

SMALL GROUP
AND SUNDAY
SERMON SERIES



CELEBRATING METHODISM



JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE OUR METHODIST HERITAGE
2 - 23 November 2025

Week 1	2 November	A heart strangely warmed
Week 2	9 November	Do all the good you can
Week 3	16 November	The world is my parish
Week 4	23 November	Let us be nothing, that Christ may be all
ADVENT I:	30 November	The best of all, God is with us

Welcome to Celebrating METHODISM Series: November 2025

As the lectionary year draws to a close and we prepare to enter the season of Advent, November offers us a beautiful moment to reflect on who we are as Methodist people. “*Celebrating Methodism*” is an invitation to rediscover our roots and ways to live out the spirit and teachings of John and Charles Wesley in our present time. Throughout this month, we celebrate the faith of those who came before us, the shared identity that binds us as Methodists, and the ongoing call to be a people shaped by grace, holiness, and mission. As we journey through the lectionary readings, we will draw on five well-known Wesleyan sayings - words that have shaped our heritage and can still guide our faith today. Each week’s reflection connects a Wesleyan insight with the Scripture readings, helping us prepare to enter Advent with renewed faith and spiritual energy.

Home Groups and classes guide:

1. Open in Worship and Prayer: this is to invite God into the meeting. For example, you can light a candle, sing together, or use a YouTube Hymn or song.
2. Open your Bibles and read the Bible verses for this week (take turns?) see below.
3. Reflect on the Bible verses and the reflection written by a Minister or Lay Preacher.
4. Connect with each other and take the reflection deeper by answering the Questions.
5. Works out: What have we learned that we can apply in our lives in this session? Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).

Week 1: 2 NOVEMBER

A heart strangely warmed



Before his Aldersgate Street experience, John Wesley had been going through the motions of faith, but feeling his prayers were empty and his belief was just a head-knowledge. Then, as someone read from Luther’s writings about the grace of God, a gentle warmth spread through him. It was the sudden, personal assurance that Christ was for him, and his sins were forgiven. In that moment, his heart was “*strangely warmed*,” and his belief moved from his head to his heart. This is the root of our Methodist zeal, and it invites us all to recall our own moments where God’s grace personally changed us - our own ‘Aldersgate moments’.

READINGS:

Psalm 32:1-7

2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12

Luke 19:1-10

REFLECTION WRITTEN BY: REV THABISO MCINGA

When John Wesley spoke of his heart being “*strangely warmed*,” he was describing something that only grace can do and that is something that cannot be earned or achieved by any human effort. We learn from his writings that when speaking of this, he was talking about a gift of grace that simply finds you in the most unexpected and unearned way, yet feeling deeply personal. This is the same kind of grace that found Zacchaeus in Jericho when we read Luke 19:1-10.

For Zacchaeus, this grace came through the unexpected voice of Jesus calling his name and saying, “*Come down, I’m coming to your house today.*” But get this.... Zacchaeus was not what we’d call a broken man. If anything, he was successful, wealthy, and appeared to have his life together. However, beneath all that success was quiet restlessness. That longing which no amount of money or achievement could satisfy. Curiosity made him climb the sycamore tree to see Jesus, but grace called him down. And that is the mystery of grace: it meets us not only in our need, but also in our comfort, gently shaking us out of the illusion that we are self-sufficient.

So, like Wesley, Zacchaeus could have said, “*My heart was strangely warmed*,” because his home which was once a symbol of his wealth, had now become a place of salvation, not because of what was in it but because of what happened inside him. This narrative challenges and invites us too to come down from our “trees”, i.e. those places where we hold on to control or keep our distance and to welcome Jesus into our lives. For when we do, God’s grace warms the hidden corners of our hearts and turns our ordinary days into moments of divine encounter.

GROUP/CLASS QUESTIONS:

1. What norms are you willing to defy to see Jesus?
2. What ways have we personally or as a society prevented others from seeing Jesus?
3. Where is my sycamore tree, i.e. a place I observe from a distance instead of engaging?

MEMORY VERSES FOR THE WEEK:

Monday	Psalm 51:10 “ <i>Create in me a pure heart, O God</i> ”
Tuesday	Luke 24:32 “ <i>Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us?</i> ”
Wednesday	2 Corinthians 5:17 “ <i>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come.</i> ”
Thursday	Ephesians 2:8 “ <i>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith.</i> ”
Friday	1 John 4:19 “ <i>We love because he first loved us.</i> ”
Saturday	Luke 19:10 “ <i>The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.</i> ”

FAMILY TIME: WRITTEN BY: JENNY BLAKE

Scripture Readings: Psalm 32:1-7; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12; Luke 19:1-10

Wesleyan Saying: “A heart strangely warmed”



Opening Thought

John Wesley had been a preacher for many years, but something was missing. His faith felt like a list of rules rather than a living friendship with God. One evening, as someone read aloud about God’s grace, he felt something deep inside - a warmth in his heart. Wesley wrote, “*I felt my heart strangely warmed.*”

That was the moment he truly understood that Jesus loved him personally, that his sins were forgiven, and that he was accepted by God's grace. From that night, everything changed. Wesley's heart was on fire for God, and his life became a mission to share that love with others.

Read Together

- **Psalm 32:1–7** – The joy of being forgiven.
- **2 Thessalonians 1:1–4, 11–12** – God strengthens us to live out our faith.
- **Luke 19:1–10** – Zacchaeus meets Jesus and his life is transformed.

Family Reflection

When Zacchaeus met Jesus, something changed inside him, he went from being greedy to generous, from selfish to kind. That's what happens when God's love truly reaches our hearts.

John Wesley experienced the same thing at Aldersgate. His faith became *alive*. He no longer believed *about* Jesus- he *believed in* Jesus.

That's the heart of being Methodist: a faith that is personal, joyful, and full of grace.

God doesn't just want us to know facts about Him. He wants us to feel His love, trust His forgiveness, and live differently because of it.

Discussion Time

For Young Children

1. How do you think Zacchaeus felt when Jesus called him by name?
2. What do you think it means when we say our hearts are "warm" for God?
3. Can you think of a time you felt God's love — maybe in church, singing, or praying?

For Teenagers

1. Why do you think John Wesley's faith felt empty before Aldersgate?
2. What does it mean for faith to move from your *head* to your *heart*?
3. Have you ever had a moment when you felt especially close to God? What happened?
4. How can we keep our hearts "warm" for God this week — even when life feels cold or hard?

Prayer

Dear Lord, Thank You for loving us so much that You meet us personally.

Warm our hearts with Your grace, just as You did for John Wesley. Help us to know, not just in our minds, but deep in our hearts, that we are forgiven and loved. Like Zacchaeus, change us from the inside out so we can share Your love with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Faith in Action (Family Challenge)

This week, share God's warmth!

- **Children:** Draw a heart and write or draw things that make your heart feel warm (like prayer, music, kindness).
- **Teens:** Write a short reflection or social post about what "a heart strangely warmed" means to you.
- **Family:** Each day, take a moment to thank God for one way you have *felt His love*.