

Pastor's SERMON STARTER for ADVENT is Matthew 3: 1 – 12, "Producing Fruit." Check out the sermon starter at the end of this document. Some initial Gut Trip Analysis is provided, and a suggested sermon outline is provided.

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

18 Topic: "The Law of Reversal" study page

Luke 12: 1 – 12, "Warnings and Encouragements;" **Luke 13: 22 – 30,** "The Narrow Door."

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 18 of 29.**

NOTE: In the Jewish tradition, the Law of Reversal is implied in the axiom, "You got yours now, I'll get mine later." There are 5 stories in this theme, and we'll study them in two sessions.

Read the assigned THEME at one time.

I. Luke 12: 1 – 12, "Warnings and Encouragements."

1. vs. 1b: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." The context for this material begins with "The Six Woes" in 11: 37 – 54. The audience for all of this material is the Pharisees and the Lawyers. In this instance, Jesus accuses the Pharisees of being hypocrites, that is, being of two minds. Here the hypocrisy is leading a double life (Gateway: 12:1 – 12); that is, what they say in public and what they say in private is two different things. In particular, we see this in 12: 1 – 3.

The assignment is to read in your commentary—or access Bible Gateway on the web—and read what others say about this section of material. Then, write a brief summary here.

- 2. vss. 4 – 7:** Read this section closely. Attempt to identify who Jesus says we are to fear in vs. 4.
- 3. vss. 5a:** In light of your findings, explore the significance of vss. 5 – 8.
- 4. vss. 8, 9:** These verses explore The Law of Reversal. Recall that the term "The Son of Man" is used by Luke to point to the humanity of Jesus, rather than his divinity. What is the experience of being acknowledged before men? What is the experience of being acknowledged before the angels of God?
- 5. vs. 10:** This is one of the most discussed scriptures in the Bible. What is the experience to "blaspheme against the Holy Spirit?"

II. Luke 13: 22 – 30, “The Narrow Door.”

The key verse is 13: 30, “Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.” This is typical of The Law of Reversal. Here, the topic is the nature and experience of salvation.

1. **In Gut Trip Analysis, what does the term “salvation” mean?** It may be helpful to reread in my book *Old Christian Code Words*, pages 17 to 23. Your assignment here is to brood on this problem, and then share your own insights.
2. **Describe the activity of The Law of Reversal described in this assignment.**
3. **If you had to describe “the feast in the kingdom of God,” how would you do it?**

THE LECTIONARY STUDY IN MATTHEW for the second Sunday in ADVENT, December 5, 2004 is Matthew 3, “Producing Fruit.” Specifically, the Matthew chart associates this scripture with “The Training of the Teacher.”

ADVENT SERMON SERIES: “O you better watch out, you better not pout. . .”

November 28 -- Theme:	Watchfulness	Matthew 24: 36 – 44
December 5 -- Theme:	Producing Fruit	Matthew 3: 1 – 12
December 12 -- Theme:	Hearing and Seeing	Matthew 11: 12 – 11
December 19 -- Theme:	Call him Immanuel	Matthew 1: 18 – 25
December 26 -- Theme:	Herod: before and after	Matthew 2: 13 – 23

PRODUCING FRUIT Matthew 3: 1 – 12 “John the Baptist prepares the Way.”

Key Verse: 13: 8, “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance”

Gut-Trip Concept: The experience of repentance is the act of turning around. In this act, nothing is changed, yet everything is transformed. We were looking in one direction, and suddenly we are looking in an entirely new direction. Note, however, we are standing in the same spot.

Prelude: Share an email story (or something else) that allows us to see the significance of Christmas.

- I. **See with new eyes**
 - A. The experience of John the Baptizer
 - B. An example of the Spiritually Awakened
- II. **People came to be awakened**
 - A. vs. 5 -- People came from “the whole region.” (everywhere?)
 - B. vs. 6 – Came confessing their inhumanity and unhumane-ness (sin as separation)
- III. **Can’t live in the past**
 - A. The problem of the Pharisees (the un-awakened)
 - B. Vs. 7 – can’t flee from the coming wrath (the reward for being unhuman and inhumane)

C. Vs. 9 – God can raise up the Awakened from stones

IV. Producing the fruit of repentance

A. The baptism of Christmas quenches the fires of our human desert

B. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is with the fires of God's love

C. Are we ready for the "barn" or for an "unquenchable burning."

Postlude

The experience of Christmas is that the God of love is just around the corner. We prepare ourselves to have the eyes and ears to see God's love by embracing the child born in a manger.