

## Week 1:

### Chapter 1, Jesus as a Recognition Event

*"If you are searching, you must not stop until you find.*

*When you find, however; you will become troubled.*

*Your confusion will give way to wonder: in wonder you will reign over all things. Your sovereignty will be your rest."*

*~Gospel of Thomas*

*"...Recognition energy. It's the capacity to ground truth and spiritual experience in your own being."*

Page 8

"The knowledge of Jesus Christ is a unitive knowledge; it is the luminosity of my own true eternal being." In other words, to quote Psalm 36, "in your light we see light." Jesus Christ standing before the Samaritan woman becomes the mirror in which she sees not only the face of God but her own true face."

Page 12

### Chapter 2, Jesus in Context

Western Christianity is Roman Christianity. "The two chief earmarks of the Roman filter are that it tends to confuse unity with uniformity and it puts a high priority on order and authority... In the West, as I said, we early on lost the generosity of spirit.

Because of the rigid control oriented focus built into our western filter we struggle even to comprehend (let alone accept) the vibrancy, breath, diversity, and inclusiveness of early Christianity. We need to regain some of that breadth of vision before it is possible to even entertain the notion of Jesus as a wisdom master. Page 16

"In the year 367, Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria ordered the monks to destroy all the writings not specifically designated as canonical." Page 17

Among the texts founded in 1947 at Nag Hammadi was the gospel of Thomas. This ancient gospel portrays Jesus as a wisdom figure in the tradition of the Middle East, teaching understanding that comes through intuition instead of logic and dogma.

"The Christianity of the east saw things radically differently. Theirs was not a soteriology, but a sophiology. The words sophiology has its roots in the word wisdom (Sophia is the Greek word for wisdom.) Christianity was supremely a wisdom path. For the earliest Christians, Jesus was not the

Savior but the Life-Giver. In the original Aramaic of Jesus and his followers there was no word for salvation. Salvation was understood as a bestowal of life and to be saved was “to be made alive.”

“... Nowadays we would call him “the Enlightened one,” a person whose life is full, integrated, and flowing. Jesus’s disciples saw him as a master of consciousness, offering a path through which they too could become *Ihidaya*, enlightened ones... Sophiological Christianity focuses on the path. It emphasizes how Jesus is like us, how what he did in himself is something we are called to do in ourselves. By contrast soteriology tends to emphasize how Jesus is different from us “begotten not made,” belonging to a higher order of being and hence uniquely positioned as our mediator.” Page 21

Most of Christianity outside of western Christianity is sophiological, about wisdom not salvation.

Cynthia sums up Jesus’s teachings:

“He's proposing a total meltdown and a recasting of human consciousness, bursting through the tiny acorn-selfhood that we arrived on the planet with into the oak tree of our fully realized personhood. He pushes us toward it, teases us, taunts us, encourages us and ultimately walks us there.” Page 27

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.” Page 29

“It's not about right belief, it's about right practice.” Page 29

### **Chapter 3, The Kingdom of Heaven is Within You**

“The Kingdom of Heaven is Jesus’s own favorite way of describing a state we would call nowadays a “non-dual consciousness” or “unitive consciousness”... It sees no separation—not between God and humans, not between humans and other humans. And these are indeed Jesus’s two core teachings underlying everything he says and does.” pages 30 and 31

“I am in God, God is in you, you are in God, we are in each other”

“... I am the vine, you are the branches. Abide in me as I in you.” Page31

“The whole and the part lived together in mutual, loving reciprocity, each belonging to the other and dependent on the other to show forth the fullness of love. That's Jesus vision of no separation between human and Divine.” Page31

We are born with a binary, egoic mind. The egoic operating system is really a grammar of perception, a way of making sense of the world by dividing the field into subject and object, inside and outside—and one of the most important first task of early childhood is to learn how to run the operating system. Page 33

“A system based in duality can't possibly perceive oneness; it can't create anything beyond itself –only more duality and more trouble. So the drama goes on and on.” Page 35

“The heart has a different way of perceiving.” Page 35

“Blessed are the pure (that is, single) of heart, for they shall see God,” he says in the beatitudes, but who would have believed that he's not talking about perfecting one's virtue but about upgrading the operating system!...Unlike the egoic operating system, the heart does not perceive through differentiation.” Page 37

“By somehow managing to fall all the way through the egoic operating system, with its inherent rigidity and fear, into the fullness of love that can be known only in and through the heart. How do we do this will begin to unfold in the next chapter.” Page 40

**Points for discussion:**

- Does the idea of Jesus as a wisdom teacher, not the savior feel right, wrong, or in between?
- Are you aware of your own “operating system?” How do you see the world?
- Have you personal experience of seeing “through the heart,” of being non-binary. What happened if you did?
- How do you imagine Jesus got to that state of consciousness?

## Week 2:

### Chapter 4, The Path of Metanoia

“...Metanoia, usually translated as “repentance,” literally means “to go beyond the mind” or “into the larger mind.” It means to escape from the orbit of the egoic operating system, which by virtue of its internal hard wiring is always going to see the world in terms of polarized opposites, and move instead into the nondual knowingness of the heart, which can see and live from the perspective of wholeness.”  
Page 41

#### Beatitudes:

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.”*

“Thomas Merton once wrote, “At the center point of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and illusion, a point of pure truth, a point of spark which belongs entirely to God.”  
Page 42-43

*“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”* Blessed are the ones who have tamed the wild animal energy within them the passions and the compulsions of our lower nature. Page 44

*“Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.”* Page 45 “Blessed are those whose heart is not divided...When your heart becomes “single”—that is, when it desires one thing only, when it can live in perfect alignment with the resonant field of mutual yearning we call the “righteousness of God,” then you “see God.” This does not mean that you see God as an object (for that would be the egoic operating system) but rather you see through the eyes of nonduality, God is seeing itself.” Page 46

“Do the beatitudes appear differently to you against this wisdom backdrop? In these eight familiar sayings we can now see that Jesus is talking about radical transformation of consciousness, embraced through an attitude of inner receptivity, a willingness to enter the flow, a commitment to domesticate those violent animal programs within us, and above all a passionate desire to unify the heart. This is a very powerful fourfold path. It has both a contemporary and timelessness to it, not unlike the teachings you would hear today from the Dalai Lama or other great spiritual masters who have dedicated their lives to increasing the quality and quantity of human consciousness.” Page 47

“His parables are much closer to what the Zen tradition would be koans—profound paradoxes (riddles if you like) that are intended to turn the egoic mind upside down and push us into new ways of seeing.”  
Page 47

Cynthia compares the parables of the vineyard workers and the prodigal son. The egoic operating system will always get stuck in judgment and self-meritoriousness... “It isn't fair.” Page 49

“Let the dead bury the dead.” If you are attached to your own identity in this world –if that's the level your consciousness is tuned to –you won't be able to pick up the more subtle frequency he's operating on. You won't be able to follow his lead. “ Page 53

## Chapter 5, A Gospel of Thomas Sampler

In 1947 shepherds found a large clay pot with manuscripts buried for centuries inside. Examination of these texts has shown that there were competing Christianities and gospels in the early church. The Gospel of Thomas is a collection of wisdom sayings (logions) of Jesus that were excluded from the canon, but that reveal a path of awakening by a nondual teacher. Less about morals, these often shocking sayings, are intended to guide the disciple away from the ego and toward seeing the “kingdom” through the heart with love and acceptance. The Gospel of Thomas reinforces Cynthia's message that Jesus is about transformation rather than salvation.

### Logion 22

*When you are able*

*to make two become one,*

*the inside like the outside,*

*and the outside like the inside,*

*the higher like the lower,*

*so that a man is no longer male,*

*and a woman, female,*

*but male and female become a single whole, when you're able to fashion and eye,*

*to replace an eye,*

*and form a hand in place of a hand,*

*or a foot for a foot,*

*making one image supersede another —then you will enter in. Page 57*

“This kind of reunification can only happen once we have transcended the egoic operating system; it is in fact synonymous with transcendence. But what is the result of unification? The second half of his teaching takes us not into *sunyata*, emptiness (as one might expect in advaitic or Buddhist teaching), but into astonishing the fecundity. Once one reaches the causal point where all forms converge in oneness (and in this gospel Jesus frequently refers to that point as “the light”), immediately the grand dance of manifestation begins again, but this time you are master (or at least a conscious servant). Pages 57-58

(Cynthia is setting us up for her understanding of how Jesus rose from the dead)

Logion 77

*I am the light shining upon all things,  
I am the sum of everything,  
for everything has come forth from me, and towards me everything unfolds.  
Split a piece of wood, and I am there.  
Pick up a stone and you will find me there.*

In this most Zen-like of sayings, Jesus presents himself as the “suchness” –that quality of pristine awareness underlying and unifying everything the moment the light of one's awareness falls on it. This saying also sounds elegantly contemporary: a vivid description of what some physicists call “the zero-point field,” incorporating dimensions of symmetry, coherence and purposiveness. But what gives this saying its poetic power is the sharp contrast between the “macro” and the “micro.” “I am the sum of everything...” yet “Split a piece of wood, and I am there.” Page 59

Logion 108

*Whoever drinks what flows from my mouth will come to be as I am,  
and I will also come to be as they are,  
so that what is hidden will become manifest.*

**Point for discussion:**

- How would describe the state of consciousness that Jesus is pointing toward?
- Please have someone read one of the Beatitudes aloud, twice. Then sit for 5 minutes in silence contemplating what was said. When the spirit moves you speak (in some order) what you thought or noticed
- What would change if Jesus was seen as a teacher of wisdom, not savior?

### **Week 3**

#### **Chapter 6, Kenosis: The path of Self-Emptying Love Right**

“So far we have been looking at Jesus as typical of the wisdom tradition from which he comes. And enlightened master recognized by his followers as *Ihidaya*, or Single One, he teaches the art of *metanoia* or “going into the larger mind.” Underlying all his teachings is a clarion call to a radical shift in consciousness: away from the alienation and polarization of the egoic operating system and into the unified field of a divine abundance that can be perceived only through the heart.” Page 62

“What name might we give to this center? The apostle Paul suggests the word *kenosis*. In Greek the verb “kenosian” means to “let go,” and this is the word Paul chooses at the key moment in his

celebrated teaching in Philippians 2:9-16 in order to describe what the “mind of Christ” is all about.”  
Page 65

Here is what he has to say:

*Though his state was that of God,  
yet he did not deem equality with God something he should cling to.  
Rather he emptied himself,  
and assuming the state of a slave,  
he was born in human likeness.  
He, being known as one of us, humbled himself, obedient unto death, even on the cross.  
For this, God raised him on high and bestowed on him the name which is above every other name.  
So that at the name of Jesus,  
every knee should bend  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth.  
And so every tongue should proclaim “Jesus Christ is Lord!”  
to God the Father’s glory. Page 63-65*

“In this beautiful hymn, Paul recognizes that Jesus had only one “operational mode.” Everything he did, he did by self-emptying. He emptied himself and descended into human form. And he emptied himself still further (“even unto death on the cross”) and fell through the bottom to return to the realms of dominion and glory. In whatever life circumstance, Jesus always responded with the same motion of self emptying—or to put it another way, of the same motion of *descent*, going lower, taking the lower place not the higher.

What makes this mode so interesting is it is almost completely spiritually counterintuitive. For the vast majority of the world spiritual seekers, the way to God is up.” Pages 63-64

“There is another route to center: a more reckless path and extravagant path, which is attained not through storing up energy or concentrating the life force, but through throwing it away or giving it all away. The unitive point is reached not through the concentration of being but through the free squandering of it; not through acquisition or attainment but through self emptying; not through “up” but through “down.” This is the way of kenosis, the revolutionary path that Jesus introduced into the consciousness of the West.” “God is the prodigal that squanders Himself.”

The Jesus Trajectory

*Love is reckless, not reason.  
Reason seeks profit.  
Loves comes on strong, consuming herself, unabashed.  
Yet in the midst of suffering,  
Love proceeds like a millstone, Hard-surfaced and straight forward. Having died to self-interest,*

*She risks everything and asks for nothing.*

*Love gambles away every gift God bestows. Jalalludin Rumi Pages 68-69*

“Over and over, Jesus lays this path before us. There is nothing to be renounced or resisted. Everything can be embraced, but the catch is to cling to nothing. You let it go. You go through life like a knife goes through a done cake, picking up nothing clinging to nothing, sticking to nothing. And grounded in that fundamental chastity of your being, you can then throw yourself out, pour yourself out, being able to give it all back, even giving back life itself. That's the kenotic path in a nutshell. Very, very simple. It only cost everything.” Page 70

“When he feeds the multitudes at the sea of Galilee, there's not nearly enough to go around; the leftovers filled 12 baskets. When a woman anoints him with expensive ointment and the disciples grumble about the waste, he affirms “Truly, I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.” (Matthew 26:13). He does not seem to count the cost; in fact, he specifically forbids counting the cost. “Do not store up treasures on earth,” he teaches; do not strive or be afraid—“It is your father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.” (Luke 12:32) All will come of its own accord in good time and with abundant fullness, so long as one does not attempt to hoard or cling.

...“Not my will but yours be done, Oh Lord, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Pages 68-69 Dancing the Trinity

Cynthia says that her understanding of the Trinity should be in terms of a flow of energy. In this flow of energy as it goes from the Father to the Son to the Holy Ghost, it then returns to the Father and begins again. In essence, this is a mystery of creation, of what happens on earth it's connected and flows back to heaven. It is the flow from above to below, from below to above.

“I am one with the source insofar as I act as a source by making everything I have received flow again—just like Jesus.” Page 73

This abundance of spirit perhaps his best summed up by the poem Cynthia gives us at the end of the chapter. The poem was left beside the body of a dead child at Ravensbruck death camp.

*Oh Lord, remember not only the men and women Of goodwill, but also those of ill will.*

*But do not remember all the suffering they inflicted on us; Remember the fruits we have brought,  
thanks to.*

*This suffering, our comradeship,*

*Our loyalty, our humility, our courage,*

*Our generosity, the greatness of heart Which has grown out of all of this, and when They come to  
judgment let all the fruits Which we have borne be their forgiveness.*

Page 74



## Chapter 7, Jesus as Tantric Teacher

“In kenotic or tantra path, anything can come toward you, and you can embrace it fully; you preserve your chastity simply by not clinging. In the free flowing coming and going (which we saw in the chapter belongs to the *perichoresis*, or “dance around,” of divine love) you dwell in safety.

Cynthia uses the story of two monks, the first one carrying the woman across a stream, the other carrying the judgment of the first for touching a woman. “I picked her up and put her down. You are still carrying her.” Page 79

*“Celibacy is an essential requirement of the ascetic path but not of kenotic one.”* Page 80

On page 80 Cynthia begins to explain that Mary Magdalene is Jesus’s most advance student. She understands self-emptying love. Her self-emptying love allows her to stay with Jesus, when others flee at the crucifixion, and brings her to the tomb and causes her to be the first to see the resurrected Christ. For that she becomes the “apostle to the apostles.”

“God is never the object of love. That is just another example of egoic operating system splitting the field of perception. God is always and only the subject of love, flowing through our relationships, through our opportunities and also our challenges, through each and every one of the particular conditions we found ourselves in at any given moment. No one and nothing is excluded.” Page 86

(Does this sound to you like the Unity statement of faith, “There is only one presence and one power in my life and in the universe God the good omnipotent”?)

What matters is that you become a living spirit. And a living spirit is a person who, like Jesus, has become *ihidaya*, who has moved beyond opposites. Page 87

### Points for Discussion:

- Cynthia continues to challenge conventional wisdom and western Christian assumptions. How does her assessments agree or disagree with yours? Are you finding agreement or disagreement?
- As a practice have you tried sitting for at least 5 minutes, meditating on the heart center with the intent of growing love? Would you be willing to sit with the group and do it now?
- How does love change the way you see reality, your partner, yourself?

## Week 4: Part Two The Mysteries of Jesus Chapter 8, Incarnation

In this chapter Cynthia offers that the hardest part of Jesus's journey was descending into the earth plane, taking the limiting form of a human—that this was harder than the crucifixion.

“Yes, this is a very heavy, frustrating, difficult density that we come into by taking birth in the human realm. Because of the binary, finite nature of both the physical world itself and the egoic operating system we use to navigate it, it seems as though we're always bumping into sharp edges. Life presents us with a series of irrevocable choices, to do one thing means that we give up something else, to marry one person means we can't marry another, and to join a monastery means we can't marry at all.

... Our bodies age; we diminish physically; loved ones fall out of our lives.

... Yes, we come into constriction, but is that the same as punishment? I believe not. I believe rather that this constriction is a *sacrament*, and we have been offered a divine invitation to participate.

... Could it be that this earth realm, not in spite of, but *because of* its very density and jagged edges, offers precisely the conditions for the expression of certain aspects of divine love that could become real in no other way?

... But when we look at this process more deeply, we can see that those sharp edges we experience as constriction at the same time call forth some of the most exquisite dimensions of love, which require the conditions of finitude in order to make sense qualities such as steadfastness, tenderness, commitment, forbearance, fidelity, and forgiveness. These mature and subtle flavors of love have no real context in a realm where there are no edges and boundaries, where all just flows. But when you run up against the hard edge and have to stand true to love anyway, what emerges is a most precious taste of pure divine love. God has spoken his most intimate name.” Pages 98-100

From a God's-eye view of creation, the real operational challenge is not sin and evil, it is posed by the vast unequal energetic frequencies between realms. How can the sun touch a snowflake? How can the divine radiance meet and interpenetrate created life without incinerating it? This is the ultimate metaphysical koan - to which Christianity proposes as its solution the mystery of incarnation.

### Chapter 9, The Passion

“Our only truly essential human task here, Jesus teaches, is to grow beyond the survival instincts of the animal brain and egoic operating system into the kenotic joy and generosity of full human personhood. His mission was to show us how to do this. It was a mission he freely accepted. And the energy of his freedom is what ultimately raises the passion (*the crucifixion and all that surrounded it*) above the emotional trappings and reveals it as a sacred path of liberation.” Page 106

*"God was not angry."* Page 107 Cynthia uses the example that Jesus uses to explain the process he is facing. It is like childbirth.

The pain is necessary and the pain is forgotten when the child arrives. Page 109

## **Chapter 10, Crucifixion and Its Aftermath**

*"He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead."*

The Apostles Creed

"From the wisdom standpoint we need to stay grounded in the collective nature of what is meant by "He died for our sins." The false self is ultimately what crucified Jesus. It is an archetypal struggle. As each of the various characters in this drama surfaces and resurfaces, we see through the swirl the core traits of the default self in action: fear, pretension, projection, self-importance, cowardice. In their collective mirror we can also catch, if we are honest, a glimpse of our own unacknowledged shadows, our own particular pattern of inner doubt and darkness. Like weathervanes, they point to the place where we individually stop short and retreat into our own shells, drawing the line on kenotic love."

Page 114

"The world has signed a pact with the devil; it had to. It is a covenant to which everything, every hydrogen atom, is bound. The terms are clear if you want to live you have to die... The world came into being with the signing of that contract. Page 121

... death, and finitude really are collective, the backdrop against which everything else unfolds. Without denying our individual responsibility here, I would merely say that the boundary conditions are deeper than our individual existence. This is something the wisdom tradition has always known and insisted upon. " Page 121

Is love greater than God?

*"God cannot enter hell, but love can enter hell and there redeem it."* Page 123

*...sitting there* in the midst of all this blackness, not judging, not fixing, just letting it be in love. And in so doing, he was allowing love to go deeper, pressing all the way to the innermost ground out of which the opposites arise and holding *that* to the light. A quiet, harmonizing love was infiltrating even the deepest places of darkness and blackness, in a way that didn't override them or cancel them, but gently reconnected them to the whole." Page 123

*"In stillness nailed.*

*To hold all time, all change, all circumstances in and to Love's embrace."* Page 124

## Chapter 11, The Great Easter Fast

“When a certain level of spiritual luminosity has been attained (which Jesus certainly manifested) it's not in fact all that difficult to regenerate physical form. And in fact, this is exactly what Jesus himself seems to be talking about in Logion 22 in the gospel of Thomas:

*When you are able to fashion  
and eye to replace an eye,  
and form a hand to replace a hand, or a foot for a foot,*

*making one image supersede another —then you will enter in.”* Page 133

“A whole stream of spiritual teachings testifies that not only Jesus but many others have done this, and that end and of itself merely confirms a very advanced spiritual being, not necessarily a cosmic singularity.” Page 133

### Points for Discussion:

- Cynthia makes the point that life and death are intertwined. If death is inevitable, is giving one's life away in love that costly? Does it feel expensive, a bargain? Are you comfortable with this as a spiritual practice?
- In a short meditation imagine yourself in hell. Practice loving what is in stillness. How was that for you?
- Where on a daily basis can you practice kenotic love, self-emptying love? Have you already begun?