

Pastor's SERMON STARTER for the Third Sunday in Advent is Matthew 11: 2 – 11, "Jesus and John the Baptist." Some initial Gut Trip Analysis is provided, and a suggested sermon outline is located at the end of this weekly study.

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

19 Topic: "The Law of Reversal" – study page

Luke 14: 1 – 14, "Jesus at a Pharisee's House; **Luke 16: 19 – 31**, The Rich Man and Lazarus;" **Luke 17: 20 -37**, "The Coming of the Kingdom of God."

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 19 of 29.

Read the assigned THEME at one time.

I. Luke 16: 19 – 31 -- "The Rich Man and Lazarus."

Note: We start with this parable, although it is out of numerical order, because it is the chief example of how Jesus uses The Law of Reversal. All of the other four parables follow a similar pattern. Here, the disciples are the audience. The contrast is between a "rich man," and the poor man, Lazarus.

It is possible to observe some political overtones in this story. The "Rich Man" represents the Jews as the inheritors of the "wealth of faith." On the other hand, Lazarus represents the followers of Jesus who received the crumbs thrown from the tables of The Law.

Vs. 22: What is the significant role that is played by Abraham in this parable?

Vs. 23: "In hell where he was in torment." Do a Gut Trip Analysis on this term. Remember, hell is not a "place," it is a relationship. What is the relationship described here that will represent a place of torment?

Vs. 26: What is your experience of the "great chasm?"

Vss. 27 – 31: Through the lips of Jesus, father Abraham offers key advice. What is it?

Can you write a paraphrase of this warning as a method of grounding its significance in Gut Trip Analysis?

II. Luke 14: 1 – 14, “Jesus at a Pharisee’s House”

1. Who is the audience?
2. Jesus sets three traps. What are they and what is the Pharisee’s response?
3. Jesus speaks of being “repaid.” It is here that The Law of Reversal is used. Explain the difference. (Note: do a Gut Trip Analysis on the phrase “the resurrection of the righteous.”)

III. Luke 17: 20 -37, “The Coming of the Kingdom of God.”

Note: At first glance, it appears this parable concerns the Kingdom of God. However, the emphasis on The Law of Reversal begins with verse 26ff.

1. **Vs. 21b:** What is the significance of the statement, “because the Kingdom of God is within you?”
2. **Vss. 22 – 24:** What are the conditions under which it is possible to identify the “Son of Man?” **Note:** The gospel writers use the term Son of Man to emphasize Jesus’ humanity instead of his divinity.
3. **Vs. 25:** How does this statement foreshadow the experience of Jesus?
4. **Vss. 26 – 36:** Jesus provides two illustrations of the conditions under which people will receive their just reward for their faithfulness, or lack of it? **Note:** Do a quick Gut Trip Analysis of this statement, “their faithfulness.” What is the experience of “faithfulness?”
5. **Vs. 37:** Jesus ends this conversation in a very curious way. Do some background research to see what’s going on.

All right, folks. Talk to me.

THE LECTIONARY STUDY for the Third Sunday in Advent is Matthew 11: 2 – 11, “Jesus and John the Baptist.” Some Gut Trip Analysis is provided as a sermon starter. Happy Trails, and Happy Holidays!

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

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

Theme: Matthew 11: 2 – 11 – “Hearing and Seeing”

Key Verse: Vs. 3 “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”

Prelude: (Use your own illustration about waiting “for the one who is to come.” Here’s mine.) Three months ago, I called an electrician to come check out an electric switch. Somehow, when our grandkids touch the screws holding the face plate, they get a shock. In the meantime, the switch is covered with tape. After three months wait, I finally called the electrician and asked, “Are you he who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” The electrician’s reply was, “Well, hear what I’ve got to say about seeing in the dark.” Pretty good for an electrician.

I. Advent and the role of John the Baptist --

A. The record in the Gospels

1. Mark begins his Gospel with John who Prepares the Way.”
2. Luke begins his Gospel with the prophesy of John’s birth.
3. John begins his Gospel with John’s denial that he is The Christ. Here he affirms that his role as, “I am the voice of one calling in the desert, “Make straight the way for the Lord.” A quote from Isaiah.

B. All this is pretty impressive Advent credentials.

II. What are we sent out to “see?” (11: 4 – 6)

- A.** The church is what the church does
- B.** Living in what is really real (the indicative)
- C.** My axiom: “The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself.”
 1. Do good, and we reap the reward of deep satisfaction and happy people.
 2. Do mean things, and we reap the reward of stress and alienation.

IV. What are we sent out to “hear?” (11: 7 – 10)

- A. The message of Jesus**
 1. To hear about the role of John the Baptist.
 2. The fulfillment of the prophecy of Malachi 3: 1.

B. To hear the truth: we are called to be “the least in the kingdom of heaven.”

Postlude: As we prepare ourselves for Christmas, we act on what our eyes show us, and *listen with the third ear of faith*. Tell the following story floating across the internet:

His name is Bill. He wears a T-shirt with holes in it, jeans, and no shoes. This was literally his wardrobe for his entire four years of college. He is brilliant; yet kind of esoteric and very, very bright. He became a Christian while attending college. Across the street from the campus is a well-dress, very conservative church. They want to develop a ministry to the students but are not sure how to go about it.

One day, Bill decides to go there. He walks in with no shoes, jeans, his T-shirt, and wild hair. The service has already started, and so Bill starts down the aisle looking for a seat. The church is completely packed and he can't find a seat. By now, people are really looking a bit uncomfortable, but no one says anything. Bill gets closer and closer and closer to the pulpit, and when he realizes there are no seats, he just squats down right on the carpet.

By now, the people are really uptight, and the tension in the air is thick. About this time, the minister realizes that from way at the back of church a deacon is slowly making his way toward Bill.

Now, the deacon is in his eighties, has silver-gray hair, and a three-piece suit: a godly man, very elegant, very dignified, and very courtly. He walks with a cane, and as he starts walking toward this boy, everyone is saying to themselves that you can't blame him for what he's going to do. How can you expect a man of his age, and of his background, to understand some college kid on the floor?

It takes a long time for the man to reach the boy. The church is utterly silent except for the clicking of the man's cane. All eyes are focused on him. You can't even hear anyone breathing. The minister can't even preach the sermon until the deacon does what he has to do. And now they see this elderly man drop his cane on the floor. With great difficulty, he lowers himself and sits down next to Bill and worships with him so he won't be alone.

Everyone chokes up with emotion. When the minister gains control, he says, “What I'm about to preach you will never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget.”

Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some people will ever read.”

Now, the Advent question is this. What did we see and what did we hear? Does it prepare us for Christmas? Amen.