



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.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES C
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From C.P.H. About the Cover: Generally, there is more than one entrance to most places, whether it is a house or a large building. But in God’s kingdom, there is only one way to enter, and that is the narrow door of faith. Faith in Jesus and what He has done for us is the narrow door that allows us to enter His kingdom. Faith leads us through the door to heaven.

First Reading: Isaiah 66:18–23

¹⁸“For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, ¹⁹and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. ²⁰And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. ²¹And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.

²²“For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain.

²³From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD.

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: In this reading Isaiah speaks of the final days of earthly history. He points to the fulfillment of the great commission when all nations of the world will have had opportunity to hear the Gospel. The picture here is one of God’s people everywhere drawing

others to the Gospel of salvation. As present day disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, this is critical to remember. Our purpose on earth is not to simply maintain a church or to meet together for worship in order to feel good once a week. Our purpose as God's people is to share the love of Christ in Word and deed to the entire world. This is a challenging thing to congregations and individuals to prioritize as the purpose of the church, but by God's rich grace it can not only be a reminder, but a goal of ministry in the hearts of God's people.

Epistle Reading Hebrews 12:4–24

⁴In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

⁷It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

¹²Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. ¹⁴Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; ¹⁶that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

¹⁸For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest ¹⁹and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. ²⁰For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” ²¹Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: The writer of Hebrews speaks of loving discipline in this reading and what it should lead to in the lives of Christ's disciples which is to yield lives of righteous living. Few modern followers of Christ have had to shed any blood in the kingdom by resisting sin, but because Christ Himself did so, we have the gift of forgiveness and eternal life. We are blessed to be legitimate children in the kingdom of Christ. As a result of the Gospel in our lives we can “strive for peace” and see to it that no one will have to live without the holiness of God which He desires to give to all people. This is another encouragement to remember the purpose of the Church which is to make disciples of all nations through the proclamation of the Gospel.

Gospel Reading:**Luke 13:22–30**

²²[Jesus] went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. ²³And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, ²⁴“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. ²⁵When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ ²⁶Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ ²⁷But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’ ²⁸In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. ²⁹And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. ³⁰And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

Gospel Discipleship Notes: These words of Jesus remind us that the kingdom of God is reserved only for the few who are known by the heavenly Father because of their relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus also confirms that there is an eternal separation between those who are a part of His kingdom and those who are not. Our calling as modern disciples of Christ is to make the Gospel known to the entire world so that people “will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.” Because of God’s love for us at work in our hearts we can do that through all our outreach efforts in the world.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read Isaiah 66:18–23

¹⁸“For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, ¹⁹and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. ²⁰And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. ²¹And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.

²²“For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain.

²³From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD.

1. What was Isaiah making reference to in the words, “*the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory*”?
2. What was meant by God sending survivors to the nations that have not heard of His fame or seen His glory?
3. What was to be evidence of this happening according to verse 20?
4. Why are they who are brought referred to as “brothers”?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read Hebrews 12:4–24

⁴In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

⁷It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

¹²Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. ¹⁴Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; ¹⁶that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single

meal. ¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

¹⁸For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest ¹⁹and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. ²⁰For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." ²¹Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

6. What does it mean to be disciplined by the Lord?
7. Why are we disciplined by God according to verses 10-11?
8. What do verses 14-15 mean?
9. What does it mean that "*you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering*" etc.?
10. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

Read: Luke 13:22-30

²²[Jesus] went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. ²³And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them, ²⁴"Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. ²⁵When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then he will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.' ²⁶Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.'²⁷ But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!' ²⁸In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. ²⁹And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. ³⁰And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

11. What did Jesus mean when He said "*For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able*"?
12. What exactly is the "narrow door"?
13. What are the excuses that will be used like those of verse 26 which we see and hear today?

14. What does verse 30 mean?

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 Isaiah 66:18–23

¹⁸“For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, ¹⁹and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. ²⁰And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. ²¹And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.

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²³From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD.

1. What was Isaiah making reference to in the words, “*the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory*”?

Isaiah’s reference was pointed to the end of time when “he will come again to judge both the quick and the dead”

2. What was meant by God sending survivors to the nations that have not heard of His fame or seen His glory?

These words are pointing to the mission activity of the Church which sends forth workers into all the world to proclaim the Gospel message.

3. What was to be evidence of this happening according to verse 20?

The evidence would be in the reality that people of every nation would be making confession of faith in Jesus Christ.

4. Why are they who are brought referred to as “brothers”?

All believers are brothers and sisters in Christ as they are brought together in the Holy Christian and Apostolic Church.

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

Read: Hebrews 12:4–24

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6. What does it mean to be disciplined by the Lord?

Answers will vary but the ultimate reality of being disciplined by the Lord is whether or not the follower of Christ will persevere in the faith in spite of the trials and tribulations encountered as a believer. The fact that we have not been persecuted to the point of death does not mean that we have not been persecuted in this world by those who reject the Gospel or fail to live according to the will of God.

7. Why are we disciplined by God according to verses 10-11?

We are disciplined so that we might share in the holiness of God and yield the fruit of righteousness. That means that we might live if the complete forgiveness and love of God and be examples of God's will for mankind to this dark and sinful world around us.

8. What do verses 14-15 mean?

In striving for peace, we are reflecting the will and the holiness of God, modeling the life of God's people in this dark and sinful world. Obviously God wants all to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth which is brought about solely as we proclaim the Gospel of God's grace to the world. Therefore, the desire that all people obtain God's grace is vital for His will to be accomplished and the world evangelized.

9. What does it mean that “you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering” etc.?

As children of God by virtue of baptism which brought about faith in us, we have come to the city of the living God, etc. We are caught in the midst of this life here on earth which is challenged with sin and every evil, but we are true citizens of heaven since through faith we have come to Mount Zion etc.

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

READ: Luke 13:22–30

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11. What did Jesus mean when He said “*For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able*”?

He was making reference to the fact that many will want to be a citizen of heaven, but will have missed the point. They will not enter heaven because they have not come to know God’s way of salvation which is solely through faith in Jesus Christ.

12. What exactly is the “narrow door”?

This is a reference to Christ alone who in John 10:7 declares Himself to be the door to the kingdom calling Himself the door for the sheep. Such a “sheep door” is a physically narrow but so is the Gospel. There is no salvation apart from Christ even though all other religions teach a way of salvation through other means, most often our own goodness and works of righteousness.

13. What are the excuses that will be used like those of verse 26 which we see and hear today?

“I had no time, I was too busy” or “I lived a pretty good life and harmed no one” or “I was born into a church family but religion was shoved down my throat” etc.

14. What does verse 30 mean?

This expression, which apparently was more than once used by the Lord, in this place clearly has an historical reference, and sadly predicts the rejection of Israel, not only in this present world.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

How important is it that the Church declares the love of God in all the world? Today's readings certainly clarify the importance of doing so. So, how is it going? Is making Christ's love to the entire world a priority in your life or in the life of your congregation? By the grace of God in our lives, it can be. We are empowered to live lives of holiness and which are reflections of the Gospel and we can speak the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others and even support the on-going ministries of the Gospel both at home and throughout the world.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Almighty and Most merciful God, grant us Your grace in this world to make known the love of God in Word and in deed. Grant us grace to speak and witness the salvation You have in store for all who will enter by way of the narrow door which is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Move us to support mission not only with our financial offerings, but also with our lives of faithful service and witness. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**