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Wesley’s Sermon: “Salvation by Faith”
Preached at St. Mary’s Oxford, before the university, on June 18, 1738

Wesley’s Sermon Outline: Near the beginning of each of John Wesley’s sermons he generally provides an outline of what he seeks to answer or accomplish in his message. This sermon’s outline is:

I. What faith it is through which we are saved?
II. What is the salvation which is through faith?
III. How we may answer some objections?

Opening Prayer: Holy Spirit, as you so evidently inspired the Wesleyan movement, infuse us again today with grace, love, and power, as we explore the richness of our history unpacked from these ancient sermons, and as we seek to be ambassadors of holiness of heart and life. Amen.

Scripture Text: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.”
—Ephesians 2:8

Sermon Recap & Reflection by Rev. Fred Vanderwerf, Superintendent of the Southern Prairie District

Questions for Reflection:

• How might you define faith? What is it exactly from your perspective?
• How might you illustrate to another the scope, quality, or kind of salvation made available to you through faith? What are you saved from or towards?
• Where have you settled for less than what God has available for you?

Hymn: “And Can It Be,” United Methodist Hymnal #363

Close with Prayer
Did You Know? Wesley gives instructions to preachers in his document entitled “Large Minutes”. Here is an excerpt:

What is the best general method of preaching?

To invite, to convince, to offer Christ, to build up; and to do this in some measure in every sermon. The most effectual way of preaching Christ is to preach him in all his offices; and to declare his law as well as his Gospel, both to believers and unbelievers.

Let us strongly insist upon inward and outward holiness; and, with this view, set forth Christ as evidently crucified before their eyes; Christ in all the riches of his grace, justifying us by his blood, and sanctifying us by his Spirit.

Always suit your subject to the state of your audience. Choose the plainest texts you can. Take care not to ramble, but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand. Be sparing in spiritualizing or allegorizing. Let your whole deportment before the congregation be serious, weighty, and solemn. Take care of anything awkward or affected; either in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation. Do not usually pray above eight or ten minutes, before or after the sermon. Be sure never to disappoint a congregation, unless in case of life or death; and begin and exactly at the time. The evening preaching should *never begin later than seven o’clock, unless in time of harvest.

Young Preachers might often exhort without taking a text. Everywhere avail yourself of the great festivals, by preaching on the occasion, and singing our hymns, which you should take care to have in readiness.
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Wesley’s Sermon: “The Almost Christian”
Preached at St. Mary’s Oxford, before the university, on July 25, 1741

Wesley’s Sermon Outline: Near the beginning of each of John Wesley’s sermons he generally provides an outline of what he seeks to answer or accomplish in his message. This sermon’s outline is:

I. What is implied in being almost a Christian?
II. What is implied in being an altogether Christian?

Opening Prayer: Holy Spirit, as you so evidently inspired the Wesleyan movement, infuse us again today with grace, love, and power, as we explore the richness of our history unpacked from these ancient sermons, and as we seek to be ambassadors of holiness of heart and life. Amen.

Scripture Text:

“Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?” —Acts 26:28

That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.”

But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

The man asked him, “What is your name?”

“Jacob,” he answered.

Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.”

Jacob said, “Please tell me your name.”

But he replied, “Why do you ask my name?” Then he blessed him there.

So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.” —Genesis 32:22-30
Watch Sermon Recap & Reflection By Bishop Lanette Plambeck

Questions for Reflection:

- “The Almost Christian” is perhaps John Wesley’s most famous sermon. Has anyone in the group read it?
- What to you is the central mark of an “altogether” Christian?
- Have you wrestled, struggled, or grappled with your faith in God? What did you find helpful to press through in your faith journey?

Hymn: “Come O, Thou Traveler Unknown,” United Methodist Hymnal #386

Close with Prayer

For Those Wanting to Go Deeper

Wesley’s Original Sermon Manuscript

Scan a QR code with your smartphone camera for quick access.

Watch Today’s Sermon Recap and Reflection
https://vimeo.com/801384998

Listen to Today’s Hymn
https://youtu.be/_3X1cj3Ez30

Read John Wesley’s Original Sermon Manuscript
https://tinyurl.com/almost-christian
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**Wesley’s Sermon: “The Circumcision of the Heart”**
Preached at St. Mary’s Oxford, before the university, on January 1, 1733

**Wesley’s Sermon Outline:** Near the beginning of each of John Wesley’s sermons he generally provides an outline of what he seeks to answer or accomplish in his message. This sermon’s outline is:

I. Circumcision of the heart is holiness
II. Circumcision of the heart is evident through:
   a. Humility
   b. Faith
   c. Hope
   d. Charity/Love

**Opening Prayer:** God of our hearts and minds, meet us in this study to lay bare our emotions and to engage our intellect. May this time together break us open to inner transformation. Lord, I want to be a Christian… Lord, I want to be more loving… Lord, I want to be more holy… Lord, I want to be like Jesus… In my heart! Amen.

**Scripture Text:** Read all of Romans 2 for context, but Wesley’s key verse is:

“Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart—it is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.”
– Romans 2:29 (NRSV)

**Watch Sermon Recap & Reflection** by Rev. Dan Johnson, Outgoing Superintendent of the Twin Cities District

**Questions for Reflection:**

- How does Wesley’s image of a circumcised heart speak into the polarization of his day? Into the polarization of our day?
- Humility, faith, hope and love: Which of these characteristics of a circumcised heart is evident in your life? Which characteristic is elusive?
- What life disciplines are important for you in developing a healthy spiritual heart?
Hymn: “O for a Heart to Praise Our God”

Close with Prayer

For Those Wanting to Go Deeper

Wesley’s Original Sermon Manuscript

Did you know? John Wesley wrote one of the all-time bestselling medical texts.

Wesley was deeply convicted that God is concerned about our earthly life as well as our heavenly one. To that end, he wrote a medical text for the everyday person titled Primitive Physick. The book detailed the current knowledge about home remedies and went through 32 editions, making it one of the most widely read books in England.

Many of Wesley’s cures and tips on healthy living remain widely accepted. While some of his advice was wishful thinking, the most important part of his philosophy was his insistence on continual observation to support hypotheses. Wesley boldly questioned modern doctors — how they sometimes treated humans like machines; that much of their “medicine” lacked merit and they lacked evidence to support its efficacy. By the same token, some of Wesley’s beliefs certainly needed more supportive evidence. For instance, Wesley recommended holding a puppy against the stomach to cure stomach pain. He offered dried and powdered toad pills for asthma. He also enjoyed regular dips in cold bathwater, thought to be a near panacea. It sounds strange to us, but many leading minds during Wesley’s time, espoused these sorts of folk remedies. And honestly, who doesn’t feel better after holding a puppy?

Listen to Today’s Hymn
https://youtu.be/OmEMCMa_-4E

Read John Wesley’s Original Sermon Manuscript
https://tinyurl.com/circumcision-heart
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Wesley’s Sermon: “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount”
Preached Oct 22-26, 1740

Wesley’s Sermon Outline: Near the beginning of each of John Wesley’s sermons he generally provides an outline of what he seeks to answer or accomplish in his message. This sermon’s outline is:

I. Christianity is essentially a social religion and to turn it into a solitary one is to destroy it.
II. It is impossible to conceal Christianity, our faith, and to try is utterly contrary to the design of God.
III. Answer some objections.
IV. Conclude the whole with a practical application.

Opening Prayer: Holy Spirit, may the light of Christ that shone bright in John Wesley illuminate our time of study, warm our hearts, and bring out our God colors in us that we may taste, see, and share God’s savory goodness with family, friends, and neighbor.

Scripture Text: “Ye are the salt of the earth. But if the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted. It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men.” “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.” “Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house.” “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” —Matthew 5:13-16

Sermon Recap & Reflection by Rev. Cynthia Williams, Superintendent of the Twin Cities District

Questions for Reflection:

• What connection do you see between salt and light?
• In Wesley’s view, what is the purpose and gift of salt and light in our faith walk? In our church?
• Where are you challenged and/or convicted by this study?

Hymn: “Christ Whose Glory Fills the Skies,” United Methodist Hymnal #173

Close with Prayer
Did You Know? After seeing his colleague George Whitefield’s fruitfulness in field preaching, Wesley embraced the practice, but initially quite reluctantly: Wesley’s Journal for Saturday, March 31, reads:

_In the evening I reached Bristol and met Mr. Whitefield there. I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday, having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church._

A few days later, Monday, Wesley reports:

_A few days later, Monday, Wesley reports:_

_At four in the afternoon I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city, to about three thousand people. The scripture on which I spoke was this: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.”_
The Wesleyan Way
2023 Lenten Study for Minnesota United Methodists: Week 5

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Wesley’s Sermon: “The General Spread of the Gospel”

Wesley’s Sermon Outline: Near the beginning of each of John Wesley’s sermons he generally provides an outline of what he seeks to answer or accomplish in his message. This sermon’s outline is:

I. How are so few people convinced of the gospel almost 2000 years after Christ’s mandate to “go and make disciples”?

II. How does God work in this world?

III. How will scriptural holiness and salvation spread throughout the world?

Opening Prayer: Holy Spirit, as you so evidently inspired the Wesleyan movement, infuse us again today with grace, love, and power, as we explore the richness of our history unpacked from these ancient sermons, and as we seek to be ambassadors of holiness of heart and life. Amen.

Scripture Text: “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” —Isaiah 11:9

Sermon Recap & Reflection by Rev. Laurie Kantonen, Superintendent of the North Star District

Questions for Reflection:

• As you consider the relationship of Christianity to the condition of the greater world, what questions arise in you?

• How do you believe Christians are most able to make an impact in the world? Do we still carry the charge to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world”? How do we best do that? What would revival look like?

• When do you find yourself leaning toward despair and what gives you hope? Do you share Wesley’s confidence that one day all the earth will reflect the love and glory of God?

Hymn: “Come, Holy Ghost, Our Hearts Inspire” United Methodist Hymnal #603

Close with Prayer
For Those Wanting to Go Deeper
Wesley's Original Sermon Manuscript

Read John Wesley's Original Sermon Manuscript
https://tinyurl.com/spread-gospel
The Wesleyan Way
2023 Lenten Study for Minnesota United Methodists: Week 6

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Wesley’s Sermon: “On Zeal”
Preached October 1, 1758 or May 6, 1781, depending on your source

Wesley’s Sermon Outline: Near the beginning of each of John Wesley’s sermons he generally provides an outline of what he seeks to answer or accomplish in his message. This sermon’s outline is:

I. What is the nature of true Christian zeal?
II. What are the properties of it?
III. Draw some practical inferences.

Opening Prayer: Holy Spirit, as you so evidently inspired the Wesleyan movement, infuse us again today with grace, love, and power, as we explore the richness of our history unpacked from these ancient sermons, and as we seek to be ambassadors of holiness of heart and life. Amen.

Scripture Text: “It is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing.”
—Galatians 4:18

Sermon Recap & Reflection by Rev. Cindy Gregorson, Director of Connectional Ministries and Clergy Assistant to the Bishop

Questions for Reflection:

• Where have you seen zeal/passion that fueled a positive movement of change? Where have you seen zeal/passion gone wrong? What were the differences between the two?

• What did you think of Wesley’s framing our zeal as concentric circles with love of God and neighbor at the center, then our disposition/character, then acts of mercy, acts of piety, and finally the church? Which level of the circle is most challenging for you? Where can you easily cultivate passion/zeal and might let that zeal keep you from moving toward the center?

• What would a morning “reset” as talked about in the video look like for you—to reset your aim and heart on the love of God and neighbor in all that you do?

Hymn: “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling,” United Methodist Hymnal #384

Scan a QR code with your smartphone camera for quick access.

Watch Today’s Sermon Recap and Reflection
https://vimeo.com/801652985

Listen to Today’s Hymn
https://youtu.be/ciibscnsXVU
For Those Wanting to Go Deeper

Wesley’s Original Sermon Manuscript

Did You Know? Wesley published his first collection of sermons in 1746, “Sermons on Several Occasions.” In the preface, he wrote:

*I design plain truth for plain people; therefore, to set purpose, I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations; from all perplexed and intricate reasonings; and, as far as possible, from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scripture. I labour to avoid all words which are not easy to be understood, all which are not used in common life; and, in particular, those kinds of technical terms that so frequently occur in Bodies of Divinity; those modes of speaking which men of reading are intimately acquainted with, but to common people are an unknown tongue.*
On Zeal

If I say I want a zeal, a heart on fire for God, what am I looking for? Some of the greatest atrocities have taken place in the name of such zeal, but true Christian zeal is no other than the flame of love.

The first thing they see is your zeal for the Universal Church.

How do you speak of and care for your siblings in Christ?

For Works of Piety

How do you practice your spiritual disciplines?

For Works of Mercy

How are you giving sacrificially to others?

For Holy Tempers

And when they peel all the layers, they find your zeal is the love of God and neighbor above all else.

For Love

They’ll be able to smell the love coming off of you!