

**My comments are in Lucida San Unicode 12 pt. Note: This session is especially long, but a worthwhile read. Pastor Bill**

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH July 13, 2004**

### **IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

**Topic: Matthew 27: 32 to 28: 15 "The Transparent Event"**

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-seventh 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 fourth lesson on "The Transparent Experience."

The Spiritual Oasis 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. **OUT OF THE DESERT AND INTO THE SPIRITUAL OASIS**

All else is prelude to the event we witness in this study. Everything prepares us for this history-changing and life-changing event. For me the key words are "Go and tell my brothers [*and sisters*] to go to Galilee; there they will see me." (28: 10.)

"Go to Galilee." Galilee is home to Jesus, just as the Spiritual Oasis is our spiritual home. It is the place where we are comfortable, among friends and colleagues, and we can be the selves we were created to be. Sociologically, this is where we experience our sense of place.

Isn't this the meaning of the crucifixion and the resurrection? We die to life in the desert of TWLI (The Way Life Is), and we are resurrected into the meaning of what it means to be fully a human and humane being. This Bible study names this experience as the Spiritual Oasis, Deep Satisfaction, or Full Awakening. These words/phrases are Gut Trip Analysis words. In the traditional language of Christianity, the name given to this experience is Sanctification, Heaven or the Kingdom of God. These are "Head Trip Analysis words that mean the same thing.

Nothing could be more transparent to this Good News in Matthew's gospel. The Genealogy of Jesus supports this purpose: Abraham is the first born; the birth of Jesus as the Christ; the baptism of Jesus; the healing, the preaching; the work of the Disciples; the work of John the Baptist; the transfiguration. All of these events paint the image of true, authentic living in the transparency of abundant life.

In other words, when we look through these events, what we see is God's intent for humanity to live in At-One-Ment with each other.

In this way, The Awakened are a "remnant" living on behalf of a world society that is unawakened! In Christ we are covenanted to be The Awakened against the day when all the world is awakened to abundant living.

When this finality takes place, then humanity will move out of the desert and into the Oasis. **In the meantime, those who are awake to this reality live on behalf of those who are still asleep. Also, we have the responsibility to be "Agents for Awakening" those still asleep.**

#### **IV. 27: 32 – 57 The Crucifixion and The Death of Jesus**

Read this section several times without stopping, and pay attention to the emotions of the passage.

1. Name the emotional content of this reading.

**I suppose it is difficult to read this passage without thinking of Gibson's movie "The Passion." While I am not a big supporter of Gibson, certainly he captured the horrific emotion associated with this event. Even in reading this passage out loud, the terror, abject horror, and deep anger quickly are summoned into consciousness.**

2. Think back. What are your emotions as you read it? What do your emotions reveal about your state of spiritual Awakening?

**O-o-o, I wish now that I had never asked this question. Because I think of myself as being spiritually awake,. Now, the question is existential. As a Head-Trip, I can justify anger, horror and terror. Yet, it is from a Gut-Trip Analysis that I experience that these**

powerful emotions find their locus in my Spiritual Oasis as well. All of us tend to deny that powerful emotions belong in the Spiritual Oasis. However, like our failures, these emotions have a wellspring in our spiritual reality.

**V. 27: 57 – 61 The Burial of Jesus**

1. What are friends for? **Friends are for doing just what Joseph from Arimathea was doing, as well as what the two Mary's are doing: waiting at the tomb. Friends are "there" for each other.**
2. What does this brief section reveal about the collegiality of The Awakened? **The Awakened are in synch with each other and with the mission/purpose of the Spiritual Oasis. There is a difference between being "friends" and being "colleagues." Friends are those who have an investment in us. Colleagues, while they can be friends, have an investment in what we are about. It is not necessary that a colleague be a friend; they are the ones who jump into our foxhole at the moment we need someone covering our exposed back.**
3. What do The Awakened reveal about the "transparent relationship" to Perfect At-One-Ment? Work hard so that you do not get trapped into seeing this event as **an object** to be studied. What is the BIG MESSAGE that Matthew is giving us about the relationship between The Deserts of Life and The Spiritual Oasis?

**Matthew's Big Message about the relationship between The Deserts of Life and The Spiritual Oasis is that death and friendship are crucial items.**

**First, it is necessary for the Awakened to die to the significance and importance of our human existence. In order for death to be defeated, it is necessary to surrender ourselves into the waiting arms of Death. It is helpful to remember that death always is our friend; it never lies to us.**

**Second, friendship/collegiality is a crucial experience because it this only through deep friendship we are called into full**

**Awakening.** Remember that Wesley reminds us that the *human situation* is that we are spiritually asleep. However, the *human predicament* is that we are unable to awaken ourselves. This is the mission and responsibility of The Church of the Awakened.

**VI. 27: 62 - 66 The Guard at the Tomb**

1. The concerns of the Tomb Guards reveal much about The Desert. Reflect on how you've adopted the stance of the Guards, and how does your experience illuminate The Desert experience?

**Oh, geez! I'm always The Guard At The Tomb.** Recently while coming home pulling our travel trailer with our pickup, a beautiful young blond pulled up next to me at a stop light. She was driving a brand new Corvette with the radio blaring full blast. Obviously, her activities were saying, "Look at me!" And I did. I was convicted at many levels. Her youth, her wealth, her in-your-face attitude all reminded me that my chosen profession as a 70 year-old retired theological writer denied me these more obvious pleasures. Of course, this experience Awakened me to how quickly the things of the flesh lead us away from the peace of the Spiritual Oasis.

This is not to say that youth, 20-something, and driving red Corvettes can not be experienced in the Spiritual Oasis. It can, but at the moment I'm writing about, my personal experienced was deeply addressed.

2. The concerns of Pilate reveals much about The Desert. (Remember Matthew 27: 11 – 26?).

**The study of Matthew 27: 11 – 26 focused on how our political institutions become agents of "worldly sleep."**

**However, in Matthew 27: 57 – 61, an interesting thing about Pilate is that he keeps coming off as a sensitive and caring person— maybe this is the because of the reported work of his wife? Whatever the case, I find it hard to imagine that our U.S. Congressional teams, much less the Office of the President of the U.S. could be approached for such a menial request, unless the one**

pleading for assistance for help was a very prominent person.  
Joseph of Arimathea may have had such a position.

What this reveals about the desert of human existence is that the political process can be a Head-Trip/World trip trap. This is not the work of evil, it is simply TWLI.

VII. 28: 1 – 15 The Resurrection

1. This is The Transparent Event of Transparency Itself! Read this brief section out loud several times. Or, have some one else read it to you several times. Savor the drama and the imagery. Print out this study page. Fold the paper in half. In one column write “Head Trip,” and in the other column write “Gut Trip.”

Use the following words found in this passage to identify how the word is used as “Head Trip” and then as “Gut Trip.” Remember, “Gut Trip” *names your experience* and then points to the traditional word for clarification.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Head Trip</u>	<u>Gut-Trip</u>
a. angel of the Lord	Supernatural messenger	The Awakener
b. from heaven	God’s Office	Place of Perfect At-One-Ment
c. to the tomb	Place of death	Place of Hope
d. His [sic] appearance was like lightning	supernatural light	Simile for enlightenment
e. his [sic] clothes were white as snow	supernatural color	Simile for enlightenment
f. he is risen from the dead	supernatural event	the open Spiritual Oasis door

2. Matthew records in 28: 8 that the women were “**afraid** yet filled with **joy**.” Reflect on how these two words are transparent to our experience of the Spiritual Oasis. **Obviously, joy is easily associated with our Spiritual Oasis. This is on the characteristics frequently associated with our**

**Spiritual Awakening. However, it is important to remember that we bring to our Spiritual Oasis all that we have and are; we bring all of our contradictions and foibles. So our fright is an honest emotion that, once we are awake, we can use to awaken us to our Spiritual Oasis and its resources.**

3. 28: 10b “Go and tell my brother [*and sisters*] to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

**This phrase “Go. . . to Galilee” frustrates me because my experience of myself is that I make too much of this phrase. Yet, Matthew uses it frequently enough that surely there are some implications that “Galilee”—like “the other side of the lake”—can be associated with our Spiritual Oasis. It is helpful to remember that Jesus was “at home” in Galilee.**

First, reflect on the use of gender terms, and why it is important to use gender-inclusive (politically correct?) pronouns? Take this in light of the experience that God is Perfect At-One-Ment.

**Ah, well. Gender pronouns associated with the term “G-O-D” borders on idolatry. God is unfathomable Perfect At-One-Ment. That’s it, unless you want to talk about the experience of God as The Guarantor, or as The Meaning of Things.**

Second, in light of the opening statement in our Section III about going home, what does this reveal about transparency?

**Every event in life provides us with the occasion to “see through it” to its meaning, significance, or to our Spiritual Oasis. Because we can bring every event, no matter how small-minded, or how mean it is, once we have the tools to be awake, each and every occasion is a potential moment for clarity.**

#### **VIII. 28: 11 – 15 The Guard’s Report**

1. Why do you think Matthew put in this strange little deception? Reflect for a moment on what may have happened *the night before* Matthew wrote this little section that produced an “Ah, Ha!” This reminds me about The Guard’s report. I’ll need to add this to my story!” Using your imagination, what may have been the event to spark this recollection?

The night before: Matthew picked up the *Galilean Gazette* to read of local C.E.O's who robbed their companies and shareholders of the pension funds. On second reflection, Matthew's mind was jogged back to a little-told story about the Chief Priest's and community Elders to deal with the local insurrection surrounding Jesus.

While this is an imaginary response, Matthew's motivation to include this escapes me. Certainly, this adds nothing to the significance of the story. It strikes me that this is extrapolated material mistakenly added to the canon. What do you think?

2. Reflect on the very curious statement at the end in 28:15b "And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day." In light of transparency, what does this reveal about living in The Desert and/or living in the Spiritual Oasis?

Living in the Desert of The Way Life Is (TWLI) is the place where anything can happen, and usually does. From my own viewpoint, this is an unfortunate addition because it adds fuel to the fire of "blaming the Jews for the death of Jesus." Of course, this is like blaming the Boy Scouts when one fails to walk an old lady across the street.

However, this does offer me the occasion to remind us that we bring all of life's experiences—both contradictions and foibles, joys and deep satisfactions—to the refreshing waters of our Spiritual Oasis.

Peace chillin!

All right, folks, talk to me.