

VISIO



DIVINA

The Wisdom Contemplative Vision

THE TROUBLED

The Gospel of Thomas Logion 58

Beatitude 5

Yeshua speaks knowingly and with great expertise about our human experience on this earth. He says it is filled with trouble and confusion. He also mentions it in Logion 2 as one of the states of wisdom through which we pass. In our current Logion he returns to this experience and calls it, confusingly perhaps, a state of blessedness. How can confusion and trouble become a state of blessedness? It does not make sense to the ordinary mind. It is counter intuitive, conflicting with our regular experience of how life is and how the world works for us. Few would call it a state of blessedness. But Yeshua does. Why?

To answer, Yeshua points toward the results—the effects of such an experience. He claims that to experience trouble in life allows us to grasp hold of life itself. Or conversely, perhaps, to know no trouble in this world causes us to never understand what life truly is. What could Yeshua possibly mean by this? What could he know about life that our ordinary perceptions do not allow us to see?

Typically when we use the word “life” we mean the biological life-form. We are talking about bodies that we recognize to be alive and not dead or inert. Is this what Yeshua means? It seems unlikely that he means that trouble causes us to gain biological life. Does trouble cause us to gain biological life? The word used here is the Greek word *Zoe*, which is another form of life beyond the biological that has properties which ‘regular’ life does not possess.

Zoe is a form of life that cannot be extinguished, because it is timeless in nature. Yeshua seems to mean that trouble compels us to reach beyond our norms to grasp something greater and higher, and to begin to grasp this other life form, while biologically alive on earth, would allow us to know not only a higher form of life, but also a state of blessedness available to conscious awareness.

Many have discovered that troubles seem to help transform fears and weaknesses into strengths. Pain, shame, embarrassment, suffering, and confusion often challenge our weaknesses and our limited seeing. They can make us face things that we would otherwise never confront and can strengthen and fortify our souls in a way that ordinary life may not. Through this experience of trouble, we seize hold of higher life-form.

Perhaps this teaching is in some way autobiographical for Yeshua. His own experience of trouble may have forced him into a new “zone of Spirit,” where he began to flourish as an eternal being and not simply a biological being. Perhaps when he walked through suffering, trials and the valley of the shadows of death, he was renewed and strengthened in the way that Psalm 23 suggests. Perhaps he himself was eventually led from that dark valley into the land of feasting and anointing that Psalm 23 describes in its conclusion.

Reflections on Image and Text:

A Place for Notes and Journaling:

1. *Yeshua calls the experience of trouble a blessed state. If this is not simply Pollyannaish or magical thinking, how can this be true? What is the wisdom that Yeshua knows? State it in your own words.*
2. *Have you ever been pushed beyond your norms by trouble and confusion? How has this happened to you? What have you experienced?*
3. *We typically try to escape trouble. Some spiritual teachers, like the Buddhist nun Pema Chodron suggest that as a spiritual practice we need to “lean into” trouble instead of running away from it. Do you agree with her? Have you ever experienced this? If so, describe your experience.*
4. *If there are many forms of life, of which biological life is only one, can you imagine what another form might be? Are Angels, for example, biological beings, or do they possess another life form alien to us? How might you describe this form, if you believe it exists?*
5. *What do you think Yeshua means by the phrase, “seize hold of life?” Can you think of other ways to describe the same experience?*
6. *As you contemplate the illuminations, how do you see yourself in them? What memories do they bring to your own mind? Journal your reflections.*
7. *Which illumination speaks most strongly to you? Write your own reflection on that illumination. Share it with others if you can.*

—This reflection, text and its
illumination
have been provided
by Alison Hine
and Lynn Bauman
as a means for reflection and
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LECTIO DIVINA

The Contemplative Reading of a Sapiential Text

Yeshua says,

Blessed are the troubled.
They have seized hold of life.

—Logion 58

The Gospel of Thomas: Wisdom of the Twin

—translated by Lynn C. Bauman

Contemplating
THE ILLUMINATIONS





