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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

28 Topic: "Preparing the Deed" – study page.

Luke 23: 26 – 43, "The Crucifixion;" Luke 23: 44 – 49, "Jesus' Death," Luke 23: 50 – 56, "Jesus' Burial."

WS: The IHOP Bible Study started off the morning with a full minute of quiet time, followed by reading the old camp song together:

"Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me." X2

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me."

This was followed by praying the Lord's Prayer.

The IHOPers then briefly reflected on this experience of what was our emotions before we started, and then after this meditation. Afterward, we read the following material.

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 28 of 29.

NOTE: Now, the danger is the familiarity of the story. We celebrate this part of the story so intensely, and so frequently, that we believe we know all there is to know. That's the danger of "Head Trip Analysis." When we apply Gut Trip Analysis we'll experience something brand new.

In Luke's gospel there are three times when Jesus is *turned inside out*. Our Luke chart reveals this clearly. The first seven chapters of Luke "Affirm Who Jesus Is." Then, in 9: 18 – 27 and vss. 28 – 36, in Peter's confession and the events on the Mt of Transfiguration, Jesus is totally transparent. Now in the final chapters of 19:20 through 24:50 Jesus stands before us as clear as spring water (alright, as Living Spring Water).

It is from these scriptures that we can presume Luke's purpose as "Affirming the Life, Message and Demonstration of Jesus' Message. In our last four lessons we experience "The Fulfillment of The Message."

Now, before you work further, please read the attached article called "Thin Places."

WS: Following the reading of this material, the IHOPers reflected on the question: "What happens to you at Christmas and Easter when the 'Hallelujah Chorus' is sung? Or, what stirs your emotions; what is your experience at pain and death; joy and deep satisfaction; baptism; Holy Communion; sometimes at this Bible study?"

The consensus is that all of these things provide "thin places" where the light of Christ shines through.

WS: After this discussion, I briefly reflected on the four places in the Gospel of Luke in which Luke's material becomes thin places:

1. In chapters 1 - 3, concerning the birth and baptism stories.
Chapter 1— Out of Elizabeth's barrenness, and Mary's virginity we open our spiritual eyes to see profound hope is born. This is represented in the angel/Gabriel's appearance.
Chapter 2--- The birth of Jesus is the birth of the Good News: we can live abundantly because of the birth of hope.
Chapter 3--- Baptism and Genealogy in which faith-history is experienced.

*(The assignment was to write a brief statement on who is **The Messenger**, what **The Message** is, and name **the difference this makes in your life**. (Work hard to make it a Gut Trip statement.)*

2. In Chapter 9: 18 - 27, concerning Peter's Confession
The messenger is: Peter. **The message:** "The Christ of God." **My experience:** we are to forget our-selves we become one with God.
3. In Chapter 9: 28 - 36--- The Transfiguration
The messenger is God's voice, "This is my son." **The message** is the fulfillment of all the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah) and the epiphany that Jesus is the Christ. **My experience:** As I surrender my life to Christ, then I stand in his illumination in Deep Satisfaction.

WS: After this brief review we read today's scriptures: Luke 23: 44 - 49, and 23: 50 - 56. We used a similar format:

4. Luke 23:26 - 43: Crucifixion, the death of "the green tree" (vs. 31), the role of the other two criminals, and Jesus' response.
The messenger is Jesus; **The message** is "I tell you the truth. **My experience:** The IHOPers talked about the significance of the "green tree" (vs. 31) and the "dry wood," as our human experience. We don't want to miss the chance to live with the "green tree," because our human experience is "dry wood" (the death of hope) without the spirit of At-One-Ment represented in Jesus Christ (the spirit of new/renewed life).
4. continued Luke 23: 44 - 49: Death of Jesus
The messenger is Jesus; **The message** is the death of the kind of hope that is not hope at all. This kind of hope is an illusion of hope. It is the hope we have when we want our human situation to change; to grow another leg, to have human sight. **My experience** is that it is easy to get trapped into wanting my human situation to change rather than for me to change my relationship to my humanly impossible situation.
3. Luke 23: 49: Jesus' burial.
The messenger is Joseph of Arimathea. **The message** is "in the hands of friends;" that of profound friendship given by a "member of the Council," who risked his reputation to care for the body of Christ. **My experience** is that of meaningful waiting on Black Saturday—the day of hopelessness.

WS: Our study concluded by reading the prayer of Dag Hammarskjöld, "a Swedish diplomat and Secretary General of the United Nations in the middle of the last century. Hammarskjöld was also a Christian mystic, though few knew this during his lifetime. He kept a journal that was discovered after his death in a peacekeeping mission in the Congo. In it,

he wrote:

Give us pure hearts, that we may see you;

Humble hearts, that we may hear you;

Hearts of love, that we may serve you;

Hearts of faith, that we may abide in you."

(Borg p. 163.)

The IHOPers concluded that this prayer also is a Thin Place."

All right, folks. Talk to me.

THIN PLACES

(from Borg, Marcus. The Heart of Christianity. San Francisco: Harpers. 2003. pp. 155, 156.)

"Thin places" has its home in a particular way of thinking about God. Deeply rooted in the Bible and the Christian tradition, this way of thinking sees God, "The More," as the encompassing Spirit in which everything is. God is not somewhere else, but "right here." In words attributed to Paul in the book of Acts, God is "The one in whom we live and move and have our being." Note how the words work: we are in God, we live in God, we move and have our being in God. **God is a non-material layer of reality all around us, "right here" as well as "more than right here."** This way of thinking thus affirms that there are minimally two layers or dimensions of reality, the visible world of our ordinary experience and God, the sacred, Spirit. *(Emphasis mine.)*

(My insertion: How can there be two layers or dimensions of reality?:

WS: The IHOP Bible Study moved quickly in their understanding of how they experienced these two layers of reality. They associated the physical with the natural world, and the spiritual layers with the emotional, the intuitional, and the relational.)

One of my favorite quotations expressing this understanding of God is from Thomas Merton, a twentieth-century Trappist monk:

Life is this simple. We are living in a world that is absolutely transparent, and God is shining through it all the time. This is not just a fable or a nice story. It is true. If we abandon ourselves to God and forget ourselves, we see it sometimes, and we see it maybe frequently. God shows Himself *[sic]* everywhere, in everything—in people and in things and in nature and in events. It becomes very obvious that god is everywhere and in everything and we cannot be without Him *[sic]*. It's impossible. The only thing is that we don't see it.

But occasionally we do "see it," do experience God shining through everything. "thin places" are places where these two levels of reality meet or intersect. They are places where the boundary between the two levels becomes very soft, porous, permeable. Thin places are placed where the veil momentarily lifts, and we behold God, experience the one in whom we live, all around us and with in us.