

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: The Knowledge of God: The Essence of Jesus Message

Luke 8: 1 – 15; 10: 38 - 42

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 8 of 31. Today, we begin a new section in our study of Luke. It is much anticipated because it gets to the heart of what Luke wants to tell Theophilus about the proof of who this Jesus is. Look at the Luke Chart for a moment. Note there are two central themes: "The Essence of the Message," and "The Message At Work."

We will study "The Essence of the Message" in 10 sessions. "The Message At Work" will be studied in 9 sessions. You will discover that some of the lessons cover a lot of scripture material. Remember that there are 58 pericopes here in 14 thematic messages.

Read the assigned THEME at one time. The Knowledge of God --

Luke 8: 1 – 15; 10: 38 – 42.

We begin with the theme "The Knowledge of God" because Luke used this material to begin his own critique in Chapter 8: 1 – 15 in *the Parable of the Sower*. It is interesting to note that there are only two pericopes involved. *The Sower*, and *At the Home of Mary and Martha*.

For the purposes of Gut Trip Analysis, it is helpful to recall that our experience of The Knowledge of God is that of the Spiritual Oasis.

First, The Spiritual Oasis is our experience of a deep sense of peace and/or satisfaction—even joy—that we have frequently. To our regret, we seldom associate these experiences as spiritual events, but they are! So, THE FIRST HINT at discovering the essence of Jesus' message is to look for one or more of these characteristics.

Second, The Spiritual Oasis is not a moral teaching, rather it is universal human/natural experience. One does not need to be only a Christian to discover the Spiritual Oasis. Rather, and this is an important distinction, anyone who has this experience is experiencing Christ. Other may give it another name, and some may never name it at all. However, The Christ Experience is the experience of Living in the Spiritual Oasis. It is a universal experience.

The assignment is to read and reflect on The Parable of the Sower. Then, ask the Gut Trip Analysis question, how do I experience the Knowledge of God (the Spiritual Oasis) as I read this parable? HOW DO WE KNOW IT IS GOD'S KNOWLEDGE? Share your insights.

WS: The IHOP discussion revolved around two verses: 8: 1b, and 8: 10.

vss. 8: 1b– The knowledge of God is “the Good News of the Kingdom of God.”

A. First, we speculated on the nature of “the Good News,” seeking to answer the question, “Why is it Good News.” We concluded first that Good News is that we are not victims, but victors. We decided that we are victors, not because of our circumstances, but that our decision changes our relationship to my circumstances.

Next, we explored The Good News formula: (Draw a large X on a piece of paper.)

In the top quadrant write: We affirm that God makes no junk.

In the bottom quadrant write: If God makes no junk, then our “Present” really is a PRESENT to be received or rejected;

IN the left quadrant write: If God makes no junk, and our present experience is a gift, then our past is not only forgiven it is forgotten.

In the right quadrant write: If God makes no junk, and our present experience is a gift, and our past is forgotten, then our future depends on the choices we make—

1. If we believe God makes us junk, then our future holds junk for us;
2. If we believe our present is to be rejected because of its burdens, then we become victims, then our future victimizes us;
3. If we believe our past cannot be forgiven we are victimized into the future.
4. However, if we affirm that God does NOT make junk, and we affirm that our present lives are a gift, and we affirm that our past is forgotten, then our future is open and filled with possibilities. **TRULY, THIS IS THE GOOD NEWS!**

- B.** vss. 8: 10 – Next, the IHOP group talked about why “The knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of God. . . “ is secret. The answer to this question is found in 10b, in the quotation from Isaiah 6:9: “though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.”

Apparently, the secrets are only secret because humans only discover them. In this way this information is hidden; we are blind to it all along. We “see, but do not see. We hear, but do not hear.”

The consequence is our need to awaken. The IHOP group speculated on this and came to the conclusion that any group, not matter its relationship to the institutional church, who lived as The Awakened, and go about the business of awakening others, THESE PEOPLE ARE THE CHURCH. They are doing God’s Will, that is to awaken our neighbor and selves to full humanity: full humane-ness.

For those struggling with this concept because of the statement that the knowledge of God is available only through Jesus Christ. Gut Trip Analysis affirms the experience of The Christ as an universal experience. Just as all people of the world experience spiritual sleep and spiritual wakefulness. This experience is the experience of the Christ (Jesus), although it may never be named The Christ, or it may never be named at all. **THE EXPERIENCE IS THE SAME.**

- C.** Third, the IHOP group speculated on the Good News of the Kingdom of God as related to the Spiritual Oasis. **The conclusion is that the Kingdom of God is not a place. Rather, it is a Gut Trip relationship.**

How can we use this information?

In light of this information, now the Parable of the Sower becomes a powerful illustration of where we are on the journey to wakefulness (faith).

The IHOP groups last reflection was to relate this information to the different roles played by Mary and Martha. One of the key words is in 8: 40, “But Martha was distracted.” Distractions are signs of our spiritual sleep that denies us access into the Spiritual Oasis (The Kingdom of God). Jesus response in 8: 42, “. . . but only one thing is needed.” This speaks to our single-mindedness necessary to keep us spiritually awake.