



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.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES C
October 2, 2016

From C.P.H. About the Cover: Thanks be to God, we are His children! It is not because we deserve to be, but because He loved us, sent His Son to die for us, and made us His. As fallen humankind, all we know is sin. It’s what we do. But God teaches us, with the power of the Spirit, to resist sin and helps us to do our duty to Him. Thanks be to God!

First Reading: Habakkuk 1:1–4; 2:1–4

¹The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

²O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save?

³Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.

⁴So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.

¹I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

²And the LORD answered me: “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.

³For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

⁴“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.”

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: The law is always paralyzed. It cannot make things right. Try as hard as we might, the Law will always be before us, but the fulfillment of the Law, at least on our part or on the part of the world, will be paralyzed. That is because of the sinfulness of mankind. In the ministry of Christ's Church, we hope for better things, but they fail to come. In the Church today there is little obvious difference in the obedience of the Law from the unbelieving world around us. But God said to wait. The most difficult thing for sinful man is to patiently wait on God to accomplish His divine purposes. Yet God does. He sent His Son to fulfill the Law for us. It took centuries for people to wait on God to fulfill the paralyzed Law. As modern disciples we still need to wait on God to accomplish His will among us. By His grace we can patiently await the fulfillment of His will. Until then, unlike Habakkuk, we can wait and serve without dismay and disappointment. God's salvation is accomplished. His Law is fulfilled. We are forgiven saints who will be with Him for an eternity.

Epistle Reading 2 Timothy 1:1-14

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

²To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, ¹²which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: Paul realized that Timothy may have had the same problem as Habakkuk. The matter of patience in the response to the Word of God from the people does not come easy. But Paul also recognized the gift God had given to Timothy, the gift of power and love and self-control. This he encouraged Timothy to fan into flame. We are also encouraged to do the same. As we continue to make the love of Christ known to the world, realize that because of the grace of God which is at work within us, we can continue to testify to about our Lord who has saved us and we can pattern the faith and love which we have seen in Paul and Timothy and those who have made the Gospel known to us.

Gospel Reading Luke 17:1-10

¹And he said to his disciples, "Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! ²It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.

³Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

⁵The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" ⁶And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

⁷"Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? ⁸Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? ⁹Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded?

¹⁰So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

Gospel Discipleship Notes: This reading reminds us of the fact that we are unworthy servants of God. Yet it also encourages us to do the duty of our callings which as Christians is to make known the Gospel of Christ to people all around us. It may be easy to lose sight of that calling, especially when there is disappointment in our lives, but Christ encourages us none the less, and promises blessings of the faith He has given to us. Unworthy servants as we are, we have been given the great gift of faith by which we can serve our Lord even in times of discouragement and disappointment. God's grace to do so is sufficient for us.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read Habakkuk 1:1–4; 2:1–4

¹The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

²O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save?

³Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.

⁴So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.

¹I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

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³For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

⁴“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.”

1. What was causing Habakkuk to feel such disappointment?
2. How might this concern be seen in our modern western culture?
3. Describe how you see the Law of God paralyzed as Habakkuk saw it.
4. What was God’s resolve to this dilemma?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read 2 Timothy 1:1–14

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

²To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us

in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, ¹²which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

6. How are we to understand Paul's love for Timothy as his beloved child?
7. What gift was Paul encouraging Timothy to "fan into flame" and why?
8. How might we become afraid or ashamed of making testimony of Christ as Timothy had experienced?
9. Discuss the meaning of following "the pattern of the sound words" Timothy had heard from Paul and what it means to "guard the good deposit" that was entrusted to him.
10. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

Read: Luke 17:1-10

¹And he said to his disciples, "Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! ²It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. ³Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

⁵The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" ⁶And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

⁷"Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? ⁸Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? ⁹Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

11. Children in Jesus' day were not so precious as Jesus made them out to be in this reading. What was meant by causing "one of these little ones to sin" and how is that carried over to this modern day and age?

12. How does one go about rebuking another because of sin and what is the goal of doing so?
13. Why was the request of the disciples sort of senseless?
14. What is the point of verses 7 – 10?
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 Habakkuk 1:1–4; 2:1–4

¹The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

²O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save?

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1. What was causing Habakkuk to feel such disappointment?

He was finding disappointment in the reality that people were failing to listen to the Word he was proclaiming and failing to respond to the proclamation of God's Law.

2. How might this concern be seen in our modern western culture?

Responses will vary, but there are numerous similarities between the failure of the people to respond appropriately to God's Law in the days of Habakkuk and the failure of people to do so today.

3. Describe how you see the Law of God paralyzed as Habakkuk saw it.

Allow for suggestions.

4. What was God's resolve to this dilemma?

He encouraged patient in waiting for His resolve and it ultimately came in the person and work of Jesus who fulfilled the Law of God for us and in doing so, gave us the blessing of His righteousness so that we might live eternally. Yet even now we must wait patiently for the fulfillment of His promise which is to come once again to "judge the living and the dead" on the final day. Even in this we are called to wait patiently and serve God in the same way as Habakkuk by making God's Word known to the world.

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

Read: 2 Timothy 1:1–14

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²To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

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6. How are we to understand Paul's love for Timothy as his beloved child?

Paul had obviously known Timothy since he was a child and along the way had evangelized him and encouraged him in the faith. In this way he had a strong affection and appreciation for Timothy as a father would have for his own child. Because of that, Paul could be a great encouragement and support for Timothy in the ministry.

7. What gift was Paul encouraging Timothy to "fan into flame" and why?

Paul was making reference to the gift of "faith" which was in Timothy, something that was encouraged by the power of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands which is an apostolic practice which we carry on to this day in the rite of confirmation and the rite of ordination for a pastor.

8. How might we become afraid or ashamed of making testimony of Christ as Timothy had experienced?

This can happen easily as we seek to make witness of Christ who is the Light to a dark and sinful world which would rather suppress the Gospel rather than promote it.

9. Discuss the meaning of following "the pattern of the sound words" Timothy had heard from Paul and what it means to "guard the good deposit" that was entrusted to him.

Responses will vary. The pattern of the sound words means to follow the Word of truth that had been taught to Timothy and the matter of guarding the good deposit entrusted to him simply means to hold onto the faith not matter what as Paul had done even while in prison.

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

READ: Luke 17:1-10

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11. Children in Jesus' day were not so precious as Jesus made them out to be in this reading. What was meant by causing "one of these little ones to sin" and how is that carried over to this modern day and age?

Causing a little one (infant) to sin is to withhold them from Christ and His Word. Children are precious to God and He desires them to receive His grace continuously. When parents or others keep a child from hearing the Word of God and overlooking the importance of that Word's power each day in their life, they are carrying over this sin even in this modern day.

12. How does one go about rebuking another because of sin and what is the goal of doing so?

This must always be done in the spirit of love and concern for the forgiveness of sin and the salvation of the sinner. God's Word says to "speak the truth in love" and this does not mean that we come down hard on the sinner, but we allow God's Word to work its power in rebuking. The ultimate goal is to seek the repentance of the sinner and the assurance of God's forgiveness and love.

13. Why was the request of the disciples sort of senseless?

God desires the increase of our faith and it happens by God's grace as a result of hearing and learning the Word of God. The more we are engaged in the Word, the greater our faith becomes.

14. What is the point of verses 7 – 10?

Here Christ was making reference to our need to recognize our complete unworthiness of God's grace and mercy and yet God's great willingness to give it to us. The point is that we acknowledge our shortcomings and the gracious gift of God's goodness.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

How often when we look around us in this world we can become extremely disappointed that God's Word seems to have little or no effect on our culture. Sin continues to abound and the culture continues to decay further and further from any sense of godliness. But we have been given God's grace to recognize our unworthiness of anything good that God has for us and in repentance and faith we can move on to make His love known to the world around us and around the world. Because of His grace we need not grow weary of growing in faith or of testifying to God's truth and salvation.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Heavenly Father, grant us grace not to grow weary of making Your love known to the world around us or around the world. Fill us with patience and strength to continue faithfully to testify to Your love and to speak Your truth in a loving manner that people may see Your glory and give praise to You for Your continued mercy and goodness and in repentance and faith, find great consolation in Your love. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**