

**My comments are in Lucinda sans red 12 point. This is for those unable to print out the color. Pastor Bill**

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

**Topic: Matthew 8:18 to 9: 8 “Teaching Standpoint,” and “Changing Lives”**

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 as "Head Trip Analysis").

This is our tenth lesson in this series, and is associated with "Tools For Teaching The Methods For A Happy/Holy Life". My reflections on the gospel give us the overall title of "The Training Manual For Teaching The Transparent Sanctified Life." With this metaphor established, let us continue.

- I. Read the assigned reading at one time.**
- II. “The Teaching Standpoint”**

Note: On occasion my titling of the groups of pericopes (sections titles in the scriptures) is done too quickly. In preparation for today's study I've changed the chart title for these few verses in 8: 18 to 22 from the “Teaching Style” to “The Teaching Standpoint.” A *standpoint* is the *point-of-view, the position, the stance or the perspective from which Jesus taught.*

**A. 8: 18 through 22 “The cost of following Jesus.” (From our perspective of viewing Matthew as a Training Manual, the scripture title for this pericope is poorly named. Such is life.)**

Essentially, what follows is material inadvertently left in with last week's lesson material!

**8: 18 --** The inclusion of this little pericope in Matthew's “Training Manual” reveals much about the standpoint Jesus uses as a teacher. Please review these few verses: The poignant words are “he gave orders to cross to the other side.” When these words are used in any of the gospels, they point to the place when the relationship to God is the closest. This “place” is experienced more than it is rationally understood.

Last week we identified this place as being “home.” In this regard, “this side of the lake is on vacation.” (You'll remember my treatment of this in the last session?)

Consequently, the **standpoint** Jesus uses is his perspective of representing the “other side of the lake,” or, from living at home rather than living on vacation.

**8: 19 – 20** (From last week’s material) Where does the Son of Man lay his head? From the point of view of the “standpoint” Jesus lays his head “at home!”

**8: 21 – 22** The story of turning away the man who wanted to bury his father before he “went to the other side” is considered one of Jesus’ hard sayings. However, in light of Jesus’ **standpoint** the answer is easily understood. Burying one’s father is living on vacation.

### III. Changing lives

A. Now, in light of Jesus’ **standpoint**, read the following scripture assignments and share how your experience of this material illuminates the experience of “Changing lives.”

1. 8: 23 – 27 Jesus Calms the Storm

This scripture is a favorite of many preachers as it lends itself to several treatments. In our construct the boat is “on vacation” where life is experienced as TWLI. This is to say, the story reveals the experience of our natural lives. Is there anyone we know who does not identify with the disciples in the rocking boat that is about ready to sink? There is a distinct possibility we could drown. In this experience as we confront our own death.

Now, look at Jesus. He is asleep! Why? Because he is “at home.” Jesus does not fear death because he is “at home.” He represents the dynamic of faithfulness (surrender) to living in an eternal relationship to God, the Perfect At-One-Ment.

Because Jesus is our example, we need not fear death as well. So, the choice is ours. On which side of the lake do we choose to live?

What is the significance of Jesus’ accusation “You of little faith.”

Understood from Matthew’s stand point, this statement convicts the disciples of their spiritual blindness. This is demonstrated in their fear of dying, and represents their spiritual blindness. The old code word “Faith” always can be translated as surrender. This statement could be transliterated as, “Ok, you guys, you’ve lost sight of the meaning of surrender to God!”

What is the significance of Jesus calming the storm?

Interestingly, from our point of view, whenever Jesus speaks, he addresses the natural side of things. As noted above, his accusation calls into question our full surrender to God. From my point of view, what is calmed is my relationship to the stormy water rather than the (natural) water

actually being calmed. When we have no fear of death, what difference does the storm really make. Once we surrender ourselves to God—the Perfect At-One-Ment—we already are At-One with the sea and we no longer fear it. This is Good News!

## 2. 8: 28 – 34 The Healing of Two Demon-possessed Men

Observe the change in the *sides of the lake*. On THIS side are tombs and demon-possessed people. What is it these people sense in Jesus? Why would the people in this region plead for Jesus to leave?

These statements regarding the “other side of the lake” always intrigue me. Perhaps, it is because they support my own prejudice and perspective. However, when these statements are understood metaphorically, they certainly support the experience of being “at home” or “on vacation.”

In the Bible, being “demon possessed” is easily associated with being a victim of a lie. What people sense in Jesus is the antithesis of the lie; in Jesus they experience wholeness or authenticity. This is the experience of being “at home.”

So, if this is true, then why do they fear Jesus? This fear is based on being convicted that they are living “demonic” lives. That is, these are people who made the choice to “surrender themselves to a lie; thereby, they are victims.”

We see this dynamic frequently. A fairly consistent message of Jesus can be summarized in the statement, “You are not really living. You are just existing.”

From this experience, sometimes it is easier to kill the messenger than it is to accept the challenge of accepting the message. This is particularly so, if we have an investment in the lie.

The interesting note in this story is the role of the pigs. Obviously, pigs represent living the unclean (on vacation) life. As the demons are exorcised, they take over the bodies of the pigs who dash off a cliff and die. Perhaps, a summary can be, when you live like pigs you’ll die a pigs death.

The opposite also is true.

## 3. 9: 1 – 8 Jesus Heals a Paralytic

Again, this portion starts with a change of venue. Is this “on vacation” or “at home?” How can the “teachers of the law” accuse Jesus of blasphemy?

Note that Jesus now is back in his own natural environment, that is he is “on vacation.” A paralytic is brought to him who wants to live “at home.” Jesus tells him that his “sins are forgiven.”

When it is remembered that "sin" is separation, then it is easy to understand that as we live "on vacation" we are separated from, and crippled by, our absence from living "at home." To live "on vacation" is to experience life as cripple.

However, it is the Teachers of the Law who accuse Jesus of blaspheme. This word is experienced as living a lie! The Teachers of The Law are not spiritually awake, but spiritually blind.

**In light of Jesus' standpoint, which is easy to say, "Your sins are forgiven," or "Pick up your bed and walk?"**

As Christians, we are people who believe in The Word. That is, The Word is the presence of The Christ, or health, or authenticity that is present in this Word.

Jesus reminds us The Word is both a "Head Trip" and a "Gut Trip." He can heal from a "Head Trip" experience, or he can heal with a "Gut Trip" demonstration. Both of them get the job done. This Word awakens people to living "At Home."

**Why were the people "filled with awe?"**

Whenever we are confronted with authenticity we experience a little bit of "home." The experience of "awe" is an indicator that we are "at home."

**From where does Jesus get his "authority?"**

Jesus gets his authority from the same place we all get our authority. When we are awake to the significance of living "at home," the experience is self-fulfilling. Our authority comes from representing health, wholeness, and authenticity.