



grow. pray. study.

August 31, 2025

Scripture: Matthew 9:35-36, NIV and John 7:37-38, NRSV

Wesley's Biblical Call: Do Good of Every Sort

MONDAY 9.1.25 Ephesians 2:4-10

The apostle Paul, that passionate preacher of God's saving grace, wrote that when we accept God's grace, we live as people "created in Christ Jesus to do good things." Like Paul, John Wesley knew that we don't receive grace passively but are changed to live it out in real life. He said, "Surely there are works of mercy... which are real means of grace. They are more especially such to those that perform them with a single eye. And those that neglect them, do not receive the grace which otherwise they might." *

- The Second General Rule of the Methodist Church was John Wesley's application of Ephesians 2:10: "By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men." ** Does the phrase "doing good of every possible sort" (large or small) spark your thinking? What are one or two "sorts" of goodness you used to ignore, but now do as a follower of Christ?
- What is your life's purpose? ("I don't know" doesn't mean you don't have one. Even if you've never given it conscious thought, you make daily choices based on some inner idea of who you are and what you're here for.) Spend some quiet time today reflecting on your life's purpose in the light of what Ephesians 2:10 says about God's intention for your life.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for offering me the gift of your saving, transforming grace. Guide me this day as I seek to live into the reality of the good things you've created me to do. Amen.

* From Sermon 98—On Visiting the Sick at <https://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-98-on-visiting-the-sick/>.

** Included in The General Rules of the Methodist Church at <https://www.umc.org/en/content/the-general-rules-of-the-methodist-church>.

Wesley's Example: Love with Action, not Words

TUESDAY 9.2.25 1 John 3:14-18

The apostle John said no one filled with God's love could see a brother or sister in need and not try to help. John Wesley lived this out, setting up what we might call a "food bank": "At Hannam, four miles from Bristol.... I made a collection in our congregation for the relief of the poor... who, having no work... and no assistance from the parish wherein they lived, were reduced to the last extremity. I made another collection on Thursday and a third on Sunday, by which we were enabled to feed a hundred, sometimes a hundred and fifty, a day, of those whom we found to need it most." *

- The apostle John used strong words about those who saw their brothers and sisters in need and didn't care. He said such people hated their brothers and sisters, which made them murderers (verse 15)! Can apathy and inaction have results as murderous as active malice? What ways have you found to help yourself avoid "compassion fatigue" and remain sensitive when God nudges you to help someone in need?
- U2 lead singer Bono refers to problems (like the lack of clean drinking water in many parts of Africa) as "stupid poverty." We could end those problems with a fraction of the money spent on NFL games or TV awards shows. How can we learn from Wesley, who, instead of saying "Someone ought to help those hungry people," took simple, direct action and helped? (For ways to help, locally or globally, visit <https://resurrection.church/missions/>.)

Prayer: Loving Lord, you taught us that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Keep growing a heart within me that rejoices in the freedom and satisfaction of your kind of giving. Amen.

* From John Wesley's Journal, January 21, 1740 at <https://ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.iv.i.html>.

Genuine Faith Produces Faithful Actions

WEDNESDAY 9.3.25 James 2:14-26

Wesley had learned firsthand that he couldn't earn God's favor through good works. He followed the apostle James in saying we do good works because we have God's grace, not in order to earn it. His sermon "The Mystery of Iniquity" said, "When St. James wrote his Epistle... that grand pest of Christianity, a faith without works, was spread far and wide; filling the Church with a 'wisdom from beneath,' which was 'earthly, sensual, devilish.'" * James and Wesley knew genuine faith leads to actions that honor God and bless others.

- James didn't describe a good "balance" between faith and works, as though we need a 50-50 mix of the two. We need 100% of both—our "works" need to grow out of our faith in God's grace, as a grateful response to God's gracious acceptance of us. What are some of the actions, the works, which you have seen grow in your life as you have responded to God's grace?
- James vividly pointed out the flaw in thinking that genuine faith meant no more than intellectual "head" knowledge. He wrote, "It's good that you believe that God is one. Ha! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble with fear" (verse 19). Whose example most powerfully showed you that faith includes your heart and your hands as well as your head, and drew you to that kind of faith?

Prayer: Loving Lord, you have accepted me as your child, and you have begun to reshape the way I live as I respond to your grace. Please continue your work in my life, so that my works may always bring you glory. Amen.

* Point 19 in "The Mystery of Iniquity" at <https://www.sermonindex.net/sermons/HKPCTCDL8N3ckEND>.

Christianity is Essentially Salt and Light

THURSDAY 9.4.25 Matthew 5:13-16

John Wesley, following Jesus' teaching, said, "Christianity is essentially a social religion." * Jesus did not retreat and live on an isolated island, and he does not call Christians to vacate their cultures to be exclusively with Christians. God's followers are to be "salt and light" in the world. God empowers us to "preserve" what is good and live lives that shine light into the darkness of our world.

- Lamps light up the darkness. It would be pointless to light a lamp and cover it up. Jesus compared his followers to a lamp in a dark room, or a city on a hill at night, seen for miles around. God still calls us to be his light, to help people lost in the darkness find their way to the light and ultimately dispel the darkness. What choices do you make in your attitudes and actions to ensure that those around you see Jesus' light more clearly as they spend time with you?
- In Jesus' day, with no electricity or refrigerators, people preserved food with salt. Jesus said he means his followers to be "the salt of the earth," living in such a way that they "preserve" what is good in the world. He said bluntly that if people have lost their "saltiness," they are "good for nothing." What would be the point of following Jesus if not to join in his mission to be salt and light in the world? How are you living that out?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are not a secret I should keep hidden. Shine your light of love through me, this day and every day, and use me to make the world you love a bit more like the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

* In paragraph 5 of "Upon Our Lord's Sermon On The Mount: Discourse Four" at <https://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-24-upon-our-lords-sermon-on-the-mount-discourse-four/>.

Wesley at 81: Still Serving Others Faithfully

FRIDAY 9.5.25 Matthew 25:14-23

John Wesley himself was a "good and faithful servant" all his life. Imagine the dedication it took to do what he recorded in his Journal when he was 81 years old. He wrote, "On this and the four following days I walked through the town and begged two hundred pounds in order to clothe them that needed it most. But it was hard work as most of the streets were filled with melting snow... so that my feet were steeped in snow water nearly from morning till evening." *

- Jesus' parable in Matthew 25 did not tie either servant's "good and faithful" quality to the amount he brought the master. (The second servant brought less than the first servant began with!) It was their energy and willingness to do the master's will that made each one a good and faithful servant. In what particular ways is God calling you to serve? How are you energetic and willing to answer the call and do your master's will?
- Richard Foster, author of the classic *Celebration of Discipline*, also wrote *Freedom of Simplicity*. ** He ironically titled the first chapter "The Complexity of Simplicity." Jesus calls you to share Wesley's simple devotion to God and serving others. It gets more complex as you realize that in an ever-changing world, you can't just copy what Wesley did. How do you cultivate a listening spirit open to God's direction? What do you believe being a "good and faithful servant" means for you today?

Prayer: Lord God, this day I face many choices. Guide me by your Spirit, that I may make those choices in ways that honor you as my King and my Lord. Amen.

* John Wesley's Journal, January 4, 1785--https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/travellers/J_Wesley/20.

** Richard J. Foster, *Freedom of Simplicity: Revised Edition: Finding Harmony in a Complex World*. HarperOne, 2010.

"I'll Praise My Maker While I've Breath"

SATURDAY 9.6.25 1 Corinthians 15:51-58, Psalm 146:1-2, 5-10

The apostle Paul reminded Christians in Corinth that when Jesus rose from the grave, he conquered death. Death has been "swallowed up by a victory." In John Wesley's sermon "On the Resurrection of the Dead," he drew on Paul's words and said, "Let this especially fortify us against the fear of death: It is now disarmed, and can do us no hurt." * He taught Methodists to die "a good death," free from fear and facing life's end "in calm assurance." John Wesley himself died on March 2, 1791, three months short of his 88th birthday. As his long life ebbed away, Wesley spoke words of faith: "The best of all is, God is with us." With his final breaths, he tried to sing Isaac Watts' hymn "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath," based on Psalm 146. The hymn said, "And when my voice is lost in death, praise shall employ my nobler powers. My days of praise shall ne'er be past, while life, and thought, and being last, or immortality endures." **

- Death separates us from those who die, and the separation hurts—we miss our loved ones. But in 1 Corinthians 15:54, Paul said we'll receive a body that can't die. Thanks to Jesus' victorious resurrection, you can trust that this separation is only temporary! Christians trust that God will reunite all of God's children. Have you felt the sting of separation death causes? How does the hope found in Christ's victory over death help you to face the pain of separation from those who die? The second stanza of Watts' hymn further expanded the themes of Psalm 146: "Happy are they whose hopes rely on Israel's God, who made the sky and earth and seas, with all their train; whose truth for ever stands secure, who saves th'oppressed and feeds the poor, for none shall find God's promise vain." In what ways do your hopes rely, not on your own accomplishments, talents, or possessions, but on Israel's God? How can you join the psalmist, Isaac Watts, and John Wesley in the confident words, "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath"?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you went where most of us most dread going—the realm of death—and you emerged victorious! Teach me how to claim your victory, praise you as long as I live, and die in the calm assurance of your eternal love and life. Amen.

* From Sermon 137 – "On the Resurrection of the Dead" at <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/sermon-137-on-the-resurrection-of-the-dead>.

** At <https://hymnoftheday.com/2024/02/05/ill-praise-my-maker-while-ive-breath/>.

Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer *Prayers of peace and comfort for:*

To **Sharon Hollingsworth** following the death of **Robert Searce** (Husband), who died 8/24/2025.

To **Krissie Ament** following the death of **Theresa "Terrie" Hall Simmons** (Mother), who died 8/22/2025.