?

The meal is the Lord's Supper prepared for us offering us the comfort of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

4. The Lord reaffirmed His promise to Abraham that prior to His return in a year Sarah would give birth to a son. What reaffirmation promise does the Lord give to us?

The reaffirmed promise we have is that of eternal life through faith in Jesus as our Savior from sin. This promise is reaffirmed each time we hear the Gospel, eat and drink of the Lord from His supper and are assured of forgiveness. "Where there is forgiveness of sin there is also life and salvation" Luther said.

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

Read: Colossians 1:21–29

²¹You, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

²⁴Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, ²⁵of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

6. What does it mean that we are now “reconciled in his body of flesh by his death”?

The sacrifice of Christ's body on the cross was the full and final sacrifice for forgiveness of sins. This sacrifice is what reconciled the world, making mankind perfected in holiness through Christ Jesus. The life we now possess in the faith we have in Christ Jesus is a reconciled life brought about by the sacrificed body of Christ on the cross.

7. What did Paul say was the purpose for being reconciled in his body of flesh?

The purpose was to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him>

8. What did Paul mean by his reference to his sufferings in the flesh filling up what was lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body?

It first of all does not mean that we must do something more and that Christ's sufferings and afflictions were somehow inadequate for our salvation. What it does mean is that the work of making the message of Christ's reconciliation known to all the world is what the Church of Christ still has to carry on today (Matthew 28:19-20). This is not easy! Paul experienced many afflictions in doing so. Sometimes we must today as well.

9. The word “stewardship” is used four times in the New Testament, all in reference to the same thing which has nothing to do with church finances. What is the concern of this term in the reading?

This has to do only with the managing of the mysteries of God in the Church. That is specifically the matters of the office of the Holy Ministry of which Paul had been made according to verse 25.

10. What responsibilities do modern disciples have to serve in the Church and how are we enabled to do so?

The responsibilities are to continue making the Gospel of salvation known to the world and the

Church is enabled to do so in the same way Paul was enabled to do so, by the energy (grace of God at work in us) that God powerfully works in us.

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

READ: Luke 10:38–42

³⁸Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴²but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

12. The "Martha syndrome" is stark reality in the modern Church. How is this so?

Many who serve faithfully in the Church feel as if they are doing it all alone and that others are doing nothing. At the same time these same individuals may be completely ignoring the opportunities to grow in faith at the feet of Jesus through His Word.

13. How are we distracted and anxious in the Church today?

Answers will vary but certainly people in the Church can become overly anxious and distracted about such things as Church finances, structure, attendance, tradition and the business matters of the Church that they neglect spiritual growth.

14. What causes people to be like either Mary or Martha in this situation?

It has solely to do with what people choose to prioritize. Some will prioritize spiritual growth while others will prioritize the matters of business at the expense of spiritual growth. This is an issue that means we might either be attracted to the Gospel or distracted from it.

15. Why is Mary's portion something that will not be taken away from her?

Spiritual growth and blessing can never be taken from us, but will only increase in us as we grow in grace and faith. It is God's will and desire to bless us spiritually.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

What causes someone to prioritize service in the Church over growing spiritually at the feet of Jesus through His Word? We each make our priorities evident in our lives by how we respond to God's goodness and mercy. While service in the Church is vital and important, real service is impossible without spiritual growth. God grants that growth through His Word and the sacraments. In these we are blessed to grow and to serve.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Dear God our heavenly Father, You desire our willingness to grow in faith and commitment to the Gospel. You promise the gift of the Holy Spirit to work in us through the Word and the sacraments. Help us, through the Word to become both students and servants of the Gospel that all the world may come to know Your salvation through the work of the Church. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**