

My comments in Lucida Sans Unicode pt. 12

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

IHOP BIBLE STUDY

Topic: Matthew 20: 17 – 21: 27 “The cost and glory of teaching the Spiritual Oasis”

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 twenty-first lesson in this series. This lesson remains under the general banner associated with "A Training Manual For Teaching the Transparent Sanctified Life. However, this is the sixth arena and the first lesson on "The Teacher's Handbook: Part III– "Moral Lessons."

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.
- II. Note: As you read this assignment, keep in mind the difference between “being on vacation” and “being at home.” Push your thinking to identify the “the cost and glory of teaching the Spiritual Oasis.” Handbook Part III teaches moral lessons.
- III. vss. 20: 20 to 28--- A Mother's Request
 1. How is the mother's request representative of living “on vacation?”

Any concern over one's “position” is the Spiritual Oasis is the antithesis of living in the Spiritual Oasis. Obviously, this also is true in “society.”

2. What is the “cost” Jesus suggests to this woman? (What is the “cup” Jesus must drink, and what does drinking from this cup accomplish?)

The “cup” that is offered is the cup of death—everyone drinks from this cup, but few choose to drink from it, especially to drink of it on behalf of someone else, much less the whole of humanity.

Jesus remind us it is those “who are prepared by God who is Perfect At-One-Ment” that will sit at the right and left of Jesus in the Spiritual Oasis. Those who are

“prepared” are those who are awakened to the Spiritual Oasis.

3. Jesus lays out a plan for living in the Spiritual Oasis. What is it?

Surrendered servanthood is the method of living together in the Spiritual Oasis.

4. What is the moral?

To live authentically is to live the surrendered life.

IV. vss. 20: 29 – 34--- Two Blind Men Receive Sight

1. Describe the human situation and related it to either living “on vacation” or “at home.”

To be blind is to be un-awakened.

2. What is the request of the two blind guys?

To have “mercy” on them; i.e., to heal their blindness.

3. What is the sight they want?

To have “insight” – that is to be awakened to the authentic that is the Spiritual Oasis.

4. What is the “mercy” Jesus gives them? What is it merciful? What is the “cost?” What is the “glory?”

Jesus awakens them. It is an act of mercy as it is the difference between just living and living authentically. The cost and glory is that the reward for the deed is found in the deed itself.

5. What is the moral?

To live authentically is to live awake to the Spiritual Oasis.

V. vss. 21: 1 – 11--- The Triumphal Entry

1. Do some research in your commentary about this part of your assignment. Why does Matthew use these references to the Hebrew Bible (Zech 9:9; Psalm 118:26)? There is a curious statement “Hosanna to the Son of David.” What does it mean, and why would Matthew include it here in this chapter?

The phrase “Hosanna to the Son of David” is used in these Hebrew Bible passages

meaning "Save!" Used in this context, the experience is that of an exclamation of praise.

2. If there is a moral, what is it?

If there is any moral here it is the association of the term "save" with Jesus who is the little picture of Perfect At-One-Ment. Perfect At-One-Ment save us from choosing to be victims and save us to being victors in spite of our human situation. This is why Jesus is the Good News.

VI. vss 21: 12 – 17--- Jesus at the Temple

1. Here, again, is this curious statement "Hosanna to the Son of David." What is going on here?

Obviously, the Lawyers are students of the Hebrew Bible. To hear this phrase, and to understand its implications, is to associate Jesus with the Messiah.

2. Again, Matthew makes use of quotations from the Hebrew Bible (Isaiah 56: 7; Jeremiah 7:11; Psalms 8:2) What is going on here? **References are from Bible Gateway.**

Isaiah 56:7 records the importance of the temple as a House of Prayer.

Jeremiah 7:1 records the falseness of those who worship.

Psalms 8:2 implies the "smallness of humans in creation, and the royal dignity and power God bestowed upon them."

3. What is the human situation in this pericope? Does it represent living "on vacation" or living "at home?"

The human situation is that the Temple is a doorway into the Spiritual Oasis: a House of Prayer. Jesus actions point up the way this doorway was closed so as to block the entrance into the Spiritual Oasis: a den of thieves. Any experiences that block Awakening represent those being "on vacation." The indication of being on vacation is the notation that the Lawyers and the chief priests were indignant.

4. What is the cost of teaching the Spiritual Oasis?

The cost is to be misunderstood concerning the meaning of being saved. When this experience is a "head trip" it means our situation makes us victims and we need an outside agent to ride in on a white horse and leave a silver bullet. When being saved is a

“gut trip” it open us to the Spiritual Oasis where our freedom to choose leads us to be victors with Christ who is our example.

5. If there is a moral what is it?

The awakened receive praise by those who are “awake” and “scorn” from those who are still asleep.

VII. vss. 21: 18 – 22--- The Fig Tree Withers

1. What is the human situation here? The question here is not why the fig tree deserved this treatment, but what is the lesson Jesus is teaching about the Spiritual Oasis?

Jesus experience of hunger is representative of the spiritual hunger we all have to live in the presence of Perfect At-One-Ment. The Spiritual Oasis is a metaphor for the authentic life. The cursing of the Fig Tree is a metaphor pointing to our need to satisfy our spiritual hunger not on things of this world (on vacation) but rather on the life that Jesus represents in the Spiritual Oasis.

2. vss 21: 21 mentions the word “faith.” What is the “Head Trip” definition of this word? What is the “Gut Trip” definition of this word?

The word “faith” means Surrender!

3. What is the “glory” of teaching the Spiritual Oasis?

The “glory” is living with absolute possibility and freedom of choice.

4. What is the moral of this pericope?

Do not deny our potential as those do who associate themselves with the “Fig Tree.” Rather, associate us with the Spiritual Oasis.

VIII. vss. 21: 23 – 27--- The Authority of Jesus Questioned

1. What is the human situation here? What is the kind of authority the “elders of the people” are concerned about?

Those in positions of responsibility have to ask for information. These “elders” are blind to the Spiritual Oasis. Jesus tricks them to reveal their blindness.

2. Do a little commentary research concerning the tricky question Jesus gives them? **Matthew Henry’s**

Commentary on the Whole Bible. (Below)

Now this question is concerning John's baptism, here put for his whole ministry, preaching as well as baptizing; "Was this *from heaven, or of men?* One of the two it must be; either what he did was of his own head, or he was sent of God to do it." Gamaliel's argument turned upon this hinge ([Acts v. 38, 39](#)); either *this counsel is of men or of God*. Though that which is manifestly bad cannot be of God, yet that which is seemingly good may be of men, nay of Satan, when *he transforms himself into an angel of light*. This question was not at all shuffling, to evade theirs; but,

(1.) If they answered this question, it would answer theirs: should they say, against their consciences, that John's baptism was of men, yet it would be easy to answer, *John did no miracle* ([John x. 41](#)), Christ did many; but should they say, as they could not but own, that John's baptism was from heaven (which was supposed in the questions sent him, [John i. 21](#), *Art thou Elias, or that prophet?*) then their demand was answered, for he bare testimony to Christ. Note, Truths appear in the clearest light when they are taken in their due order; the resolving of the *previous* questions will be a key to the *main* question.

(2.) If they refused to answer it, that would be a good reason why he should not offer proofs of his authority to men that were obstinately prejudiced against the strongest conviction; it was but to cast pearls before swine. Thus *he taketh the wise in their own craftiness* ([1 Cor. iii. 19](#)); and those that would not be convinced of the plainest truths, shall be convicted of the vilest malice, against John first, then against Christ, and in both against God.

3. How they were hereby baffled and run aground; they knew the truth, but would not own it, and so were taken in the snare they laid for our Lord Jesus. Observe,

(1.) How *they reasoned with themselves*, not concerning the merits of the cause, what proofs there were of the divine original of John's baptism; no, their care was, how to make their part good against Christ. Two things they considered and consulted, in this reasoning with themselves--their credit, and their safety; the same things which *they principally aim at, who seek their own things*.

[1.] They consider their own credit, which they would endanger if they should own John's baptism to be of God; for then Christ would ask them, before all the people. *Why did ye not believe him?* And to acknowledge that a doctrine is from God, and yet not to receive and entertain it, is the greatest absurdity and iniquity that a man can be charged with. Many that will not be kept by the fear of sin from neglecting and opposing that which they know to be true and good are kept by the fear of shame from owning that to be true and good which they neglect and oppose. Thus they *reject the counsel of God against themselves*, in not submitting to John's baptism, and are left without excuse.

[2.] They consider their own safety, that they would expose themselves to the resentments of the people, if they should say that John's baptism was of men; *We fear the people, for all hold John as a prophet*. It seems, then, *First*, That the people had truer sentiments of John than the chief priests and the elders had, or, at least, were more free and faithful in declaring their sentiments. This people, of whom they said in their pride that they *knew not the law, and were cursed* ([John vii. 49](#)), it seems, knew the gospel, and were blessed. *Secondly*, That the chief priests and elders stood in awe of the common people, which is an evidence that things were in disorder among them, and that mutual jealousies were at a great height; that the government was become obnoxious to the hatred and scorn of the people, and the scripture was fulfilled, *I have made you contemptible and base*, [Mal. ii. 8, 9](#). If they had kept their integrity, and done their duty, they had kept up their authority, and needed not to fear the people. We find

sometimes that the people feared them, and it served them for a reason why they did not confess Christ, [John ix. 22, xii. 42](#). Note, Those could not but fear the people, who studied only how to make the people fear them. *Thirdly*, That it is usually the temper even of common people to be zealous for the honor of that which they account sacred and divine. If they *account John as a prophet*, they will not endure that it should be said, *His baptism was of men*; hence the hottest contests have been about holy things. *Fourthly*, That the chief priests and elders were kept from an open denial of the truth, even against the conviction of their own minds, not by the fear of God, but purely by the fear of the people; as the *fear of man may bring good people into a snare* ([Prov. xxix. 25](#)), so sometimes it may keep bad people from being *overmuch wicked, lest they should die before their time*, [Eccl. vii. 17](#). Many bad people would be much worse than they are, if they durst.

(2.) How they replied to our Savior, and so dropped the question. They fairly confessed *We cannot tell*; that is, "We will not;" *ouk oi damen--We never knew*. The more shame for them, while they pretended to be leaders of the people, and by their office were obliged to take cognizance of such things; when they would not confess their knowledge, they were constrained to confess their ignorance. And observe, by the way, when they said, *We cannot tell*, they told a lie, for they knew that John's baptism was of God. Note, There are many who are more afraid of the *shame* of lying than of the *sin*, and therefore scruple not to speak that which they know to be false concerning their own thoughts and apprehensions, their affections and intentions, or their remembering or forgetting of things, because in those things they know nobody can disprove them.

Thus Christ avoided the snare they laid for him, and justified himself in refusing to gratify them; *Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things*. If they be so wicked and base as either not to believe, or not to confess, that the baptism of John was from heaven (though it obliged to repentance, that great duty, and sealed the kingdom of God at hand, that great promise), they were not fit to be discoursed with concerning Christ's authority; for men of such a disposition could not be convinced of the truth, nay, they could not but be provoked by it, and therefore *he that is thus ignorant, let him be ignorant still*. Note, Those that imprison the truths they know, in unrighteousness (either by not professing them, or by not practicing according to them), are justly denied the further truths they enquire after, [Rom. i. 18, 19](#). Take away the talent from him that buried it; those that *will not see, shall not see*.

All right, people. Talk to me!