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 2: JUSTIFYING GRACE — Welcomed and Made Right

Main reading: Matthew 25:1–13 New International Version
The Parable of the Ten Virgins
25 *"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.* [2] *Five of them were foolish and five were wise.* [3] *The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them.* [4] *The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps.* [5] *The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.* [6] *"At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'* [7] *"Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.* [8] *The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'* [9] *"'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'* [10] *"But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.* [11] *"Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!'* [12] *"But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'* [13] *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.*

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Justifying grace is God's forgiving and restoring grace, received through faith in Jesus Christ. The parable of the ten bridesmaids calls us to respond personally and faithfully to the invitation of the Bridegroom. We do not save ourselves by our preparedness; rather, readiness reveals a living response to grace. This week we consider repentance, trust and assurance: in Christ, guilt is forgiven, relationship with God is restored and a new life begins.

THE WEEKS AHEAD

Last week we saw that God seeks us before we respond. This week focuses on receiving God's gift of forgiveness and new standing in Christ. Next week turns to **sanctifying grace**—the lifelong work by which the Spirit forms our character and makes our lives fruitful. In the final week, we will look towards **glorification**, when God's saving work is brought to completion.

SONG:

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS - BY **MANDLENKOSI DAKADA** *(Class Leader)*

JUSTIFYING GRACE: RELOCATED AND REPOSITIONED THROUGH GRACE
Scripture: Matthew 25:1–13 Justifying Grace is a profound expression of God's unconditional love, through which we are forgiven, reconciled to Him, and made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. It reminds us that salvation is not earned through our good deeds, religious commitments, or positions within the Church, but is a gift freely given by God and received through faith.

In Matthew 25:1–13, the Parable of the Ten Virgins is a powerful reminder of spiritual readiness and genuine faith. All ten virgins carried lamps, all awaited the bridegroom, yet only five were prepared when he arrived. This challenges us to examine whether our Christianity extends beyond outward appearances into a genuine relationship with Christ.

As a nation, we are continuously confronted by poverty, inequality, unemployment, and social division. While we proclaim faith, love, and unity, we must ask ourselves whether our lives truly reflect the grace we have received. As members of the Bryanston society, wearing our uniforms, attending services, and serving in leadership should never replace a personal relationship with God.

This speaks directly to our theme, *"Relocated and Repositioned for Mission and Ministry: The Other Side Awaits."* Through Justifying Grace, God relocates us from separation into reconciliation with Him, repositioning us from merely identifying as Methodists to living with renewed purpose and commitment to His mission.

However, the other side requires readiness. Like the wise virgins, we are challenged not to rely on religious traditions, inherited faith, or outward appearances, but to respond personally to God's grace. Our

calling is not simply to belong to the Church, but to live as people who genuinely know Christ.
As Jesus reminds us, *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."*

May we never become so occupied with Church activities that we neglect our relationship with the Head of the Church. May Justifying Grace restore us, faith sustain us, and God's purpose reposition us for meaningful mission and ministry. *The other side awaits. May we be found ready.*

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. How do we move beyond religious activities to build a genuine relationship with Christ?
2. How should God's freely given grace influence the way we live and serve?
3. What does *'being repositioned for God's mission'* mean to us as a Church family?
4. How can we demonstrate God's grace amid South Africa's social challenges?
5. Are we prepared for the other side, and what must change in our lives?

DAY-BY-DAY VERSE AND PRAYER

Day 1 — Matthew 25:4. *"but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."* **Prayer:** Lord Jesus, fill my life with your Spirit and teach me to live ready for you.

Day 2 — Matthew 25:13. *"Watch therefore, for you don't know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."* **Prayer:** Keep me watchful, faithful and responsive today.

Day 3 — Luke 18:13–14. *"But the tax collector, standing far away, wouldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."*
Prayer: Merciful God, I come honestly before you; forgive and restore me.

Day 4 — Romans 3:24. *"being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,"*
Prayer: Thank you that I am made right by your grace, not by my achievement.

Day 5 — Romans 5:1. *"Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;"* **Prayer:** Jesus, let your peace quiet my shame and strengthen my trust.

Day 6 — 2 Corinthians 5:17. *"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new."* **Prayer:** Make the new life of Christ visible in my choices today.

Day 7 — 2 Corinthians 5:20. *"We are therefore ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."* **Prayer:** Reconcile me to yourself and make me an ambassador of reconciliation.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Set aside fifteen quiet minutes for an honest prayer of confession. Receive God's forgiveness, then take one concrete step towards reconciliation—apologise, forgive, seek wise help or restore a neglected relationship where it is safe and appropriate.

FAMILY DEVOTION: ARE YOU READY? - by **Jenny Blake** (Children's Pastor)

Theme: Justifying Grace **Bible Reading:** Matthew 25:1–13
Big Idea: God's forgiveness is a gift of grace, and we are invited to respond by trusting Him and living with faith.

Let's Talk About It

Have you ever been so excited about something that you couldn't wait for it to happen? Perhaps a birthday, a holiday or a special celebration? Imagine being invited to a wedding, getting dressed up, and then having to wait much longer than you expected for the celebration to begin!
Would you be ready, or would you have forgotten something important?

Read the Bible Together
Matthew 25:1–13
Jesus tells a story about ten bridesmaids who were waiting for the bridegroom to arrive. They all had lamps, but only five had brought extra oil. When the bridegroom took longer than expected, their lamps began to run out. The five who had prepared with extra oil were ready when he finally arrived, while the others were not.

Jesus used this story to remind His followers to be ready and to keep watch.

What Is Justifying Grace?
In the Methodist Church, we believe that God's love is not something we have to earn. God offers us forgiveness and welcomes us into a restored relationship through Jesus.
John Wesley called this *justifying grace*. It is the moment we respond to God's love in faith and receive His forgiveness. We don't have to be perfect, do everything right or earn our way into God's favour. God's grace is a gift!

But what does this have to do with the ten bridesmaids?
The story reminds us that following Jesus is not something we should put off or take for granted. We are invited to trust Him, keep our faith alive and be ready to live as His followers.
We don't do good things to earn God's love; we do good things because we have received His love.

Discussion questions:
1. Why do you think some of the bridesmaids were prepared and others were not?
2. What does it mean to keep our faith alive?
3. How can we show others that we trust and love Jesus?

Our Challenge
This week, think about one way you can live out your faith. Perhaps you can forgive someone, show kindness, help someone in need or spend a little more time talking to God.
Remember, we don't have to earn God's love. We simply need to receive it and allow it to change the way we live.

Let Us Pray
Loving God, Thank You for Your amazing grace and for loving us even when we make mistakes. Thank You for the gift of forgiveness through Jesus.
Help us to trust You, keep our faith alive and be ready to follow wherever You lead us. Teach us to share the love and forgiveness we have received with those around us.
Help us remember that Your love is a gift, not something we have to earn.
In Jesus' name, Amen.