

WS: LET'S REVIEW — Holding phrases for the four Gospels. Memorize the following four statements!

These hold the key to understanding the four Gospels.

MATTHEW: Jesus' Teaching Manual for living the deeply satisfied life;

MARK: Our mission is to awaken those spiritually asleep;

LUKE: Jesus and Jesus' message is the same;

JOHN: The meaning of our baptismal experience.

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

IHOP BIBLE STUDY

15 Topic: "Hard Sayings" -- with commentary

NOTE: According to the Luke Chart, there are 7 hard saying in this theme. My plan is to take them in 4 sessions, and this is session # 3. Today's scriptures are:

Luke 16: 14 – 18: "Kingdom preaching and The Law."

The purpose of the Gospel of Luke is told in the opening verses in the first chapter, ". . . it seemed good to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught." It is this "orderly account" that provides the organization of our study material. **This is lesson number 15 of 29.**

Read the assigned THEME at one time.

NOTE: In each of the seven scriptures in these "Hard Sayings" the underlying theme is "Judgment." For many Christians, the judgment of God is not easily understood, if at all. Consequently, it is first helpful not to make the topic something to study. Instead, think of it in terms of relationships.

Second, it is helpful to apply the axiom "The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself." An illustration is helpful. When we do things that please others as well as ourselves, the reward for our deeds is the experience of deep satisfaction and a sense of peace. Conversely, when we do things that hurt, and drive others away, the reward for our deed is the experience that people get hurt and are separated from us.

Now apply this principle to the following questions.

I. Luke 16: 14 – 18 – "Kingdom preaching and The Law."

A confession: In my original study to prepare the Luke chart, this material was separated into two "Hard Sayings" studies. The first began in Luke 16:16 – 17, and then Luke 16:18. I was convinced we were dealing with two different sayings because the first revealed Jesus' authority to preach the good news of the Kingdom. The second concerned Jesus' teaching about divorce and adultery.

In preparing for this week's session, material in Bible Gateway changed my mind. The following statement did the trick: *"This brief interlude is among the more perplexing passages in the book of Luke. It comes between two passages that are clearly about wealth and possessions, [Luke 16: 1-13 and Luke 16:19-31.] Luke introduces it by noting that the Pharisees scoffed at Jesus' teaching because they loved money. Yet though Jesus proceeds to rebuke the Pharisees, he does not mention money directly at all. On the surface the unit is so disjunctive that many interpreters despair of trying to ascertain where it fits in the chapter's literary argument.*

([http://bible.gospelcom.net/cgi-](http://bible.gospelcom.net/cgi-bin/bible?language=english&passage=Luke+16%3A14-18&version=NIV)

[bin/bible?language=english&passage=Luke+16%3A14-18&version=NIV](http://bible.gospelcom.net/cgi-bin/bible?language=english&passage=Luke+16%3A14-18&version=NIV))

This leaves the material in between these two teachings about money, Luke 16:14 – 18. As a consequence, our study is expanded and starts at 16:14 and includes the teaching about divorce and adultery in vs. 18.

Now that we've got this profound change made, let's get busy.

1. **Vss. 16: 14 – 15: What is it God knows about the “hearts” of the Pharisees.** In fact, what God knows is “detested.” Brood about this. You want to turn to your commentary and/or study Bible to do a little research.

WS: The Pharisees considered their relationship to God **to be a burden**; that is they had to fulfill The Law in order to have a relationship to God. This is why the Pharisees “detested” God. Jesus arrives as the fulfillment of The Law, revealing God---as Perfect At-One-Ment—is not a burden, but illuminates wholeness, peace, deep satisfaction, etc.

2. **What does it mean that “God knows your hearts?”** The caveat is to beware the danger of Head Trip Analysis.

WS: The word “heart” is used here—in Gut Trip Analysis—as the “essence of being human/humane.” When we fulfill our essence we see with the eyes of the heart. Or, as Luke puts it, “God knows your hearts.”

3. **Vss. 16:16a: Reground for yourself the significance of the relationship between The Law and the Prophets and the preaching of the “good news of the kingdom of God.” (Keep it Gut Trip, please.)**

WS: Preaching the “good news of the kingdom of God” is to preach the following: 1) **God makes no junk**; 2) If God makes no junk, then our **present moment is a gift**. This is why we call it a “present.” 3) If God makes no junk, and our present is a gift, then **our past is not only forgiven, it is forgotten**. 4) If God makes no junk, and our present moment is a gift, and our past is forgotten, then our **future is an open possibility**. This is why this formula is “Good News.” Those who awaken to this good news discover that The Law now become guidance for continuing to live as the Awakened Ones.

However, without preaching the Good News, The Law only convicts us and makes us guilty. There is no freedom and no release. God becomes a burden rather than a blessing.

4. **What are the benefits of living in the Kingdom of God?**

WS: Living in the Kingdom of God is to live in the Spiritual Oasis. Remember that the Spiritual Oasis is discovered (we awaken to it) right in the middle of our human experience of living in the human desert of hopelessness. The Spiritual Oasis is the discovered of Hopefulness; this is why this Oasis is refreshing. Humans find fulfillment in their essence as living humane and human.

5. **Vss. 16: 16b—This is a most curious phrase: “. . .and everyone is forcing his way into it.” Do a little research in your commentary to discover what you can about it.**

WS: Bible Gateway records the following helpful commentary: *But Jesus says more. He notes that "all are urged insistently to enter in." This translation is somewhat*

*unusual and needs defending (for this approach, Fitzmyer 1985:1117-18). Most versions read everyone is forcing his way into it (NIV; NRSV has the variation "everyone tries to enter it by force"), but such a statement is manifestly not true. Everyone is not in a rush to enter in; many choose to reject the kingdom utterly. The key here is the Greek term *biazo*, which means "to apply force." But the voice of the verb is ambiguous in Greek. Is it middle, so the force is applied by everyone? Or is it passive, so force is applied to everyone--and if so, in what sense? I would argue that the term is passive and thus that Jesus is speaking of the persuasion applied to all through preaching (for details, Cortes and Gatti 1987:247-59). The preaching of the good news offers the opportunity to enter into kingdom benefits. Through this message all are urged to enter in. The time of fulfillment has come, and all are asked to share in its blessing. But to do so one must hear Jesus, not scoff at his authority. (Same reference as above.)*

6. Vss. 16: 17—The Law evidently is going to stick around. In light of this study material, how does The Law play an important role here?

WS: Again, Bible Gateway is useful here by identifying three ways in which the term "Law" is used. Observe the following:).

In Luke three themes dominate. First, in terms of relating to God and to others, the law instructs and gives moral guidance (16:27-31). Second, when law is considered in terms of promise, as in this passage, it stands fulfilled in Jesus. Third, law has passed away when it is considered as individual laws or what the Jews would call "halakoth," practices that identify a person as Jewish as opposed to Gentile. Rites like circumcision and concern about clean foods are no longer necessary (Acts 10--11, 15). These three senses summarize how Luke sees the law; each time the term appears, the reader should examine the context to see which force is being applied (Blomberg 1984). (Same reference as above.)

7. Vss. 16: 18 --- How does this material of Divorce and Adultery illustrate, or illuminate what has gone on before?

WS: The standard and moral tone of living the awakened life is to live in covenant with God. A couple who decide to marry into the Christian Faith discovers a third relationship is added to the couple. God is added, along with the Christian Covenant (to live in At-One-Met) is fulfilled in this marriage relationship. To this day, we call marriage "Holy Matrimony," or "Holy Covenant." To break the covenant between a couple is the same as breaking the covenant with God who is experienced as Perfect At-One-Ment. We recall that Paul gets in some trouble in defining the relationship between married couples. Women are to obey their husbands in the same way Jesus Christ obeyed God. In like manner, a husband relates to his wife as Christ would relate to her. This is the model of always asking WWJD.

However, this statement does not imply that an abusive relationship is not a rationale for divorce. The marriage does end when any relationship becomes abusive. Abuse is the antithesis of At-One-Ment. The caveat is that abusive relationships have already broken the covenant with God and the marriage itself.

All right, folks. Talk to me.