



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.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES B

September 27, 2015

From C.P.H. About the Cover: “Salt is good,” our Lord declares (Mark 9:50); it is good for preserving food and good for flavoring it. And in the Old Testament, the Lord’s sacrifices were also salted. When our Lord instructs His own to “have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another” (v. 50), He is inviting us to live our lives with Him as sacrifices, salted by His sacrifice and so made acceptable to the Father.

First Reading: Numbers 11:4–6, 10–16, 24–29

⁴Now the rabble that was among [the children of Israel] had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, “Oh that we had meat to eat! ⁵We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. ⁶But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.”

¹⁰Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹Moses said to the LORD, “Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? ¹²Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,’ to the land that you swore to give their fathers? ¹³Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’ ¹⁴I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. ¹⁵If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.”

¹⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you..."

²⁴So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. ²⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

²⁶Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." ²⁹But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: The children of Israel were engaged in rabbling in discontent about the food they had to eat. Instead of gratitude in their hearts to God, they grumbled and complained. But that is not the point of this entire reading. We know how God responded to them. He provided food in the form of manna and birds to eat. The point of the reading is that the people also complained about some individuals who proclaimed God's Word instead of Moses. But Moses saw the important point...God can place His Spirit on people and they can respond. If we cannot speak like angels or if we cannot preach like Paul, we can tell the love of Jesus and we can say He died for all. That is an appropriate response to the grace given to us in Christ Jesus. In addition, we can also express praise and thanksgiving for all the gifts of God's blessings on us in this life.

Epistle Reading James 5:13–20

¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. ¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

¹⁹My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: James once again properly gives direction to how the lives of believers ought to be evidence of faith. If we are found in suffering then we ought to live in

prayer, if experiencing cheerfulness, then we ought to express praise to God. If one is sick, that believer ought to seek the prayers of the righteous in his/her behalf. All of this kind of response to the goodness and mercy of God delivers some great results. God can raise us up, He can draw others to Himself, and He will forgive our sins. What greater response can we have to all of this than to offer Him our praise and thanksgiving?

Gospel Reading:

Mark 9:38–50

³⁸John said to [Jesus], "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." ³⁹But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰For the one who is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

⁴²"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. ⁴³And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.' ⁴⁹For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

Gospel Discipleship Notes: In this Gospel reading we see a similar concern expressed to Jesus as was expressed to Moses in the O.T. lesson. Once again the response is the same. Let's not stop people who are proclaiming the name of the Lord, and let's not feel jealousy or anger toward them, rather let's respond with praise and thanksgiving for that which is being done in the name of the Lord. That is a plus compared to those who cause those who believe in Jesus to sin. Our response to God's goodness ought always to be a response of joy and thanksgiving.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read Numbers 11:4–6, 10–16, 24–29

⁴Now the rabble that was among [the children of Israel] had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, "Oh that we had meat to eat! ⁵We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. ⁶But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at."

¹⁰Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹Moses said to the LORD, "Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? ¹²Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,' to the land that you swore to give their fathers? ¹³Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' ¹⁴I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. ¹⁵If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness."

¹⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you..."

²⁴So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. ²⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

²⁶Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." ²⁹But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"

1. What was the real issue among the children of Israel and how is that issue still the same today?
2. How does Moses fall into the same sort of sinful mindset?
3. Was there any significance in the command to engage 70 men of the elders?
4. What does it mean that "*the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp.*"?
5. Why was there this concern about them prophesying in the camp as they were?

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

Read James 5:13–20

¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. ¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

¹⁹My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

7. Relate verse 13 with the verse that precedes it and reads, *“But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.”*

8. Is it really prayer of faith that heals the sick as it says in verse 15?

9. Does James 5:13-20 give us a procedure to follow for healing?

10. How is confession of sin related to healing?

11. What does it mean to “wander from the truth”?

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

READ: Mark 9:38–50

³⁸John said to [Jesus], “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” ³⁹But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰For the one who is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

⁴²“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. ⁴³And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two

hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.' ⁴⁹For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

13. The John who addressed Jesus about this concern was one other the two brothers whom Jesus nicknamed 'sons of thunder'. How does John fit the representation of that title?
14. What does Jesus mean in verse 41?
15. What did Jesus mean by it being better to cut off the hand or foot or tearing out the eye?
16. What does it mean that "everyone will be salted with fire"?
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 Numbers 11:4–6, 10–16, 24–29

⁴Now the rabble that was among [the children of Israel] had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, "Oh that we had meat to eat!

⁵We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. ⁶But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at."

¹⁰Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹Moses said to the LORD, "Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? ¹²Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,' to the land that you swore to give their fathers? ¹³Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' ¹⁴I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. ¹⁵If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness."

¹⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you..."

²⁴So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. ²⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

²⁶Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." ²⁹But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"

1. What was the real issue among the children of Israel and how is that issue still the same today?

They were remembering the past with some rose colored hindsight while at the same time failing to recall how miserable they had been in the midst of their time in Egypt. Always our look to the past is tainted by the conditions of the present. In the Church we tend as well to look back with a greater appreciation for what was then we have for what is.

2. How does Moses fall into the same sort of sinful mindset?

He takes on the same attitude of discontent and personalizes the situation and ultimately questions God's wisdom in dealing with him in this way.

3. Was there any significance in the command to engage 70 men of the elders?

Frequent mention is made in Scripture of the number seventy—a number which is composed of the two sacred numbers seven and ten—the former being the seal of the covenant, and the latter probably denoting perfection. That the number seventy has a symbolic significance in Scripture will hardly be denied (cf. Exodus 1:5; Daniel 9:2, 24; Luke 10:1), although it is probably futile to affix any precise meaning to it.

4. What does it mean that, “the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp.”?

It means the God gave of his Spirit to all seventy elders who spoke to the people of the things of God and that God was with them. The Spirit of God found these two men in the camp where they had stayed and there they exercised their gift of praying, preaching, and praising God; they spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God was not confined to the tabernacle.

5. Why was there this concern about them prophesying in the camp as they were?

This was actually a type of jealousy that was felt for Moses as though they were taking some of His authority away from him while in truth they were fulfilling the will of the Lord.

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

Read: James 5:13–20

¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. ¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

¹⁹My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

7. Relate verse 13 with the verse that precedes it and reads, “*But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.*”

James continues to address how our tongue is to be used. It is not to be used to swear, but it is to be used for prayer.

8. Is it really prayer of faith that heals the sick as it says in verse 15?

The power of healing comes solely from God. Prayer, in and of itself, has no power. The accumulated prayers of the saints has significant influence on God’s response to prayer. Furthermore, as Jesus emphasized faith with regard to the miracles He performed, faith is a critical ingredient for miraculous intervention.

9. Does James 5:13-20 give us a procedure to follow for healing?

This is certainly not a procedure for healing, but it is a common sense approach to ministering to the sick. The called people of the Church should be engaged in the prayerful ministry for the sick as should all faithful people. Many church groups use this as a procedure and no where does the Lord command this as a procedure, but it certainly is appropriate to engage the called workers in the Church with the prayer concerns of the people.

10. How is confession of sin related to healing?

Sickness and other such maladies in life are a result of sin. Confession of sin and the reception of absolution are a much needed comfort and blessing for all people, but especially for those who are struggling with health issues. It is actually a scientific fact that those who deal with illness, surgery or other such maladies in the hospital heal more rapidly and easily who are engaged in prayer, confession and pastoral care.

11. What does it mean to “wander from the truth”?

This is to depart from the reception of God’s means of grace in Word and sacrament. It is a physical separation from God’s activity of pouring out His mercy on us.

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

READ: Mark 9:38–50

³⁸John said to [Jesus], “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” ³⁹But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰For

the one who is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

⁴²"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. ⁴³And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.' ⁴⁹For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

13. The John who addressed Jesus about this concern was one other the two brothers whom Jesus nicknamed 'sons of thunder'. How does John fit the representation of that title?

He and his brother's nickname suggests volcanic personalities—too ready to act precipitously. That is what he does here. John does not ask Jesus how to handle the exorcist, but simply reports what the individual had done—probably seeking Jesus' praise or at least hoping that He will condemn and stop the individual's action. That is what a tattletale always hopes to accomplish.

14. What does Jesus mean in verse 41?

Elsewhere, Jesus calls us to love enemies and to help vulnerable people generally, but his blessing here is directed to those who "are Christ's." The gift that Jesus mentions is simple—a cup of cold water—essential to life but something that almost anyone can give. The cup of water symbolizes any practical gift—food, clothing, shelter, financial aid, or help. The reward is God's approval.

15. What did Jesus mean by it being better to cut off the hand or foot or tearing out the eye?

Today, we might re-phrase Jesus' words this way: "If it costs an arm and a leg to resist temptation, it is worth it?" When we talk like that, we aren't suggesting that a person literally sacrifice an arm or leg, but are simply using colorful language to make the point that resisting temptation is very, very important. However, if we should not take Jesus words, "cut it off," literally, we must take them seriously. Discipleship sometimes requires amputations. We need to amputate bad habits—resentments—ambitions that cause us to act unethically. The recovering alcoholic or drug addict needs to amputate old relationships that threaten to pull him/her back to a life of addiction. The rich young ruler needed to amputate his wallet. We need to amputate things that stand between us and God.

16. What does it mean that "everyone will be salted with fire"?

Both salt and fire are useful in preserving meat, and temple sacrifices require salt as well as fire (Leviticus 2:13). In the present context fire and salt appear to be symbols of the trials and costs of discipleship.

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

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

What stands between you and the Lord that hinders the promotion of the kingdom of God? Is it personalities that stand in the way?

How about judgements about others or some sinful thought or word or behavior that cripples the work that needs to be done?

Whatever it might be, God is present to assure you of His forgiveness and willingness to approve you and your service for His kingdom through Jesus' name. You are invited to allow nothing to separate you from His love and service.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Heavenly Father, grant us Your grace and blessing that we might with Your help remove anything that separates us from service in Your kingdom. Remove our jealousies and judgements of others, our worthless and heartless words, our desires to make waves of discord and our weakness of simply seeing the simple acts of mercy in Your name accomplish great good according to Your will. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**