SMALL GROUP AND SUNDAY SERMON SERIES



THE Salvation JOURNEY

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JOIN US ON A FOUR-WEEK JOURNEY EXPLORING GRACE AND SALVATION

1 - 22 November 2026

In the Methodist Church, we believe that salvation is not a once-off achievement because John Wesley taught that salvation is a process that begins in this life and continues until we enter glory. In one of his sermons titled: Sermon 85, he writes: "*Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation; whereby, 'through grace,' we 'are saved by faith;' consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin and restored to the image of God.*

All experience, as well as Scripture, shows this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual. It begins the moment we are justified, in the holy, humble, gentle, patient love of God and man. It gradually increases from that moment, as 'a grain of mustard-seed, which, at first, is the least of all seeds,' but afterwards puts forth large branches, and becomes a great tree; till, in another instant, the heart is cleansed from all sin and filled with pure love to God and man. But even that love increases more and more, till we 'grow up in all things into him that is our Head;' till we attain 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

In very simple terms, even when we experience a definite moment of faith, God continues to work in us, teaching us to love more deeply and live more faithfully. Salvation is therefore not about becoming perfect overnight, but about continually growing in God's grace. The question is not only, '*have I accepted Jesus*?' but also, '*Am I becoming more like Jesus*?' Therefore, over the month of November, before we get into Advent, we shall use the designated lectionary readings to journey through the notion of salvation as understood and lived by Methodists. In approaching the end of the year now, the invitation is to find a moment to reflect on whether we are still growing in grace and becoming more like Christ. And, in the words of our Methodist heritage, check our pulse by asking ***are we yet alive*?** Because trust me, the journey is not over - there is still more grace to receive, more love to embody, more holiness to pursue and more of Christ to reveal in the world.

1 November	**Prevenient Grace**	**Joshua 3:7-17**
8 November	**Justifying Grace**	**Matthew 25:1-13**
15 November	**Sanctifying Grace**	**Matthew 25:14 - 30**
22 November	**Glorification**	**Matthew 25:31- 46**

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: Practical Activity. Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).*

WEEK 1 – PREVENIENT GRACE - God Goes Before Us

Main reading: Joshua 3:7–17

New International Version

7 And the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. 8 Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.'" 9 Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God. 10 This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. 11 See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. 12 Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. 13 And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap." 14 So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. 15 Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, 16 the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. 17 The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Prevenient grace is the grace of God that comes before we recognise, understand or respond to God. In Joshua 3, God prepares the way through the Jordan before the people can cross. The priests step forward in faith, but it is God who makes passage possible. This week invites the group to notice the ways God has already been present—awakening desire, opening doors, placing people in our lives and drawing us towards faith. Salvation begins with God's initiative, not our achievement.

THE WEEKS AHEAD

Across this four-week journey, we will follow salvation as a work of grace: God seeks us through **prevenient grace**; welcomes and restores us through **justifying grace**; forms us in holy love through **sanctifying grace**; and brings the journey to fulfilment in **glorification**. Next week we will explore the call to receive God's saving grace and live ready for Christ.

SONG: Way Maker by Sinach - *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QM8jQHE5AAk*

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS - BY **REV THABISO MCINGA**

One of the things we do not speak about enough is the beauty and wonder of how much God is with us - always at work in our lives - even in way we cannot fathom. I mean, this is even before we know what lies ahead. In Methodist theology, we call this prevenient grace, i.e. the grace of God that goes before us, prepares the way and draws us towards God even before we know that we need God. In Joshua 3, the Israelites stand before the Jordan River, facing an obstacle they could not get through by their own strength. Yet, before they take their first step into the river, God has already spoken and prepared to make a way for them. So, their journey across the Jordan does not begin with their courage or even their ability but it begins with God's initiative.

Sometimes, we look back at our lives and realise that there were moments when we thought we were simply finding our own way, only to discover later that God had been leading us all along. There were doors that opened, people who came into our lives, moments of conviction, and even interruptions that redirected our paths. We did not always recognise God's presence at the time, but grace was already at work. Just as God went before Israel into the Jordan, God often enters the unknown ahead of us, preparing us for what lies beyond our present circumstances. Grace does not wait for us to have everything figured out before it begins its work in us.

As we continue our journey of salvation, prevenient grace invites us to stop believing that we must find our way to God entirely by ourselves. Before we could seek God, God was already seeking us; before we could respond in faith, God was already calling us. The question, therefore, is not simply whether we are ready to cross our Jordan, but whether we are willing to trust the God who has gone before us.

We may not yet see how the waters will part, or understand what awaits us on the other side, but we can take comfort in knowing that the God who calls us forward is already at work ahead of us. Our journey begins not with what we do for God, but with what God, in grace, has already begun to do for us.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1) Looking back at your life, can you identify a moment when God was working in your life before you were even aware of God's presence? What helped you recognise it afterwards?
2) Looking back at your life, can you identify a moment when God was working in your life before you were even aware of God's presence? What helped you recognise it afterwards?
3) Where might God already be at work in your life, and what would change if you began each day believing that you are not walking into the unknown alone?

DAY-BY-DAY VERSE AND PRAYER

Day 1 — Joshua 3:5. *"Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow Yahweh will do wonders among you.""* **Prayer:** Holy God, prepare my heart and help me expect your gracious work.

Day 2 — Joshua 3:8. *"You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.'"* **Prayer:** Lord, give me courage to step forward when you call.

Day 3 — Joshua 3:13. *"It shall come to pass, when the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of Yahweh, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan will be cut off. The waters that come down from above will stand in one heap."* **Prayer:** God who makes a way, teach me to trust you before I see the outcome.

Day 4 — Psalm 139:5. *"You hem me in behind and before. You laid your hand on me."* **Prayer:** Thank you for surrounding me with your presence and care.

Day 5 — Romans 5:8. *"But God commends his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* **Prayer:** Jesus, thank you for loving me before I could earn or return your love.

Day 6 — John 6:44. *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up in the last day."* **Prayer:** Draw me nearer to Christ and help me recognise your invitation.

Day 7 — Philippians 2:13. *"For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure."* **Prayer:** Work within me, Lord, shaping my desires and actions according to your good purpose.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Draw a simple timeline of your faith journey. Mark people, moments, questions and unexpected openings through which God may have been drawing you closer. Thank one person who helped you recognise God's grace and pray daily for one person whom God may already be drawing closer.

FAMILY DEVOTION: GOD GOES BEFORE US - by **Jenny Blake** (Children's Pastor)

Theme: Prevenient Grace **Bible Reading:** Joshua 3:7–17
Big Idea: God's grace is at work in our lives even before we realise it.

Let's Talk About It

Have you ever been nervous about doing something new, like starting at a new school, meeting someone new, or trying something difficult? Sometimes we cannot see what lies ahead, but we can trust that God is with us.

Read the Bible Together

In Joshua 3:7–17, the Israelites faced a huge challenge: they needed to cross the Jordan River, which was overflowing its banks. God instructed the priests to step into the water, and God made a way for the people to cross on dry ground. God was leading His people, even when they could not see how everything would work out.

What Is Prevenient Grace?
In the Methodist Church, we believe that God's grace is at work in our lives before we even realise it. John Wesley called this *prevenient grace*, which means God's grace "goes before us."

God loves us before we know how to look for Him. He works through people, experiences and opportunities, inviting us into a relationship or friendship with Him. Just as God made a way for the Israelites, God continues to guide us. We may not always know what lies ahead, but we can trust Him to walk with us.

Remember: God's grace goes before us, walks with us, and helps us grow to become more like Jesus.

Discussions

- When have you been nervous about something new?
- Who has helped or encouraged you along the way?
- How can you show God's love to someone this week?

Our Challenge
This week, look for ways God might be at work in your life. Show kindness, encourage someone, or help someone who needs it. As we receive God's grace, we are invited to share that grace with others.

Let Us Pray
Loving God, thank You for loving us and guiding us, even when we cannot see what lies ahead. Help us to recognise Your grace, trust You when we are afraid, and grow to become more like Jesus. Help us share Your love with others this week.
In Jesus' name, Amen.