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, 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 3: SANCTIFYING GRACE — Growing in Holy Love

Main reading: Matthew 25:14–30 *New International Version*

The Parable of the Bags of Gold

14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. 15 To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. 17 So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. 18 But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.' 21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' 22 "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.' 23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' 24 "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' 26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. 28 "'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. 29 For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Sanctifying grace is the continuing work of the Holy Spirit that makes us more like Christ. In the parable of the talents, servants are entrusted with gifts and called to use them faithfully. Grace is never passive: God's love frees and equips us to grow, serve and bear fruit. This week invites us to reject fearful hiding, practise the means of grace and offer our abilities for God's purposes. Christian perfection is not flawless performance, but a heart increasingly filled with love for God and neighbour.

THE WEEKS AHEAD

We have traced the God who seeks us through prevenient grace and restores us through justifying grace. This week asks how grace continues to transform our habits, relationships and service. Next week concludes the series with **glorification**: the hope that God will complete what grace has begun, and the call to recognise and serve Christ in the least of these while we wait.

SONG: Grace to Grace – Hillsong worship: *https://youtu.be/NS3OgXaHoyc?list=RDNS3OgXaHoyc*

Or

Methodist Hymn book IsiXhosa Hymn 221

Ma ndithwale iziqhamo, EzoMoya oyiNgcwele; *May I bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit*; Ubunchathu nolulamo, Ukulunga nobubele, *Goodness, humility,Righteousness and kindness,* Zonke ezizezenkolo Zezothando, nezoxolo. *All that are of faith, Of love and peace* Ezi zinto ma zikhule Entliz'yweni onk' amaxa; *All these should grow, In my heart all the time;* Zindincede ndinyothule, Konke oko kuzixaka;	*Yes, they should help to free me, From my countless sins that defeat me*;Okwekratshi nokomona, Neento eziphuma khona *Pride and jealousy, And everything associated with them* Ewe, Nkosi, ma ndihlume Ndibe ngoxakathileyo; *Yes, Lord, may I bring forth lots and lots of fruit;* Ndizamele, ndiphuthume, Konke okulungileyo, *And be quick to pursue Everything that is loveable & righteous*, Iz' ingabi nakuphikwa, Yonk' imilo kwa nemikhwa. *So that my behavior and my ways can never be questioned.*

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS - BY **BULELWA NKOLONGWANE** *(Class Leader)*

Wesley taught us that justification saves us from the guilt of sin, while sanctification saves us from its power and root and restores us to the image of God. Sanctifying grace is God's continuous work in us through the Holy Spirit, and it is at the heart of this parable. The master entrusts his servants with his wealth, just as God entrusts us with gifts, time and opportunities. Grace is not passive. It frees us and equips us to grow, which is why the master's praise, *"well done, good and faithful servant"* (Matthew 25:21), goes to faithfulness and not to results.

Sanctification is not something we achieve by effort alone. In John 15:5, Jesus says we bear fruit only by remaining in him, the vine by consecrating ourselves in the means of grace. The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 is the visible evidence of sanctifying grace at work, not a list of virtues to produce through our willpower.

Building spiritual discipline through works of the flesh, does not yield the evidence of sanctifying grace, instead it leads to self-righteousness. Sanctifying grace exposes the danger of self-righteousness. When we trust our own goodness instead of God's grace, we stop seeing our need for it. We judge others, and care more about looking holy than being changed. Self-righteousness crowds out the fruit of the Spirit, replacing love with criticism, gentleness with harshness and joy with anxious performance. Fear and pride are two sides of the same mistake: trusting in ourselves rather than in the God who began a good work in us and will complete it.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are what grow naturally when we stay connected to Christ. This is why the means of grace (prayer, Scripture, Holy Communion, Christian conversation and acts of mercy) matter so much. They keep us attached to the vine so that the Spirit can do the growing.

The third servant shows what resists that growth. He buried his gift because he was afraid (Matthew 25:25), and fear can quietly stop sanctifying grace from bearing fruit in us. Grace replaces it with love, peace and trust. Because *"he who began a good work in you will complete it"* (Philippians 1:6), we do not have to be anxious about being perfect. This is also why patience with ourselves matters. Sanctification is gradual, like Wesley's mustard seed, and God is faithful to finish what he starts. Paul's prayer in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 goes further and asks that God would sanctify us completely, in spirit, soul and body. Grace is not meant to be a once-a-week experience, it reaches our work, our relationships, our money, our words and our habits, which is where fruit like patience, kindness, goodness and self-control becomes visible.

Sanctifying grace is also not meant to be lived alone. Hebrews 10:24 calls us to *"provoke one another to love and good works,"* and that is the aim of Christian perfection: not flawless performance, but a heart increasingly filled with love for God and one's neighbour. We grow as we encourage and hold one another accountable in a space of grace such as our small groups or classes. So, the invitation this week is to dig up whatever we have buried, stay close to the vine and let the Spirit grow us in holy love.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Self-righteousness and fear both come from trusting in ourselves instead of God's grace. Which of the two do you struggle with more, and how might Philippians 1:6 *"he who began a good work in you will complete it"* change the way you respond?

2. Which means of grace (*prayer, Scripture, Communion, community, acts of mercy)* keep you humble and connected to him, and which do you most need to practise this week?

3. Self-righteousness crowds out the fruit of the Spirit, such as love, gentleness and joy. Where have you seen the fruit growing in your life over the past year, and which one do you most want the Spirit to grow next?

DAY-BY-DAY VERSE AND PRAYER

Day 1 — Matthew 25:21. *"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'"* **Prayer:** Faithful God, help me steward well what you have placed in my hands.

Day 2 — Matthew 25:25. *"I was afraid and went away and hid your talent in the earth. Behold, you have what is yours."* **Prayer:** Reveal the fears that make me hide and replace them with trust.

Day 3 — John 15:5. *"I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."* **Prayer:** Jesus, keep me close to you, for apart from you I cannot bear lasting fruit.

Day 4 — Galatians 5:22–23. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law."* **Prayer:** Holy Spirit, grow your fruit in my words, attitudes and actions.

Day 5 — Philippians 1:6. *"being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."* **Prayer:** Continue your good work in me; make me patient with the process of growth.

Day 6 — 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24. *"May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who will also do it."* **Prayer:** Sanctify every part of my life and make me whole in love.

Day 7 — Hebrews 10:24. *"Let's consider how to provoke one another to love and good works,"* **Prayer:** Show me how to encourage someone towards love and good works.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Choose one gift or resource God has entrusted to you—time, skill, influence, hospitality, finances or encouragement. Use it intentionally this week to serve a person or ministry. Also practise one daily means of grace, such as prayer, Scripture reading, Holy Communion, Christian conversation or an act of mercy.

FAMILY DEVOTION: ARE YOU READY? - by **Magogodi Nkuna**

Theme: You Don't Have to Do It Alone
Bible Reading: 1 Peter 1:16 "*Be holy, for I am holy.*"

Have you ever felt the pressure to act perfect? To post the right things, say the right words, and never mess up? When God says, *"Be holy, for I am holy,"* it can sound like just another expectation we can't live up to. The truth is, God wants us to be like Him, but he doesn't expect us to achieve this on our own. To sanctify means to set apart for holiness or to make holy. God gives us sanctifying grace which is His power at work in us to make us more Christlike.

God gets personal with us, transforming us from the inside out. So, when Scripture says to be holy, it isn't something we do by trying harder in our own strength. It's something that only happens when we stay in Christ. As we keep walking in faith and staying close to Him, we are bound to become more like Jesus every day.

REFLECTION:

Where are you trying to "*be good*" in your own strength instead of trusting God to change you?

PRAYER:

Lord, thank You that I don't have to do this alone. Transform me from the inside out and help me stay close to You today so I can grow to be more like Christ. Amen