

Colleagues: In this session there are three rich discussions. One is on “God’s wrath,” another is on living the life we have at hand or the indicative, and yet another is on “glorification.” Enjoy. Happy Thanksgiving! Pastor Bill

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

15 Romans 9: 1 - 29, “Spirit Help: Not our desire but God’s” -- with commentary
The purpose of the Letter to the Romans is to develop a “Model for Living the Awakened/Transformed Life.” **Today’s study is the 15th of 27 lessons.**

According to our Study Chart we are studying the 3rd section of “Embrace The Work of Christ and the Spirit” This is one of seven sessions under the rubric of “Spirit Help.” This is the third session in this series. Remember, the focus of the Book of Romans is to provide us “The Model For Living The Awakened/Transformed Life.”

KEEP YOUR “GUT TRIP ANALYSIS CARD” IN YOUR BIBLE FOR REFERENCE! Add to the list of words as you identify them so that you do not struggle with the definitions as you have need of them.

BACKGROUND: Honoring our Romans Chart is important. In this section we have seven lessons, two of which we’ve completed. At this point, it is helpful to keep before us that each of these seven lessons teach us what Paul has to say about “Embracing the work of Christ and The Spirit.”

In order to re-ground for myself the significance of this sentence, I did a transliteration of it with this result. *“How does this information help us awaken to our human purpose of standing in the presence of God as Perfect At-One-Ment.”*

To this end, these seven lessons spell out how The Spirit helps us.

1. **In lesson # 13**, The Spirit helps us to **embrace our weakness**, so that it is no longer our enemy, but a friend. Our weakness can be represented in anyway that creation itself is frustrated in that it can not, or does not, fulfill its intended purpose of standing in the presence of God. To stand in this way is to experience fulfillment and a peace that passes all understanding.
2. **In lesson # 14**, The Spirit helps us to fulfill God’s desires for us rather than our own desires. This is accomplished as we awaken to our relationship with Jesus who demonstrates how to die to our denial and wish dreams, and as we awaken with The Christ who demonstrates the resurrected life of humane living in the Presence of God as Perfect At-One-Ment. The transformation of our human experience (The Way Life Is) takes place as we drag these experiences *through* the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ described here.
3. **Today’s lesson # 15**, the focus is on how The Spirit helps us do God’s desires and not our own.

I. **Vss. 1 – 15, The Spirit helps us to find “truth in Christ.”**

WS: “Truth in Christ” is: 1) The Good New that we are not asleep but awake; 2) While we are victimized, we have the choice of being victims or victors; 3) We are son and daughters of God for no other reason than we are the adopted family of God.

A. **Vss. 4 and 5**, Paul identifies the adoption of the Jews who have been given a tremendous list of resources to find the “truth.” What are these resources, and how can they be used to reveal “the truth?”

WS: The list of resources includes: 1) “**Adoption**” or we are family; 2) “**Divine Glory**” Perfect Awakening; 3) “**covenants**” God’s Presence; 4) “**The Law**” tools of Awakening; 5) “**Temple Worship**” the means of awakening; 6) “**The Promises**”

Whereas the covenants with Abraham are permanent and irrevocable (Romans 11:29), other Old Testament promises focus on what the Holy Spirit of God will do through the Messiah (Isaiah 42:1; 59:21; 61:1-3; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 36:26-27; 37:14; Joel 2:28-29). Obviously if a nation rejects the life-giving work of the Spirit it excludes itself from what the promises offer. (*See the web: Bible Gateway*);

7) **The Patriarchs**”

It is interesting that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and David are now familiar to children in the Sunday schools of all nations. We might add that the ideas of liberation and Exodus, Job’s inexplicable suffering and lament, and the Psalms of David also belong to Christians of all nations. (*See the web: Bible Gateway*)

B. **Vs. 6, 7 and 10, 11**, Paul makes a highly unusual expression here. “For not all who are descended from Israel **are Israel**. Nor because they are his descendants **are they all Abraham’s children.**” What is going on here? Who really is “Israel,” and who really are “Abraham’s children? Rebekah’s children?”

WS: Those who do God’s will are Israel, Abraham’s and/or Rebekah’s children. Remember, we all are by adoption sons and daughters of God. Those who live like it do God’s will.

C. **Vs. 11b and 13**, Paul makes another unusual expression. “. . . in order that God’s purpose in **election** might stand: not by works but by him who calls. . . .” Recall the Gut Trip Analysis of the term “election.” Then, look at the significance of Paul’s use of the story about Jacob and Esau and how “The older will serve the younger.”

WS: Our election is through our adoption as sons and daughters. All of creation is elected by God to do God’s will, or to live in the presence of God. (For further discussion on how Paul uses the term election, please see Romans 8: 28 - 39 (Session # 14). In other words, the elected are those who live the awakened life as sons and daughters of God.

How is Paul using the words “younger” and “older,” and for what purpose?

WS: Concerning the “younger” serving the “older,” in Gut Trip Analysis this is *the awakened serving the unawakened*.

D. **Vs. 14**, Why do you think Paul uses this passage from Exodus 33: 19? Is God unjust? Why or why not?

WS: The point made in Exodus is that God is merciful and compassionate. It is God's mercy that God desires to awaken us to our relationship as sons and daughters of God. It is God's compassion to call us to live in At-One-Ment with neighbor, self and God as Perfect At-One-Ment.

II. Vss. 16 - 21, How does The Spirit help us to experience God's mercy?

A. What is the experience of "God's mercy" any way?

WS: It is helpful to remember that all religious words are not objects to be understood. Rather, these words are dynamics that are experienced as experiences of The Spirit. It is helpful to recall that **beginning with 8:1** Paul is giving us a series of ways in which The Spirit awakens us.

Previously: **8: 28 - 39** = The Spirit awakens us by teaching us to embrace our weaknesses, or embracing The Way Life Is. In this way we surrender to God to handle The Way Life Is; **9:1 - 29** = The Spirit helps us remember that we do not live by our own desires, but that we live for God's purposes.

B. In this section, Paul uses the Israelites experience with Pharaoh. **Vs. 18**, How does God have mercy, and/or harden hearts in order to display God's power in us?

WS: Gut Trip Analysis employees the axiom "The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself." *This is to live by the indicative; this is living the life that we have at hand. We can deny it, or we can live the wish dream that we had some other life. Both denial and wish dreams are the antithesis of what God wants for us. God wants us to face the reality we have, and trust that God who is experienced as Perfect At-One-Ment transform us, but does not change or altar The Way Life is.*

When we chose to life in the presence of God, i.e., that is to live the human life given to us, then the reward is a personal and social sense of deep satisfaction. When "hearts are hardened" this provides God/The Spirit with the occasion to awaken us!

C. **Vs. 19**, The question Paul raises is if God is merciful, "Then why does God still blame us? **This whole section of vs. 19 – 21 is curious.** What do you think is going on?"

WS: Who resists God's will? Only those who are asleep, in denial, or living a wish dream for another reality.

For those of you using this material as a lesson plan, the following material is where you want to spend the most of the time allowed. Short course, or briefly review all of the above the material so that it sets the context for what follows. But the following is where the meat of this lesson is to be found.

III. Vss. 22 – 29, Paul raises two questions here. How do the following two questions help The Spirit to help us to do God's desires and not our own?

A. **Vs. 22**, What if God, choosing to show **his wrath** and make his power known, bore with great patience the **objects of his wrath**—prepared for destruction? (Hint; start by defining God's wrath.)

WS: According to our Roman's Chart, remember the formula Paul uses to demonstrate in **8: 1 through 11: 32** seven ways by which The Spirit awakens us to live in God's presence (living the humane life).

So, the question we are to answer is "how do the following two questions help The Spirit. . ." The key to answering these two questions in **vs. 22** and **vs. 23 - 24** is to recall the Gut Trip Analysis of **God's wrath**.

Gut Trip Analysis defines God's wrath as God's love. When we are spiritually asleep and acting out in inhuman (racism) or un-human (self-depreciative) ways, then we need an application of tough love that will re-awaken us. This re-awakening can come in thousands of ways, but always comes to us as an event. This is the same thing that we point to theologically as a Christ Event. The Cross and the Resurrection is the demonstration provided by Jesus as the Anointed One (Christ), or as Immanuel God-with-Us, whose purpose is to awaken us to live again in the Presence of God. This event can be as simple of the highway patrol red light (asleep to our social responsibilities) and as complex as an argument with your spouse (asleep to living the humane life). In whatever way we experience this Christ Event, the result is the same, we are restored to fulfilling the Great Commandment of Jesus Christ to love neighbor, self and God as Perfect At-One-Ment.

How does this prepare us for destruction? Well, some of it is self-evident. From the moment when we fail to live the awakened life, we have begun to experience spiritual destruction. This is the Gut Trip Analysis of the term "repentance." We are facing a life of destruction. We experience the wrath of God. We now are standing facing living in God's presence.

Vs. 22 - God is patient! Is this Good News, or what?

B. **Vs. 23**, What if he did this to make **the riches of his glory** known to the objects of his mercy, whom he **prepared in advance for glory** --- even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? (What's going on here?)

WS: What are the riches of God's glory? At this point it is helpful to recall three Old Christian Code Words: justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Justification is the experience of being awakened through a Christ Event;

Sanctification is the experience of living the awakened life;

Glorification is the experience of embodying the awakened life. Look at your faith heroes and heroines. Mine are Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King. Each of them is living the glorified life.

The interesting point of Gut Trip Analysis is that each of us is already living the glorified life! Our fundamental problem is that we are spiritually asleep to this spiritual gift. This knowledge came home to me the other day when one person spoke of be bored after attending a session on practicing spiritual meditation. My response to her was that such events bore me too. The reason way is that I don't need to practice spiritual meditation because I am a spiritual meditation. Her reply was, "Exactly!" This is living the glorified life, and sharing the riches of God's glory.

C. **Vs. 25 – 29**, is proof-texting. It would be an interesting task to explore why Paul uses these particular references from Hosea, Genesis and Isaiah. What is there about the purposes of Hosea, Genesis and Isaiah that Paul found attractive by which to make his point? We'll leave this for another day.

WS: However, here is a brief Gut Trip Analysis (mostly intuitional). In each of the following references, the problem addressed is that the covenanted (awakened) people are facing away from the Presence of God.; they are facing toward destruction.

Hosea: ". . . my people who are not my people. . . my loved one who is not my loved one." = my sons and daughters who don't live like it.

Genesis: ". . . only a remnant will be saved." = The remnant are those living the awakened life.

Isaiah: "Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants. . ." = The Awakened are these descendants; we are the sons and daughters of God.

Alright folks, talk to me.