Lesson # 18, pp. 108 - 114
TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY
Topic: Matthew 14: 13 to 16:20 “Demonstrating new directions for ministry”

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 eighteenth lesson in this series, and it is associated with "Life In The Spiritual Oasis." 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.

### A Partial Summary Chart of the Gospel of Matthew

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I. Read the assigned reading at one time.

Today’s lesson introduces the Teacher’s Second Handbook concerning living the **humane and gracious** life working for justice and mercy; i.e., teaching us how to live in the Spiritual Oasis. It is helpful to remember that we humans are created to live in the Spiritual Oasis – this is HOME represented by living **dependently on God**. The human experience is represented in the story of Adam and Eve who are created to live in the Spiritual Oasis, but who choose to live **independently from God**. The result is they live ON VACATION but believe they are living AT HOME. Our situation is defined by their circumstances. Our need is to re-awaken to our intended creation of living dependently on God.

The purpose of the 2nd Teacher’s Handbook is to teach this lesson, and it is focused on “Life in the Spiritual Oasis.” The Third Handbook embraces “Moral Lessons.”

As you read, observe the many new directions for ministry offered as we become aware of living in the Spiritual Oasis. We know it is to “other side” that we are called in
Vs. 14: 22. It is learning to live with the resources of the “other side” that is our challenge.

1. Vss. 14: 13 – 21, Living in the Spiritual Oasis is the experience of compassion and servanthood. The result of our experience is that people are fed and healed. Those with whom we live and work “eat and were satisfied.” It is this sense of satisfaction that is the sign we are operating out of the Spiritual Oasis.

2. Vss. 14: 22 – 36, Living in the Spiritual Oasis is the experience of living over the storms of life. I like this story because it reminds us that the Spiritual Oasis is found in the midst of the storms of life; we do not escape tragedy, pain or suffering just because we’ve found the Spiritual Oasis. However, those who live in the Spiritual Oasis are those who know how to embrace The Way Life Is (TWLI) because we are transformed by life in the Spiritual Oasis and not the storms of life.

WS: In our discussions about this passage, an interesting speculation was raised about the place, and use of, anger. The conversation ranged around the topic of “anger at injustice.” Anger is another “storm of life,” and the focus is on righteous anger; i.e., anger to bring about At-One-Ment.

As we embrace the storms, we are no longer victims but victors. Again, this section ends with the healing of many who “touch his cloak” (NIV). Those who live in the Spiritual Oasis experience the power of Jesus’ cloak.

What is this “power” and where does Jesus get it?

WS: Jesus “power” is that of At-One-Ment. That is, the result of the use of this power heals divisions and separations. Jesus got his power from the same place we get it, from his Spiritual Oasis, and his Altar of Spiritual Resources. For some reason, Jesus is profoundly turned in to his spiritual center (Spiritual Oasis). It is interesting to note that this same power is available to us. As a consequence, the more we are “tuned in” to The Christ (revealed in Jesus), the more “turned in” we are to our spiritual resources. The result is the more awakened we become to living in our Spiritual Oasis.

3. Vss. 15: 1 – 20, Those living in off of the resources of the Spiritual Oasis live by a different set of values. These values are based on the formula of WWJD (What would Jesus do?) The reward for choosing these values is that people experience a new sense of freedom from a life that degrades humanity, in exchange for a freedom for a life that brings us into At-One-Ment.

The key words in this section are in Vs. 15: 10, “Listen and understand.” The demonstration of new ministries in these scriptures points to the difference between the role of tradition and “command of God” (Vss. 15: 3b). This command of God is to live in At-One-Ment! As long as tradition assists us toward this goal, then tradition serves God. When tradition stands in the way of this goal, then tradition becomes the antithesis of At-One-Ment.

As Jesus explains to his disciples, it is “the things that come from the heart” (Vss. 15: 18) that make the difference between being clean and unclean.

4. Vss. 15: 29 to 39, The structure of this set of scriptures is interesting. Observe that Matthew bookends this section (14:13 – 16:20) between two amazing feedings of the 5,000 and the 4,000. Note that the people bring “the lame, blind, cripple, mute and many others.” Who are these people? I recognize my face among them. Can you recognize yours? We come hungry to the Spiritual Oasis” but we leave satisfied (Vss. 15:37), and we leave with an overabundance of spiritual food.
II. The assignment—

1. Vss. 15: 21 – 28, In light of the Spiritual Oasis, why does Matthew put in this story of the Canaanite woman. Obviously, she is not an Israelite. What are the “crumbs” she’ll take from Jesus?

**WS:** The use of the diminutive work “little” offers a metaphorical play: little dog, little crumbs, little woman. (Our English translations do not reveal this to us. I'm told the Hebrew/Aramaic language does.) In biblical Israel, dogs ate scrappes of leftovers outside the house. Puppies, and little dogs, stayed under the table and could eat the little crumbs that fell to the floor. The little woman made the wise observation that these crumbs would not waste any food prepared for the Jews, because it was just little crumbs.

   The region of this story takes place around Tyre and Sidon in northern Palestine (Israel). The woman is an outsider—a non-Jew, or a gentile. The little crumbs are a simile for the Good News that we are not victims but victors. For additional commentary, an interesting resource is www.crystalinks.com/canaan.

2. Vss. 16: 1 – 4, What is the new ministry suggested? What does it mean to live in the Spiritual Oasis and be able to interpret the signs of the times?

**WS:** The experience of Jonah is an interesting speculation. Those who rebel against doing God’s Will (Perfect At-One-Ment) pay a price for their actions. (Remember the axiom: The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself.) Jonah paid the price of his disobedience by being swallowed up by his decision and then became vomit. Jonah’s new ministry is to awaken others to the resources of their Spiritual Oasis. The work of The Church of the Awakened is to do likewise.

3. Vss. 16: 5 – 12, What is the “yeast” of the Pharisees and the Sadducees?

**WS:** The yeast of the Pharisees is the experience of allowing tradition and “rules” to stand in the way of preaching the Good News (victim/victor).

4. Vss. 16: 13 – 20, Answer the question, “Who do people say the Son of Man is? Do a little research on the use of the term “Son of Man” as opposed to “Son of God.” Why would Matthew choose to make this difference?

**WS:** SON OF MAN—In this instance, Jesus as the Christ is experienced as the 2nd Adam—the New Creature (the Awakened). This term is used in Ezekiel whose mission is to do the work of God. Ezekiel may use this term to describe himself. Here in Matthew, it is used to prefigure Jesus as the Christ, the New Awakened Creature.

   The most frequent use in the New Testament of the term “Son of Man” is in Daniel 7:3. This is Daniel’s Apocalyptic vision or revelation/epiphany in which the symbols of the Eagle, Bear, 4-Headed Leopard, and the 100-Headed Monster, apparently point to the powers of separation (evil) that rules the earth, to be replaced by the 5th symbol of “The Son of Man,” the power of At-One-Ment.

   Jesus used of this title represents his consciousness of his prophetic role as “The Son of Man” whose purpose is to bring about At-One-Ment and to illuminate the Good News (Victim/Victor).

   The use of the term “Son of Man” also may be associated with Jesus’ concern of the Pharisees concerning blaspheme. In 16:20, Matthew closes
this section with the statement, “Then he [Jesus] warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.”

The following is for those who want to know the difference between the use of “Son of Man” and “Son of God.” The use of “Son of Man” refers to Jesus identification as the 2nd Adam. The use of “Son of God” refers to him as the Messiah.

For more on these two topics, an interesting viewpoint in provide at: www.searchgodsword.org/enc/isb/view.cgi?word=Son+of+Man&action=Lookup.

Probably, the first part of this address will take you there if the information gets garbled for some reason. I usually don’t have much luck with long website addresses.

Then, in light of the Spiritual Oasis, who do YOU say the Son of Man is?

WS: In light of The Spiritual Oasis, Jesus is a Guide and a Caretaker of the Spiritual Oasis. As Guide—Jesus demonstrates the experience of awakening to the Spiritual Oasis with which we all are born. As Caretaker—Jesus demonstrates how to continue our awakening through compassion and works of justice.

ABOUT THIS SCRIPTURE: Material from SermonStarter---Matthew 14: 13 – 21, August 3, 2008
This is a “Teaching moment”

Because Matthew is a composite of three Teaching Manuals, always it is necessary to think of what Jesus is out to teach. In this case it is, “The Cost of Teaching.” The question to keep before us is, “What is it the teacher must give up in order to clearly communicate living in the Spiritual Oasis of the Kingdom of Heaven?” The Gut Trip answer is the suspension of their disbelief. Jesus’ teachers always pull their metaphors through Jesus.

Sanctification

This sermon is about the experience of sanctification, or leading the Holy Life. The significance of sanctification is found in the experience of eating and being satisfied; i.e., being made holy. Ground in your own experience what it means to eat at Jesus’ table. In Gut Trip Analysis, whenever Jesus goes over to the other side, or “withdrew to a solitary place” (Vs. 13), this is the gospel writer’s code telling us this is where Jesus is fed and from which Jesus feeds us. In other words, the “other side” is the Kingdom of Heaven.

ABOUT THIS SCRIPTURE: Material from SermonStarter---Matthew 14: 13 – 21, August 3, 2008

About today’s scripture. Often this lesson gets lost in the attempt to apply the physical or literal interpretation of these events (Head Trip Analysis). It is NOT the event or the experience that is transformed; rather we are transformed in our relationship to these experiences and events. For example, it is not necessary that we walk on water like Jesus. What is important is that we transform the impossible into the possible. While we can be victimized, we are not victims. We are victors. In this way, we are transformed in our relationship to The Way Life Is (TWLI).
Jesus’ kingdom from “another place”---

In Vs. 18: 36, Jesus supports this position, “But now my kingdom is from another place.” Where is this “other place?” It is on the other side of the coin while the worldly side is on the obverse. Howard Thurman, the mentor of Martin Luther King who carried Thurman’s book on ethics during his march at Selma. Thurman reminds us, “We are not Human Beings having a spiritual experience. Rather, we are Spiritual Beings having a human experience. (Emphasis mine).

In other words, the coin was created as spiritual but lives boldly in the world. Until this is fully embraced, then the death and resurrection always will be a problem, to say nothing about the problem of the birth of Jesus.

The Human Side is characterized by the world and our possessions. The Spiritual side is characterized by being possessed by God who is experienced as Perfect At-One-Ment. The human side is characterized by political, social and religious customs and organizations. The spiritual side is characterized by self surrender of our possessions so that we live in the Perfect At-One-Ment of God; that is our meager attempts to live in At-One-Ment with self and neighbor are completed by God who is experienced as Perfect At-One-Ment.

What is “the Truth”?

It is necessary that we have a clear grounding of what the Truth is. In this scripture three views of truth are given:

- **Political Truth** based on Roman and a Greek institutional and civil law represented in Pilate;
- **Religious Truth** represented in the Jews and the Law of Moses. These are the ones who want Jesus crucified;
- **Spiritual Truth** represented in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Spiritual Truth**, when viewed through the Christian experience is,

1) the Awakened who surrender to being possessed by their possessions;
2) who follow Jesus’ example and die to that which is preventing them from living the surrendered life of practicing At-One-Ment; and
3) who experience the profound joy of fulfilling our human intended purpose of doing pleasurable things (i.e., righteous things including “tough love”) for the sake of God through Christ.

This is the way Gut Trip Analysis views the Spiritual Truth that is embraced by Jesus in this scripture.

ABOUT THIS SCRIPTURE: Material from SermonStarter---Matthew 14: 13 – 21, July 13, 2005, Year A

The key to the sermon is: This sermon is about the experience of sanctification, or leading the Holy Life. The significance of sanctification is found in the experience of eating and being satisfied; i.e., being made holy. Ground in your own experience what it means to eat at Jesus table.

In Gut Trip Analysis, whenever Jesus goes over to the other side, or “withdrew to a solitary place” (vs. 13), this is the gospel writer’s code telling us this is where Jesus is fed and from which Jesus feeds us. In other words, the “other side” is the Kingdom of Heaven. Note, however, that it is the same lake, just a different experience from a different experience.

The ONE THING to get said: We awaken to the experience that our spiritual life is discovered with our worldly life. This awakening comes from the new perspective demonstrated by Jesus. As we awaken, then we experience being fed spiritually.
The key to the sermon is: Living on the “other side”---

This is an easy sermon to preach because the storms of life are so readily experienced. The struggle here is going to be grounding what it means to “go on ahead to the other side.” I have never seen any commentary take seriously this little phrase, yet the Gospel writers use it frequently. It is my own interpretation but I find it useful for drawing the distinction between living in the world where we drown, and living in the world where we swim eternally in peace. This is the difference between living on this side “in the desert vacation” in this world, and living on the other side “in the spiritual oasis.” Note however, that the other side is not somewhere else. It is the spiritual dimension that is experienced in the middle of our “desert vacation;” we find “Home/Oasis in the midst of—in the middle of—our human experience, only our perspective is transformed. In the one we are victims, in the other we are victors. It is the same world but the perspective is worlds apart!

Unfortunately, this lection reading stops too soon. It misses the result of “crossing over” found in 14: 34 – 36. The result is that people are healed! Our lection picks up a different result that ends in worshipping Jesus as the “Son of God” (Vs. 33B).

Worshipping the Son of God—

In order to be obedient to the lection reading, and because the lection stops too soon, it is necessary to think through the significance of “worshipping the Son of God.” To “worship” is to “awaken” to living the intended purpose for which we are created; i.e., to live the humane and gracious life working for Justice and Mercy. This is authentic worship!

The “Son of God” is experienced as the demonstration of what it means to turn away from, i.e., to die to the barriers preventing us from fulfilling our intended purpose. In sum, to worship the Son of God is to live the awakened life so as to fulfill our intended purpose.

Please note the direct reference to “God.” Matthew is noted for this statement. The other Gospels use “Son of Man,” which is a reference to the humanity of Jesus; this is Jesus’ purpose that demonstrates the humane quality of living the Awakened life (sanctification). Matthew’s use of the statement, “Son of God,” highlights Jesus’ function that demonstrates how to die to the barriers preventing our fulfillment (glorification).

Unfortunately, this lection reading stops too soon. It misses the result of “crossing over” found in 14: 34 – 36. The result is that people are healed! Our lection picks up a different result that ends in worshipping Jesus as the “Son of God” (vs. 33b).
The ONE THING to get said: When we keep our eyes on Jesus we can “Take courage. . . be not afraid.”