



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.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES A

August 23, 2015

From C.P.H. About the Cover: Traditions aren’t all bad, but neither are they all good. They must be evaluated. Our Lord rejects all those traditions that human beings dream up only to proclaim that failure to observe them is a sin! So it was with the washing of hands among the Jews. Our Lord warns: “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.” Lord, may my heart and my lips be one.

First Reading Isaiah 29:11–19

¹¹And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot, for it is sealed.” ¹²And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot read.”

¹³And the Lord said:

“Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,

¹⁴therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden.”

¹⁵Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, “Who sees us? Who knows us?” ¹⁶You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, “He did not make me”; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, “He has no understanding”?

¹⁷Is it not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest? ¹⁸In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. ¹⁹The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: Is the book of knowledge sealed or does it just appear as though it is? When the world rejects God's truth, it is not that His Word is sealed or hidden, it is simply because the will of mankind is to reject God and His Word. What application can be gleaned from a reading like this? Perhaps the best application is one of paying attention to God warning here and not turn things upside down. Weigh the wisdom of God's Word with the matters of the world around us. His truths are clear and His Wisdom is one of salvation. Pay attention to the message of the Gospel and not make the words of our mouths far from God or our hearts far from His truth. Because the grace of God has been given us, we can cling in faith to what is meaningful for an eternity.

Epistle Reading Ephesians 5:22–33

²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body. ³¹"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: This reading is one of tremendous application of God's desire for marriage, but even more it is a picture of the intimacy of the relationship that exists between God and His bride the Church. The most profound application of this text is obviously directed toward the behavior and responsibility that is before husbands and wives in a Christian marriage, but it applies to all people, whether married or not in so far as our relationship to Christ and us in his Church. We are to submit to His guidance and Wisdom as He loves us with absolute love that caused Him to lay down His life for us. Because He has done so, we can live in submission to Him and His Word in the Church and in marriage we can fulfill the responsibilities we have as husbands and wives.

Gospel Reading:**Mark 7:1–13**

¹ When the Pharisees gathered to [Jesus], with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, ²they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, ⁴and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) ⁵And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" ⁶And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

"This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
⁷in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

⁸You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men."

⁹And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! ¹⁰For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' ¹¹But you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban' (that is, given to God)— ¹²then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, ¹³thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: Traditions of man that lead us away from the wisdom of God's Word are meaningless and dangerous. That is what our lord pointed out to the scribes and Pharisees who gathered around Jesus that day of this reading. When we reject God's Word because the world around us teaches us things that are acceptable merely to those of this world but not to God, we are following the traditions or ways of man and not God. The application of this text lies in knowing the difference between God's teachings and those of man. By the power of the Holy Spirit through the proper teaching of God's Word, we can discern the difference and we can implement those things in our lives that, while contrary to the world view, are meaningful for eternity.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read **Isaiah 29:11–19**

¹¹And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." ¹²And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."

¹³And the Lord said:

"Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,

¹⁴therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."

¹⁵Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" ¹⁶You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

¹⁷Is it not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest? ¹⁸In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. ¹⁹The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

1. What is meant by verses 11-12?
2. How is this revealed in what the Lord said in verse 13?
3. How has verse 16 shown itself in the modern world?
4. How does the promise of verse 18 come true?
5. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read **Ephesians 5:22–33**

²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body. ³¹"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it

refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

6. Read Ephesians 5:21. Does that verse change any thoughts people might have about the matter of women only having to submit to someone?
7. How is the woman to submit to her husband? What does that mean?
8. How is the husband to love his wife? Which partner has the more difficult role?
9. What is this role relationship in marriage actually a picture of and how is living out a marriage like Paul encourages couples a witness of that truth?
10. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

READ: Mark 7:1–13

¹ When the Pharisees gathered to [Jesus], with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, ²they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, ⁴and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) ⁵And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

“‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
⁷in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

⁸You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

⁹And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! ¹⁰For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ ¹¹But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban’ (that is, given to God)— ¹²then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, ¹³thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

11. What had happened with the Jews that caused the leadership to bring their concerns before the Lord and His disciples?

12. How has this same sort of thing happened in the church today?
13. What was meant by Jesus' illustration of the fourth commandment?
14. In what ways do you make void the Word of God and how can you, with the help of God, change that?
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 Isaiah 29:11-19

¹¹And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." ¹²And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."

¹³And the Lord said:

"Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,

¹⁴therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."

¹⁵Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" ¹⁶You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

¹⁷Is it not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest? ¹⁸In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. ¹⁹The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

1. What is meant by verses 11-12?

Isaiah had just revealed a vision of God's judgement on the people and the land spelled out in chapter 28 and the first ten verses of chapter 29. What was happening here, however, is that people were failing to pay any attention to the words of the prophet and so it was as though the words were sealed up and unable to be read or understood. But God was sealing nothing of His Word, the people were doing so.

2. How is this revealed in what the Lord said in verse 13?

People were going through the motions of honoring God, but listening to the words of man which were false teachings and prophecies.

3. How has verse 16 shown itself in the modern world?

Answers will vary, but think of things taught by the world which are taken as Gospel truths in our culture today.

4. How does the promise of verse 18 come true?

By the power of the Holy Spirit God's Word is made clear and His truths are made known to people who otherwise could seem deaf or blind to it.

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

Read: Ephesians 5:22–33

²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body. ³¹“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

6. Read Ephesians 5:21. Does that verse change any thoughts people might have about the matter of women only having to submit to someone?

Out of reverence for Christ, all people are to be submissive to each other. This isn't a matter given only to wives, but to all people and carried out in marriage is something reverent and a reflection of the Church's relationship to Christ.

7. How is the woman to submit to her husband? What does that mean?

“As the Church submits itself to Christ.” It means that we are not slaves to Christ, but willingly submissive to His Word and reverently respectful of His guidance.

8. How is the husband to love his wife? Which partner has the more difficult role?

“As Christ loves the Church and gave Himself up for her.” The answer ought to be the husband has the more difficult role because he models Christ who gave up his life for the Church.

9. What is this role relationship in marriage actually a picture of and how is living out a marriage like Paul encourages couples a witness of that truth?

It is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the Church and modeling that relationship in marriage is a witness of that relationship and therefore a testimony to the Gospel. A good marriage lived out in this fashion is always a testimony to Christ-like love and devotion.

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

READ: Mark 7:1–13

¹ When the Pharisees gathered to [Jesus], with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, ²they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, ⁴and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) ⁵And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" ⁶And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

"This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
⁷in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

⁸You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men."

⁹And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! ¹⁰For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' ¹¹But you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban' (that is, given to God)— ¹²then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, ¹³thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."

11. What had happened with the Jews that caused the leadership to bring their concerns before the Lord and His disciples?

The disciples had eaten without washing their hands in a ceremonial fashion. The reality is that the Jewish leaders had developed all sorts of rubrics and regulations for people to follow which were unassociated with the Laws of God. These regulations had gotten out of hand and they were judging others according to these manmade regulations, having overlooked the things of God's Word.

12. How has this same sort of thing happened in the church today?

Answers can vary, but an example might be when certain expectations are placed on how the liturgy is to be done or overstressing certain rubrics in the church or over regulating how and what things should be done in the church.

13. What was meant by Jesus' illustration of the fourth commandment?

The ways in which the Jews had passed over the fourth commandment in a way as to diminish the honor and obedience due the parent in favor of the regulations and conduct of the children moving away from respect for their parents.

14. In what ways do you make void the Word of God and how can you, with the help of God, change that?

Answers will vary and if someone wishes to expose something in their own life it is important to listen, to thank the person for being willing to share, and to assure the individual that through repentance and forgiveness, they can change because God's grace is present to help them do so.

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 people worship God with their lips but their hearts are far from honoring Him. Isaiah recognized this in the lives of the people of Israel centuries ago, and Jesus encountered this very thing right before his very own eyes. Even today the lip service to God is erased by the absence of the heart in love and devotion to God and His Word. How vital it is that we find ourselves empowered by the Gospel to do more than pay lip service, but rather, through repentance and faith, find great joy in coming to our Father's loving arms with heartfelt faith and trust.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Eternal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, fill us with love for Your Word so that we do not hide behind the lip service of outward devotion but rather to find ourselves embracing the great truths You have made known to us in Your Word. Teach us not only to know You and the way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, but teach us also to respond to that salvation with grateful hearts and lives that reflect our love for you. Grant us grace to learn and grow and to make Your love known to those around us. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**