TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY

According to our Study Chart: This is the third major section of our chart, “The renewal experience through the ministry of the spirit of freedom.” This is a new subsection based on “Applying the context of Christ against hopelessness.” This is the second of four lessons in this subsection.

Read the assigned reading at one time: 2 Corinthians 4: 1 - 18

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<th>“The Applied Ethic of Working Together in Christian Community”</th>
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<td>2nd Corinthians 4: 1 – 18: The Apostle’s Defense Against Hopelessness: Resulting in joyful living in touch with Perfect At-One-Ment</td>
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<td>The Apostle’s Defense</td>
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<td>The Apostles defend themselves against those preaching a gospel of despair and hopelessness</td>
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| The Apostles act plainly so that light is found in the darkness | We are clay jars subject to hopelessness to which, in freedom, we choose to die. The result is living the awakened life | The Awakened live for “Jesus’ sake” | The Hope of living the Awakened life | The proof is in your joy | Our human pain reminds us of the joy of living in the experience of the eternal understood as Perfect At-
| Vss., 1 – 6 | Vss. 7 – 10 | Vss. 11 – 12 | Vss. 13 – 14 | Vss. 15 – 16 | Vss. 17 – 18 |

“We are not Human Beings having a spiritual experience; rather we are Spiritual Beings having a human experience.” (Howard Thurman)

“We live from the inside out.” This is living the synthesized life.” (A friend)
I. The first assignment --- Reflect on the following and be prepared to share your own insights. (It's OK to work together before class!)

A. Vs. 1, The question was raised: What is God’s mercy and what is the ministry of the Apostles and the early church?

**WS:** How is this God’s mercy? God’s mercy is to never let us be more nor less than we are created to be; that is, we are victors, living the human life in At-One-Ment with everything and everyone.

The IHOPers worked on defining the difference between “grace” (as a gift) and “mercy” (as a need). They finally decided that both words were “cousins.”

The IHOPers concluded that all of us are created in God’s image which is experienced as living the human life in At-One-Ment with all things.

B. Vs. 2, What is the experience of “setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s [sic] conscience?”

**WS:** The questions was raised, Would living only to satisfy/gratify myself be shameful, and why or why not? “Why would living in Christian community apart from the world be shameful?” The IHOPers concluded that it would be shameful because this would be “living in the world,” while Christians are encouraged to “live in the world, but not be of the world.”

How do we set ourselves plainly before the conscience of others? The IHOPers response was that Christians “walk the walk and talk the talk.”

C. Vs. 3, What is it that veils the Gospel, and for whom and why?

**WS:** The Gospel is veiled when it is not understood that total surrender is necessary.

Why are such people “perishing?” They are like people waiting for their ship to come in when it already is in! It is necessary to other our eyes to see we already have all that we need as long as we operate in the context of Christ.

D. Vs. 4, Identify the “gods of the age.”

**WS:** Greed, selfishness, pride were listed as starting points.

E. Vs. 6, What is the experience of the “glory of God in the face of Christ?”

**WS:** The “glory of God” is the experience of living the surrendered life in At-One-Ment.

What is it that makes the face of Christ shine, and how do we experience it?

**WS:** To live “in the face of Christ” is to freely choose to live in complete surrender. As one IHOPer concluded, “You can accomplish much as long as you don’t care who gets the credit.” (Teilhard de Chardin)

F. Vs. 10, What is our experience to “carry around in our body the death of Jesus?”

**WS:** We “carry around in our body the death of Jesus” when we experience the victimization that “The Way Life Is” provides us, and we intentionally die to
becoming victims of it. In this way we experience the resurrection and the hope that is living the victorious life.

G. **Vs. 18,** How do you experience the intent of this verse?  
**WS:** Paul makes the point that Christians “fix our eyes not on what we see, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” Using Gut Trip Analysis, Paul is not promoting something supernatural, rather what is “not seen” is a part of reality to which we are blind. It is when we live the surrendered life “in the face of Christ” that are spiritual eyes are opened to see a part of reality never explored before.

   It is necessary to understand that the “eternal” is not a place but a relationship to God. Only God is eternal. As we live the surrendered life to God do we experience the eternal.

H. **(Just for the fun of it.)** **Vs. 16,** “... outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”  
**WS:** My point, of course, is that the phrase supports Gut Trip Analysis. We confirm that we are awakening to our inner resources (the resources of our Spiritual Altars) when we experience renewal; this is the sign of our awakenment. This, of course, is done while our natural/human bodies are dying from the moment of our birth.

II. The second assignment is to answer the following questions in our usual format.

   **It is helpful to begin to brood about WHY the Corinthian church was unable to solve this problem themselves.** When we get around to asking this question we’ll be dealing with one of the “contradictions” preventing their own solutions. These contradictions are not always named in the scripture, but frequently implied. However, Paul provides his solution which gives us some idea about this very deep barrier. At this point we do some intuitional work that always is revealing.

A. **How does this material express the surface barriers or problems?**  
**Vs. 2A,** The Corinthian Church were practicing “secret and shameful ways,” and distorting the Christian message. The message is distorted when we embrace the hope of changing our situation rather than changing the individuals relationship to their situation; i.e., embracing the hope of re-growing a cut off leg is distortion, instead of deliberately embracing the possibility of being the best one-legged dancer.”

   Recently, one person testified concerning a blind women in their neighborhood. She has a beautiful voice and sings semi-professionally. This is a woman who embraces possibility instead of the hopelessness of having sight-full eyes to see. It can be said, this woman has eyes to see things that those of us who have human sight will never see.
Vs. 4, Paul observes that the Corinthian people are blinded by “the gods of this age.” The IHOPers observed that greed, selfishness, and the desire for things/toys, are the gods that still plague us today.

B. Describe Paul’s solution.
Vs. 2B, Paul’s solution is “setting forth the truth plainly. . . to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” For Paul, “the truth” always is living the humane life in At-One-Ment. Paul notes that this is done “plainly” when the Apostles walk the talk, or have congruence between who they are and what they say. Lastly, Paul makes the point that this is done “in the sight of God.” The way we experience the “sight of God” is to fulfill our intended purpose as human being by living the humane life.

Vs. 5, Paul makes the point here that “. . .we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord.” This is a solution to the surface barriers by intentionally living as servants of Christ.

Vss. 15 – 18, The proof that this solution is working as evidenced in the “thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.” God’s “glory” always is Perfect At-One-Ment.

C. What does Paul’s solution suggest about the Deeper Problem? (Note: this usually results in new information.)
Vss. 3, 4, The deeper, underlying problem, is that people cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” In other words, “the light of the gospel” is the Good News that we are not victims to the victimization of our times. The “glory of Christ” is the inner peace and deep joy that comes from living this victory.

Alright folks, talk to me.