

My comments are in QuickType Mono 10 pt and preceded by the initials WS. The comments of Gene Mace are preceded by his initials GM.

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

Topic: Luke 7: 1 to 7: 50 "The Faith 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 – 7: 50); "Fourteen Themes of Jesus' Message (8: 1 – 21: 4); "Affirming the Transparent Jesus" (21: 5 – 24: 50). There are 31 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 7 of 31. This lesson is a part of the first seven lessons on "Affirming Who Jesus Is." The overall purpose of Luke's gospel is "Affirming the life, message and demonstration of Jesus' message."

- I. **Read the assigned reading at one time.** Note: The Sermon on the Plain is ended. Our purpose for this session is to examine the testimony of others concerning Jesus and his message.

NOTE: Keep in mind that our purpose is to explore the authority of Jesus from the perspective of others. In this case, from the perspective of a Centurion, a widow, the disciples of John the Baptist, and a "Sinful Woman." Keep pushing on what is the EXPERIENCE of these people. In this way, we keep it Gut Trip Analysis.

- II. **Vss. 7: 1 to 7: 10 – The Faith of the Centurion**

1. Identify who the Centurion is in this story. What is his message concerning Jesus?

GM: The Centurian is a Gentile who is, most likely, serving Herod Antipas. He is identified as a humble person who strives to be wise in how he handles people. He is reported to have been the driver behind building a synagogue for the Jews. This indicates his ability to respect others without having to show his power. He is also identified as a man with strong faith. His message is that Jesus is “worthy” which seems to indicate that he respects who Jesus is and holds him in high regard. His sensitivity is shown in striving to keep Jesus from having to deal with criticism from the Pharisees who would be critical of Jesus if he entered the home of a Gentile, which they considered to be unclean.

WS: Well, Gene, you’ve given us a basket-full of things to consider. First, you’ve given us several characteristics of the Centurian that are helpful. He is: a wise leader, respectful of others, strong faith, sensitive to the situation of Jesus.

From the point of view of Gut Trip Analysis, what is the underlying authority that serves as glue? From my perspective, these characterize an AWAKENED individual.

It was helpful for me to note that “Jesus was amazed at him” because Jesus had “not found such great faith even in Israel.” One of the assumptions we always can make is that “Israel” always represents those who are asleep, yet they are to be the ones who are awake.

The Good News here is that even Gentiles—that’s the rest of us—can demonstrate our SPIRITUAL WAKE-FULL-NESS.

Jesus authority came from his spiritual wake-full-ness. The Centurians authority came from his spiritual wake-full-ness. Our authority comes from our spiritual wake-full-ness.

2. Jesus makes his response in vss. 9 and 10. What is your experience of the word “faith” used by Jesus? (Keep it Gut Trip Analysis.)

GM: No bells are ringing for me on this.

WS: From the point of view of Gut Trip Analysis, “Faith” always is “trust,” or the experience of “surrender.” A transliteration of vs. 29: “Those who are supposed to be the Awakened are now surpassed by those who were supposed to be Asleep. Let me tell you, I have never seen such surrendered Awakened people as this gentile Centurian.”

III. vss. 7: 11 to 7: 17 – Jesus Raises A Widow’s son

The testimony in this pericope is from the “widow.” While not much information is given, a hint is given in the statement, “(Jesus’) heart went out to her.” Then, in vss. 17, what was the news that spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country?”

GM: A great prophet has arisen and in this they saw that God has come to help his people.

WS: Gene, it is true that God came to help his people. This is the demonstration of Jesus’ authority. This little pericope is the testimony of the Widow who just lost her son in death. Jesus is moved to move toward her. The Gut Trip implication is “his heart” was in tune with her heart. Some may call this intuition, others may call it empathy. Whatever it is called, communication is taking place on a deeper level than just as a Head Trip Analysis. The Widow and Jesus, in this case, were in synch.

This is what I mean by the witness of others to the authority of Jesus. The capacity for empathy is one characteristic of those in touch with their authentic self. The interesting follow up is that all of us have this capacity, but we are blind—asleep—to it.

IV. vss. 7: 18 to 35 – Jesus and John the Baptist

The audience is John's Disciples. What is the question to which they seek information? In vss. 21 – 23, Jesus provides them with plenty of information. What does this tell us about Jesus and his message. Keep it Gut Trip Analysis.

GM: They ask if he is the "Coming One", i.e. the messenger from God, the Messiah. It seems to me that Jesus is challenging them to move from their idea that the Messiah would be some sort of royalty who would take away all their problems. His message is that God is concerned about human suffering and as humans we are called to share that concern. *Look for God's purposes and justice and submit to that.*

WS: I like this statement because it is almost axiomatic. For those doing Gut Trip Analysis "God's purposes" is to bring about At-One-Ment. Justice issues always are founded on the antithesis of At-One-Ment.

Vss. 29 – 32 – Speculate on the statement, "Jesus' words acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John." What difference did John's baptism make, and what was the experience of those baptized that gave them assurance that "God's way was right?"

GM: I think Jesus is saying that John had caught onto the message of justice and concern for people. That is what attracted them to become John's disciples. There was nothing supernatural in the baptism itself. It was only the disciples' witness to the truth they had come to understand. They were able to escape the traditional expectations of what constituted the Messiah.

WS: How did John's disciples know "God's way was right?" They knew what we know: God is Perfect At-One-Ment. Baptism is the sign of awakening. The power of John's baptism is in the symbol of moving from living only on our natural/human resources, to acknowledging-*awakeni ng to*-living fully authentic lives that testifies to both our natural/human resources as well as our spiritual resources (The Spiritual Oasis).

This is the source of Jesus' authority. He looked for the antithesis of At-One-Ment and set out to bring it into At-One-Ment. In this instance, John's disciples were in the Family of the Awakened. Their witness to At-One-Ment was strong. Their hope was that in Jesus they would find a fellow traveler. They did.

V. vss. 7: 36 to 7: 50 – Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman

What is it that makes this woman "sinful." (Keep it Gut Trip.)

GM: The commentary that I read identifies her as a harlot. I do not know what she was from the passage itself. The Greek word here identifies only a sinner. If she were a harlot she was destroying herself. She was failing to become her creation. This is the real essence of sinning as I see it.

WS: Yes! Yes! The issue here is not a moral one; because she is a harlot, she is immoral. No. This issue here is that her actions resulted in separating herself from her authenticity as a woman. She used her body for the exploitation of others. She use her-self for the selfish gratification of others, and made money doing it.

By Gut Trip definition, sin always is separation that breaks one of the New Commandments given to us by Jesus. Separation is the result of not loving Perfect At-One-Ment, nor loving ourselves (authentically) and our neighbors.

What does his woman's testimony tell us about Jesus and his message?

GM: Forgiveness prompts one to love. Love prompts one to forgive. (Which is first, the chicken or the egg?) Basically, this talks of being open and transparent with God is the beginning of living at one with our world.

WS: Wonderful, Gene. Isn't this the Good News proclaimed by Jesus? The only thing I would add is to note the actions of the woman. She moved at a very deep level to perform these acts of love. She chose to expend herself and her resources in this profound act of charity. Her tears and the use of her hair along with the touch of her lips to an unseemly part of the body—the feet is a moving and profound statement. All of these actions are demonstrations of moving through our natural/human existence into the realm of deep communication with Jesus.

Again, note that Jesus' authority lies in the integrity of being a fully human and humane individual. Jesus was grateful, and acknowledged this deep level of communication.

Vss. 7: 49 – Speculate on the question raised by “The other guests,” “Who is this who even forgives sins? Be careful now: What does the word “sin” mean, and what would it mean to experience one's sins forgiven?

GM: I am inclined to think that Jesus did not forgive as much as he acknowledged the forgiveness that happened in this woman. The very nature of God, as I see it, is that we are forgiven but we need to acknowledge that. Sometimes we need someone to say the words. This does not institute forgiveness. It acknowledges what is already there and calls us to recognize that.

WS: O-o-o, now we're cooking on the same burner! The belief that we are in NEED OF FORGIVENESS, is the first sign that we are asleep to the forgiveness that is already ours. We are asleep to it.

Wesley reminds us that the human situation is that we are asleep to our spiritual resources. The human predicament is that we *can not awaken ourselves!* Awakening is only a gift! Those who already are awake are obliged to do the awakening of others. This is what the IHOP Bible Study is all about. First, it is keeping each other awake. Then, it is training ourselves to awaken others.

The neat thing about Gut Trip Analysis, is that the Awakening is not moralistic. Rather, it begins in the human experience; in this way the process is indicative; it is The Way Life Is. The Way Life Is is that we are blind or asleep to the forgiveness that is already ours to claim. We only can awaken to what is already there. So, the word here is to “Relax.” Or, as the old Beatles' song said, “Let it be!”

Jesus' authority comes from living this story. It also caused his death, because the Pharisees and the lawyers were offended because they believed they were already awake. However, the proof is that Jesus showed them over and over that living the antithesis of At-One-Ment is the demonstration they were asleep. THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE FORGIVEN OF OUR SINS. WE EXPERIENCE AT-ONE-MENT.

All right, folks. Talk to me.