

SESSION 2 – Saturday Morning 7:00 – 12:00 (MNSJR,2/2007)

Greeting: **L:** Praise the Lord, Christ is Risen. **R:** He is risen indeed. **Amen. Amen.**

7:00 am Worship (Geneva 4)

Context: Xn worship reflects TWLI. Traditionally, there are 3 Acts of Worship: confession (looking at TWLI), praise (thanks for TWLI) and dedication (offer selves +possessions +prayers on behalf of TWLI) Corresponding 3 Moods: humility, gratitude, and compassion.

7:20 Song: “Lord’s Prayer” – tune: “Midnight in Moscow”

Conversation: “Jesus the Man” (historical reality, like Abraham Lincoln) (**Quick**)

1. [Round – Name, then] **How old** were you when you first **heard about Jesus**?
2. [Round – Name, then] What are early pictures of Jesus? **Now?** Look like, how **tall, fat** or lean, **wear**, body hair, head hair, beard, voice, walk, nose. **Stylistic** descriptions: mannerisms; relationships (with his **family**); establishment/ disestablishment; how would a psychiatrist have talked about him: any neuroses?
3. [Round] What **stories** about Jesus are your **favorites**?
4. [Round] Doing a short historical bio of Jesus. Some key phrases: **born** in, **raised** in, went to **school**, then, then, **then** . . .
5. What did Jesus **say** that **changed history**?
6. What did he **do** that **change history**?
7. **Jn. Macquarrie** says Jesus was the “ultimate Jew, the Lord of the Church (save that for tomorrow), and the authentic human.” Which Jesus addresses you more deeply: **ultimate religious person** or **authentic human**? How so?
8. Anyone ever wanted to be like Jesus? What would that look like today?
9. So, what **is it about Jesus the man** that is **all-important** re to our **faith journeys**, **assuming we want to follow him**. (his **faith in God**, his **freedom**, his **compassion**).

(**Transition**) We have been talking about Jesus the Man, a historical reality. When we come back, we will talk about Christ the Event, the even more powerful historical reality.

7:55 Meal Ritual (context: Fifth City Preschool ritual, in response to Between the Arrows of last night; secular, but confronts us with how we relate to TWLI – our grandchildren love it, as do we.) (“Songs, Rituals” folder)

Food is Good. Right? (**Right!**)

Life is Good. Right? (**Right!**)

All is Good. Right? (**Right!**)

What do you say? (**It’s Okay!**)

What do you say? (**It’s Okay!**)

What do you say? (**It’s Okay!**)

(The ritual tells me I can be self-conscious to the relationship I’m deciding to take to life. I can usually say “wrong” and “not okay” more easily than “right” and “okay.” The ritual gives me a chance to redecide that fundamental relationship to life.)

Let us feast.

8:00 Saturday Breakfast (eat at tables with UMC sign)

8:45 Presentation: Christ Symbol (> and X)

Greeting: (St. Paul) L: Grace is yours and peace,

R: from God Almighty and the Lord Jesus Christ. **L: Amen. R: Amen.**

Poetry: D.H. Lawrence: "New Heaven and New Earth" (5 min., pp. 75-79)

Context:

From **last night** (Arrows), the activity of that Mysterious Power we called "God" – **golfer** tells us "we have to play it like it lies." (Blt: **cynic, stoic, Xn – not the whole story: "something more"**). **This morning:** What allows us to take a **relationship** to that **Between The Arrows situation as good?** **This afternoon** we will talk about **radical Christian freedom** that is the **gift** of the Holy Spirit. **Tonight** use our theological glasses to reflect on a **great movie**. **Tomorrow morning** we will talk about the **church and our faith journey.**

8:55 Story: "Long Tall Sally" (pp. 247-48 in *TTE*)

A campus minister friend at a Texas university tells a story about Sally that illustrates **Jesus' type of therapy.**

She was very tall and did all she could to cover up that fact. She walked humped over with her long hair falling straight down over most of her face and neck. She wore no heels. She obviously thought she had problems, and she came into his office frequently to share them. She began to get to my friend. One day after she "dumped" on him again, he lost control. He snapped, "**Sally, do you know what your real problem is? You've got a long neck and you refuse to accept that fact!**" As he said the word "fact," her long arm came down with a vengeance, leaving fingernail marks down the left side of his face. As he pulled out his handkerchief to see if she had brought blood, he saw her run past his window, her coat flying.

He looked all over for her, asked everyone he knew that might know where she was. Nobody knew. A couple of days went by. No word. He feared the worst. Then, he caught sight of a tall woman walking down the sidewalk. She was very attractive with low heels, hair pulled back, head held erect, walking with a sense of pride. She wasn't beautiful but was a captivating presence. Lo and behold, it was Sally. He couldn't believe the transformation.

Had his spontaneous remark been somehow responsible for this? Yes, indeed. After her rage, her flight, her hiding out, feeling sorry for herself, in despair over the situation, something clicked. She said it was like truth got spoken, a word that communicated to her that she was a tall, long-necked lady who could accept or refuse to accept that fact that had become so fundamental to her life. And in the flash of a moment she was enabled to accept that fact. She became "**Long-necked Sally**" with passion. Reality broke into her life. "If this is who I really am," she said to herself, "**I will be my tallness with grace.**" She was like a new person after that (new born, "accomplishing a resurrection"). He said she didn't come by his office anymore but spoke pleasantly with him when they met in passing.

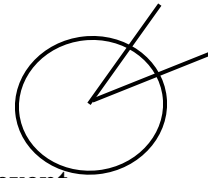
The therapy of truth was Jesus' way. What came as bad news was often the good news of *the way life is, the way our lives really are.* Do you remember the **story of the man by the pool?** (Newest translation: He had to be brought to Jesus on that rotten stretcher that he had lived on for over thirty years. It must have stunk! Jesus noticed him and opened the conversation. "What's your problem?" (Jesus wasn't much for small-talk.) The man said, "Oh, I've been sick for all these years, and nobody cares." What did Jesus say? "Bless your heart! Here, let me help you?" No. He said with authority, "Do you want to get well? Then pick up your bed and walk." And

did the man do it? First, he rehearsed all his excuses, one more time, why he couldn't live his life as it was. When the angels stirred the pool, the first one in was healed. "I have tried hundreds of times but was never able to get into the pool first." Jesus just looked at him while the man rehearsed reasons he couldn't get well. Jesus said again, "What are you waiting on? Pick up your bed and walk."

"But, but . . ." "Pick up all your excuses and walk. Stop blaming anyone for anything. Pick up your life – which is all you've got – and get on with it. You are going to die lying around being a victim. I can't believe you've been here thirty-eight years. Get up!" And what happened? The man picked up his bed and walked. He didn't even know what happened or who it was telling him to pick up his life.

Do you suppose Jesus' healing command came as good news at first hearing? Jesus had that way about him that called people to live their real lives here and now: Truth Therapy. His command cut to the quick as he brought people in touch with the truth of their lives. He brings the truth and we have to say, Yea or Nay. Will we live out of the truth, or will we, like Sally, attack the one who brings the truth, and go on living out of illusion?

**9:05 Draw Circle = my illusory story about my life . . .
Arrow = truth-event breaks in and breaks my illusion**



At breakfast Jesus the Man. Now we want to talk about Christ the event. Who wrote the first books we have in the NT? We want to look at Paul's story about his historical Christ event.

Tillich Paper

- Tillich preached this sermon about 1948 at Union Theological Seminary, NY.
- It is in my **Third Testament**.
- A **revolutionary** piece of literature.
- Only **one paragraph**.
- You must go back and read it all to find out what **sin** is, what **despair** is, what **reunion** is, what the **mystery-depth-and greatness** of life is, what your **origin-aim-destiny** is.
- Just one paragraph . . . and you will want to **memorize part IV** as did the 23rd Psalm.

Paragraph 12 (go through quickly and let **divide it into 4 parts**) (read down to s. 24)

1. PAUL'S EXPERIENCE

¹"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," says Paul in the same letter in which he describes the unimaginable power of separation and self-destruction within society and the individual soul. ²He does not say these words because sentimental interests demand a happy ending for everything tragic. ³He says them because they describe the **most overwhelming and determining experience of his life**. ⁴In the picture of Jesus as the Christ, which appeared to him at the moment of his greatest separation from others, from himself and God, he found himself accepted in spite of his being rejected. ⁵**And when he found that he was accepted, he was able to accept himself and to be reconciled to others.** ⁶The moment in which grace struck him and overwhelmed him, he

was reunited with that to which he belonged, and from which he was estranged in utter strangeness.

2. GRACE IS NOT ...

⁷Do we know what it means to be struck by grace? ⁸It does *not* mean that we suddenly believe that God exists, or that Jesus is the Savior, or that the Bible contains the truth. ⁹To believe that something *is* is almost contrary to the meaning of grace. ¹⁰Furthermore, grace does not mean simply that we are making **progress in our moral self-control**, in our fight against special faults, and in our relationships to others and to society. ¹¹Moral progress may be a fruit of grace; but it is not grace itself, and it can even prevent us from receiving grace. ¹²For there is too often a graceless acceptance of Christian doctrines and a graceless battle against the structures of evil in our personalities. ¹³Such a graceless relation to God may lead us by necessity either to arrogance or to despair. ¹⁴It would be better to refuse God and the Christ and the Bible than to accept them without grace. ¹⁵For if we accept without grace, we do so in the state of separation, and can only succeed in deepening the separation. ¹⁶We cannot transform our lives, unless we allow them to be transformed by that stroke of grace.

3. GRACE IS ...WHEN IT STRIKES

¹⁷It happens; or it does not happen. ¹⁸And certainly it does not happen if we try to force it upon ourselves, just as it shall not happen so long as we think, in our self-complacency, that we have no need of it. ¹⁹**Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness.** ²⁰**It strikes us when we walk through the dark valley of a meaningless and empty life.** ²¹**It strikes us when we feel that our separation is deeper than usual, because we have violated another life, a life which we loved, or from which we were estranged.** ²²**It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility, and our lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us.** ²³**It strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection of life does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades, when despair destroys all joy and courage.** (stop reading)

(Trap: I'm Okay ... on Board ... X out)

4. GRACE IS ... and OUR RESPONSE (s. at a time) **Not read/ go to questions below**

²⁴Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: "You are accepted. ²⁵*You are accepted*, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. ²⁶Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. ²⁷Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. ²⁸Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. ²⁹*Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!*" ³⁰If that happens to us, we experience grace. ³¹After such an experience we may not be better than before, and we may not believe more than before. ³²But everything is transformed. ³³In that moment, grace conquers sin, and reconciliation bridges the gulf of estrangement. ³⁴And nothing is demanded of this experience, no religious or moral or intellectual presupposition, nothing but *acceptance*.

9:20 Let's Recap:

24. “Sometimes . . . at that moment” . . . **what moment?**
 24/25. Wave of light . . . **voice saying what?** How else say Y.A.A.?... **Accepted by whom?**
 26/28. What are the **5 do nots?** ... What is being said here?
 29. What **do?** **SATFTYAA**. Which of those **eight words** most important? *Simply accept the fact that you are accepted.* (So, **what do you have to do to be saved?** . . . **When are we accepted? Always already. Why do we live out of the illusion we’re not accepted?**)
 30. If **what** happens to us we **experience grace?** (Quickly **draw Triangle: SIN deep separation (while yet sinners)** . . . **WORD EVENT yaa** . . . **FAITH RESPONSE satftyaa – we’ll come back to this in few minutes**)
 31. After such an **experience:** (other words): **moment, strike, happening, encounter, event**
 32. But everything is **WHAT? Transformed;** sentence before: **nothing changed**
 33. In that moment **WHAT? Grace conquers sin**—only **quasi religious** statement; after the **secular** articulation of grace; what is **sin; separated from whom?** (ss. 4-5 – read)
 34. What is **not demanded?** Nothing but **WHAT?** So what if we do not accept the fact that we are accepted? (Grace does not happen to us at that moment.)

LET US ALL READ PART IV IN UNISON

9:45 SELF TALK

(Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha* (movie: Sophia Loren), when Cervantes says to her, **my lady, my queen, my guiding angel**. Not me. **I’m nothing but a whore!**). Some of us **can’t even accept:** You look beautiful. **Not me, ugly.** You are loved. **Not me, unlovable.** You are forgiven. **Not me, unforgivable.** You are accepted. **Not me, unacceptable.**

“Don’t deserve it? **I’m not okay the way I am** until I do something to earn it all – the human way. Thank you anyway. I wish it were true.”

(Transition) **We are left with the unbelievable possibility to elect or reject Word about our lives: What is the Word about our lives?**

Joseph Mathews (I read)

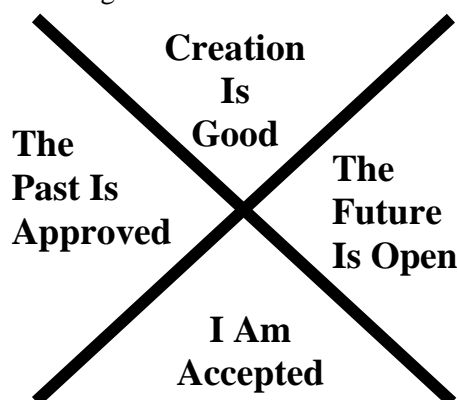
“Every situation you find yourself in, until the day nobody finds you anymore, calls for . . . a Jesus. This is your commission, your assignment, to be Jesus in history. . . . [How bout that for a definition of vocation?]

“I had a chance to love the Aboriginal people in Australia. I wrote a bit of poetry—terrible poetry—but it spoke to them about the meaning of their past, including the brutality of the white man. It painted a new possibility of the future of black people across the world. It laid out the meaning of the present in terms of their real demands. That’s what I mean by divine love.

“That’s all Jesus did. . . . He delivered the **word that all is good** just as it is, in spite of all the suffering in life; that **I am received**, in spite of my bag full of neuroses, fears, and faults; that **my past is approved**, in spite of all my personal tragedy and my mistakes; and that **my future is open**, in spite of all the problems and looming crises—even death.”

9:55 The X (Christ) word

ALL IS GOOD:
life, me, past, future –
right now and forever!



1. Creation is Good (“Yah. Very Good. I did not goof.”) (Present is Good)
2. **I am received** (accepted) (I am Good) (Paul & Sally) (Rollo May: illegitimate child)
3. Past is approved (Past is Good) (Marilyn Monroe/man by pool/13.7b yrs/6m Jews)
4. Future is open (Future is Good) (All is Possible) w/ global warming/terrorism

Are you hearing the **WORD**, folks? It’s an **unbelievable Word** when you think . . .

Turn to the **Dynamics of Grace** (**TRIANGLE**) (**Quickly point out the parts**)

1. **Deep Separation** (illusion) from **self/others/GOB** – illusion rather than Truth:
UNION: We are always united, but seldom are aware of the fact, huh?
2. **Event/Word: YAA**
3. **Faith: Yes! (SATFTYAA) WHEN THE 3 DYNAMICS HAPPEN, WHAT?**

This **Word of all words** is **in history**, and **in our history**. It has **happened to us over and over**, and will **never stop** coming, for it is the **grace of God** through the **Christ event**.

L: Thanks be to God

R: and our Lord Jesus Christ. **L: Amen. R: Amen.**

10:25 Grace Exercise(s) (or personal grace reflections)

Song: “Good News” page ____ in the song book (What struck you about this song?)

We want to do **Grace Exercises** now.

10:30 Grace Reflections (from the heart)

Take **20 minutes** write out your reflections re **significant moments grace in your life**.

- Pass out “**My Grace Reflection**” (with separate sheet of examples)

10:50 Grace Huddles

- **6 per huddle to share your written reflections (number off from 1-6, no spouses) assign **leaders**, who will keep it moving so everyone shares**
- **(#8) each will read how three events key to his/her journey to the Huddle**
- Decide/write down **as a Grace Huddle “What do events of grace do?”** to **report back** to the **Grace Plenary** (1 sentence: “These events of grace . . .” – can be a big sentence)

11:25 Grace Plenary Reflection

1. What **happened** in each group? (couple responses from each)
2. What did each group say was the **“grace events do”**? (the one sentence)
3. So what are the **DYNAMICS OF A GRACE EVENT?**
 - *In the midst of my separation (or illusion), an external event happens . . .*
 - *which occasions an interior crisis . . .*
 - *which opens me up to the truth of the way life is . . .*

- *and leaves me with the possibility to say YES to the WORD addressed to my life.*
- *When I accept my acceptance by saying YES to the WORD . . .*
- *I am reunited with GOB/others/self . . . at that moment . . . & will never forget it.*

4. What are the **gifts of grace**? (**get out phrases**: new life; resurrection in this life)

5. **“Grace is . . .”** (think couple of minutes and each come up with a phrase. . . .)

Let’s hear your phrases, please.

We all have experienced grace and know it’s the most important fact of our lives!

R.A.M.: Grace is always ours. /We say the *Yes* of faith and live./ **Amen.**

11:50 Song: “Amazing Grace,” (“House of Rising Sun”) adapted John P. Cock

We will meet back here at 2:30 . . .

After your **afternoon Personal Reflection**.

2 hours to **Meditate, Contemplate, Pray** -- (better by yourself)

Meditate:

- pass out **jpc meditations** (for reflection)
- read rest of the **4 theologians’ essays**
- read from a **book**

Contemplate:

- gaze at **nature** outdoors until it speaks to you
- do a **sketch**

Pray:

- write a **poem**
- write a **prayer**
- just **pray**

12:00 Meal Prayer: (Fifth City PS meal ritual) “Food/Life/All . . . Okay/Okay/Okay.”