

Dr. Roger Green, Reformation to the Present, Lecture 14, Charles and John Wesley

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This is Dr. Roger Green in his Church History course, Reformation to the Present. This is session 14 on Charles and John Wesley.

One of Wesley's sermons. This is a sermon called the Almost Christian, where he talks about the Almost Christian and the Altogether Christian. So, on a Friday morning from John Wesley, what is implied in being an altogether Christian? First, the love of God, for thus saith his word, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. Such a love of God is this as engrosses the whole heart, takes up all the affections, fills the entire capacity of the soul, and employs the utmost extent of all its faculties.

He that thus loves the Lord his God, his spirit continually rejoiceth in God his Saviour. His delight is in the Lord, his Lord, and his all, to whom he thanks in everything. All his desire is unto God and to the remembrance of his name.

His heart is ever crying out, Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. Indeed, what can he desire besides God? Not the world, or the things of the world, for he is crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him. He is crucified to the desires of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life.

Yea, he is dead to pride of every kind, for love is not puffed up, but he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him is less than nothing in his own eyes. The second thing implied in being altogether a Christian is the love of our neighbor. For thus said our Lord in the following words, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

If any man asks, Who is my neighbor? We reply, Every man in the world, every child of his, who is the father of the spirits of all flesh. Nor may we in any wise accept our enemies, or the enemies of God and their own souls. But every Christian loves these also as himself.

Yea, as Christ loved us. He who would more fully understand what manner of love this is may consider St. Paul's description of it. It is long-suffering and kind, it envieth not, it is not rash or hasty in judging, it is not puffed up, but maketh him that loves the least the servant of all.

Love does not behave itself unseemly but becometh all things to all men. She seeketh not her own, but only the good of others, that they may be saved. Love is not provoked, it casteth out wrath, which he who hath is not made perfect in love.

It thinketh no evil, it rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in truth. It covereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. So, that's one of Wesley's sermons, in this case called the Almost Christian, the Altogether Christian.

Okay, it's October 11th, an interesting day in church history. This is the day that, remember, we talked about Zwingli, and this is the day that Zwingli died in 1531 on this day. I know you were talking about that at breakfast, so I thought I'd just kind of remind you that you were talking about Zwingli's death today because it's October 11th, so there he is.

Just a couple of things before we start. Monday it could be crowded in here on Monday; it's hard to tell. It's GE Day, and this is one of the classes listed for GE Day, so it could be crowded.

We could get a few. Who knows? I mean, sometimes it's been packed, and people are sitting on the floor and everything, so it's really hard to say. But Monday, we'll be prepared for our visitors and guests on Monday. Now, the way we've got the, then we'll lecture Monday, of course, lecture Wednesday.

No, we won't lecture on Wednesday. That's what I was going to tell you on Monday, but I've only got two days when I can help you get ready for the exam. So, next Wednesday is going to be one of them, and I've got the Lions then for next Wednesday.

So, we'll lecture on Monday, and I'll remind you of this. Now, I don't need the questions until Wednesday because I don't need you to work on the questions over the weekend. So, you can bring questions on Wednesday.

I'll remind you of this again on Monday. Just email them to me or bring them with you on Wednesday. That will be fine.

Then we don't meet on Friday, because it's a quad break. We're halfway through the semester, halfway through the course. Then, next week, we would meet on Monday and Wednesday, and then we would do a Friday session.

Normally, next week I would do a Friday session, but we're not meeting on Friday. So, we do the Friday session, and for that session, you can get questions to me earlier, and then the exam is next Monday. So, the second-hour exam.

So, we. This would be, this would be, I'm sorry. Yeah, this is. You don't need the questions for Monday.

I don't want you working on this over the weekend. I'm glad because I'm kind of springing this on you. You can just bring the questions on Wednesday to the discussion group.

That'll be fine. I'll be there early, or I'll try to get there a bit early. At least I'll get a chance to look at them.

I'll have our texts and everything. And then on Friday, we don't see; normally, I'd be doing this on Friday, but we don't meet on Friday next week. And then the week after, we'll do it on Friday, like usual.

Questions are on Wednesday, we are meeting on Friday, and then the exam is on Monday of the week. So, then we're, then we're really moving along here. Yikes, yikes.

Okay. Are there any questions? I'll remind you of this again on Monday, but because we might have a lot of visitors on Monday, I should stick with my lecture pretty carefully. Okay.

Well, the evangelical resurgence in the church. We are not now talking about England, so we had Germany, the Pietist movement, America, and the awakenings. In America, we just concentrated on the first great awakening, but we had the awakenings.

And in England, we had the Wesleyan revival. Simultaneous movements of resurgence in the church, bringing the church back to life again. And we're talking about numbers, we gave an introduction, and we especially talked about Arminius and the Remonstrants, who drew up the Remonstrants, remember? Kind of speaking, they accepted some of Calvinism, but they responded to other parts of Calvinism.

And that gives you some background for the theology of John Wesley just a bit. So now, we're still under number two, a biographical sketch of John Wesley. I do this with four or five people in the course, and I'm just trying to get you to get to know him a little bit.

So, here's where we are with Wesley. Let me just think of where we left off. Well, we were talking about the fact that he had settled into life, at Oxford University.

He was teaching at Lincoln College at Oxford. He settled in, pretty much, and that's where he thought he'd be the rest of his life, teaching Greek and other related subjects. And then he gets a call to go home to Epworth, because his father was ill, so he had to go home and help his father take care of that, attend that church, and the church at Root as well.

That's about where we left off. We mentioned something is happening while he is gone. Something is happening in Oxford, and I think that's where we left off, isn't it? So, okay, a group of Christians and a group of students are meeting at Oxford.

Now, John is away when this is happening, but one of the leaders of the group at Oxford was his brother, Charles Wesley, because Charles was, by now, a student at Oxford. So, Charles Wesley was one of the men who led this group. And then another person who was part of this group was George Whitefield.

So, remember, we lectured on George Whitefield, the grand itinerant, coming over here seven times for his revivals. There were other people, other students, at Oxford meeting together. Now, we want to be fair about these meetings.

When they started meeting, it was not for religious purposes. Their original intent of the meeting was to study together. But they found out that they had so much in common religiously with each other that it quickly evolved into religious, a religious meeting.

So, these were students at Oxford meeting together to pray, study the scriptures, and even do good works for the poor who were in Oxford. So, the other students at Oxford mocked them. They, they, they really mocked these people, these few guys who got together to study in this way and pray and so forth.

And they called them all kinds of nasty names. Sometimes, they were called Bible moths. Well, you know, that's not a very, you know, give me a break, Bible moths.

Remember, we used the term supererogation. Remember those, remember those Roman Catholic works that were stored up and, you know, well, they called them supererogation men as though they were trying to merit their own salvation by their praying together and so forth. So, you know, they had some pretty derisive names against these poor fellows meeting at Oxford.

But, but the, but they, but they, maybe the, the one that stuck, what's the one that stuck? Methodist is the one that stuck. Methodist was a term of derision. They were deriding these people.

They were studying methodically. They were praying methodically. They were leading their lives methodically.

We're going to call them Methodists. And they said to themselves, we're going to take this as a term of honor. It was meant as a derisive term, but we're going to take it as a term of honor.

So, they started calling themselves Methodists, not in any denominational way, not any kind of formal church way, but they were living a methodical life and praying methodically, studying the Bible methodically. So, they started saying, okay, we'll call ourselves Methodists. So now what happens is that John comes back after his father got well. John comes back, joins the group, and actually pretty quickly becomes the leader of the group.

John Wesley was just a natural-born leader. His leadership skills were seen by the others in the group. So, he came back, and he became the group's leader, and not no surprise, no surprise there.

Methodism was born at Oxford, with Charles and George Whitfield, John, and other people. So, there is the Methodist movement, which eventually would be shaped as a movement of reform within the Anglican church. So, but that's where it all started there.

It all started at Oxford. So, okay. Another thing we want to take note of, and we're just, just some biographical sketch here, but another thing we want to take note of is of 1735.

That was an important time in his life, 1735. Let me just look at the bottom name here. Forget, for now; forget the name of Francis Asbury.

Just look at General George Oglethorpe. So, take a look at that name and look at the dates there. General, long story short about Oglethorpe.

Oglethorpe was going to America on a second expedition to Georgia, where a colony had been established. So General George Oglethorpe is heading for America, and again, he had been there once, heading for America to help, you know, continue establishing the colony in Georgia. Long story short, he convinced John and Charles Wesley to accompany him to Georgia.

So, John decided he would go on this missionary endeavor. He went as the chaplain, and Charles went as the secretary. So, John and Charles Wesley leave everything behind, and they head for Georgia with General Oglethorpe.

They are missionaries. Now the missionary movement hasn't really taken off very much here, but they, in a sense, consider themselves as missionaries to the new world. So, chaplain, secretary, off we go.

Okay, long story short here, on the way to Georgia, a natural occurrence happens that frightens John Wesley. And that was, there was a tremendous storm at sea. And, as we've already said about going across the ocean in that world was a very perilous journey anyway.

I mean, it was a very, you take your life into your hands, you know, you're not, like we said, you're not on British air enjoying tea while you fly across the ocean. So, a pretty perilous journey. John, a tremendous storm arose, and John found himself in absolute fear of death.

And therefore, would he meet his maker, you know, under judgment, or would he meet his maker in eternal life? He didn't know. He was so fearful of that experience. It became a turning point in his life because there was a group of people on board who, in spite of the fact that it looked like the ship was going to go down, were praying and singing hymns.

And this group of people was the Moravians. Now, remember we talked about the Moravians when we talked about the Pietists. And remember we mentioned the formation of the Moravians under Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf.

Well, these Moravians were also going over as missionaries, but they were singing hymns and praying, and there were families too. It wasn't just some adult men here. These are men and women and children, and they're together, and they're singing hymns and praying.

And Wesley was so, so moved by these Christians who, in the face of death, were so calm that he decided he would look up the Moravians when he got to Georgia, which he did because he was, they had something he didn't. So the ship made it all right. We got to Georgia, and he was, he was witnessed to by the Moravians.

So, he gets into Georgia. So, okay. Long story short on his time in Georgia.

His time in Georgia lasted less than two years, and he was very, very discouraged. And I'll just say, I already said I got to watch my time on this because we could be telling stories about Wesley forever and until the end of December. So, I got to be careful.

So, long story short, his time in Georgia was a disaster, an unmitigated total 100% disaster. And part of it was because he fell in love in Georgia with a woman who was there. She didn't return his love.

She married someone else, and he refused to serve her and her husband communion because he was an Anglican priest. He, the chaplain, refused to serve them communion, which was against the law. They were going to put him on trial.

So, he decides he's going to head out of town. So, he had a very, very unhappy time in Georgia, and he used to keep a journal. He kept, and he's famous for his diary and journal.

His journal is voluminous. And here's what he said when he decided I've got to head home. He said, I went to America to convert the Indians, but oh, who shall convert me? Who? What is he that shall deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion.

I can talk well, nay, and believe myself on no danger is near, but let death look me in the face. My spirit is troubled. Who will deliver me from this fear of death? So he was in a very depressed state, over his time in Georgia, and he decided to go home.

By the way, Charles followed him soon after he went home. So, this was an unmitigated disaster for these two. And, they had to go home.

So, he goes home and notices the language. I have a fair summer religion. I have an evil heart of unbelief.

Notice the language of this man. This man is an Anglican priest when he's writing this. So he goes home.

Okay. Returns to London in 1738. So, he's been there just two years.

All right. Now, just a couple of other things here. One of the most important dates in church history is May 24th, 1738.

You should write this down because you may see this again in your lifetime, May 24th, 1738. A few years ago, there was a magazine called Christian History Magazine. and, they were doing a hundred most important dates in church history, and they wanted an article on May 24th, 1738, and they asked me to write the article.

So, I was pleased that they asked me to write this, you know, so I wrote the article on Wesley. This was a turning point in his life, May 24th, 1738. Okay.

Long story short, on May 24th, 1738, he was going to hear, some, a preacher, at a meeting on Aldersgate Street in London. So, on the way to the meeting, he stopped at St. Paul's Cathedral, and he was there for the evening song at St. Paul's, and then he went to the evening for a meeting, held by the Moravians. now he, this was a turning point in his life, and this is what he says in his journal.

In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change that God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. This was a turning point in his life.

This was a major turning point in his life because it was not as though he were not a Christian. He was a Christian, but he saw his Christianity, as he says, as a fair summer religion. so he wasn't technically converted.

This is not his conversion experience. As some people sometimes say, Wesley was converted on May 24th, 1738. It wasn't his conversion experience.

He didn't become a believer. But he received assurance. So, this great experience of assurance came to him.

Now, something very interesting. It came to his brother, who had the same kind of experience, not in the same place and not couched in the same language, but his brother Charles had the same kind of experience three days earlier. And, and his brother Charles, who wrote 6,000 hymns in his lifetime, wrote a hymn about that, about that assurance experience.

And now here's John Wesley being assured that he's the child of God. Now, let's go back to the Reformation for just a minute. What was one of the great battles of the Reformation, in a sense? It was the doctrine of assurance.

One of the great problems during the Reformation days is that people couldn't be sure they were children of God. Now, in a sense, in Wesley's life, it's happening all over again in him. He couldn't be sure he was a child of God.

He wanted to be sure, but he couldn't be sure he was a child of God. That night he received assurance. So, on May 24th, 1738, you'll see this again in your lifetime.

This is his time of assurance. And this is the beginning then of the Wesleyan Revival because it's from here on in that he gives himself, fully to the revival, to bring people alive in Christ and so forth. So, so for the next, what, 53 years or so, the Wesleyan Revival takes place.

And, John Wesley is a part of that. In terms of his personal life, after May 24th, 1730, I mean, there were struggles in his personal life, no doubt about that. One of the struggles he had was with two other women in his personal life.

And, I think I've got, well, anyways, one, there's an interesting story about one woman. Oh, that's right. I wanted to tell you a story about my, I felt my heart's warm, but I'll tell you that in a minute.

one woman he really did fall in love with. I mean, this was going to be the love of his life, no doubt about that. But he and his brother had made a contract with each other that unless the brother agreed to the marriage, the marriage wouldn't take place.

So, a long story short, this one is about Grace Murray, and John is in love with her. John decided I wanted to marry this woman. So, John got on his horseback, and he drove; he rode to the village where Grace Murray was, but Charles didn't agree to the marriage.

So Charles arranged a marriage for Grace Murray, and Grace Murray got married by an arranged marriage through Charles earlier, you know, a few days earlier, John arrives, and Grace is married. So, so that was strange. So then he, yeah, that kind of broke your heart.

These stories tell the story of how he married a woman named Mary Bazile. I'm not exactly sure I have to confess how to pronounce her last name. He married a woman by the name of Mary Bazile.

And, anybody here, it's, anybody here takes French, no French, help me out with the pronunciation. Can you? I'm not exactly sure now. So he married her, a very tragic marriage.

Mary finally left him, and they were never divorced, but she walked out on the marriage, and John didn't help matters because, on the day she left, he said to his brother in Latin, these people spoke Latin as English. So, he said to his brother in Latin, I did not ask her to stay. I did not ask her to go.

I will not ask her to return. And he didn't even know the day she died. Her death had to be reported to him by Charles.

He never saw her again. So it was a real tragic, oh, the heartbreak of this, of this marriage, you know, so forth. So with John, but anyway, the revival goes on.

Let me don't; just remind myself to come back to that heartwarming story in a minute. We, I forgot, but anyway, let me finish this off. So one of the things that John did was he sent, he wanted, oh, just a reminder now, the, the Methodist movement is not a denomination for John.

Never, never, never a denomination. It's a revival movement within the Anglican church. So, therefore, it's like the Puritans, the early Puritans, they weren't, they weren't separatists.

They were bringing reform and renewal, to the Anglican church. So it is with John that he brings renewal to the Anglican church. He's a Methodist but an Anglican; he died an Anglican priest.

now, one thing he does is send missionaries to America. The most famous of the missionaries was a man named Francis Asbury. Now, the reason Francis Asbury is so famous is because Francis Asbury stayed in America after they, the eight missionaries, came before the Revolutionary War.

Francis Asbury was the one who stayed after the Revolutionary War. All the other seven went home. And Francis Asbury became an itinerant minister itinerant revivalist, bringing Methodism across the land, just as John Wesley did in England.

So Francis Asbury really became a very important person in English and American Methodism. now, John Wesley wanted Francis Asbury to be ordained. So he sent a minister over to ordain him, a man by the name of Thomas Coke.

Now, Thomas Coke was an Anglican priest, and he had the blessing of John Wesley. He sends Thomas Coke over to ordain Francis Asbury to be a, an Anglican priest. And this is the picture of that ordination.

It was called the Christmas Conference because it happened on Christmas Eve. And as you can see, the man in the white robe who's kneeling is John Francis Asbury. The man in the white robe there is Thomas Coke, ordaining Francis Asbury to the ministry.

Now this was, now the Anglican church in England was very unhappy about this. Now the question is, why were they unhappy about this ordination by an Anglican priest who had the blessing of John Wesley as an Anglican priest? Why were, why do you think the Anglican establishment was so upset about this? Who ordains people in the Anglican tradition? The bishop, only the bishop. John Wesley is not a bishop.

Thomas Coke is not a bishop. And here they are ordaining Francis Asbury. Now, the reason for this, however, is John Wesley said, as far as I'm concerned when I read the New Testament, the bishop is no different from the elder or the pastor or the presbyter.

I mean, the bishop is no different. So, so I have all the rights and responsibilities of a bishop. I don't, I don't recognize the distinction that they're making.

So sometimes John Wesley had a little bit of an argument over church polity, even with his own Anglican church. But in any case, Francis Asbury is, is ordained and he carries on this great ministry here in America. He was itinerant, just like John Wesley.

That itinerant ministry is very interesting. Maybe I'll tell a quick story about that. I can't, I can't.

Okay. I can't resist this. Okay.

John Wesley died in 1791. And here's a picture of John Wesley on his deathbed in 1791. He's writing his last letter, the last letter he ever wrote.

And there it is. And the letter was to a man. I didn't put his name up.

We don't need to know him necessarily for this course, but a letter was to a man by the name of William Wilberforce. Now, what do you know William Wilberforce for? Yeah. Abolitionists of slavery in England.

And Wesley on his deathbed in 1791. Now, England still has slavery. The abolition didn't come until 1807, I guess.

But he's writing to William Wilberforce, encouraging him on his work on the abolition of slavery. He called it in the letter; he called slavery that villainy of villainies. So, the last letter he ever wrote was to William Wilberforce, encouraging him on the issue of abolitionism.

Let me tell you two quick stories. I can't resist this. So, this has nothing to do with anything.

So, don't even try to make any connections. Here are two quick stories about John. One is he traveled about 250,000 miles by horseback during his revival times. And he, he was not a person to waste one minute of the day.

So he had a special, a special thing made for the saddle. It went right over the saddle. I've seen it in the Wesley home in England, and it went right over the saddle.

And it was a little, like a little podia little desk that went right over the saddle. It opened up. There were things in there like writing paper, his Bible, and so forth.

And so even when he was riding his horse, never to waste a minute, John Wesley would get out his books, read his books, write letters, and so forth as he rode from place to place. He was so used to that that he made a saddle, a chair made like a saddle in his home. And even when he was in his home and in his study, he was sitting on the saddle and studying at that little desk.

So that's how he studied. And that's how he wrote voluminously, of course, and all those sermons and everything. It's pretty interesting.

I think it's interesting. But let me tell you, let me do a heart-strangely warm story, and then I will get back to the important stuff. But I went to Asbury Theological Seminary.

Okay. So that tells you something right there. And on Asbury Theological, by the way, if you ever go to Asbury Theological Seminary, Asbury College, you're going to see a lot of pictures of Francis Asbury.

So, and you're even going to see this picture we showed of him getting ordained. So, a lot of pictures of Francis Asbury. So let's just say that at Asbury Theological Seminary, they take all this stuff pretty seriously.

So, I was at a seminary in the middle of Kentucky, by the way. So it's in Wilmore, Kentucky. And when I was in seminary, it snowed, which is unusual for Kentucky, but it snowed.

We had a pretty good snowstorm. And some of the students at Asbury built a snowman in the exact likeness of John Wesley. It looked exactly like John Wesley.

By the way, John Wesley was only five feet tall and weighed about 105 pounds or so. So, he stood about this high. So, they made it exactly the looks of John Wesley.

And the professors at the seminary who take this stuff really seriously didn't think this was funny at all. I mean, they were appalled that John Wesley, the snowman, stood in the front yard of the seminary. And then a few days later, the sun comes out.

Wesley starts to melt. Some students made a huge sign and stuck it right in the middle of John Wesley. I felt my heart strangely warmed.

And so then the old professors who didn't think that the first snowman was funny when they saw that sign right in the middle of John Wesley, I felt my heart strangely warmed. No, this is not going to work. I mean, this is not going to happen.

So, it's a wonder they didn't get rid of all of us. And I was not a part of this, I guarantee that. But when I say us, I mean the whole student body.

It's a wonder they didn't just throw us all out. But I felt my heart strangely warmed. So there is John Wesley, there's his life.

What a life, what an interesting life. We're going to get to his theology in a minute. Okay, so are there any questions about his life? Are you interested in John Wesley's life? Fascinating fellow brought great resurgence in England, no doubt about that, through Methodism.

But never intended Methodism to become a denomination, though. There were no Methodist denominations on the day he died, 1791. They sprang up after his death.

Okay, now let's look at number three, the theology of John Wesley. And the reason we're looking at this, the reason this is important, is because we are now seeing a counterbalance to a very strong Calvinist theology that we've seen in the course so far, with some degree of some finessing here and there.

But we're going to see a balance of that now. And then we're going to see where we go in the future with these kinds of theological programs that these people have. So what we're going to do, you can see, I've got down here five things.

First of all, we're going to just mention the Wesleyan quadrilateral, okay? Now, the Wesleyan quadrilateral, have any of you had, were any of you in Christian theology in the core course by any chance? Did they mention this in the core course? We do mention this in the core course. We're trying to find a kind of common ground in the core course. Long story short, the Wesleyan quadrilateral is not a term that John Wesley used himself.

It's a scholarly term put on his kind of way of understanding the scriptures. So, when I'm teaching the Christian theology course, I always say that the Wesleyan quadrilateral is like a stool with three legs on it. So, it's a way of understanding the Bible.

So obviously, the seat of the stool is scripture, the Bible. The question is for Wesley: how do you understand the Bible? How do you interpret the Bible? And for him, there were three ways to interpret the Bible. First of all, reason.

You use the mind that God has given you. But this is not a strict rationality. This is not the rationality of the scholastic Lutherans or something like that.

This is the use of the mind, but also God enlightens the mind to help us to understand the Bible. Sometimes, in ways we can't totally, or not totally, we can't kind of rationalize them, but we have to use our minds. God gave us our minds to think, and we have to use our minds.

And then secondly, tradition. John Wesley was very taken with tradition. What has the church taught since the early church? That's what I want to know.

In general, John Wesley looked over the Reformation back to the early church because his focus was on the early church, what the early church taught, and what the first seven councils of the church taught. So by tradition, he's often talking about the early church. So tradition is important.

How did the early church fathers understand the Bible and so forth? That becomes really important. Now, if he were just a good Anglican, he would stop there because,

for the Anglicans of his day, there wasn't a quadrilateral; there was a trilateral. There was scripture, and then reason and tradition helped us to understand the scriptures.

But Wesley expands his notion, and he brings in experience. Sometimes, the heart tells us what the scripture has to say. Sometimes our own experience tells us what's true about the Bible.

So, he brings experience into the whole story here. Now, the thing you need to notice about Wesley is that experience is last, however. You don't open your Bible and begin understanding it through your own experience.

You begin understanding it through reason, through tradition, and then you bring your experience into the story. So, experience has its place, but for Wesley, it is, in a sense, the least of the ways in which you interpret the Bible. But this is what's called the Wesleyan quadrilateral.

This was the way he experienced and understood the scriptures. So, you've talked about that before, so you know that. Okay, then under B, if there's one word that would kind of govern Wesley's theology, it would be the word grace.

Wesley's theology is a theology of grace. Now, as Wesley said, however, there are various aspects of God's grace. Now, I'm going to take a little more time with the first one because two, three, four, and five are going to be pretty evident.

But the first one is something he really felt he needed to elaborate on in order to counterbalance a Calvinist understanding of grace. And the first one is something he spends a lot of time on. You can see it; it's called prevenient grace.

Wesley bases prevenient grace basically on John 1.9, although he has other passages on which he bases this doctrine of prevenient grace. John 1.9, the true light that enlightens every person, was coming into the world. That is, the light was Christ.

So, John Wesley said, oh, and by the way, the word prevenient just means the grace that comes before. So, the grace that precedes comes before and it comes before salvation. In other words, it's the grace that every person in the world has this prevenient grace.

Okay, so John Wesley was convinced that because every person in the world has this measure of God's grace, this thing called prevenient grace, this light of Christ, then there are certain aspects of that prevenient grace that he preached on. So, he claims that every person in the world has a basic knowledge of God. There isn't anybody who doesn't have some basic understanding of God.

And in a way, he would be at one with Calvin on this. How does Calvin's Institutes begin? All the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, begins with a knowledge of God and of ourselves. So, with this basic knowledge of God, Wesley believed everybody has that.

Number two, Wesley believed that everybody has a basic knowledge of the moral law of God. There's nobody in this world, Wesley believed, who doesn't have some basic knowledge that it is wrong to commit murder. That just your heart tells you that.

Everybody has this understanding. Or that it's wrong, as C.S. Lewis picks up on this unselfishness. It's wrong to be selfish.

Wesley believed everybody knew that. That's just basic knowledge that comes with prevenient grace. Number three, prevenient grace is the ultimate origin of conscience.

It's by God's grace in every single person that every person has a conscience, and conscience tells that person what is right and wrong. But conscience comes from God. It's not something innate in us.

It comes from the prevenient grace of God. Number four, a certain measure of free will is restored. Now, this becomes really important for Wesley.

A certain measure of free will is restored. Like Calvin or Luther, like Calvin, Wesley believed that in the fall, we lost our freedom of the will. We came in total bondage to sin in the fall.

He believed that. And he said I'm only a hair's breadth away from Calvin on this. So he believed that in the fall, we were totally depraved.

We have lost all freedom of the will. Our will is under total bondage. But he believed that by prevenient grace, God restores in every person a certain measure of free will.

So, everybody in the world has some freedom by which they can say yes to God. Nothing is prohibiting them from saying yes to God. So, Wesley then does not believe in a double election.

He believes that there's this freedom, and everybody has to say yes to God. So that's number four. And I'll be right with you.

I hope I'll just finish off the last one, and I'll come on back. Number five, through this prevenient grace, God restrains human wickedness. Because everybody has some sense of the grace of God, we're no longer totally depraved.

But imagine what the world would be like if it weren't for prevenient grace if human wickedness weren't restrained. It's bad enough as it is, but imagine what the world would be like if human evil had just been rampant all over the world. It'd be pretty bad.

It's by God's grace, Wesley said, by his prevenient grace, that human wickedness is restrained. So, the world is not as bad as it could be. So, prevenient grace was really important for John Wesley because, in a sense, it answered the theology that came before him and tried to get a theology of grace more in place here.

It comes upon us as it were. It's given to every person. So as you are born, you enter into life, and every person has God's grace, this kind of vestige of God's grace, this prevenient grace. So he thought no person is without this.

It's not passed along biologically in a sense, as Augustine felt that original sin is passed along, but it's just part of the human condition. Right, right. Bondage of the will: Wesley believed that that was a result of the fall, that what the fall did, in a sense, was to bind up the will.

Now, if it weren't for God's prevenient grace, we would still live under that bondage of the will. That's his argument with a person like Luther because Luther felt that the will was still in bondage, and it was only by God's predestinating will that released some people from that bondage, so Luther said. Other people are kept under that bondage.

Calvin comes along and says, I'm going to even be clearer than that. I'm going to say some people are elected to be saved and to have their bondage released. Other people are elected to live under that bondage for eternity.

Wesley comes along and says, I don't believe that. I believe that every person, even though they've inherited this bondage of the will, has now been given by God this measure of grace that he called prevenient grace and that there's some measure of freedom of the will in every individual. But that's why he said, I'm only a hair's breadth away from Calvin because when you exercise your freedom of the will to turn to God, the only way you can do that is still by God's grace.

Just as Calvin believed we're saved by God's grace, Wesley also believed that. We're saved by God's grace. I wouldn't be able to turn to God if it weren't for his grace.

It doesn't play out, and the reason it doesn't play out is because God intervenes in us, in every person, and gives every person this prevenient grace. So there is this measure of grace, but the most important of all of that is that freedom issue for

Wesley because Wesley believed every person has this freedom to say yes to God. Freedom to say no to God, but also a freedom to say yes to God.

Yeah, Jason. So where does the freedom of the will come from? Does it have anything to do with Christ? Right. It is manifested in and through Christ.

So, the true light that enlightened every person was coming into the world. Of course, that was Christ. So, it is manifested in and through Christ.

It is a gift of God manifested through Christ. It was, that's a good point, revealed by Christ because it's always been so. So he looks at a passage like the Micah passage, he has shown you, oh man, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you? So Wesley believed there were places in the Old Testament that kind of gave a preview in a sense of this prevenient grace, that it's been operative since creation, but it is now revealed fully in Christ and in his work. Yes, this is a grace that precedes the whole message of salvation. This is just to all people.

This has, because you'll see the next kind of what we then, grace is then a saving grace, sanctify, so forth. So this precedes salvation for Wesley. Yeah.

Well, Wesley makes a little distinction in the sense that common grace is the grace of God that you perceive by looking at the natural world. You look at the natural world and you perceive that God has given his grace to this place and exercised his grace in this place by the world that he has given to us, by the world he has kind of granted to us. Whereas prevenient grace is specifically the grace that comes before actual salvation.

So, it is a little, and there's a distinction between prevenient grace and common grace for Wesley. So, okay, now, if you just look at it, this is on your syllabus, so I don't have to put this up here, but what happens if Wesley's theology is a continuum of grace? What happens after prevenient grace? Well, after prevenient grace, then there is saving grace. Some people, by their own free will, embrace this grace as a saving grace.

And after saving grace, there is a sanctifying grace. And after sanctifying grace, there is an accompanying grace. And after accompanying grace, there is a glorifying grace in eternity.

So Wesley felt that his theology is a theology of the continuum of grace, beginning with prevenient and ending with glorifying grace. And we're going to explain a couple of those that are in between. But does everybody, I'm not asking you by any means to buy this.

If this is not, I'm just asking you; I'm trying to explain what Wesley said here in the 18th century and why he said it and so forth, but I'm just trying to get you to understand this. Just like when we talked about Calvin's double election, I wasn't lecturing on it for you to buy it. You may believe in a double election, but I'm not trying to persuade you here.

Are you all okay with this? Okay, let's just mention here C, free salvation for all people. Free salvation for all people. That would be a third aspect, I guess you would say, of the theology of John Wesley.

Free salvation for all people. Well, what are people saved from if there's free salvation for all people? What are people saved from? Of course, they're saved from sin. So he begins this free salvation for all people. He begins with the nature of sin.

And what is sin for John Wesley? Sin is both original sin, but it's more than that. Sin is also an action for John Wesley. Sin is a transgression of the known law of God.

So, you transgress the known law of God, as far as Wesley is concerned, that is sin. And what is free salvation for all people? What are people saved from? They're saved from sin by God's grace. And how do they respond to that? They respond to that by faith, by their own free will, through their own free will.

Now, Wesley did believe that all people could be saved. So that's why it's called free salvation for all people. He believed that the death of Christ was not for the elect, that the death of Christ was for the whosoever.

So, he believed that all people could be saved. Basically, he also believed that when people were saved and were living a life in Christ, they stayed in that salvation, although he admitted that some people fell from grace. And why did they fall from grace? Because they had a free will.

So, nothing has taken their free will away from them. They still have free will to say no to God, even after they're believers. Okay, what's the likelihood of that for Wesley? It is very unlikely because once you're walking in the light, you want to stay in the light.

So, okay, you're doing okay with that. The next is D, full salvation from all sin. I haven't given you any kind of a break today.

I need to give you a break. So, take a break here. Take a 10-second break because it's Friday.

So, you deserve extra time on a Friday. Yes, I'm just stretching. Yes, I hear that.

I hear those groans here. Does anybody get exams today? Are there any exams today? No, you're doing okay then, huh? You have an exam today, Kobe? You have a Greek exam today. What time is that, Kobe? 11:25.

I wish you well, Kobe. Have a good time with the Greek exam. Greek exam day.

Is anybody else in Greek this semester? Some of you have been Dr. Hildebrand in Greek before. Okay, all right. So, encourage Kobe now.

Those of you who have been in the course encourage him. He's going to do well. Okay, let's move on to the. I think I may be most maligned under number D. It's called full salvation from all sin.

Full salvation from all sin. Okay, what did Wesley believe in full salvation from all sin? All right. Well, Wesley loves Calvin and Luther, and there is no doubt about that.

He thinks that they have freed the church and done a great deal in the church. However, there are places where he disagrees with Calvin and Luther. He believes that Calvin and Luther were right in talking about the imputed righteousness of Christ.

They were right in talking about that. They were right in stressing that. Okay, now the imputed righteousness of Christ means that Christ covers us by his righteousness.

So, the righteousness of Christ covers the believer, kind of like a covering. So that when God looks at us, he sees what? He sees the righteousness of Christ when he's looking at us in a sense. But that imputed righteousness for someone like Luther is only still covering our sin.

Remember we mentioned Simul Justus et Peccator? Remember we talked about that? Simul justus et peccator means for Luther at the same time, I am justified, but I am still a sinner. So, Luther believed that in Christ, I'm justified by his righteousness. I am justified.

But in and of myself, I am still a sinner and I'll remain that way until the day I die. So this imputed righteousness. Now Wesley comes along and says, well, there is an imputed righteousness of Christ for sure, no doubt about that.

But that's not the end of the story for Wesley. Because the end of the story for Wesley is that Christ not only gives us his righteousness, but he imparts it in us. The righteousness of Christ becomes my righteousness.

I've been crucified with Christ nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. So, for Wesley, imparted righteousness is also part of the Christian story. It's Christ dwelling in the believer.

It's Christ living in the believer. It's Christ in me, the hope of glory kind of stuff, for Wesley.

Now, he calls this full salvation. He calls this sanctification. His favorite term for this was perfect love.

And the reason that he uses the term perfect love is because of the passage that was quoted here in our devotional reading, Matthew chapter 22. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and love your neighbor as you do. Love God with your whole being and love your neighbor as yourself.

For Wesley, that is what we're called to in obedience. That is perfect love. Loving God wholly, loving your neighbor wholly. That's what it means to be an altogether Christian.

That's what it means to be perfect love. So now, I am in the midst of Greek scholars here, so I am not going to press this issue home. But Ted could help me with this, and I'm not going to call on Ted.

But perfect doesn't mean perfect in the Greek sense, in the sense that we think of it as perfect in English. We think of a diamond that's perfect in English. If we say that a diamond is perfect, we mean there's not one flaw in that diamond.

There's not one little scratch in that diamond. That diamond is perfect. Perfect doesn't mean that in this sense.

In this sense, perfect means having the same end in view, having the same goal in view, and having a kind of the mind of God. And can the believer have that? Wesley said yes, I think the believer can have that because Jesus commanded it. Love God with your entire being, and love your neighbor as yourself.

Or from the Sermon on the Mount, be perfect as God is perfect. Now Wesley was quick to say this is not human perfectionism that I'm talking about. It's not human perfectionism.

This is Christian perfection, not human perfection. There's no such thing as human perfectionism. Be humanly perfect. That's not possible.

Can you be perfect in Christ, though? Can you follow that command of Jesus perfectly to say you love God with your whole heart, mind, and soul, and you love

your neighbor as yourself? Wesley believed that that was indeed possible. So he called this kind of an evangelical perfection. What happens with this perfection is it sorts itself out in many ways, but there are two conclusions to it that Wesley thought were pretty important.

Okay, we don't have time for that, so what we're going to do is finish this off real quick on Monday. We're going to have lots of visitors on Monday, and wouldn't you know it, it's when I'll be starting my lecture on liberal theology. So, gee whiz, it's GE day, and I'm talking about liberal theology.

But it's where we are in the lectures, so at least I'm not giving a lecture on sex or something, so liberal theology. So, we'll see you on Monday, and have a good weekend.

This is Dr. Roger Green in his Church History course, Reformation to the Present. This is session 14 on Charles and John Wesley.