



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.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES C
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From C.P.H. About the Cover: Jesus is met every day by those who are sick with illness and sin. Everywhere Jesus went, there were sinners. The same is true today. Jesus and we encounter sin everywhere. And yet, He continues to bring the Good News of His love and forgiveness. That has never changed. He continues to love His creation and desire the salvation of all humankind.

First Reading: Ruth 1:1–19a

¹In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ²The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. ³But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, ⁵and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

⁶Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. ⁷So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each of you to her mother’s house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!” Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰And they said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.” ¹¹But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters;

why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?
¹²Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, ¹³would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me." ¹⁴Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." ¹⁸And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

¹⁹So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem.

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: In this reading we discover the two ends of devotion. The first is that of Orpah who upon the death of her husband abandoned Naomi, her mother-in-law. The other is Ruth who upon the death of her husband remained devoted to Naomi. Devotion is something we often see lacking in people's lives. Marriages fail because devotion fails, church membership fails for some because devotion fails, and we could lengthen the list with more examples of failed devotion. But God, in His mercy, grants grace to His people to become and to remain devoted both to Him and to one another. We are strengthened by God's grace to make certain commitments in life, and to keep them. In the church, membership commitments are important and our devotion in keeping those commitments remains just as important. Given the gifts we receive in the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life in Jesus' name, we should be encouraged to live continuously devoted to the Gospel ministry in our congregations, and throughout the Church.

Epistle Reading 2 Timothy 2:1–13

¹You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ²and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. ⁷Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

⁸Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, ⁹for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! ¹⁰Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹The saying is trustworthy, for:

If we have died with him, we will also live with him;

¹²if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;

¹³if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: Once again the matter of devotion is taught us in this reading. Paul encourages Timothy to remain devoted as a soldier in battle remains devoted to the civil pursuits he is enlisted to do, or as an athlete who is committed to running his race or as a farmer who is committed to planting and harvesting. Paul does not want to see Timothy or anyone walk away from the grace of God at work in us through Jesus Christ. And it is solely by that grace that we can become and remain committed to the work of the Gospel or committed to our responsibilities of membership in a congregation. This grace that allows us to live with Christ and endure with Christ is the same grace that empowers us to live and serve and even contribute to the work of the Gospel.

Gospel Reading Luke 17:11–19

¹¹On the way to Jerusalem [Jesus] was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance ¹³and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." ¹⁴When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: The account of the ten lepers reminds us of two important life lessons. The foremost is obvious and that is the importance of thankfulness as expressed by the Samaritan leper and the other is the realizing the power of God's grace in our lives. "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" ought to be our daily prayer and reliance. Having received that mercy as the lepers received it, we have an appropriate response of thanksgiving which is expressed not only in words, but also in deeds and acts of service. Even our offerings are a response of thanksgiving for the fullness of mercy God has bestowed on us.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read Ruth 1:1–19a

¹In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ²The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. ³But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, ⁵and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

⁶Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. ⁷So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." ¹¹But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? ¹²Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, ¹³would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me." ¹⁴Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." ¹⁸And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

¹⁹So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem.

1. Mahlon and Chilion are names which mean sickness and consumption. How did the meaning of the names play out in this situation?
2. Naomi's name means "amiable or pleasant one" and Elimelech means "my God is King." How did the meaning of these names play out in this situation?
3. What did Naomi mean by the reference to sons in her womb for the daughter-in-laws to marry?
4. Ruth's response to Naomi says a great deal about her love and respect for her. What more does it say about Ruth?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-13

¹You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ²and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. ⁷Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

⁸Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, ⁹for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! ¹⁰Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹The saying is trustworthy, for:

If we have died with him, we will also live with him;

¹²if we endure, we will also reign with him;

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for he cannot deny himself.

6. What are we to understand strengthening “by the grace of God in Christ Jesus” to mean?
7. What does it mean to share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus?
8. Why does Paul include the statement that Christ is risen from the dead in his encouragement of remembering which he gave to Timothy?
9. Discuss the meaning of Paul’s willingness endure everything for the sake of the elect.
10. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

Read: Luke 17:11-19

¹¹On the way to Jerusalem [Jesus] was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance ¹³and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” ¹⁴When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

11. Why were the lepers kept at a distance from others?
12. The cry for mercy was really a cry for what?
13. Why would Jesus have sent the lepers to show themselves to the priest?
14. How can we know that the Samaritan recognized Jesus as God?
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 Ruth 1:1–19a

¹In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ²The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. ³But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, ⁵and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

⁶Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. ⁷So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." ¹¹But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? ¹²Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, ¹³would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me." ¹⁴Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." ¹⁸And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

¹⁹So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem.

1. Mahlon and Chilion are names which mean sickness and consumption. How did the meaning of the names play out in this situation?

Both died in Moab and at a reasonably young age we can assume they died of sickness or some infirmity particularly since they had sired no children in their ten years of marriage.

2. Naomi's name means "amiable or pleasant one" and Elimelech means "my God is King." How did the meaning of these names play out in this situation?

Names given Biblical characters often displayed their character and personality. Both parents in this scenario, if their names displayed their character, would have offered a remarkable witness and influence on Ruth and Orpah. An obvious witness to Ruth of the power and impact

of God's mercy in our lives led her to follow after Naomi and fulfill her vows to Naomi revealing her loyalty to and trust in God.

3. What did Naomi mean by the reference to sons in her womb for the daughter-in-laws to marry?

It was Hebrew Law that if a woman was without a child and her husband dies, a younger brother of her deceased husband was to take her as a wife thus offering the potential for offspring which could potentially bring about the messianic fulfillment. Naomi's reference to sons in her womb was the reference to this Hebrew Law which, even if she were to have another couple of sons in her old age, they would still have to grow into manhood before either Ruth or Orpah could be married to them.

4. Ruth's response to Naomi says a great deal about her love and respect for her. What more does it say about Ruth?

It says that Ruth was a remarkable witness of her faith and love for God showing His grace and mercy which was obviously at work in her life in spite of the great loss she had experienced.

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

Read: 2 Timothy 2:1-13

¹You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ²and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. ⁷Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

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for he cannot deny himself.

6. What are we to understand strengthening "by the grace of God in Christ Jesus" to mean?

We are to understand strengthening as the same thing we experience today as God's grace works in our lives to increase our faith and our understanding of God's Word as it applies both Law and Gospel and as it guides our daily living.

7. What does it mean to share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus?

There is much suffering that we bring upon ourselves. Such suffering is caused because of our sin and is a consequence of sin. Yet other sufferings experienced because we witness Christ (such as persecution, ostracism, disrespect, etc.) are sufferings we endure as soldiers of Christ Jesus. We are actually called to experience these sufferings and strengthened by God's grace to endure and to witness Christ faithfully through it all.

8. Why does Paul include the statement that Christ is risen from the dead in his encouragement of remembering which he gave to Timothy?

Without Christ being raised from the dead, our faith and our preaching is in vain. Because of the resurrection we are assured of God's power in our lives and assured of salvation as well. In truth, the matter of the resurrection of Christ is something we should be encouraged by each and every day because it is the assurance of the ultimate victory of God over sin, death and the devil for us.

9. Discuss the meaning of Paul's willingness endure everything for the sake of the elect.

Responses will vary. Paul's willingness to endure everything for the sake of the elect certainly expressed the dedication he held for the Church he was made an apostle to serve.

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

READ: Luke 17:11-19

¹¹On the way to Jerusalem [Jesus] was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance ¹³and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." ¹⁴When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

11. Why were the lepers kept at a distance from others?

They were removed from others so as not to infect them with the disease. Notice the fact that this group of lepers were mixed as well. They were both Jews and this foreign Samaritan.

12. The cry for mercy was really a cry for what?

This was a cry for pity and compassion which is the literal meaning of "mercy".

13 Why would Jesus have sent the lepers to show themselves to the priest?

This was part of the Levitical Law that when one was cleansed from leprosy, they were to show themselves to the priest in order to be declared clean to the rest of the community.

14 How can we know that the Samaritan recognized Jesus as God?

When he turned back he also praised God and kneeling at the feet of Jesus he thanked Jesus. In doing so he was recognizing Jesus as the Lord and God of our salvation.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

How would you define your devotion to God? Some would claim their membership in a church would define their devotion. Others would define it in their life through their witness of love for God and for others. They would witness it in their willingness to make Jesus known through their lives, and their witness would be seen and potentially followed as others would see in them something they desire for themselves. Such a thing happened for Ruth and for Timothy and for a Samaritan leper who was cleansed. God grant it would happen to others as they witness the devotion to God which we claim to have as well.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Lord Jesus Christ, grant us grace so to continually witness devotion to You. Fill us with patience and love for You and for others that people might see in us a life they also desire for themselves. As Ruth saw in Naomi a true devotion and love for you, may others see in us the same. As Timothy witnessed from Paul a devotion to You and a love for the Gospel, may we also be given grace to boldly and confidently make Jesus known to others. As a Samaritan leper saw mercy and experienced Your great love for him and for nine others, may we also see Your mercy at work in our lives and show Your love in such a way as others may see it also. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**