



A Guided Tour  
of United Methodist  
Tradition and History  
Resources

for Lay Speakers

April 25, 2009  
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# The Sermons

John Wesley provided 44 “Standard Sermons” as models for his preachers to use in writing their own. They are very formal – which is proper for theological reference materials. Their purpose was to ensure that Wesley's lay preachers did not stray from orthodox doctrine.



# The Sermons

Notes made by Wesley's listeners and recorded in their journals indicated that Wesley's own preaching was not at all like those recorded in the written sermons, supporting the theory that they were better models than examples of his actual preaching style.

They can be updated ...



## Salvation by Faith (Sermon 1)

-- Ephesians 2:8

**Preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, before the University, on June 18, 1738.**

Actual date: June 11, 1738 (Wesley left for Germany)  
Aldersgate: May 24, 1738

Now, that we fall not short of the grace of God, it concerns us carefully to inquire, --

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.

*We will look at just a few paragraphs of the sermon. Ask yourself: Do I have this faith?*

1. And, first, it is not barely the faith of a heathen.

Now, God requireth of a heathen to believe, *"that God is; that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;"* and that he is to be sought by glorifying him as God, by giving him thanks for all things, and by a careful practice of moral virtue, of justice, mercy, and truth, toward their fellow creatures. A Greek or Roman, therefore, yea, a Scythian or Indian, was without excuse if he did not believe thus much: the being and attributes of God, a future state of reward and punishment, and the obligatory nature of moral virtue. For this is barely the faith of a heathen.

2. Nor, secondly, is it the faith of a devil, though this goes much farther than that of a heathen. For the devil believes, not only that there is a wise and powerful God, gracious to reward, and just to punish; but also, that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ, the Saviour of the world. So we find him declaring, in express terms, "I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God" (Luke 4:34). Nor can we doubt but that unhappy spirit believes all those words which came out of the mouth of the Holy One, yea, and whatsoever else was written by those holy men of old, of two of whom he was compelled to give that glorious testimony, "These men are the servants of the most high God, who show unto you the way of salvation." Thus much, then, the great enemy of God and man believes, and trembles in believing, --that God was made manifest in the flesh; that he will "tread all enemies under his feet;" and that "all Scripture was given by inspiration of God." Thus far goeth the faith of a devil.

3. Thirdly. The faith through which we are saved, in that sense of the word which will hereafter be explained, **is not barely that which the Apostles themselves had while Christ was yet upon earth;** though they so believed on him as to "leave all and follow him;" although they had then power to work miracles, to "heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease;" yea, they had then "power and authority over all devils;" and, which is beyond all this, were sent by their Master to "preach the kingdom of God."

*(The apostles set a very high example of service.)*

4. What faith is it then through which we are saved?

It may be answered, first, in general, **it is a faith in Christ:** Christ, and God through Christ, are the proper objects of it.

Herein, therefore, it is sufficiently, absolutely distinguished from the faith either of ancient or modern heathens.

And from the faith of a devil it is fully distinguished by this: it is not barely a speculative, rational thing, a cold, lifeless assent, a train of ideas in the head; but also a disposition of the heart.

For thus saith the Scripture, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness;" and, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

5. And herein does it differ from that faith which the Apostles themselves had while our Lord was on earth, that it acknowledges the necessity and merit of his death, and the power of his resurrection.

It acknowledges his death as the only sufficient means of redeeming man from death eternal, and his resurrection as the restoration of us all to life and immortality; inasmuch as he "was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification."

Christian faith is then, not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ; a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon him as our atonement and our life, as given for us, and living in us; and, in consequence hereof, a closing with him, and cleaving to him, as our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," or, in one word, our salvation.

II. What salvation it is, which is through this faith, is the Second thing to be considered.

1. And, First, whatsoever else it imply, **it is a present salvation. It is something attainable, yea, actually attained, on earth, by those who are partakers of this faith.** For thus saith the Apostle to the believers at Ephesus, and in them to the believers of all ages, not, Ye shall be (though that also is true), but, "Ye are saved through faith."



# The Journal

John Wesley kept a diary in code. He revised sections of it for publication as his “Journal.”

These passages are examples that can be used in messages as illustrations.

Sunday, November 25, 1735.—At noon our third storm began. At four it was more violent than before. At seven I went to the Germans (*Moravians*). I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behavior. Of their humility they had given a continual proof by performing those servile offices for the other passengers, which none of the English would undertake; for which they desired and would receive no pay, saying, “it was good for their proud hearts,” and “their loving Saviour had done more for them.”

And every day had given them an occasion of showing a meekness which no injury could move. If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth.

There was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as from that of pride, anger and revenge.

In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans calmly sang on.

I asked one of them afterward, “Were you not afraid?” He answered, “I thank God, no.” I asked, “But were not your women and children afraid?” He replied, mildly, “No; our women and children are not afraid to die.”

Saturday, February 7, 1735.—Mr. Oglethorpe returned from Savannah with Mr. Spangenberg, one of the pastors of the Germans. I soon found what spirit he was of and asked his advice with regard to my own conduct.

He said, “My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?”

I was surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it and asked, “Do you know Jesus Christ?” I paused and said, “I know He is the Saviour of the world.”

“True,” replied he; “but do you know He has saved you?” I answered, “I hope He has died to save me.” He only added, “Do you know yourself?” I said, “I do.” But I fear they were vain words (*untrue*).

May 25, 1738 - In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, "This cannot be faith; for where is thy joy?" Then was I taught that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation; but that, as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth, them according to the counsels of His own will.

After my return home, I was much buffeted with temptations, but I cried out, and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes, and He “sent me help from his holy place.” And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror.

Thursday, 25.—The moment I awakened, “Jesus, Master,” was in my heart and in my mouth; and I found all my strength lay in keeping my eye fixed upon Him and my soul waiting on Him continually. Being again at St. Paul’s in the afternoon, I could taste the good word of God in the anthem which began, “My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord: with my mouth will I ever be showing forth thy truth from one generation to another.” Yet the enemy injected a fear, “If thou dost believe, why is there not a more sensible change? I answered (yet not I), “That I know not. But, this I know, I have ‘now peace with God.’ And I sin not today, and Jesus my Master has forbidden me to take thought for the morrow.”

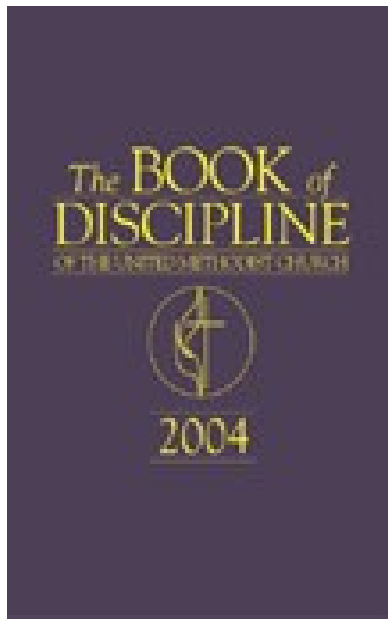


# Letters

To Vincent Perronet, December, 1748. Also known as John Wesley, “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists,” *The Works of John Wesley*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 8:252-255. *Wesley says that in this 'Plain Account' the whole plan of the people called Methodists may be seen; not only their practice, but the reasons whereon it is grounded, the occasion of every step taken, and the advantages reaped thereby.*

3. At length, while we were thinking of quite another thing, we struck upon a method for which we have cause to bless God ever since. I was talking with several of the Society in Bristol concerning the means of paying the debts there, when one [Captain Foy, on Feb. 15, 1742. See *Journal*, ii. 528] stood up and said, 'Let every member of the Society give a penny a week till all are paid.' Another answered, 'But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it.' 'Then,' said he, 'put eleven of the poorest with me; and if they can give anything, well: I will call on them weekly; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbors weekly; receive what they give, and make up what is wanting.' It was done.

In a while, some of these informed me, they found such and such an one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, 'This is the thing; the very thing we have wanted so long.' I called together all the Leaders of the classes (so we used to term them and their companies), and desired that each would make a particular inquiry into the behaviour of those whom he saw weekly. They did so.



The Book of Discipline is the instrument for setting forth the laws, plan, polity, and process by which United Methodists govern themselves. The Discipline includes the Constitution of The United Methodist Church, Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task, Social Principles, The Mission and Ministry of the Church, and Organization and Administration.

This edition includes the legislation approved by the 2004 General Conference of The United Methodist Church, which was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania April 27-May 7, 2004.

# 2008 Book of Discipline

Pages 1-20 - Table of Contents, United Methodist Bishops, Historical Statement,

Pages 21-40 - Part 1 - THE CONSTITUTION

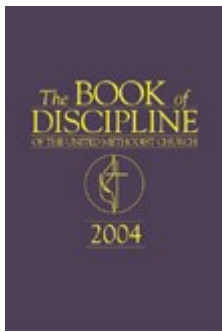
Pages 41-86 - Part II - DOCTRINAL STANDARDS AND OUR THEOLOGICAL TASK

Pages 87-96 - Part III - THE MINISTRY OF ALL CHRISTIANS

Pages 97-132 - Part IV - SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

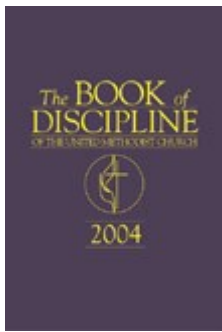
Part V - ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Pages 133-202 - Chapter One - THE LOCAL CHURCH

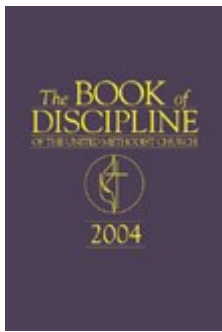


Methodism did not arise in response to a specific doctrinal dispute, though there was no lack of theological controversy. Early Methodists claimed to preach the scriptural doctrines of the Church of England as contained in the Articles of Religion, the Homilies, and the Book of Common Prayer.

Their task was not to reformulate doctrine. Their tasks were to summon people to experience the justifying and sanctifying grace of God and encourage people to grow in the knowledge and love of God through the personal and corporate disciplines of the Christian life. (p. 45)

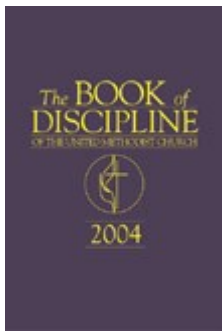


¶ **120.** *The Mission*—The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.



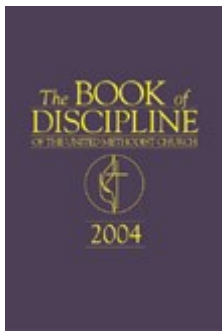
## ¶ 121. *Rationale for Our Mission*— ...

Jesus' words in Matthew provide the Church with our mission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (28:19-20), and "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. . . . And you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (22:37, 39).



¶ **121.** *Rationale for Our Mission*— ...

Whenever United Methodism has had a clear sense of mission, God has used our Church to save persons, heal relationships, transform social structures, and spread scriptural holiness, thereby changing the world. In order to be truly alive, we embrace Jesus' mandate to love God and to love our neighbor and to make disciples of all peoples.



¶ 126. *The Ministry of the Laity*—The ministry of the laity flows from a commitment to Christ’s outreaching love. Lay members of The United Methodist Church are, by history and calling, active advocates of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every layperson is called to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20); every layperson is called to be missional. The witness of the laity, their Christ-like examples of everyday living as well as the sharing of their own faith experiences of the Gospel, is the primary evangelistic ministry through which all people will come to know Christ and The United Methodist Church will fulfill its mission.



¶ 127. *The Ministry of the Community*—... The church as the community of the new covenant has participated in Christ’s ministry of grace across the years and around the world. It stretches out to human needs wherever love and service may convey God’s love and ours. The outreach of such ministries knows no limits. Beyond the diverse forms of ministry is this ultimate concern: that all persons will be brought into a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ and be renewed after the image of their creator (Colossians 3:10). This means that all Christians are called to minister wherever Christ would have them serve and witness in deeds and words that heal and free.

¶ 132. *Mission as Active Expectancy*—The ministry of all Christians consists of service for the mission of God in the world. The mission of God is best expressed in the prayer that Jesus taught his first disciples: Thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as in heaven. All Christians, therefore, are to live in active expectancy: faithful in service of God and their neighbor; faithful in waiting for the fulfillment of God’s universal love, justice, and peace on earth as in heaven.

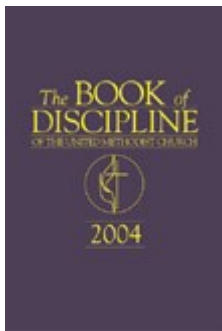
Pending this time of fulfillment, the ministry of all Christians is shaped by the teachings of Jesus.

¶ 135. *Our Relationship with God: Privilege*— Christians experience growth and transition in their spiritual life just as in their physical and emotional lives. While this growth is always a work of grace, it does not occur uniformly. Spiritual growth in Christ is a dynamic process marked by awakening, birth, growth, and maturation. This process requires careful and intentional nurture for the disciple to reach perfection in the Christian life. There are stages of spiritual growth and transition: Christian beginnings; Christian birth; Christian growth; and Christian maturity. These require careful and intentional nurture for the disciple to come to maturity in the Christian life and to engage fully in the ministry of all Christians.

The Social Principles  
update Wesley's General Rules,  
and the delegates to General Conference  
define in a specific, modern sense what it  
means to *Do No Harm* and to *Do Good*.

¶ 162 U) *Persons Living with HIV and  
AIDS— . . .*

All individuals living with HIV and AIDS  
should be treated with dignity and  
respect. . .



¶ 163 B) *Collective Bargaining*—We support the right of all public and private employees and employers to organize for collective bargaining into unions and other groups of their own choosing. Further, we support the right of both parties to protection in so doing and their responsibility to bargain in good faith within the framework of the public interest. In order that the rights of all members of the society may be maintained and promoted, we support innovative bargaining procedures that include representatives of the public interest in negotiation and settlement of labor-management contracts, including some that may lead to forms of judicial resolution of issues. We reject the use of violence by either party during collective bargaining or any labor/management disagreement.

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NO PARKING  
EXCEPT THE  
AM-PM  
MAY 1981

IF YOU CAN'T SEE  
MY MIRRORS  
I CAN'T SEE YOU!

ASTE

HOW AM I DRIVING?  
COMPLIMENT  
OR SCENT PW 828  
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TRIPLE-B



BAR  
WE ALL   
HAVE DUSTY  
BIBLES

