

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY

August 12, 2003

Topic: The Gospel of John 1: 35 – 51 1st Sign As Call

In order to set the background for this section, it is necessary to return to John 1: 29 - 34.

Concerning the chart

I'm still working on ways to transfer the chart to the web site. Sorry about that. This is the second study in a section titled "Illuminating the 'Word' made flesh (vss 1:1 to 6:23). The sub-section that includes our session today is titled "Signs that the 'Word' is made flesh" (1:1 to 3:21). Today's lesson is titled "1st Sign As Call."

I. Read the entire section in one reading.

II. Take time to answer the following questions because these are the foundation for understanding this section of the Gospel of John. What is your experience of authenticity? How have you experienced the genuine? How did it make you feel when you experienced these things?

More questions to answer: Think of a person whose life demonstrates something authentic and genuine. What were these qualities? How does this individual illuminate these qualities?

III. The characteristics of the authentic and the genuine are based on the experience of quality. Theologically, quality is a part of GOODNESS. You'll remember Jesus' admonition in Matthew 19:16, 17, "Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." Here, the association of authenticity and the genuine is with God and with really living life.

This theological definition allows us to associate the experience of the genuine and the authentic with God who is known to us as The Meaningfulness, The Guarantor and The Perfect At-One-Ment. Consequently, whenever, wherever, and with whomever we experience the authentic and the genuine we are experiencing The Good that is God. In Matthew's scripture, to answer the man's questions about eternal life Jesus points to God.

My experience of The Good is universal. I look at a Jaguar car and see God. I view an artwork by an old seacoast painter and see God. I listen to a Mozart piano concert or a saxophone jazz riff and stand in the presence of God. I sit at the feet of an old mentor and experience God. I hit a good golf shot (OK, this is getting far fetched!) and experience God.

From the viewpoint of "Gut Trip Analysis," eternal life is not a place. Eternal life is a relationship with the Authentic, the Genuine, the Good or with God. Eternal life is not something we earn after we die. Eternal life is life now, each and every day. Then, when we die, we shuck off the body-of-this-world, and continue to live the relationship we've already begun with God/Good/Authentic/Genuine.

IV. Vs. 29 - what was it John the Baptizer saw in Jesus that he recognized as the "Lamb of God?" Vs. 31 -- How did Jesus baptism reveal to Israel that Jesus is the Messiah or the Anointed One? (These are Old Christian Code Words -what is the experience of them?) Vs. 33 - John, the gospel writer, uses the metaphor "the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

V. Take a few minutes to re-ground the term "Holy Spirit in your own experience. For me, words like "Profound Freedom," "Authentic Choice" comes to mind. With what experiences do you associate your experience with the "Holy Spirit?" (Keep it "gut" oriented.)

V. vss. 1: 35 - 51 - Discuss the assigned reading in light of this discussion. What did the Disciples experience to make the choice of leaving the old and familiar for the new and radical?

VI. Vs. 51--- Take the old code words in this statement and do a gut analysis on them.