

My comments are in Lucida Sans pt. 12. If you like what you read, please pass this website on to your colleagues. Everyone must be really busy his spring, as I'm not hearing from anyone. Let's dialogue when you can.

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TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

IHOP BIBLE STUDY

Topic: Matthew 14: 13 to 16:20 "Demonstrating new directions for ministry"

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 through "Head Trip Analysis").

This is our seventeenth lesson in this series. This lesson still is under the general banner associated with "A Training Manual For Teaching the Transparent Sanctified Life. However, this is the fifth arena, and this is related to Matthew's material on "The Teacher's Handbook: Part II – The Spiritual Oasis."

The Spiritual Oasis (formerly, the Secret Garden) is not really all that secret. It is a metaphor for the Kingdom of Heaven. However, what interests us is the experience of the Kingdom rather than an understanding of the Kingdom. This relates to our understanding of the difference between "Head Trip Analysis" and "Gut Trip Analysis."

I. Read the assigned reading at one time.

As you read, observe the many new directions for ministry offered as we become aware of living in the Spiritual Oasis. We know it is to "other side" that we are called in 14: 22. It is learning to live with the resources of the "other side" that is our challenge.

- 1. vss. 14: 13 – 21**—Living in the Spiritual Oasis is the experience of compassion and servanthood. The result of our experience is that people are fed and healed. Those with whom we live and work "eat and were satisfied." It is this sense of satisfaction that is the sign we are operating out of the Spiritual Oasis.
- 2. vss. 14: 22 – 36**---Living in the Spiritual Oasis is the experience of living over the storms of life. I like this story because it reminds us that the Spiritual Oasis is found in the midst of the storms of life; we do not escape tragedy, pain or suffering just because we've found the Spiritual Oasis. However, those who live in the Spiritual Oasis are those who know how to embrace The Way Life Is (TWLI) because we are transformed by life in the Spiritual Oasis and not the storms of life.

In our discussions about this passage, an interesting speculation was raised about the place, and use of, anger. The conversation ranged

around the topic of “anger at injustice.” Anger is another “storm of life,” and the focus is on righteous anger; i.e., anger to bring about At-One-Ment.

As we embrace the storms, we are no longer victims but victors. Again, this section ends with the healing of many who “touch his cloak” (NIV). Those who live in the Spiritual Oasis experience the power of Jesus’ cloak.

What is this “power” and where does Jesus get it?

Jesus “power” is that of At-One-Ment. That is, the result of the use of this power heals divisions and separations. Jesus got his power from the same place we get it, from his Spiritual Oasis, and his Altar of Spiritual Resources. For some reason, Jesus is profoundly turned in to his spiritual center (Spiritual Oasis). It is interesting to note that this same power is available to us. As a consequence, the more we are “tuned in” to The Christ (revealed in Jesus), the more “turned in” we are to our spiritual resources. The result is the more awakened we become to living in our Spiritual Oasis.

3. **vss. 15: 1 – 20**—Those living in off of the resources of the Spiritual Oasis live by a different set of values. These values are based on the formula of WWJD (What would Jesus do?) The reward for choosing these values is that people experience a *new sense of freedom from a life* that degrades humanity, in exchange for a freedom **for a life** that brings us into At-One-Ment.

The key words in this section are in 15: 10, “Listen and understand.” The demonstration of new ministries in these scriptures points to the difference between the role of tradition and “command of God” (vss. 15: 3b). This command of God is to live in At-One-Ment! As long as tradition assists us toward this goal, then tradition serves God. When tradition stands in the way of this goal, then tradition becomes the antithesis of At-One-Ment.

As Jesus explains to his disciples, it is “the things that come from the heart” (vss. 15: 18) that make the difference between being clean and unclean.

4. **vss. 15: 29 to 39**—The structure of this set of scriptures is interesting. Observe that Matthew bookends this section (14:13 – 16:20) between two amazing feedings of the 5,000 and the 4,000. Note that the people bring “the lame, blind, cripple, mute and many others.” Who are these people? I recognize my face among them. Can you recognize yours? We come hungry to the Spiritual Oasis” but we leave satisfied (vss. 15:37), and we leave with an overabundance of spiritual food.

II. The assignment—

1. **vss. 15: 21 – 28**—In light of the Spiritual Oasis, why does Matthew put in this story of the Canaanite woman. Obviously, she is not an Israelite. What are the “crumbs” she’ll take from Jesus?

The use of the diminutive work “little” offers a metaphorical play: little dog, little crumbs, little woman. (Our English translations do not reveal this to us. I’m told the Hebrew/Aramaic language does.) In biblical Israel, dogs ate *scrapes of leftovers outside the house*. Puppies, and little dogs, stayed under the table and could eat the little crumbs that fell to the floor. The little woman made the wise observation that these crumbs would not waste any food prepared for the Jews, because it was just *little crumbs*.

The region of this story takes place around Tyre and Sidon in northern Palestine (Israel). The woman is an outsider—a non-Jew, or a gentile. The little crumbs is a simile for the Good News that we are not victims but victors.

For additional commentary, an interesting resource is www.crystalinks.com/canaan.html.

2. **vss. 16: 1 – 4**—What is the new ministry suggested? What does it mean to live in the Spiritual Oasis and be able to interpret the signs of the times?

The experience of Jonah is an interesting speculation. Those who rebel against doing God’s Will (Perfect At-One-Ment) pay a price for their actions. (Remember the axiom: The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself.) Jonah paid the price of his disobedience by being swallowed up by his decision and then became vomit. Jonah’s new ministry is to awaken others to the resources of their Spiritual Oasis. The work of The Church of the Awakened is to do likewise.

3. **vss. 16: 5 – 12**—What is the “yeast” of the Pharisees and the Sadducees?

The yeast of the Pharisees is the experience of allowing tradition and “rules” to stand in the way of preaching the Good News (victim/victor).

4. **vss. 16: 13 – 20**—Answer the question, “Who do people say the Son of Man is? Do a little research on the use of the term “Son of Man” as opposed to “Son of God.” Why would Matthew choose to make this difference?

SON OF MAN—In this instance, Jesus as the Christ is experienced as the 2nd Adam—the New Creature (the Awakened).

This term is used in Ezekiel whose mission is to do the work of God. Ezekiel may use this term to describe himself. Here in Matthew, it is used to prefigure Jesus as the Christ, the New Awakened Creature.

The most frequent use in the New Testament of the term "Son of Man" is in Daniel 7:3. This is Daniel's Apocalyptic vision or revelation/epiphany in which the symbols of the Eagle, Bear, 4-Headed Leopard, and the 100-Headed Monster, apparently point to the powers of separation (evil) that rules the earth, to be replaced by the 5th symbol of "The Son of Man," the power of At-One-Ment.

Jesus used of this title represents his consciousness of his prophetic role as "The Son of Man" whose purpose is to bring about At-One-Ment and to illuminate the Good News (Victim/Victor).

The use of the term "Son of Man" also may be associated with Jesus' concern of the Pharisees concerning blaspheme. In 16:20, Matthew closes this section with the statement, "Then he [Jesus] warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ."

The following is for those who want to know the difference between the use of "Son of Man" and "Son of God." The use of "Son of Man" refers to Jesus identification as the 2nd Adam. The use of "Son of God" refers to him as the Messiah.

For more on these two topics, an interesting view point in provide at: www.searchgodsword.org/enc/isb/view.cgi?word=Son+of+Man&action=Lookup. Probably, the first part of this address will take you there if the information gets garbled for some reason. I usually don't have much luck with long website addresses.

Then, in light of the Spiritual Oasis, who do YOU say the Son of Man is?

In light of The Spiritual Oasis, Jesus is a Guide and a Caretaker of the Spiritual Oasis. As Guide—Jesus demonstrates the experience of awakening to the Spiritual Oasis with which we all are born. As

Caretaker—Jesus demonstrates how to continue our awakenment through compassion and works of justice.

All right people, talk to me.