

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

**Topic: John 18: 1 to 19: 42 "Ecclesiastical, political and human choices."**

NOTE: This is our fifth—and last—major section of the Summary Chart of John's Gospel. This chart is available elsewhere on our website, and it is associated with this study of John's Gospel. This last section is under the larger banner of "Illuminating the Work of Jesus As The Word." The immediate over-section is "Death As The Fulfillment of the Work of God." Today's session is the fourth of five studies. This fifth section is called "Ecclesiastical, political and human choices." The new working title for the whole Gospel of John is "The meaning and significance of Baptism."

I. Read the assigned scriptures in one reading.

The story of the arrest and crucifixion is so overwhelming and familiar that it is easy to miss the lesson involved. It is my confession that this is a personal testimony until a more objective analysis was made. There are two lessons to be learned.

First, it is helpful to remember this gospel is about the experience of our baptism. The method used by the writer John to convey this experience is the baptism of Jesus by his cousin John. This is the way John's Gospel begins. Following this event for Jesus, the rest of the book draws word pictures of what this means to us. Baptism opens up the spirit world for us. In these pictures we see the possibility of our own transformation. This transformation is experienced as miracles: healings, walking on water, thousands fed with minuscule amounts of food and drink, people are raised from the dead, Jesus is crucified, dies and is resurrected.

Again, this lesson gets lost in the attempt to apply the physical or literal interpretation of these events. It is NOT the event or the experience that is transformed, we are transformed in our relationship to these experiences and events. For example, it is not necessary that we walk on water like Jesus. What is important is that *we transform the impossible into the possible*. While we can be victimized, we are not victims. We are victors.

In this way, we are transformed in our relationship to The Way Life Is. It is not the other way around, that The Way Life Is is transformed to accommodate us!

Second, in 18: 1 and 18:36, Jesus supports this position. "On the other side there was an olive grove. (18: 1). "But now my kingdom is from another place. (18: 36).

The Way Life Is is experienced on the physical side of life. The "other side" is the spiritual life. The Kingdom of God is on the spiritual side of life, it is not on the side of The Way Life Is. In these two experiences just described is the significance of the rest of this Gospel:

On the side of The Way Life Is we read of the Ecclesiastical or religious-related decisions, the Political decisions, and the human decisions. Next week we'll finish this gospel by examining the *transparent results*. Transparency is that which is revealed to us about our experience of living out of our spiritual resources.

II. For your exercise in grounding these two chapters,

Describe the experiences of the following as these relate to the assignment---

The Ecclesiastical

The Political The Human

Describe Peter's experience?

Which side of Peter's experience might you find yourself? Why or why not?