



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-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES C

October 30, 2016

From C.P.H. About the Cover: We seek to be God’s people and members of His kingdom. Often we work to try and earn that membership. However, we cannot earn membership into God’s kingdom, for that comes only through humble faith in Him and in the love of Jesus for us. With unassuming love and a servant’s heart, we become members of His kingdom.

First Reading: Isaiah 1:10–18

- ¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!
- ¹¹“What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?” says the LORD;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.
- ¹²“When you come to appear before me,
who has required of you this trampling of my courts?
- ¹³Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me.
New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.
- ¹⁴Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.
- ¹⁵When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.
- ¹⁶Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,

- ¹⁷learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.
- ¹⁸"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool."

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: Vain worship and sacrifice is no new thing. It happened in last Sunday's reading as well with Cain. It still happens today. What God wants is not merely going through motions to do something in the Church. God wants the heart of the individual. When given the grace of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the heart can be moved. It can be moved to worship with intensity and passion. It can be moved to sacrifice with thanksgiving. It can be moved to care for the needs of the fatherless and the widow, to learn and seek justice and correct oppression. Because of God's grace, we are empowered to do all sorts of things with thanksgiving and love for God and mankind and we can do it with joy in our hearts as well.

Epistle Reading 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5, 11-12

¹Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. ⁴Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

⁵This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—

¹¹To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹²so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: The Thessalonian congregation got it right when it came to sacrifice and service by the power of the Gospel. That's because their faith was growing abundantly and their love for the Lord and for one another was increasing in the Gospel. The same thing happens even today as we are given the grace of God through the Gospel. As God pours it out on us in the Word and sacrament, He works in our hearts to grow in faith, to share love not only for him but for one another, and to remain steadfast in faith even in spite of difficulties and perhaps even persecution. Because of God's grace our service can be every bit as noteworthy as that of the Thessalonians and something that glories Christ.

Gospel Reading Luke 19:1-10

¹[Jesus] entered Jericho and was passing through.

²And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was

small of stature. ⁴So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. ⁵And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." ⁶So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. ⁷And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." ⁸And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." ⁹And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: This Gospel reading confirms what the grace of God in a person's life can accomplish. Zacchaeus was a rich man, but because of the grace of God in his life, he was committed to restoring anyone he had dealt with dishonestly four times his fraudulent amount. That is amazing. Would we have done so? Because of God's grace, our life has changed. It is amazing what that grace can accomplish in us. We may not have the issue of Zacchaeus, but we all have issues of sin. With God's grace at work in us, those issues can be addressed and our lives can be transformed for the good of others also.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read **First Reading: Isaiah 1:10–18**

- ¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!
- ¹¹“What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.
- ¹²“When you come to appear before me,
who has required of you this trampling of my courts?
- ¹³Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me.
New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.
- ¹⁴Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.
- ¹⁵When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.
- ¹⁶Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,
¹⁷learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.
- ¹⁸“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.”

1. Since Sodom and Gomorrah had long since been destroyed by fire, what is meant by the reference to “rulers of Sodom” and “people of Gomorrah”?
2. Describe what you think the issue was with the people’s offerings and sacrifices.
3. What is the major sin at work here?
4. Which verse carries the Gospel and how does it make you feel?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read **2 Thessalonians 1:1–5, 11–12**

- ¹Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
- ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ³We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. ⁴Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.
- ⁵This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—

¹¹To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹²so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. What two things were obvious and evident in the lives of the Thessalonians and why?
7. What was necessary and obviously at work in these peoples' lives for the evidence of their faith to be known in such a way?
8. How might the Thessalonians have been suffering?
9. What did Paul mean about God making the Thessalonians "worthy of his calling" and how does that come about for a person?
10. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

Read: Luke 19:1-10

¹[Jesus] entered Jericho and was passing through. ²And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. ⁴So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. ⁵And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." ⁶So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. ⁷And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." ⁸And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." ⁹And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

11. Why might Zacchaeus have desired to see Jesus so intently?
12. What does it say about our God that Jesus would stop and personally identify Zacchaeus by name and invite himself to the man's home?
13. How did Zacchaeus respond to the direction of Jesus?
14. What did Zacchaeus' response to the Lord's visit say about the power of God's grace in a person's life?
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 First Reading: Isaiah 1:10–18

- ¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!
- ¹¹"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD;
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who has required of you this trampling of my courts?
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though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool."

1. Since Sodom and Gomorrah had long since been destroyed by fire, what is meant by the reference to "rulers of Sodom" and "people of Gomorrah"?

This was a reference to how the people of God had become over the years, like those of Sodom and Gomorrah.

2. Describe what you think the issue was with the people's offerings and sacrifices.

Allow for discussion, but it was much the same as the situation in last Sunday's Old Testament reading with regard to Cain's offering. It was done, not out of thanksgiving to God and a sacrifice of a willing heart, but rather an offering of obligation and a lack of care and concern for God's goodness to His people.

3. What is the major sin at work here?

Hypocrisy

4. Which verse carries the Gospel and how does it make you feel?

Verse 18 and allow for discussion

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

Read: 2 Thessalonians 1:1–5, 11–12

¹Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. ⁴Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

⁵This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—

¹¹To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹²so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. What two things were obvious and evident in the lives of the Thessalonians and why?

Verse 3 says their faith was growing and the love increasing.

7. What was necessary and obviously at work in these peoples' lives for the evidence of their faith to be known in such a way?

The Holy Spirit through the power of the Gospel was necessary and working in the people.

8. How might the Thessalonians have been suffering?

The people of Thessalonica had suffered much persecution, both from the Jews and their own countrymen. They were undoubtedly rejected, ridiculed, perhaps faced physical sufferings as many in the first century had to face, but no persecution could turn them aside from the truth of the Gospel. And having suffered for the truth, it was precious to them. Persecution never essentially injured the genuine Church of God.

9. What did Paul mean about God making the Thessalonians “worthy of his calling” and how does that come about for a person?

One is truly worthy of God's calling solely by the matter of faith in the Holy Gospel. This comes about solely by the work of the Holy Spirit through the preached and taught Scriptures as the Thessalonians had received from Paul and from others.

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

READ: Luke 19:1–10

¹[Jesus] entered Jericho and was passing through. ²And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. ⁴So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. ⁵And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." ⁶So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. ⁷And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." ⁸And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." ⁹And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

11. Why might Zacchaeus have desired to see Jesus so intently?

Many had heard of the reputation of Jesus and particularly about the miracles He performed. Zacchaeus' interest may have been spurred by this reputation, or it may have been spurred by his own need to capture a moment's experience of God's presence, pardon and peace in His own life which is something all mankind needs and desires to some degree.

12. What does it say about our God that Jesus would stop and personally identify Zacchaeus by name and invite himself to the man's home?

God does not delight in the death of the wicked, but that all mankind would repent and believe and thus be saved. God cares for us personally in the regard and even calls us by name.

13 How did Zacchaeus respond to the direction of Jesus?

Verse 6 - He received Christ joyfully.

14 What did Zacchaeus' response to the Lord's visit say about the power of God's grace in a person's life?

God's grace works mightily and powerfully in people's lives. The great guilt Zacchaeus felt was lifted from him and he found great peace with God. That grace moved him to make amends to those he had done wrong. It was at great expense to him, but the grace of God motivated him to willingly sacrifice that great expense and joyfully remain in the mercy of God.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

The Old Testament people of God often strayed from true worship and joy-filled sacrifice and thanksgiving to God. People still do the same today! But true believers, even while facing sufferings and persecution as the Thessalonians experienced are happy to respond to God's grace with joy and thanksgiving in service and loving acts. Even the likes of a sinner like Zacchaeus can know the blessing of God's grace at work in his life. We are no different today. We, too, have been given great grace and as a result we can be filled with joy to serve the Lord in our offerings of thanksgiving and our lives of loving service.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Fill us with Your grace, O Lord, that we might know the joy of salvation and grow in faith and in loving service in Your kingdom. Help us to be faithful witnesses of the Gospel as we make known Your love to those around us, in our communities, our congregation and through our vocations. Make us instruments of mercy as Your mercy has made us one of Your own. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**