

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

IHOP BIBLE STUDY

Topic: Matthew 26: 1 to 26: 16 -- "Preparing for death"

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-fourth 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 seventh arena and the first lesson on "The Transparent Experience."

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: The way in which the word "transparency" is used in this Bible Study associates the concept with the photographic film used to make transparencies. This film has an image engraved on the emulsion. When a light is passed through the transparency the result is an image that is thrown up on a screen. It is my contention that the "image" engraved into our human emulsion is the idea (Head Trip Analysis) of the Holy. The experience of Holiness, or the "sanctified life," is the experience (Gut Trip Analysis) of *deep satisfaction*, or what I've called The Spiritual Oasis.**

This seventh arena of our study supports "The Transparent Experience." Interestingly enough, the Gospel of Matthew begins this part of our study in the "Preparation for Death."

- III. **As you do the following assignment, put on your spiritual glasses to see absolute wonder begin to unfold. Then, listen with your best spiritual ears to the absolute and awe-filled silence of what is happening here AND WHY!**

The setting for this drama is "Passover." For the ancient Hebrew slaves in Egypt this is the refining moment of their individual and communal lives—from the moment that death passes over the land, saving the Hebrew people this people is no longer "**on vacation**" **but are moving "toward home."** This ancient experience is a foreshadowing (or a prolepsis) of what will take place in Jesus Christ (Son of Man). As Moses led the Old Humans (the old Adam) *HOME*, Jesus leads the New Humans (The new Adam) *HOME*.

As this event takes place we no longer see the images of transparency projected on the screen of our life, but WE BECOME THE TRANSPARENT IMAGE OF GOD'S CREATION; we become AT-ONE with the Spiritual Oasis. This is full transformation! But it takes a death to get there—the death of our- "selves!"

By the way, this is what the church always calls "GLORIFICATION."

Now, with this in mind, please do some commentary research on the following topics:

1. Passover—speculate on how this ancient celebration sets the stage for our glorification.

Passover, in the Hebrew Scriptures, is a foreshadowing of the crucifixion and resurrection in the Christian scriptures. For the Jews, Passover is a defining event for them as a nation. The people of the "old Adam" were led to freedom from slavery; i.e., in a word, this act was for their "salvation." Death passed over the houses in Egypt and the firstborn children living in those houses died unless the blood of the lamb was painted on their doorposts.

Observe, the whole nation of Israel becomes the transparency of salvation. An "event" happened, blood was shed on their behalf, they experienced a type of baptism crossing the Red Sea, they ate Manna as a type of Holy Supper, and they were led HOME into the Promised Land (the Spiritual Oasis).

As Christians, our Passover is the same series of actions. An "event" happens, blood is shed on our behalf, we experience baptism, we eat a holy meal, and we are awakened to our HOME in the Kingdom of Heaven (the Spiritual Oasis).

2. Son of Man---In this setting, why does Matthew pick up, again, this particular phrase from Daniel?

When Jesus uses this phrase, it emphasizes his humanness. On the other hand, Son of God emphasizes his divine aspects. Matthew uses this phrase in support of the "transparent experience" to which all humans are heir. Like the ancient Jews, as we experience the transforming event of the resurrection, then we are the *transparent* emulsion through which the spiritual light illuminates our relationship to the Spiritual Oasis. As this happens, we experience glorification.

3. Anointment (in this instance with perfume)---In general, what is the role of "anointment" and how is it used in the New Testament? Jesus tells us the significance of this event in vss. 26: 12, 13. To what end does Matthew use this material at this place in his gospel? Speculate on the importance of "anointment" for us as contemporary Christians.

Literally, anointment is the application of oil to a body. What it symbolizes is the setting aside of an individual for a particular purpose. To this end, the religious, priests, ministers/pastors are set aside from society to be God's representatives. This goes back to the division of labor in the twelve tribes of Israel, the Levite Tribe was anointed for this purpose. In the experience described in Matthew, the importance of this symbol is related to the significance of the act Jesus was about to experience in the cross and resurrection.

Observe that Jesus indicates his anointment by Mary Magdalene is in preparation for his death. The significance for us that that as we are joined in a death like Christ's death (through baptism and/or confession) we die to being "on vacation" and awaken to the life of living "at Home."

4. Simon the Leper---Speculate on the significance of Jesus eating with the family of this social outcast.

The commentaries are of two minds about this event. One commentary speculates on the translation of the word "leper" that also can be "potter." In this instance, Jesus may be in the home of Simon the Potter. This is likely since lepers were not allowed to own homes. Also, it is doubtful that even a healed leper would have the resources to buy a home

Other commentaries speculate that this event may be in the home of Simon the leper whom Jesus healed.

Under any circumstances, Jesus association with the outcasts of society is an illustration of the Good News that is the product of the impending death and resurrection. The Good News is that we are not victims of our circumstances, rather we are victors. In other words, the circumstances of our lives are not transformed, *we are transformed; i.e., our relationship to our circumstances is transformed because we are transformed!!*

One writer observed that Jesus, who was great, chose to make himself nothing: he existed with the Creator, but chose to become a creature; he lived in a mansion in glory, but chose to be born in a manger; he lived in fellowship with the Father, but chose to be in fellowship with prostitutes, lepers and outcasts. While I like this illustration, as you might guess it troubles me because of its use of old images understood as objects to be studied rather than experiences: creator, mansion in glory, holy Father.

5. Judas Iscariot---In light of this drama, Judas plays the double role of helping us set the context for the Transparent Experience," and then pushes the drama onto the next act on our stage. Share some of your insights with us.

Why did Matthew include this section in his writings, particularly at this place? Of course this sets the stage for the betrayal. However, the significance of Judas' betrayal is its emphasis on greed. Greed can be associated with living On Vacation; i.e., he is un-awakened to the Spiritual Oasis.

6. 30 silver coins---This is a symbolic amount. What can you find in your commentaries, and how does what you find be applied to our drama of transparency.

Some commentaries note the contrast of the extravagance of the amount of money in comparison of the extravagance of the cross and resurrection. Thirty silver coins represent four months salary. Another commentary notes that thirty silver coins was the amount due as compensation of the loss of a slave. Also, the betrayal fulfills the prophecy made in Zechariah 11: 12.

This event convicts us all, since it is a common occurrence for we humans to choose the death of life on vacation for the life of the Spiritual Oasis.

All right, folks. Talk to me!