

My comments in red in 12 pt. Text.

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

IHOP BIBLE STUDY

Topic: Matthew 11: 1 - 19 “Affirming Credentials”

The gospel of Matthew's message is powerful and relevant to our current human situation. Matthew's purpose is to give us a training manual for teaching the Deeply Satisfied Life. This material is developed for the early church, but is applicable for us today.

Matthew's teaching role model is Jesus. The "Deeply Satisfied Life" is the experience ("Gut Trip Analysis") of the term Sanctification (which is an Old Christian Code Word understood as "Head Trip Analysis").

This is our thirteenth lesson in this series, and is **the last lesson in the Tool Box**; this is associated with "Tools For Teaching The Methods For A Happy/Holy Life". My reflections on the gospel give us the overall title of "The Training Manual For Teaching The Transparent Sanctified Life." With this metaphor established, let us continue.

I. Read the assigned reading at one time.

II. The context for this lesson begins with the statement, “After Jesus had finished

instructing his twelve disciples. . .” This affirms the conclusion of the Teacher’s Handbook on Transparent Ethics.” The writer of Matthew’s gospel is making a concluding observation. The last item to put into the Teacher’s Tool Box is a checklist for affirming credentials for those aspiring to use this “tool box.”

The fundamental affirmation is found in the last statement is verse 11:19b –“But wisdom is proved right by her actions.” The conclusion we come to is that what they do, rather than what they say, characterized the awakened. Jesus makes this point two times in these 19 verses: 1) 11: 4 – 10; Action is illuminated in the story concerning John’s disciples coming to ask Jesus who he is; Jesus’ answer is “What do you hear and see?” 2) 11: 18, 19; “Wisdom is proved right by her actions.”

III. The assignment for this study:

First--Take a piece of paper and divide it into two columns. Name one column **AT HOME** (That part of our REALITY SOUP that is living in the shadow of Perfect At-One-Ment; the place where humans are intended to live in peace and harmony with neighbor, self, and with Perfect At-One-Ment; in a relationship with eternity). Name the other column **ON VACATION** (That part of our REALITY SOUP that is The Way Life Is –TWLI; the human/natural part of being human).

Matthew 11: 1 to 19

ON VACATION

AT HOME

Blind

Receive sight

Lame

Walk

Lepers

Cured

Deaf

Hear

To the poor

Good News preached

In desert

Not fall away from Jesus

Reed shaken

Man dressed in fine clothes

Prophet (Malachi 3:1)

King's Palace

Least in the kingdom

Second—What do these things reveal about our *teaching credentials* as Awake Teachers?

First of all, Awakened Teachers are those who can distinguish between living “on vacation” and “at home.” Implied in this proposition is that awakening presupposes the awakened one lives with these experiences all of the time.

Second, Awakened Teachers are those who have a passion for sharing their awakening with the unawakened as well as others who are awake. To be awake is to experience the Good News of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

IV. For extra credit?! The following two references Matthew uses as proof texting. Because Matthew is writing to the Jewish community, referring to Malachi and Elijah were powerful strokes to prove the point Matthew is making: The deeply satisfied life is the focus for the teacher's tool box for teaching the Good News.

A. Reflect on Jesus' assertion that John the Baptizer is “Elijah.” Use your Study Bible, or other resource in your library or On-line, to see what the commentators say about Elijah in this context.

My personal observation is that Elijah, by tradition, is the one who is to announce the coming of the Messiah (Jewish), or the Christ (Greek). Elijah and John are associated in Matthew, Mark and Luke. The figure of John the Baptizer embodies the role of Elijah and is one of the affirmations needed by the Jewish community to identify Jesus as the Christ, “the one who is to come.”

B. REFERENCE 11: 10b – Malachi 3: 1 – Why would Matthew use this reference? What was the purpose and who were the audience for Malachi's prophecy? What does this say about why this reference is used?

Malachi is the last of the Hebrew Testament prophet mentioned in the Hebrew canon. He wrote around 430 B.C.E. (Before the Common Era.) His book is written to the ungrateful people and unfaithful leaders of Jerusalem. Probably, Malachi is a contemporary of Nehemiah, writing after the return of the Jews from Exile. He uses a literary format of writing about the “Dark Side of the Picture” (Malachi 1: 1 – 3:14) and the “Light Side of the Picture” (Malachi 3:1 to 4:6).

The reference in Matthew 11: 10b. Matthew uses this reference to foreshadow the role of John the Baptizer as Elijah who is the one to prepare the way of the Messiah. “See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.” (Malachi 3: 1.)

Again, all this is proof-texting.

C. REFERENCE 11: 17-- This is the “little ditty” for a children’s game. Again, use your commentaries and share with us why Matthew uses this material in this place.

Referencing: Matthew 11:17 “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.” Any number of commentaries are available. I found useful information in the *Bible Gateway Commentaries* at www.bible.gospelcom.net. This reference notes two things about the role of John the Baptizer and his identification as Elijah.

First, this reference observes, “. . .the children’s complaint is true: Jesus and John approached the generation from two angles, but the other children would not play either game. Jesus scandalously paints the kingdom in terms of children’s play. But this assumes an exact analogy that among other things would require two groups of children, one piping and the other mourning, a picture not explicit in this text. (REF. Dodd 1961.)

The second interpretation I found a little more likely, and the commentary writer confirms this. “These spoiled children thus resemble Jesus’ opponents, who are dissatisfied no matter what. . . They piped to John and he would not dance, they wailed to Jesus, but he refused to mourn.”

I guess it is take your pick for the interpretation that matches your expectation or analysis.

Next week we start of new section in Matthew’s chart. If you don’t yet have a copy of this chart it is available at the Trinity UMC website at www.triumc.org. Look for the Blue Drop-Down boxes at the top of the page. Select “Ministries” and click on “On-Line Bible Study.” Find the Matthew Study and select the Matthew Chart. Follow the instructions for printing. If you have trouble, please e-mail me at pastorbill@triumc.org and I’ll snail mail you a copy.

Also, this is true if you do not have a copy of my book “*Old Christian Code Words*.” The book can be downloaded from the same site, or I can mail you a neater copy for \$10.00 and includes the postage.

All right folks, talk to me!