



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-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES C

November 13, 2016

From C.P.H. About the Cover: We permit ourselves to be fearful. When our lives seem good, we allow fear to disrupt. At trying times, we allow fear and imagination to overtake and overwhelm us, and we fret. We ask, “Where is Jesus?” Jesus is where He always is, right here with us. He is our stay and our comfort. He is all we need. We need not ask for signs. All we need is Jesus.

First Reading: Malachi 4:1–6

¹ “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ² But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. ³ And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

⁴ “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and just decrees that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

⁵ “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: As we quickly approach the end of the Church year, the readings will point to the end of times when, as this reading says, the prophet Elijah (the Lord

Jesus Christ) will come and turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. In this reading we learn of some things to be expected, but the application of this reading might seem vague. But the reader is challenged to remember the laws and statutes of Moses and to show love for parents and children. Having received the gift of the “sun of righteousness” in Holy Baptism and via the powerful Gospel shared with us, we can remember those laws and statutes as well as show love for parents and children. We are privileged to do so.

Epistle Reading 2 Thessalonians 3:1–13

¹Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, ²and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. ³But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. ⁴And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. ⁵May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

⁶Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. ¹¹For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹²Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

¹³As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: In this section of Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians, he urges the readers to practice a few things that are applicable to a believer yet today. The first is the matter of prayer for the Word to be spread everywhere and honored by people. This is certainly something all believers can do by the grace of God. The second is to imitate the kind of life of service that Paul and his team displayed which was a life that didn’t expect or demand of the people, but instead, serve them willingly. Modern day disciples can also, because of the grace of God, follow their spiritual leaders in a joyful and willing life of service in Jesus’ name. The final application is not to be idle in the Lord’s work. This is perhaps the most difficult for people today because it is so easy to allow others to do what needs to be done in the kingdom rather than engage in service with others. Because of God’s grace this is not impossible, but certainly vital because God’s grace is at work within us.

Gospel Reading Luke 21:5–28

⁵ While some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, [Jesus] said, ⁶“As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” ⁷And they asked him,

"Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"⁸ And he said, "See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is at hand!' Do not go after them.⁹ And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once."

¹⁰Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.¹¹ There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.¹² But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake.¹³ This will be your opportunity to bear witness.¹⁴ Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer,¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.¹⁶ You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death.¹⁷ You will be hated by all for my name's sake.¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish.¹⁹ By your endurance you will gain your lives.

²⁰"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it,²² for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written.²³ Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people.²⁴ They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

²⁵"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves,²⁶ people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.²⁷ And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: Jesus didn't paint a pretty picture about the future of Jerusalem or of the Kingdom. He predicted the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, wars, rumors of wars, hunger, violence, etc. Well, the temple was destroyed not once, but twice since that prediction. Wars, etc. have certainly happened as Jesus predicted. So, do modern disciples sit and wait the final destruction. Jesus would say no! He looked on these things as opportunities to witness Him before the world. Because of God's tremendous grace and assurance of our Savior's presence with us even until the end of the age, we need not fear those opportunities to witness Christ, but see them as blessed times for us to honor God with our lives of service and speaking of God's salvation to the world around us.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read First Reading: Malachi 4:1–6

¹ “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ²But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. ³And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

⁴ “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and just decrees that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

⁵ “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

1. What is meant by the “sun of righteousness”?
2. To what day is this reading making reference?
3. What does it mean to remember the law of Moses?
4. Elijah the prophet had long since come centuries before Malachi. Who is referred to in verse 5?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1–13

¹ Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, ²and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. ³But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. ⁴And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. ⁵May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

⁶ Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. ¹¹For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹²Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

¹³As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

6. Paul sought prayer for the effectiveness of the Word. How might we seek the Lord's blessing for the same today?
7. What does it mean to "walk in idleness"?
8. What does Paul mean in his direction of imitating him and his missionary team?
9. What is Paul's primary message in this reading to the Thessalonians and to us?
10. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

Read: Luke 21:5-28

⁵ While some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, [Jesus] said, ⁶"As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." ⁷And they asked him, "Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" ⁸And he said, "See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is at hand!' Do not go after them. ⁹And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once."

¹⁰Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. ¹²But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. ¹³This will be your opportunity to bear witness. ¹⁴Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, ¹⁵for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. ¹⁷You will be hated by all for my name's sake. ¹⁸But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹By your endurance you will gain your lives.

²⁰"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. ²¹Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, ²²for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. ²³Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. ²⁴They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

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when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

11. Would the day of the temple destruction and the rest of the things Jesus talked about be one and the same?
12. What will be the worst thing that will happen before the second coming?
13. In his reference to times of oppression being opportunities for witness, when in history is Jesus referring.
14. With the advent of weird events in nature and the skies before Christ’s return, how is it that believers can straighten up and raise heads and not live in fear?
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: Malachi 4:1–6

¹ "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ²But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. ³And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

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⁵"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."

1. What is meant by the "sun of righteousness"?

This is a direct reference to Christ, the Messiah.

2. To what day is this reading making reference?

This is perhaps two-fold. First to the day of Christ's first coming when He overcame the sin, death and the devil, but even more a reference to Christ's second coming when the evil will be sentenced to eternal hell fire and destruction.

3. What does it mean to remember the Law of Moses?

The Law of Moses is in reference to the Moral Law or Ten Commandments, which are all encompassing for living a holy life. Of course, this is not a Law we can fulfill. It is now fulfilled by Christ Jesus. We are recipients of His holiness and perfection. So to remember the Law of Moses is to recall our moral expectations from God but also to remember the One who has fulfilled them.

4. Elijah the prophet had long since come centuries before Malachi. Who is referred to in verse 5?

This was a reference to the coming of John the Baptist. See Mt. 17:10–13; and very expressly, Mt. 11:14.

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

Read: 2 Thessalonians 3:1–13

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¹³As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

6. Paul sought prayer for the effectiveness of the Word. How might we seek the Lord's blessing for the same today?

Answers will vary but it might behoove the parishioners to ask their pastors to include such petitions each week in the General Prayers if he does not already do so.

7. What does it mean to "walk in idleness"?

This is a reference to those who may claim to believe the Gospel, but fail to live according to it. Of course it also refers to those who refuse to be involved in the ministry of the Gospel and who idly gossip, complain, and otherwise hinder the work of the Gospel in the Church.

8. What does Paul mean in his direction of imitating him and his missionary team?

Paul and his team did not rely on the support of the Thessalonian believers. They modeled willing service and dependency on God's mercy to care for them. And they worked for their keep. This is what he meant with regard to imitating him and his missionary team.

9. What is Paul's primary message in this part of the letter to the Thessalonians and to us?

Paul's central message in this part of his letter was not to just sit back and be served, but to serve. Idleness in the kingdom is really a form of sin. We are all called to live out our vocations in such a way as to honor Christ and serve our neighbors for the sake of the Gospel.

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

READ: Luke 21:5–28

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11. Would the day of the temple destruction and the rest of the things Jesus talked about be one and the same?

No! The temple would be destroyed in 70 A.D. and rebuilt and destroyed again in 363 by an earthquake. The other things Jesus talked about that were to come point to the second coming of Christ.

12. What will be the worst thing that will happen before the second coming?

The presence of those who will come in Jesus’ name but who are far from him because they will lead the followers of Christ astray.

13. In his reference to times of oppression being opportunities for witness, when in history is Jesus referring.

This period of time in history is each and every day since the day of Pentecost until Jesus returns.

14. With the advent of weird events in nature and the skies before Christ's return, how is it that believers can straighten up and raise heads and not live in fear?

For believers, knowing that our redemption is so near, this will be a wonderful reality of God's truthful Word and a certainty of His promise of salvation for it will be just as He says it is and we can celebrate that our redemption is near.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

God is always with His people even as the end of time draws near. Although there will be various kinds of persecution and oppression to be experienced, God's people can rest assured of His presence and help every moment until Jesus comes in the clouds. Until then we are called to use every opportunity to witness the truth of God's Word and make known the love of God to the world. Because the grace of God is so lavishly given to us through the means of grace, we can make bold witness and rejoice in God's mercy to everyone with whom we come in contact and we can make faithful witness to the world around us in whatever vocation we find ourselves in the Church, at home, at work, or wherever we are.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Guide us, Oh Great Jehovah, that our lives may display faithful witness of Your mercy to the world around us. Fill us with deep devotion for serving You and one another that others might see the confidence and peace You have given us in the manner in which we live out our lives and the ways in which we testify of Your goodness in our lives. As we anticipate the second coming of our Savior at the end of time, fill us with a sense of urgency to make Your love known to all. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**