

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

IHOP BIBLE STUDY

November 2003 (Salina)

Topic: John 9: 1 to 9: 41 "A Demonstration"

NOTE: This is our third major section of the Summary Chart of John's Gospel. This chart is available elsewhere on our website. The overview of these seven sessions is to define the Word of God. This definition has two parts: "To do the work of God," and the "Validity of Jesus' Teaching." Today's session is the third study in this section. It is one of four studies in this section.

I. I. Read the assigned reading at one time.

The audience is the Pharisees.

The key verse is 10: 30, 31. This is the conversation between the once-blind man and the Pharisees. "Now, here is an astonishing thing! He (Jesus) has opened my eyes, and you don't know where he comes from! We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but God does listen to men who are devout and do his will."

One part of the demonstration illustrated in this section is the age-old struggle between the imperative and the indicative. An 'ought' is represented in the imperative, and 'this is the way life is' is represented in the indicative.

The Pharisees represent the imperative. We read this into the discussion about what *should*, or *should not*, be done on the Sabbath. The other demonstration is illustrated on whom blame *should* be placed; did the blind man's parents sin or is this a demonstration of "the works of God might be displayed in him."

First, it is observed that Jesus is not concerned with the imperative. He is concerned with the indicative. Jesus **demonstrates** healing by spitting and making a dirt paste. The once-blind man **demonstrates the indicative** when he testifies in vs 26 "I only know that I was blind but now I can see."

This is the first lesson in this chapter; concern yourself with the indicative and not the imperative.

The second lesson concerns listening to God. This concern is a constant theme for Jesus. The Pharisees always represent US. Like the Pharisees, we are deaf to hearing the words of Perfect At-One-Ment, even though these words are very common. We experience the words of Perfect At-One-Ment whenever and wherever we experience being At-One! In the moments of quiet sharing, or when we stand in the middle of a rock concert and watching while hundreds of bodies move in rhythm **together**. The language of the spirit is everywhere all of the time.

Jesus is right, we are spiritually blind. Of course, this is what this story in John is all about. "Once I was blind, but now I see."

The third lesson in this section concerns the difference between FAITH and BELIEF. Faith is what you bet your life on. Belief is the system, or structure, to support your faith.

We Pharisees make our Belief Systems more important than our Faith Systems. Faith is surrendering yourself to that which brings fulfillment. Belief is joining like-minded people in the effort to bring fulfillment to completion.

Faith is surrendering ourselves to live in Perfect At-One-Ment with neighbor, self and God. This fulfills the New Commandment of Jesus to love God and neighbors as we love ourselves. Belief is joining a denominational team whose vision and purpose is to support us in our faith journey.

With this in mind, ruminate on the following:

A. A. What do the Pharisees mean in vs. 34 "You were steeped in sin at birth?"

B. B. Why doesn't "God listen to sinners?" (9:31 - "We know that God does not listen to sinners. He (or she) listens to the godly man (or woman) who does his/her will.")

C. Why is it necessary to be gender aware as we study these scriptures?

D. How is it possible to avoid the Imperative and to live out of the Indicative? What difference will it make?