The Wesleyan Way
2023 Lenten Study for Minnesota United Methodists: Week 6

Thank you for journeying through Lent with the Minnesota Conference Cabinet. One of the values we seek to live out as people called United Methodists in Minnesota is to be “grounded in Wesleyan theology.” With that in mind, each of us has selected one sermon from John Wesley’s standard sermons, sought to recap the sermon in our own words, and then offered our reflection on why we believe the sermon’s message matters to us today. For each week, we have provided a scripture verse for the sermon, a 10- to 15-minute video, a link to the original sermon, some questions for reflection, and a hymn composed by Charles Wesley that we believe beautifully illustrates the splendor of Wesleyan theology in lyric.

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/ciiabscnXVU
Close with Prayer

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!