



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.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES C
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From C.P.H. About the Cover: We have heard “You can’t take it with you.” Earthly possessions remain on earth after we have been called to heaven. God wants us to use what He gives us to further His kingdom. God also wants us to know that what we possess is not what’s most important. He, not what we possess, is always our focus. We prepare ourselves to heed His call to live with Him forever.

First Reading: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12–14; 2:18–26

²Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

¹²I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. ¹³And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. ¹⁴I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

¹⁸I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, ¹⁹and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, ²¹because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. ²²What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? ²³For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

²⁴There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, ²⁵for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?

²⁶For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: The Wisdom of Solomon conveys a remarkable truth and that is to find enjoyment in the vocation given you. Striving after wealth leaves one filled completely with stress, vanity and emptiness, but to serve in the vocation God has given and to do so with a joy-filled heart is to be blessed. Solomon's wisdom does not express what that vocation has to be, only that in whatever the vocation, given to toil or labor of it, finding joy in doing it is the greatest wealth there is on earth. That joy is discovered when a person realizes that no matter what he or she does, when done for the glory of God and welfare of others, it can't be surpassed in blessing under the sun.

Epistle Reading Colossians 3:1–11

¹If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: Paul invites believers to seek the things that are above which are spiritual things. He calls disciples to “put to death” the earthly agendas we have which are sinful and focus instead on the spiritual good that comes from God. In doing so, we find great blessing in exercising the “new self” which is constantly being renewed in the forgiveness of sins and the certainty of eternal life in Jesus Christ. As disciples, such things are not difficult to do, they are a blessing.

Gospel Reading: Luke 12:13–21

¹³Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus], “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

¹⁴But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" ¹⁵And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." ¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' ²⁰But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: God desires that mankind lays up spiritual treasures. Jesus reaffirmed that truth in this reading. Because of God's desire, He also provides us with the spiritual blessings to do so in His Word and Sacraments. Interestingly enough, when the kingdom of God is sought, He also promises to give us all we need to support body and life, things which we can also manage in Godliness and virtue for His glory and for the good of our neighbor who also is encouraged to lay up spiritual treasures.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read **Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12–14; 2:18–26**

²Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

¹²I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. ¹³And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. ¹⁴I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

¹⁸I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, ¹⁹and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, ²¹because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. ²²What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? ²³For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

²⁴There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, ²⁵for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?

²⁶For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

1. How is it that all is vanity and what does that mean?
2. Why did Solomon despair over all his toil as vanity and a great evil?
3. Solomon sounded extremely discouraged about the toil of mankind in this world. What did he say was important to mankind in order to deal positively with his toil?
4. Where is that to be found?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read **Colossians 3:1–11**

¹If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you must put them all

away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

6. How have we been raised with Christ?
7. How do we go about setting our minds on things above?
8. All of the items mentioned were “earthly” in people of the first century. What does this say about the earthliness of mankind throughout the ages?
9. What does it mean that we are “being renewed in knowledge”?
10. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

Read: Luke 12:13–21

¹³Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus], “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

¹⁴But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” ¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ ¹⁸And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ ²⁰But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

11. Jesus had just spoken to religious authorities about hypocrisy (11:37-54) and then warned his disciples to be faithful even in the midst of persecution (12:1-12) and now He addresses His followers about what matter?
12. The concern of this reading rests in the light of what inevitable reality? (see 12:35-53)
13. Of what did the parable remind us that is most important for our lives?
14. How is this done?
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 **Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-26**

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1. How is it that all is vanity and what does that mean?

All is vanity because it is utterly meaningless when compared to the knowledge of God's grace and the good things that come to us from God.

2. Why did Solomon despair over all his toil as vanity and a great evil?

He despaired because he realized that all the earthly rewards of his toil would be left to an heir who may very well mismanage and foolishly utilize all he had worked for. Such poor stewardship of that which he had received could become a great evil.

3. Solomon sounded extremely discouraged about the toil of mankind in this world. What did he say was important to mankind in order to deal positively with his toil?

He said what was important was to find enjoyment in one's toil.

4. Where is that to be found?

Enjoyment in toil can only be found when we discover how God can also be served in what we do as we think on the things above rather than on our earthly matters.

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

Read: Colossians 3:1–11

¹If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

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6. How have we been raised with Christ?

We were raised with Christ in our baptisms. In Romans 6:4 we read, “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

7. How do we go about setting our minds on things above?

This is done by focusing on God’s Word and sacraments through which we are strengthened with hope and joy for salvation as well as for guidance in godliness for life.

8. All of the items mentioned were “earthly” in people of the first century. What does this say about the earthliness of mankind throughout the ages?

All the ungodliness of the past is still present in the same ways in the present and it will be present in the future as well. It comes about because of the sinful nature in which we were born. The only thing that can remove mankind from it is the new life we have in Christ Jesus, given us by His grace.

9. What does it mean that we are “being renewed in knowledge”?

Through Holy Baptism, all that was accomplished for the salvation of man in the death and resurrection of Christ is transferred to us. Through the Holy Word of God we are taught the truths of God’s grace and salvation in Christ Jesus. Through the Holy Absolution we are renewed in forgiveness and the new life we have in Christ our Lord. Through the Holy Meal of the Lord’s Supper we are renewed in faith and hope for eternal life in our Savior Jesus Christ. In each of these ways we are being renewed in knowledge.

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

READ: Luke 12:13-21

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¹⁴But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" ¹⁵And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." ¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' ²⁰But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

11. Jesus had just spoken to religious authorities about hypocrisy (11:37-54) and then warned his disciples to be faithful even in the midst of persecution (12:1-12) and now He addresses His followers about what matter?

He was addressing them about the sin of covetousness because "one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

12. The concern of this reading rests in the light of what inevitable reality? (see 12:35-53)

It rests on the inevitable reality of Christ's return when we are called before Him in the final judgement.

13. Of what did the parable remind us that is most important for our lives?

That which is most important for us is the matter of storing up spiritual treasures which are the blessings of living in faith and forgiveness and the joyful certainty of eternal life.

14. How is this done?

This is done through our continued renewal in the Word and sacrament and Holy Absolution.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

How well do you store up spiritual treasures? Solomon found that earthly treasures were meaningless. Paul calls on believers to set their minds not on earthly things, but to set our minds on things above in Christ Jesus. Jesus warns His disciples against covetousness in this world of things. Spiritual treasures are not things we earn, they are given us by the grace of God and profitable for our lives in this age and the one to come.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Dear God our heavenly Father, Help us to set our hearts on things above in Christ Jesus and to store up spiritual treasures through Your Word and sacrament. Give us a full measure of the Holy Spirit that we might grow in grace and in the knowledge of Your will for our lives that we might even find joy and purpose in our toil under the sun, giving You honor with our lives and giving earthly treasures for work in Your kingdom. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**