

One of the people on our list service suggested that I change from colored type to another font. Colored type is expensive and the printing is slower. For a while I'll try QuickType Mono 10 pt. Anything to make the comments accessible to you. Please let me know what you experience. Thanks. The material from Gene Mace is noted with his initials "GM." My comments will begin with the initials "WS." Let's go to work.

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

**Topic: Luke 6:17 to 6:49 "Sermon on The Plain"**

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 6 of 31.** Recently, someone asked me, "How can you study such small portions of a gospel without losing sight of the big picture?" The answer is The Chart! Each lesson is a part of the larger focus represented by the chart.

This lesson is a part of the first seven lessons on "Affirming Who Jesus Is." This lesson, and the next, concerns the theme the "Message Affirms Who Jesus is." Our overall purpose of Luke's gospel is "Affirming the life, message and demonstration of Jesus' message."

**I. Read the assigned reading at one time.**

For those who express a concern about such slow progress, My response is to point to the chart. The first 7 chapters are very busy. Remember that Luke is writing this gospel to provide "an orderly account" for the Greek-speaking Jews in Diaspora. After the next session (lesson 7), we'll get into the 14 themes of Jesus' message. Several of these 58 little messages (grouped into 14 themes) involve several chapters at a time. Be patient and stick to the plan. It's a winner.

**II. Note: This study material is comparable to The Beatitudes recorded in Matthew 5. Take the time now to review your notes on this material. These notes can be found on the web at [trinity@triumc.org](mailto:trinity@triumc.org). In the little boxes at the**

top, locate the “Ministries Box” and lick down to the “On-Line Bible Study.” Here is the archive of all the IHOP Bible Study work to date. Locate the “Matthew Study” and search for Matthew 5.

Write down some of your reflections of The Sermon on the Mount. What was our Gut Trip Analysis?

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’ Teacher’s 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.

The use of these four statements provides the Big Picture. As you hear references from the gospels, immediately recall the holding phrase. With this material you’ll know more about the Gospels than 90% of the preachers.

REVIEW the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5.

Matthew 5 we understand as “Transparent Happiness.” That is, we see through the ordinary experience to the extra-ordinary experience.

Vss. 3 Poor in Spirit – forget self; reduce anxiety;

Vss. 4 Mourn – become intentionally vulnerable; lance the boil;

Vss. 5 Meek – want nothing; existence is changed to real living;

Vss. 7 Merciful – The really happy are not searching for happiness;

Vss. 8 Pure in Heart – become single-minded; always stand the cross between you and all else;

Vss. 9 Peacemakers – work to balance relationships;

Vs. 10 Persevere in righteousness – stand in the gap for justice.

These statements summarize Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount as a Gut Trip Analysis of each phrase.

III. Note: This study is called The Sermon on the Plain. It is very different from the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5. Again, read the Luke assignment very slowly and thoughtfully.

1. vss. 6: 19 b --- Reflect on the statement, “because power was coming out of him.” What is the source of this power? What does this say about Jesus and his message? Make your reflections Gut Trip and not Head Trip.

GM: I am open to listening to someone who finds this more meaningful than I do. I know that there are those who are able to manifest a sense that they are leaders and by their leadership compel others to follow them. I think that a leader such as this is able to impact people in such way as to prompt them to believe what the leader presents. They seem to be able to even prompt the people to abandon certain symptoms of illness and move into more wholesome life stances.

I suppose that this could be called power. But some sort of “power” that oozes out and overcomes people is alien to my view of life and Jesus. This may be an area in which I am unable to get out of my head, but I have had so much trouble with people who see Jesus and stuff related to him as having some sort of metaphysical power that overcomes them in spite of whatever they do.

WS: Wow! OK, I find this passage more meaningful than you do. Geez, I wrote the question, eh? To me, it is interesting that I choose

these types of questions because I scan the assigned reading to look for experiential words, or words that point to a human experience. "Power" is one of those words.

First, let me affirm that you have drawn a clear picture of what the "power" is not: 1) not metaphysical or "beyond the human experience;" 2) Jesus is not a magician; 3) the "power" referred to in this gospel does not mystical "ooze."

Next, the "power" that I point to has its foundation in authenticity and essence. "Essence" is one's essential quality or its core experience. In this way, this scripture verse can be transliterated as, *"Those troubled by a sense of hopelessness find hope in the presence and message of Jesus, and all the people wanted to be in contact with Jesus in whom they sensed what he was and what he did was of one piece."*

*By the way, this sense of "power" can be associated with the Spiritual Oasis. Instead of driving people apart in separation, people experience At-One-Ment!*

## 2. vss. 6: 20 to 26 --- Blessing and Woes

What is going on in each of the blessings and in each of the woes? Keep your reflections Gut Trip Analysis. Recall the "blessings" means "Happiness," or "Deep Satisfaction." Woes mean "The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself."

See what you can do with these.

GM: There is a quality in these woes and blessings that rings a bit of what Karl Marx referred to as "opiate for the masses", i.e. promises in the after life that will prompt people to accept the current vicissitudes of life.

On the other hand there are some interesting dynamics in them that may be what Jesus was trying to say. (Of interest is that these statements were not originated by Jesus. They had been around before his time.)

The poor: When we don't have unlimited resources, we have to choose what is important. In that we develop a challenge to what we want to determine if it has value beyond the moment. We all know of "stars" that get a lot of money and get themselves into various sorts of troubles. Choosing is a basic virtue in my belief. It causes us to develop values of what is worth investing in. The rich have a tendency to become so preoccupied with their possessions that they are lulled into a false security.

Hungry: I do like Matthew's extension of this. There he interprets Jesus as speaking of desire for that which is of ultimate value, righteousness.

Weeping: I go back to my comments in Matthew on how in order to get tough grief one must be able to feel the pain of mourning. Weeping is a way of expressing that pain. In this one is able to move beyond the pain of event.

When people revile: It seems that Jesus is saying to live your own creation and not others and in this find great joy. That is the source of true happiness. It was interesting to me that one interpretation of "blessed" is "Oh, how fortunate are these people."

WS: It is the "promises in the after life" that Gut Trip Analysis was invented to dispel. The "after life" begins the moment each of us awakens to the Good News: 1) my life is received NOW as a good and precious gift; 2) my present everyday experience is a gift to be received; 3) my past is not only forgiven it is forgotten; 4) and my future is entirely open to a new set of circumstances. This is my definition of the Good News!

In this sense, there is no “after life” that is a place to which we go (This is Head Trip Analysis). The “after life” is living in the Spiritual Oasis found in the experience of living in The Way Life Is. Our “after life” begins at the time of our Awakening!

To grasp the significance of this passage it is important to read them as spiritual standards and not human standards. Read on:

The Poor inherit the Kingdom of God: This is best understood is the axiom “When you want nothing (the intentional poor), you have everything (the Kingdom of God or the Spiritual Oasis).

To Hunger now and be satisfied: Get hungry for an authentic existence, or for life in the Spiritual Oasis, because this is where real satisfaction is found.

To weep now for you will laugh: Cry over the loss of Really Living while you were asleep. As you awaken to your true spiritual nature you will jump for joy!

To be hated by those living in the world, exclude you, and reject you, and insult you, reject your name as evil, because of the SON OF MAN:

The key word to understanding this saying is “because of the Son of Man.” Remember, this statement means “the Heir of the Spiritual Oasis.” When the Awakened live as heirs of the Spiritual Oasis in At-One-Ment with nature, themselves, their neighbors and finally with the Meaning of Life as Perfect At-One-Ment, they are judged by the world’s standards as losers. But, it just ain’t so! Its great to be Awakened!

#### DEEP BARRIERS--

The “woes” can be understood as “Deep Barriers.” To understand the term Underlying Contradiction think of two football teams on a playing field. The goal of the game is to score points by getting the ball over the goal. The questions is, “What is preventing one team from scoring on the other team?”

The usual answer is “The other team.” Wrong. If the other team is removed from the playing field, no one is playing football.

The deeper question is, “What is the offense in charge of that they control themselves?” The offense team is in charge of their own GAME PLAN, TEAMWORK, TIME SPENT IN THE LOCKERROOM, TIME SPENT IN PRACTICE, ETC. These are barriers to their effectiveness.

Now, the deep barrier can be identified through the question, “What is preventing this team from solving the problem and irritants OF WHICH THEY ARE IN CONTROL? When this is identified, the team will find their DEEP BARRIER!

In our culture, there is the mistaken belief that we are victims to our situations: the other team are giants! They are better prepared! They have better equipment. This kind of attitude is self-defeating!

**NO ONE IS EVER A VICTIM TO THEIR SITUATION! WE ARE ALL IN CHARGE OF OUR OWN CHOICES.**

With this information, now look at the “Woes.” If these statements are Jesus’ solution to deep barriers, then what are the barriers. The only thing we can do is to speculate, yet this is exactly the power of Gut Trip Analysis. Again, it is helpful to remember to judge this by spiritual standards and not human standards.

Woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort:

What is our human experience of being rich? Represented here is a deep barrier for those who believe their wealth (a thing of this world) opens up the Spiritual Oasis. This barrier is that the benefits of this world are found only in what the wealth of this world can buy.

Surrender to the things of this world and you get only the benefits of this world.

Vss. 6: 25 to 26: In the same way, this is true for being well fed, laughing now, and being well thought of.

### 3. vss. 6: 27 to 36 --- Love for Enemies

These scriptures give us our first experience in Luke with the law of reversal.

Read the material again and then reflect on how this makes you feel!

GM: First of all, one of my therapeutic rubrics is that nothing makes me feel anything. That puts responsibility for what I feel “out there” on some person or other entity. I am having trouble with any sort of feeling (affective) response to this. My cognitive response is a judgment that this is unreal. When one is an enemy, it is a denial of my response to speak of loving that one. I think that in this we are being called to break the cycle of violence and prevent Hatfield and McCoy feuds. Difficult though it is, we are called to go beyond what we usually identify as “natural”.

WS: OK, Gene! You caught me on this one. “Makes you feel” is an inappropriate remark. How about “reflect on your experience?” You’ve processed this rather nicely. First, you tell us your cognitive response (this is unreal), and then you tell us your reflective response (to go beyond our “natural” responses).

In my words, we are called to live as the Awakened. Also, this can be understood as living *reflective lives* that take into account the effects and the affects of our decisions. As the Awakened, our concern becomes At-One-Ment.

**Vs. 6: 35b:** Reflect briefly on the “reward” received for son/daughters of the Most High.

GM: The reward seems to be integral to living in at-one with life. When we are in harmony with TWLI we find a peace and sense of well being and fulfillment.

WS: Amen! This I can affirm

### 4. vss. 6: 37 to 49 ---

This material includes several pericope. The theme concerns “The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself.” What is your experience here?

GM: The interesting part of this to me is how we get upset and judge others, really portrays those areas inside us that we do not like, and where we are condemning ourselves, i. e. the “speck in our own eye”. The issue involves the difference between judicious and judgmental responses. It is valuable to be judicious, but it is destructive to be judgmental. (It is interesting that we like positive judgmentalism; e. g. s/he is a good person, but not the negative responses.)

The pericope about a tree & its fruit is a calling to be judicious. We cannot avoid judgment without avoiding life. “If it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck and looks like a duck, it is not honest to judge it as anything other than a duck.

WS: Heavens, Gene. Your last paragraph is more than ducky, it is all that it is “quacked up” to be.

### 5. vss. 6: 46 --- Answer Jesus’ question “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not do what I say? What’s going on here?”

GM: It seems to me that he is identifying people who want to be identified as Christian because it is the popular thing to do but they

really are not following what Quakers call “the inner light”. They are following but have really not integrated what they are hearing into their being. They are not in a state of at-one-ment. This is something that I sense in a lot of the popularity of being “born again” Christians today, no intimacy between lives and words.

WS: Gene, I like your term “intimacy between lives and words.” Coherence is a word that comes to my mind too. Jesus demonstrates the experience of leading a coherent life in the story of the wise and foolish builders. The proof of a coherent life is that it stands in good times and when it is tested by the hard times.

**All right, folks. Talk to me.**