

Wesleyan Studies

The Optimism of Grace

Salvation – Lesson 5

In Wesley's house of salvation analogy, repentance is the _____ faith is the _____, and holiness is the _____. Although some teach that salvation and holiness are separate, Wesley believed holiness _____ salvation—to bring the moral image of God back to human beings and the restoration and therapeutic _____ of the human heart, as well as _____ from our sins.

In Wesley's sermon "Justification by Faith," he said sanctification actually _____ at justification—it is the _____ of justification.

In Philippians 1:6, Paul says "God, who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." Wesley sees this beginning and continuation of salvation normative and not simply a transaction. There is a beginning of _____ and _____; this is the entrance into the house of salvation, not the _____. Wesley said this is the life where faith is working through _____. Wesley actually likened faith as the handmaiden of love, that faith _____ the expression of love. Wesley considered salvation and sanctification to only be fully understood as _____. This was not only faith or being justified, it is a life now empowered _____ and _____ faith to bring about _____.

Wesley said, "Religion itself we define is loving God with all of our heart and our neighbor as ourselves and in that love, abstaining from all evil and doing all possible good we can for all people. Religion we concede to be _____ other than the love of God and of all mankind."

To understand Wesley's doctrine of salvation, one must understand the place that love occupies. This faith must be _____. Wesley sees all of repentance and faith moving toward a life of love.

In Wesley's sermon "Laying the Foundation," he said "There's nothing higher in religion. There is, in effect, nothing else. If you look for anything other than love, you're looking wide of the mark. You're going out of the royal way. And when you're asking others, 'Have you received this blessing or that blessing?' If you mean anything, ANYTHING other than _____, you are wrong. You're leading them out of the way and putting them on a false scent."

Wesley was once asked, "What is a Methodist?" Wesley answered, "It's an old religion, nothing more _____—love to God and love to mankind. This love is the great medicine of life, the never-failing _____ for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries of man."

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This understanding of love is the operational center, or core, per Dr. Joseph Dongell at Asbury Theological seminary, and makes love the _____ of the Christian life of salvation and holiness. Love is the transformation that Wesley was preaching and calling for and declaring. Faith working through love as the center means that this is a _____ kind of experience in the life of a believer.

Dr. Dallas Willard, professor of philosophy at UCLA, said, "There are many people who seem to only want to know what are the minimal entry requirements to go to heaven." Wesley said salvation was not just this vulgar notion of _____. Salvation is not just this matter of the minimal entry requirements for heaven, that would violate what Paul said in Philippians 1. Willard said, "Much of evangelism today is rooted in a _____ of salvation. People have been told they are Christians because they've confessed, they believe that Jesus died for their sins. But the total package is presented in such a way that it leaves their general life _____."

Wesley would never accept this minimalist understanding of just being _____ from sin, but also required being _____ in the image of God and _____ working through _____. Love becomes, again, the supreme expression of _____ and _____. Wesley never contended that salvation was simply a matter of _____ or that one just "lived right." Wesley knew that salvation meant the heart was filled with love.

J. Sidlow Baxter, a Baptist British theologian and writer, said whenever we focus about this salvation or holiness on just not sinning, it just aggravates us because it forgets the greater and the more important feature of salvation and holiness as love.

We know that love must be the center because obedience, or conforming or not sinning, can be done _____. People can obey and do the right thing out of fear of _____ or the promise of a _____; that's a very _____ approach. It is not faith working through love.

Consider Luke 15, the story of the prodigal son. The older son, when he's so angry that his father is being lavish, says "I have never disobeyed your command." This older son had obeyed knowing he would receive a later reward, but not out of love.

Wesley could not stand for this notion of salvation simply being a matter of _____ or _____. It must be an expression of faith working through love. It is the promise of the old Covenant in Ezekial 36:26 that says "I will give you a _____."

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Wesley's understanding of salvation is this restoring of the moral image of God in true _____, _____, and _____. Salvation is more than _____— it is _____, it is _____ in the moral image of God, and it is _____.

The value of Wesley's theology is that salvation and holiness is really an expression of _____ to us and _____ us _____ and not just some _____.

Questions to consider:

How has your understanding of salvation been affected by these materials, or has it?

Are there areas in your understanding that you should give some attention to?

What feature or area of Wesley's understanding of salvation is most needed in your life?

How have you fallen into the notion of the minimal entry requirements to go to heaven and how could you adjust that?

Wesley's view of salvation encourages us to live a life that is animated by faith working through love.