



**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.

**SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES C**  
**SEPTEMBER 11, 2016**

**From C.P.H. About the Cover:** Have you ever put something “where you can find it later,” but then later, you can’t find it? You know the sense of loss. But when you have lost something and then find it, you know great joy and relief. That’s the way it is with Jesus. Because of sin, we were lost and separated from Him, but He found us and rescued us. We rejoice in being found again through His love and grace.

**First Reading: Ezekiel 34:11–24**

<sup>11</sup>“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD.

<sup>16</sup>I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.”

<sup>17</sup>“As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. <sup>18</sup>Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that

you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? <sup>19</sup>And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

<sup>20</sup>"Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup>Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, <sup>22</sup>I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. <sup>23</sup>And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.

1<sup>st</sup> Reading Discipleship Notes: In this reading we rediscover the mercies of our God, wanting the sheep of His pastures to not only behave properly, but thrive as well. He promises to restore His sheep through His servant David (a messianic prophecy). God threatens punishment and eternal separation of the sheep between those who are loyal to His voice and His Word and those who are notoriously evil and destructive. So where do we find any application in this reading? We might find it in the encouragement to live properly as one of the Lord's sheep, but perhaps we need to seek something a bit bigger than that. Perhaps we need to recognize that there is a severe and ultimate judgement that will happen. Until then, there is an encouragement of the sheep to make known the love of God in Word and in Deed. We are empowered by the Gospel to speak the truth of God's eternal wrath and eternal comfort which is ours in Christ Jesus. Because of God's grace we can speak the truths of God to those around us and those around the world through our mission involvement.

### **Epistle Reading      1 Timothy 1:12-17**

<sup>12</sup>I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, <sup>13</sup>though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup>and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup>But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup>To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: Paul was not afraid to identify the sinfulness of his former life when he acted ignorantly and in unbelief. Paul recognized his own sin and so must we in order to appreciate the fullness of God's mercy in our lives. As a result of that mercy, we can become people who like Paul can express our faith and love for God in Christ Jesus to others. We can become examples of Godly living and Godly blessing to the people around us.

**Gospel Reading:****Luke 15:1-10**

<sup>1</sup>Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [Jesus]. <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable: <sup>4</sup>"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? <sup>5</sup>And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup>And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' <sup>7</sup>Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

<sup>8</sup>"Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? <sup>9</sup>And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' <sup>10</sup>Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: There is great rejoicing over the one sinner who repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ for the gift of forgiveness and eternal salvation. Great rejoicing over the lost soul who is found is not just reserved for the angels of God, we too are given great reason to rejoice over the lost sinner who repents and is saved. And like the owner of the sheep who seeks out the lost one, we too can seek those who are without the Gospel and usher them into the presence of the Gospel where together with all the saints we can celebrate the joy of eternal life in Jesus name. God's grace empowers us to do such a thing.

## Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

### Read            **Ezekiel 34:11–24**

<sup>11</sup>“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD.

<sup>16</sup>I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.”

<sup>17</sup>“As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. <sup>18</sup>Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? <sup>19</sup>And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

<sup>20</sup>“Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup>Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, <sup>22</sup>I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. <sup>23</sup>And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.

1. How does the shepherd imagery honestly reflect the relationship between God and man?
2. When would be the day talked about in verses 13-15?
3. How does God seek the lost and bring back the strayed, etc.?
4. What is meant by the “one shepherd, my servant David”?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

### Read            **1 Timothy 1:12–17**

<sup>12</sup>I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, <sup>13</sup>though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup>and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to

save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup>But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup>To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

6. Why was it important for Paul to identify the sins of his past to Timothy?
7. What was it that worked faith and love in Paul?
8. In viewing himself as the foremost sinner of mankind, what was Paul really saying?
9. How might this be something we could put into practice in our own lives?
10. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

**Read: Luke 15:1–10**

<sup>1</sup>Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [Jesus]. <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable: <sup>4</sup>"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? <sup>5</sup>And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup>And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' <sup>7</sup>Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

<sup>8</sup>"Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? <sup>9</sup>And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' <sup>10</sup>Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

11. How are we sometimes like the Pharisees and scribes with regard to our attitude about others?
12. What was Jesus intending to invoke or encourage in the minds of the Pharisees and scribes?
13. What was the point of the scenarios that Jesus shared?
14. Why do you think the angels rejoice over the sinner who repents?
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 Ezekiel 34:11–24

<sup>11</sup>"For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD.

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<sup>20</sup>"Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup>Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, <sup>22</sup>I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. <sup>23</sup>And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.

1. How does the shepherd imagery honestly reflect the relationship between God and man?

*Sheep are dumb animals. They are easily led astray. They are easily scattered. They will graze themselves off into places away from the rest of the flock. They are easy prey for a predator. In these ways, we are all like sheep. A good shepherd protects the flock, leads the flock to where they can easily feed on good pasture, and cares for the needs of the sheep. In these ways God is like a good shepherd.*

2. When would be the day talked about in verses 13-15?

*Many prophecies have a two-fold fulfillment. The immediate fulfillment to this promise would be when God would bring the Hebrew people back to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The ultimate fulfillment to this promise is when God will bring all His people into the final land of promise, or heaven.*

3. How does God seek the lost and bring back the strayed, etc.?

*At the time of Christ it was done through Him and the apostles and evangelists. Today it is done through the Church on earth as it seeks to fulfill the great commission.*

4. What is meant by the “one shepherd, my servant David”?

*This was a direct reference to Jesus Christ, a descendant of David and the one who called Himself the Good Shepherd of the Sheep.*

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

**Read: 1 Timothy 1:12–17**

<sup>12</sup>I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, <sup>13</sup>though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup>and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup>But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup>To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

6. Why was it important for Paul to identify the sins of his past to Timothy?

*It is vital for people to be able to see how God works for good in a person's life through His grace and in this case Paul was identifying for Timothy this very matter. As a result, Timothy, like us all, could see that even his own personal life of sin is cleansed through the blood of Christ as God grace is showered on him.*

7. What was it that worked faith and love in Paul?

*It was God's grace that worked these gifts in Paul.*

8. In viewing himself as the foremost sinner of mankind, what was Paul really saying?

*Allow for response. But ultimately direct the thoughts to how Paul was giving us an example of how we must view our own lives in order to identify the richness of God's grace in our lives.*

9. How might this be something we could put into practice in our own lives?

*Answers will vary with each response, but try to identify the kind of testimony that is made when we identify the sinfulness of our past and how the mercy of God conquers that sin in us and how that one thing can testify to the wonder of God's grace in our lives.*

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

**READ: Luke 15:1-10**

<sup>1</sup>Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [Jesus].

<sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable: <sup>4</sup>"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? <sup>5</sup>And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup>And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' <sup>7</sup>Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

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11. How are we sometimes like the Pharisees and scribes with regard to our attitude about others?

*We are sometimes like the Pharisees and scribes when we tend to grumble about people in the Church or try to elevate ourselves above others in some way.*

12. What was Jesus intending to invoke or encourage in the minds of the Pharisees and scribes?

*He was trying to invoke a proper sense of repentance and encourage trust in the mercies of God for forgiveness and eternal life so as not to rely upon one's own merit for eternal salvation, but upon God's grace alone in Christ Jesus.*

13. What was the point of the scenarios that Jesus shared?

*God desires the salvation of the lost and as the Old Testament Reading for today points out, God is the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost and His Kingdom rejoices over the sinner who repents. The point of the scenarios was to look to our own lives and see how God has sought us out in the Church and how we are poor miserable sinners who in repentance and faith have been brought into the kingdom of God by grace.*

14. Why do you think the angels rejoice over the sinner who repents?

*They rejoice because this is God's good and gracious will that mankind be saved, not lost to the evil one.*

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

## Discipleship Bulletin Blub

Our lives of repentance are often overlooked, but God's angels in heaven rejoice over the sinner who repents. That is because the sinner who repents and believes on Christ Jesus is the one who also is restored to the way God first created man and all things. He is good! He is made good and righteous through the grace of God working in him as it worked in the apostle Paul. God said He would send the shepherd who would gather His sheep together and today He does that through the Church as we confess our sins and testify to the grace of God at work in our lives. As modern day disciples, we are gifted to share the story of our salvation as a gift of God with others that they too might repent and be saved and together with all the company of we can evermore praise God and rejoice.

## Discipleship Prayer Thought

Almighty and Most merciful God, grant us Your grace to make Your salvation known to the world around us. Fill us with wisdom and mercy so to receive sinners like ourselves and testify to the wonders of Your mercy that has been given to us in forgiveness and eternal life. By the power of the Holy Spirit, work in the hearts of people around us and around the world to come to repentance and faith that all the company of heaven might rejoice and we as well, knowing that Your will is for all to be saved. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**