

Donna – I've taken the liberty of using your responses as the basis of my reply. Thanks for your efforts, and keep up this dialogue. The others on the subscription list are encouraged to participate in this way too. Pastor Bill

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

24 Topic: "Faith and Gratitude" - study page

Luke 17: 1 – 10, "Sin, Faith, and Duty;" Luke 17: 11 – 19, "Ten Healed of Leprosy"

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 24 of 29.

Read the assigned THEME at one time.

NOTE: Take a moment to re-read the above purpose of the Gospel of Luke statement. This will remind you that Luke purpose is to "provide an orderly account" demonstrating that Jesus--the messenger, and Jesus—the message—are one and the same thing. We see the messenger at work and we experience the message. We hear the message of the Good News and we see in Jesus the message demonstrated.

I. Luke 17: 1 – 10, "Sin, Faith and Duty."

FOCUS: How does Jesus' message reveal who Jesus is? How does Jesus, the messenger, reveal the significance of Jesus' message?

Vs. 2b: ". . . one of these little one's to sin." Write a Gut Trip definition of the word sin. If necessary, see my book *Old Christians Code Words*.

Donna's response--Sin is separation from God, living in the black hole, "feeling" that God is not there, but knowing he is make it easier.

WS: Good work, Donna. I like the image of "living in the black hole;" it matches my own life experience. By-the-way, it is in my "black hole" that I find that God lives there!

My only suggestion is to remember that God is genderless. To use the masculine or the feminine gender to describe God borders on idolatry. Use the word "God,:" or as I prefer "Perfect At-One-Ment," because this describes our experience of God.

Who are the "little ones?" Research your commentary or study guides to find the answer.

Donna's response- They are God's children, "us" We are all in the family of God.

WS: Of course, we are God's children. However, the more traditional response is that Jesus is referring to his disciplines. Someone at the IHOP Bible Study on Tuesday said their study of the commentary suggested it may refer to "new converts" or new followers.

Vs. 1b: ". . . woe to that person through" whom the sin comes. In light of your definition of

sin, what might the person do to bring such wrath?

Donna's response--When you sin, it is bad enough, but if you bring someone with you or are an influence that is even worse to cause pain to someone else. That is why Jesus said, "It is much better to die than to cause His children to sin.

WS: Why is this true? Why is it better to die than to cause others to experience separation? My answer is that separation is the antithesis of being fully and authentically human/humane. When we do things to dehumanize others, we dehumanize ourselves as well. In fact, all of humanize—as well as all creation—is a little bit less instead of more.

Vs. 3b – 4: What does “forgiveness” represent in light of your definition of sin?

Donna's response- The 'millstone' has been taken off. I am not worthy, but through God's grace I receive and am thankful. But I realize that when I am forgiven, I must forgive also.

WS: Forgiveness restores unity to the family of humanity. Forgiveness is the humane act that defines what it means to be both human and humane. I like Donna's response that the “millstone” is taken off. When we are forgiven we often speak of being “unburdened.”

Vs. 6: Define the word “faith” using Gut Trip Analysis.

Donna's response- When I keep my eyes on Jesus, my faith is practiced not just felt.

WS: Um-m-m, Donna, I believe I understand what your intent is, but, you haven't defined what your “experience” is. You are correct in saying that faith is “practiced.” Now, if I was walking down the street, and I saw you “practicing your faith” what would I be seeing? My answer is that faith is surrender. I'd see you practicing WWJD.

Vs. 7 – 10: Define the word “duty” using Gut Trip Analysis. To do this, it may be necessary to review 1 Corinthians 9:16, and 1 Corinthians 9: 19.

Donna's response- it is my "duty" to live and be the best I can and be an influence to others by my actions and how I live. It a great gift to **know** I have God's love, but a great privilege and duty to share it.

WS: Ok, why is this true for you? Paul's response to the Corinthians is that he is “compelled” to preach and to practice Christian surrender (faith). He has no choice. Duty, in this way, is not an obligation but a life style. To use Jesus' example in this scripture, we intentionally make ourselves available to do the servant role, and we do our duty as an expression of our free will. Paul tells us, that he is nothing, yet through Christ he is everything.

What does the message of Luke 17: 1 – 10 reveal about the message of Jesus? What does it reveal about the messenger?

Donna's response--Jesus does not want us to be responsible for bringing sin to anyone. We are all in His family and we are to look out for one another and hold each other accountable. Jesus is the family.

WS: OK, however, your answer reveals more about us than it does about Jesus. To speak of Jesus the man always is to speak about his obedience to God as Perfect At-One-Ment.

Jesus' message is that true and authentic freedom is found in the choice to be obedient to Perfect At-One-Ment; that is, in everything, and in every relationship, we

ask WWJD. This is why it is called "Good News."

Jesus the messenger is that he is the demonstration, his life is the example, of this message!

II. Luke 17: 11 – 19, "Ten Healed of Leprosy"

Note: Do some research in your commentary or study guides to discover what you can about the significance of vs. 11. There is a geographical lesson involved here with political implications.

Donna's response- It is not just the miracle, but the reaction of it. The tenth leper was the only one who came back and thanked Jesus. The area is today, I think around the Gaza Strip, the Middle East. The Lepers can be related to in that area who are in the middle of that conflict.

WS: Well, Donna, you've covered a lot of ground here, and offered us a surprising relationship of the material to the human experience; lepers are those who experience the entrapment of political conflict. Interesting. Certainly, there are a lot of people in Iraq that can relate to this.

However, you've ranged further than the question asks. The geographical/political lesson is that Jesus is beginning his journey to Jerusalem. He starts down the east bank of the Jordan, because Herod—who was hunting for him—did not control the Samaritan side of the river.

Vs. 11 – 16: What is the experience of the lepers to be given the instructions to "Go, show yourselves to the priests." What does Jesus expect to happen?

Donna's response- In those days it was required for any lepers who thought they were healed to go to the priests and make sure they were cleansed. It was clear Jesus acted to heal them when he told them to go to the priests. *It was also an act of faith for them to go not being healed yet.* As they obeyed Jesus and turned to go is when they were healed.

WS: Certainly, you got the intent of this passage. Good work. You got the point that the response of the lepers *was an act of surrender (faith).* However, look again at the scripture to see that it is in going to the priests that they are healed. Who do the "priests" represent? Of course, they are God's representatives. The lesson to be learned is that when we surrender ourselves into God's care then we are healed.

What is the social significance of the one leper who returned to thank Jesus?

Donna's response-- To always be thankful for our healing, miracles, blessings etc. We can be witnesses to others through this.

WS: Let me push your thinking just a little bit. Yes, you've captured the essence of the experience, to be sure. Yet, think a moment on who the lepers are; they are gentiles! That's you and me babe. The Good News in this scripture is that healing the wounds of society is offered to both Jews (the People-of-God) as well as to the rest of us (God's-People).

Vs. 17 – 19: What is the point that Luke is making in these verses?

Donna's response- We are to be ever thankful of God's presence in our lives. Not for our possessions, but for the very act of His love toward us on the cross. Our chance of salvation, spiritual gifts, other believers etc. If it were not for our belief and thanksgiving it would for a lonely existence.

WS: Is it alright to be thankful for our possessions too? However, you expressed the message very well.

What does the message of Luke 17: 11 – 19 reveal about the message of Jesus? What does it reveal about the messenger?

Donna's response- Jesus is for the family, we all stick together and watch out for one another as Christians. He wants the best for us.

WS: I can agree with your statement provided your definition of "family" means the human-family. Fortunately, or unfortunately, Christians have the responsibility to watch out for everyone (people) and everything (creation)! This is a duty we accept when we surrender (faith) to Jesus Christ.

What I believe this scripture reveals about the message of Jesus is that our decision to live our lives in the shadow of Perfect At-One-Ment (G-O-D) brings health, wholeness, deep satisfaction and peace to us. What this reveals about the Messenger is that Jesus is our "priest." We can recall in the book of Hebrews that Paul identifies Jesus as the new "High Priest." The new Melchizedek! When we keep in the shadow of Jesus (wholeness) we experience health.

Good work, Donna. I'm proud of you.

Alright folks, talk to me.