

**My comments are in Lucida Sans Unicode pt. 12. The comments of Gene Mace are in blue. This week, Gene's comments take the lead, and I've responded to him. You'll enjoy this exercise. I did! Pastor Bill**

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

**Topic: Luke 5: 12 to 5: 32 – The Second Demo: “Touching the lives of others”**

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.

The reflective studies forming the chart of Luke's gospel reveals the overall title of “Affirming The Life, Message, and Demonstration of Jesus' Message.” This theme has three major sections: “Affirming The Life of Jesus Christ” (1:1 – 3:33); “Fourteen Themes of Jesus' Message (8: 1 – 21: 4); “Affirming the Transparent Jesus” (21: 5 – 24: 50). There are 32 lessons in this series.

The uniqueness of Luke's gospel is discovered in the “Fourteen Themes of Jesus' Message.” This material encompasses 58 pericopes. A “pericope” can be associated with the subsections titled in the chapters of most bible translations. Sometimes some translations differ, and some leave this titling out altogether. For our purposes, this material is grouped into fourteen themes. This work is aided by the chart work previously done. This thematic approach is unique and, as you will discover, it is an interesting endeavor. The study of this thematic material begins in session 8.

**This is lesson number 4 of 31. In lessons 3, 4, and 5 we experience the way Luke “Demonstrates the Authority of Jesus.” In this session, we lift up the ways in which *Jesus' touched the lives of others.***

- I. **Read the assigned reading at one time.**
- II. **This session only covers three pericope.** The focus of this study is on how Jesus touched the lives of others. In these instances we have those who are sick or disabled, the townspeople, Pharisees and “teachers of the law,” Levi and his tax collector friends. Take a moment to reflect on the significance of these relationships.

**GM: The interesting part for me relates to the stance Jesus was taking involving inclusiveness rather than separation. One stance in relating to others is to separate ourselves from those whom we consider to be living a more destructive life. Jesus was secure enough that he could include them in his relationships and thereby influence them to change.**

**In areas of our weakness, we need to separate ourselves from those who influence us into destructive behaviors. Examples of this relate to our addictive areas of life. The “good” people of Jesus' day excluded the “sinners” because they did not want to be identified as “that**

sort". Or was it that they really wished they could be like "that sort" because of their weaknesses? Whatever, the picture we see here is that the "good" people could not influence the "sinners" whereas Jesus could because he related to them and influenced them and portrayed the picture of a more healthy and secure life.

**WS:** Gene, as usual you provided us with your unique brand of insights. Certainly, the theme of Separation vs. At-One-Ment is present here. The Tuesday IHOP Bible Study missed this approach. Our conversation centered more on the theme of hopelessness vs. hope. In deed, we do hurtful acts that bring about separation.

However, there is a deeper, more hurtful condition to consider. Human beings are fated to live in the hopelessness of separation. Our gender, race, culture, economics, education and birth order do this number on us. As Paul Satre, the French philosopher wrote, we live lives in "No Exit."

### **III. Vss. 5: 12 –16: The Man With Leprosy**

The miracle of healing always is a danger to turn us to Head-Trip Analysis. This happens because we make objects out of the lepers – something to study.

Take time now to reflect on this story with Gut-Trip Analysis. What is the experience of being leprous? Apply your reflections to your own experience of being human.

**GM:** The thing I struggle with for myself relates to a feeling of not being good enough. I can see my inadequacies better than anyone else. This is my leprosy.

**WS:** Gene, I understand what you are getting after. This form of leprosy is one to which we can relate, or at least extrapolate into our lives. We all are victimized by life one way or the other.

However, because of—or even in spite of—our hopeless existence, there is hope. We have the choice to live as victims or victors. The choice is ours.

Observe, this does not change our circumstances, we are still males or females, black or white, etc. However, our choice changes us! That is, it changes the relationship we take toward our human existence; while victimized, we need not be victims, but rather we are victors.

**Vss. 5: 14:** “Don’t tell anyone. . . “ This is a curious phrase we see frequently in the gospels. Reflect on why Jesus was concerned about secrecy.

**GM:** I can only wonder if the issue here is that if this fellow had told Jesus that he had touched him, Jesus would have to deal with the religious view that he was not unclean. The other factor seems to me to be that Jesus was trying not to be seen as a person with supernatural powers.

**WS:** Interesting!

**GM:** He was more concerned with teaching about living life to the full more than being some sort of star performer whom people would come to see only to see what special thing he would do next.

**WS:** Yes, this is what I mean when I say Jesus didn’t want the people to only get THE MESSAGE, and then miss the significance of THE MESSENGER.

#### **IV. Vss. 5: 17 – 26: Jesus Heals a Paralytic**

Use the following phrases and apply Gut-Trip Analysis to them:

##### **1. vss. 17b: The power of the Lord**

**GM:** True power is not demonstrated in circumventing the natural order. In that day, and also in this day, the test of really being hooked up with God is the ability to perform special things that overcame the natural order.

It seems the true power of the Lord is seen in helping people feel accepted as they are. This seems to me to be the true purpose of the Church.

**WS:** Absolutely. The Church is THE AWAKENED. As the church goes about the mission of Awakening others, they are The Church. Or, The Church does the work of At-One-Ment. When people and relationships are brought together in At-One-Ment, then the work we do is The Church.

Unfortunately, many times the only place where they experience this is within the framework of the various psychotherapy settings.

**WS:** U-m-m, your professional propensities are showing. I’m certain that in the therapeutic setting people are AWAKENED! Yes, indeed.

One of the dangers church people fall into is the notion that only good things are done by, or through, a denominational structure. Of course, denominations do good things—schools, hospitals, orphanages, rescue missions, etc. all are demonstrations of the denominations being The Church. However, psychotherapy sessions also are demonstrations of overcoming inner separation. When these sessions work to bring about Awakening and At-One-Ment—or health—these sessions represent The Church At Work.

Reinhold Niebuhr broadened our understanding of The Church to include any group, and any group within a group, that sees the judgement (human hurt), and knows the resurrection (we are not victims but victors), this is The Church as The Awakened.

The other insight is my axiom “The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself.” In other words, At-One-Ment has its own energy. When people, places and things experience unity, the reward for this is found in the experience of unity. The “power” is already there within us that is released as unity is experienced.

## 2. vss. 20b: sins forgiven

GM: Letting the past be history rather than carrying it with us. The problem is not in what we do but in keeping it current, i.e. carrying it with us. This always reminds me of the Zen story about the two monks walking along the road and seeing a woman in fine clothes perplexed about going through a big puddle of water in her path. Their order forbade their touching women. One picked up the woman, carried her across the puddle, put her down and proceeded along the way with his colleague. After awhile his colleague said, “We aren’t supposed to touch women.” To this, the first monk said, “Oh, I see you are still carrying her. I put her down back there.”

Jesus’ message is “You are already forgiven, accept that and move along to live.” It is rather like with our children. When we are truly good parents to our children, we love them and accept that what they did was destructive. We want them to let go of it and move on to fulfill being their creation.

WS: It always is helpful for me to experience that my forgiveness lies within me. It is not an objective other outside of me that confirms my acceptance. I am already forgiven. Usually, I'm blind to this experience and frequently forget it. Consequently, as one who is Spiritual Asleep, it is when I am awakened that I remember again (and again, and again, and. . . ) that I am already forgiven, and "Accept the fact of my acceptance," as Tillich pointed out so well.

3. vss. 24: Son of Man – pick a commentary and read up on this term.

Write a brief summary statement. **The following is very Head Trippy, but it does lay the foundation for the use of the term "Son Of Man."** This was found on the web at [theologyweb.com](http://theologyweb.com) (Much of the background for this post comes from here:

[http://www.tektonics.org/tekton\\_01\\_02\\_01\\_SOM.html](http://www.tektonics.org/tekton_01_02_01_SOM.html))

Jesus refers to himself many times in the Gospels as "the Son of Man". This is taken by many to indicate that Jesus believed himself to be merely human. In fact, the opposite is the case. Consider this passage:

*13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)*

The first important thing to note about the phrase "son of man" as used in this passage – the Aramaic word used for "man" in the original text of Daniel here is 'enash, not 'adam (the normal word for "man"). At the time of Daniel, Israel was in exile in Babylon. The term "bar 'enash" (son of man) meant "heir" in Babylonian usage.

But whose heir was the "son of man" in this passage? Well, the next thing to note about this passage is that the Ancient of Days is God Himself. This is obvious from the earlier verses in Daniel in the same chapter.

Thus, if the son of man is the heir to the Ancient of Days (as the passage makes obvious), then the phrase "son of man" is actually equivalent to the phrase "son of God" (because God's Son is His heir).

Summary: The interpretation of Daniel 7:13-14 would have us believe that the "Son of Man" was equal to God. We can see from the reactions of various biblical figures who were in a position to know (Caiaphas at Jesus' trial, the Pharisees at Stephen's trial) that they shared this interpretation. It therefore seems fair to conclude that every time Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man (and he does so on numerous occasions) he was claiming to be equal with God.

GM: This is a rather interesting term. It is unclear if Jesus used this in the sense of Daniel who saw the Son of Man as the messiah who would suffer and die and then come back in glory as God's son. In places it is used as synonymous with Son of God. It also seems to have some support for Jesus using this as just "man" in referring to himself. It was a phrase that was used in other religions prior to Judaism to denote someone with a special relation to the ethereal powers.

4. **vss. 25: "Every one was amazed. . ."** This statement is a true Gut-Trip expression. Why? What does the word "amazed" do to us? Do for us?

**Amazed -- astound, dumfound; overwhelming astonishment; great surprise. (The American College Dictionary.)**

GM: Being amazed for me means that I stand in awe of what I see. One of the few things that I remember from my class in Greek relates to the issue of miracles. Miracles were not seen as supernatural but as that which caused one to stand in awe. Dr. Gealy spoke of miracles as anything that caused us to see God. Much of life for me is a miracle in that I am amazed at it. Those who know me and my affinity for automobiles are not surprised when I speak of standing in awe when I think of how an engine works. I am amazed when I think of it.

**WS: Bravo! Thanks for the reminder of Dr. Gealy at Perkins School of Theology. What a delightful man.**

Jim Wheeler, OKC, observed about the ancients as being of a "Supernatural mentality." Jim goes on to say,

*"I'm thinking that we're the "supernaturalist" and the ancients used the language available to them to talk metaphorically about ultimate realities. Maybe, we're the naive ones and they're the ones who talked about the "Way-Life-Is" in a way they never intended to be scientifically verifiable, since scientific verifiability was not even an issue prior to Newton. Modern reductionists may be the "naive of history." What a turn of events if it's our interpretations of the ancients, and not the ancients, is what is naive. Anachronisms bite both ways, don't they?"*

V. vss. 5:27 – 32: The Calling of Levi --- Keep it Gut-Trip Analysis.

1. Do some commentary research on the term "Tax Collector."

**Tax Collector:** The following is defined in Bible Gateway, an online commentary:

"Again Jesus' attention turns to a social outcast, in this case Levi the tax collector. Luke has already discussed tax collectors when he described the ministry of John the Baptist (see 3:10-14). Jesus initiates relationships with outcasts, even though pious people in Israel challenge such associations (7:36-50; 15:1-2; 19:1-10

But why? Why does Jesus associate with sinners when so many righteous people do not want to have anything to do with them? Many people think one must choose absolute separation if one is to remain pure, but for Jesus this is a false choice. Jesus views people in terms of what God could make them into, rather than pigeonholing them into who they currently are. There is no compromise with holiness (to be whole, healthy, At-One) in his relationships with sinners, because one of the very characteristics of God's holiness is the way he (sic) reaches out in mercy to those in need (1:46-53). God graciously takes the sinner who is responsive to him (sic) and begins the work of transformation. "

**More from Bible Gateway: Luke 3: 10 – 14:**

"The tax man is simply to collect the appropriate taxed amount, not extort additional monies. In the first century, tax collection was

loaded with middlemen, who each added their own surcharge, so the potential for abuse was great.”

GM: I was interested to learn that there were two types of tax collectors. The people who collected directly from the people were employees of the Roman Empire. However, there were others who might or might not be local people who sat in toll booths. They contracted with the Romans to garner so much tax. They often were rather unscrupulous folk who made their income by assessing inappropriate amounts upon those who were taxed. They were “bad” people because they did bad things and also, they were in cahoots with the Romans.

WS: Those in the employ of Rome were traitors! They did things that resulted in *seperation*, the antithesis of At-One-Ment.

2. What was the problem the Pharisees and the teachers of the law had with Jesus and Levi?

GM: See above comments relative to inclusiveness and separation. *“One stance in relating to others is to separate ourselves from those whom we consider to be living a more destructive life. Jesus was secure enough that he could include them in his relationships and thereby influence them to change.”*

WS: The mission the Pharisees was to maintain purity in order to bring about At-One-Ment with God, neighbor and self. The only problem is that the purpose of The Law is to convict rather than to forgive.

The Pharisees always get bad press from Christians. However, they represent the *status quo*. They were the ones who sustained the structures of home and society in order to preserve the future. These were good people and well intentioned. Sometimes, it is helpful to remind us of this, because so many of us are just like them!

Jesus’ message to these people is that Real Purity is not something you do, it is found in who you are – we are pure! Doing good acts results in At-One-Ment. Good actions are not something we do that makes us “good,” rather we do good acts BECAUSE WE ARE GOOD! Goodness is found within us where God lives. Our good deeds are done to reveal God, not to reveal our goodness.

3. Reflect on the following: vss. 31 – “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”

GM: It is sort of like in mechanical work, “If it ain’t broke, it don’t need fixin.” Only the broken need repair.

WS: This will preach.

4. Reflect on the following: vss. 32 – “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

GM: I think of this relative to the “righteous” sinner and the folk who acknowledge that they are in need of help. The first step toward recovery is acknowledging your weakness (illness).

WS: This is what I mean by being Awakened!

GM: It is usually futile to try to get those who see themselves as righteous to improve their living even when it is quite destructive. So in a sense it is rather like “casting your pearls before the swine”. The real issue seems to me to be a matter of Jesus saying that he is really concerned about those who need “fixin”.

**What is your Gut-Trip Analysis of your own human experience?  
Please share it with us.**

GM: For me, as indicated above, the issue has always been feeling that I am not good enough. I have overcome this to a large degree, but every so often it still rears its ugly head. Earlier in my life I would hit those times when I doubted my abilities, particularly in my professional roles. Sally (my wife) got to where she could see it when it started and commented, “Oh, it’s that time again?” One of the last times when that happened I sat out on the porch and felt real sorry for myself for a couple hours. I eventually didn’t need any more so I went to bed, got a good night’s sleep and then felt better the next morning.

Out of this came three lessons for me. First, rather than trying to avoid it, I let myself feel and indulge in it as voluptuously as I could. Second, the lesson is that nobody can feel as sorry for me as I can. Third, the lesson is that we need to care for and love ourselves, or we are condemned by ourselves as the most condemning judge anywhere.

WS: Great illustration. Your three lessons support what I mean by Awakening. It is interesting that Sally, your wife, is among those who is The Messenger. I imagine there were many others as well.

My wife, Beverly, can testify to her role as "The Wrath of God" in my life. While she doesn't like me to use this title, the truth is that The Wrath of God always is God's Love—the presence of Perfect At-One-Ment. My experience of the message of truth applied to my life is experienced as "wrath." Only later do I experience this event as *Agape*.

My initial response is to kill the messenger. Since I am a circumspect man, I kill her is a flood of angry words. Beverly stands before me as a Pillar of Truth with her hair blowing in my wind. At last, when I'm again Awakened to live as a human/humane individual, Beverly still is there waiting to love me in other kinder and more gentle ways.

What a Blessing she is. "Blessing" is a Head Trip Word. A Gut-Trip Analysis of the word Blessing is "Happy times!"

VI. What does this lesson teach us about the kind of people Jesus touched?

GM: He touched those people who sensed a need to be cared for. They were the people who were condemned by others and themselves. They truly needed to be cared for by the very essence of all creation, i.e. God.

Gene, I like this phrase "the very essence of all creation" because it supports our Gut-Trip Analysis of God as Perfect At-One-Ment. This is the essence of all creation.

I have a concern in this: To predicate this I call attention to the mental health distinctions between the acute and chronic disorders. In life there are those who really need care because of the vicissitudes of their lives. There are also those who have made a "racket" of needing care, i.e. the personality disorders. The latter are those who have discovered that they get care by being needy. This prompts others to tell them that they are good. Rather than accepting that they are good and sharing that "good news" with others, they play at being needy so that they get taken care of.

WS: Gene, I've enlarged this last statement. Using colors is dangerous because I know your software doesn't translate color very

well. This is why I've gone to a larger print to distinguish our different contributions. However, how can I embolden what already is in bold print? All this is to reflect that you make a hefty good point here.

The experience we all have is denial of our own "goodness." This is what I mean in the statement "we already are good!" Then, it is helpful to say that as we live Awakened we have a responsibility to Awaken others. As you said, this is "sharing that "good news" with others." Yep, this is the mission of those who are awakened.

**GM:** Oftentimes in the church I have seen this played out. It gives the church a bad rap. They oftentimes express their insecurity "racket" by being very stringently demanding that others think as they do. Their security lies in what they believe and/or do, and they become very judgmental toward others whom they see as different from them and become an exclusive clique rather than an inclusive fellowship.

**WS:** Well said. Your statement supports my point that The Church is ONLY the CHURCH when it does God's will; i.e., to bring At-One-Ment into every relationship between neighbor/environment, self and God who is experienced as Perfect At-One-Ment.

All right, folks. Talk to me!