



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.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY -- SERIES C

January 31, 2016

From C.P.H. About the Cover: When we look at the portrait of the Christ, we have so many thoughts. Our Lord, our Savior. The One who suffered willingly to save us from our sinfulness, so that we may live with Him and with our heavenly Father for eternity. “You are the Son of God!” is a profound confession of just exactly who this Jesus is: the one and only Son of God the Father. Our Lord and Savior!

First Reading; Jeremiah 1:4–10

⁴Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

⁶Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” ⁷But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD.”

⁹Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: It is a wonderful thing to know that God knows us so completely, even before He formed us in the womb. He has purposes for us in His Kingdom as well. Whether we want to act on and attempt to fulfill those purposes is yet another thing. Jeremiah wanted out, so do we. Yet the Lord promised to be with Jeremiah and place Him in the

right spots at the right time to do the right thing. We are blessed by God to have that same grace and assurance that God is with us at all times to do those things that He places before us whether in the home, on the job, at school and especially in the Church. He knows us well enough to also know what we are capable of doing to His glory. Because He first loved us, out of love for Him we can certainly find opportunity to use our lives in loving service to others to “build and to plant.”

Epistle Reading 1 Corinthians 12:31b—13:13

³¹But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

¹³So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: Picking up where we left off last Sunday, we are encouraged to desire the higher gifts of the Holy Spirit. These aren't the ones that stand out in front like pastors and apostles and others who hold a public attraction. These are the higher gifts of love and faith and hope. The greatest desirable gift is that of love. Such love manifests itself in outward action toward others. Whether it is a visit of concern, a neighborly kindness, an expression of compassion, an act of service, a gift of need, an offering of generosity or whatever act of love, because of God's grace, we are given the higher gift of the Spirit to use for the good of others and the glory of God. Because of His grace we are also empowered to use the gift wisely and generously.

Gospel Reading: Luke 4:31–44

³¹And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, ³²and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. ³³And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴“Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to

destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”³⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm.³⁶ And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!”³⁷ And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

³⁸And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf.³⁹ And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

⁴⁰Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.⁴¹ And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

⁴²And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them,⁴³ but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.”⁴⁴ And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Gospel Discipleship Notes: Like Jeremiah in the Old Testament reading, Jesus had to admit that He was sent to preach the good news of the kingdom of God. Yes, He tore down demons and destroyed their power in people’s lives, but more importantly He shared the love of God for sinful man in preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. Because we have that good news today, our lives can also be evidence of building and planting the seed of the Gospel in the conversations we have, the services we perform and the testimony of God’s love at work in our lives. Because of His grace we can use that higher gift of God’s love in us to accomplish great activities of service and kindness in God’s kingdom. Even our generosity is a spiritual gift that is carried out in love for others and for the glory of the Lord.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read Jeremiah 1:4–10

⁴Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

⁶Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." ⁷But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD."

⁹Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

1. Why was it significant that God made Jeremiah aware of His desire to set him apart as a prophet to the nations long before he was formed in the womb?
2. How might we relate this truth about Jeremiah to our own lives?
3. Does this have anything to say to the world about the abortion holocaust?
4. What specific assurance did God offer Jeremiah that he was fully capable of serving as the prophet for which he was consecrated?
5. What assurance do you have from God to comfort you in knowing that you also are capable of serving God as the person in the vocation He desires you to fulfill?
6. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:31b—13:13

³¹But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought

like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

¹³So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

7. To what spiritual gifts was Paul comparing the higher gifts he encourages us to seek according to the immediately preceding these verses?
8. Why is love the greatest spiritual gift?
9. What did Paul mean about prophecies, tongues, etc. in verses 8-9 and how do we see this coming true today?
10. How are the final words of verse 12 like our Old Testament reading for today.
11. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

READ: Luke 4:31–44

³¹And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, ³²and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. ³³And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴“Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” ³⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. ³⁶And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” ³⁷And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

³⁸And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. ³⁹And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

⁴⁰Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. ⁴¹And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

⁴²And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, ⁴³but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” ⁴⁴And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

12. According to the verses just preceding this reading Jesus had already been in Capernaum in Galilee. Why was he returning there after not being accepted in His hometown of Nazareth?
13. Why did Jesus command the demon to be “silent” and come out of the individual?
14. What did the people identify in Jesus as demonstrating His power over evil?
15. Jesus rebuked the demons and the fever. What does it mean to rebuke and why?
16. What did Jesus recognize as the most significant concern of His ministry?
17. 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 **Jeremiah 1:4–10**

⁴Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

⁶Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." ⁷But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD."

⁹Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

1. Why was it significant that God made Jeremiah aware of His desire to set him apart as a prophet to the nations long before he was formed in the womb?

Jeremiah had felt insignificant and inadequate to fulfill the office of a prophet. For God to have assured him that even before he was formed in the womb He had Jeremiah in mind to serve as His spokesman to the people would have been extremely reassuring and confirming.

2. How might we relate this truth about Jeremiah to our own lives?

God has in mind those things He desires us to accomplish as well in our lives, be they in the home, in our places of work, in school or wherever we are in the various vocations we fulfill and we can rest assured that He had those things in mind long before we were formed in our mothers' wombs also.

3. Does this have anything to say to the world about the abortion holocaust?

Yes, most certainly. God has in mind the purposes of each child that is conceived. If nothing else, He would have all who are conceived to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

4. What specific assurance did God offer Jeremiah that he was fully capable of serving as the prophet for which he was consecrated?

In verse 8 we learn that God said, "Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD." God's powerful Word of promise was the specific assurance Jeremiah needed.

5. What assurance do you have from God to comfort you in knowing that you also are capable of serving God as the person in the vocation He desires you to fulfill?

We have that same Word of promise from God that He will "be with you always, even unto the close of the age". With this promise of His Word, we can rest assured that God's grace and power in our lives is sufficient assurance that we can accomplish the purposes which He desires us to fulfill.

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

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:31b—13:13

³¹But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

¹³So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

7. To what spiritual gifts was Paul comparing the higher gifts he encourages us to seek according to the immediately preceding these verses?

Spiritual Gifts of apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles etc. which are the most publically visible to the world and within the kingdom.

8. Why is love the greatest spiritual gift?

Without love, every other spiritual gift is meaningless and useless.

9. What did Paul mean about prophecies, tongues, etc. in verses 8-9 and how do we see this coming true today?

These more visible and in many ways desirable gifts would eventually become extinct over time because they would no longer be needed to give birth to the kingdom of Christ in the Gospel. As we look around us, they are no longer visible as they obviously were in the early Church.

10. How are the final words of verse 12 like our Old Testament reading for today.

Like Jeremiah, we are fully known by God. This is not something that will eventually happen, it already has happened.

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

READ: Luke 4:31–44

³¹And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, ³²and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. ³³And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴“Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” ³⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. ³⁶And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” ³⁷And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

³⁸And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. ³⁹And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

⁴⁰Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. ⁴¹And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

⁴²And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, ⁴³but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” ⁴⁴And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

12. According to the verses just preceding this reading Jesus had already been in Capernaum in Galilee. Why was he returning there after not being accepted in His hometown of Nazareth?

Here and in the other Gospels, it was done in order to establish a center for His ministry. Some scholars even suggest that Jesus had a place of residence there from which He worked. That is not the case because Jesus had no place to lay His head (in His own words). None the less, Capernaum in Galilee became the center for His ministry.

13. Why did Jesus command the demon to be “silent” and come out of the individual?

This was because they knew that Jesus was the Christ, but this truth was not yet to be revealed to the world. That was to happen after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who would convict the world of this truth.

14. What did the people identify in Jesus as demonstrating His power over evil?

According to verse 36 it was the power of His Word and its authority.

15. Jesus rebuked the demons and the fever. What does it mean to rebuke and why?

To rebuke means to censure or admonish or scold. To censure the demons and the fever was to take away their power and eradicate them from the people they were affecting. He did this because of His great love for the people and for the revelation to the Kingdom of who He is.

16. What did Jesus recognize as the most significant concern of His ministry?

The most significant concern of His ministry was not the miracles, but the matter of preaching the good news of the kingdom to people everywhere. That still is His most significant concern.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

Jeremiah felt insignificant and unqualified to speak the Word of God to people. He had the spiritual gifts to do so, but He lacked self-confidence. The greatest spiritual gift is not to be a prophet like Jeremiah, but to hold love and compassion for the salvation of people. That's what Jesus had, compassion and the need to preach the good news of the Kingdom everywhere. By God's rich grace, we can find ourselves filled with such compassion and love as well that we might willingly share the love of Christ in Word and in deed.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Almighty God, Grant us grace to be the servants in Your kingdom that You desire us to be. Even before we were formed in our mothers' wombs, we were known by You with the purposes of our lives clearly in mind. Help us by Your grace to be able to identify those purposes in our various vocations and being filled with the higher spiritual gift of love, seek ways to fulfill those purposes for the good of others and to Your glory. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**