

My comments are in Lucida Sans 12 pt.

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

For the IHOP Bible Study on June 29, 2004

IHOP BIBLE STUDY

Topic: Matthew 26: 31 to 27: 30 --- "Transparent Food"

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-fifth 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."

III. In this section, the Lord's Supper stands alone because of its uniqueness. Baptism and Holy Communion are intimately tied together, and represent the two symbols called sacraments in the mainline Protestant Churches are Holy Communion, Eucharist, Holy Mystery, Holy Supper. All of these names are descriptions of ways to understand this experience. The Catholic Church (Roman and Eastern) has seven sacraments.

IV. Your assignment is the following:

- 1. Reflect on your experience of Holy Communion. Please share your insights with us.**

I prefer the term Holy Communion because it reflects a deeper level of relationship with the Body of Christ, and with individual communicants. Also, this term implies a spiritual connection with God as Perfect At-One-Ment.

My experience of Holy Communion is that it reflects the story of my life. To this end, my ritual with each communicant is "This is the story of my life," and the response is "This is the story of my life renewed."

This holy meal has roots in Judaism's understanding of covenant. King David, when he was a small boy had a unique relationship with Jonathan. Many of the rituals of covenanting have their origins around this relationship. It is believed they ritualized their relationship by cutting their hands, and then joining hands to commingle their blood; in this way they became "blood brothers;" they were in "communion" with each other. It is this "sharing of blood" that Christians ritualize in communion.

There are other aspects of the "blood covenant" that also are reflected in our communion ritual, the breaking of bread and the spilling of wine. Our Christian tradition picks up on this at wedding receptions during which the newly weds cut the cake and feed each other, and then drink wine or juice with linked arms. In this way they are ritualizing covenant—a serious commitment experience in the "eating of each other's body, and the drinking of each other's blood." This activity foreshadows Holy Communion.

- 2. What is the significance of the broken bread? To what human experiences can this be related?**

One aspect of my life is the experience of brokenness. My life is broken. This is reflected in my own self-depreciation and daydreaming. In the understanding of the blood covenant, brokenness is our fate as human beings—I am fated to be male, others are fated to be females. Fate describes The Way Life Is (TWLI); this is our state of being human.

However, when our brokenness is surrendered (*poetry—“into the arms of God”*) into the presence of Perfect At-One-Ment we experience the transformation of our brokenness into spiritual nourishment. This is the experience of awakening to the Spiritual Oasis. Holy Communion ritualizes this experience of transformation.

3. What is the significance of the spilled juice? To what human experience can this be related?

A second aspect of my human experience is that my life is expended; it is spilled out! At conception we are given all of the life we are going to have. At birth, life begins to be spilled out until one day we experience the last drop. When this is expended, then we're gone. This also is TWLI.

Like my brokenness, when my expenditure is surrendered to God as Perfect At-One-Ment, the miracle of transformation occurs. My expenditure becomes spiritual refreshment.

4. How do these elements become spiritual food from our Spiritual Oasis?

How does this transformation occur? At once this is both mysterious and transparent. It is mysterious because we know it occurs because our experience is the demonstration of it (Gut Trip). Again, it is mysterious because we know it happens but we don't fully comprehend it (Head Trip).

However, from the point of view of the transparent Spiritual Oasis, our wholeness is something that is always present with us. Our problem is that we are spiritually blind to it. Life (on vacation) is experienced broken and expended. Life (at home) is experienced whole; i.e., life is experienced as nourished and refreshed.

As we awaken to life in the Spiritual Oasis we are more aware of this experience.

All right, folks. Talk to me.