

Sunday, July 3, 2022 -Holy Communion, Independence Day Sunday

Memory Verse: “Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.” -Romans 12:2

Message: Swan Song #4: “John Wesley’s House of Salvation”

Scripture: Romans 5:1-11

Blurb: John Wesley is the founder of Methodism, and he explained biblical salvation as a house. This Sunday Pastor David urges us to enter this house and to choose to really live there. But that means living differently than out on the streets. It’s time to change where we live!

[Recorded Worship Beginning]

WELCOME -Pastor David
Elements for Holy Communion

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David
“Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.” -Romans 12:2

WORSHIP SONG -Prerecording
Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Live Worship Beginning]

GATHERING SONG: *Broken Cisterns* -Sanctify

WELCOME -Pastor David
Open Communion

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David
“Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.” -Romans 12:2

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify
My Country, 'Tis of Thee
Blessed to Be a Blessing
Show Me How to Live
Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Both Recorded & Live Worship]

READING OF SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:1-10 (CEB) -Sherry Robinson

In Romans 12, Paul urges disciples of Jesus to live differently than the rest of the world. We live by a different pattern. Listen for how your life should look. Romans 12:1-10,

“So, brothers and sisters, because of God’s mercies, I encourage you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God. This is your appropriate priestly service. 2 Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.

“3 Because of the grace that God gave me, I can say to each one of you: don’t think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Instead, be reasonable since God has measured out a portion of faith to each one of you. 4 We have many parts in one body, but the parts don’t all have the same function. 5 In the same way, though there are many of us, we are one body in Christ, and individually we belong to each other. 6 We have different gifts that are consistent with God’s grace that has been given to us. If your gift is prophecy, you should prophesy in proportion to your faith. 7 If your gift is service, devote yourself to serving. If your gift is teaching, devote yourself to teaching. 8 If your gift is encouragement, devote yourself to encouraging. The one giving should do it with no strings attached. The leader should lead with passion. The one showing mercy should be cheerful.

“9 Love should be shown without pretending. Hate evil, and hold on to what is good. 10 Love each other like the members of your family. Be the best at showing honor to each other.”

LOVE.GROW.SERVE. MOMENT: Living as Christians in response to the Supreme Court’s ruling
-Pastors David and Andrew

GENERATIONAL BRIDGE -Pastor Andrew

MESSAGE: Swan Song #4: “John Wesley’s House of Salvation”

PP#1: Swan Song #4: “John Wesley’s House of Salvation”

“Therefore, since we have been made righteous through His faithfulness, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand through Him, and we boast in the hope of God’s glory.” Romans 5:1-2

John Wesley’s House of Salvation. Romans 5:1-2a “Therefore, since we have been made righteous through His faithfulness, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand through Him, and we boast in the hope of God’s glory.”

PP#2: *A door, slightly open, subtitled,* “Make yourself at home.”

“Well, hello! How nice of you to come. Won’t you please come in? Here, let me take your coat. Please, make yourself at home.”

You've been invited to the party, and this is the greeting that welcomes you when the door opens. You go in. What does it mean to "make yourself at home?" Well, it means going in, getting comfortable, having access to the different rooms and being in that home like you belong.

So, think about this spiritually. This is how our God greets us: He welcomes us and invites us in, spiritually speaking. But, if we're honest, many Christians just stand there in the entry. "Come on in!" He says. "Won't you come in make yourself at home?"

"Thank you," we say. But then, sometimes, we just stand there. And soon it turns awkward.

PP#3: *A floor plan of a house with a porch, an entry door, and the inner rooms of a house.*

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, called salvation a house. God lives there and has invited us to come in and live with Him. God invites us, long before we ever choose Him. We respond to the invitation, cross the porch, and come to the door. God opens the door and welcomes us across the threshold. We are reconciled to God. Now we get to be with Him. But it is then that the life of salvation begins. It is the living within the house, making God's home ours, living with God day by day—living differently than before out on the street—that is the living out of the Christian life of faith. The problem, said Wesley, is that Christians have a tendency to cross the porch, walk through the door, but then just stand there.

PP#4: The House of Salvation

Salvation ≠ Conversion (Salvation = Conversion + ...)

Let me put this another way. Wesley said that salvation is NOT conversion. Salvation is not *just* that moment when you give your heart to Jesus, or put your trust in Him, or pray the sinner's prayer. Yes, that is a crucial *part* of salvation: you have to surrender your life to Jesus at some point. You must take the step of faith across the threshold. But that isn't the conclusion of salvation: "I've heard my God calling me, and I have turned to Him. I have confessed my sins and have invited Him into my heart. I've received forgiveness for my sins and have been justified. Now I am saved. That was back on October 12, 1995."

Wesley said this is not the biblical teaching of salvation. That decision part of salvation is called justification. But there is so much more to salvation than just justification. Conversion, or justification, is just the beginning! It's the door, and we are invited in to be with God. But going through the door isn't the point. *Living* on the inside is the point, making ourselves at home. The door is just the entrance.

PP#5: Salvation by GRACE alone through faith

G.R.A.C.E. = Gifts Received At Christ's Expense

"We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand through Him, and we boast in the hope of God's glory." -Romans 5:2

Wesley, you see, was reading Romans. And in Romans, Wesley saw that Paul described salvation *as grace* in four major movements, or acts.

Grace. It's all about grace. This is key to salvation in the Bible. Romans 5:2, "We have access by faith [that means choosing to trust in Jesus] into this grace [of salvation] in which we stand [our new identity] through Him, and we boast in the hope of God's glory." Wesley said that Methodists are people of grace! One way of defining grace is to use it as an acronym. G.R.A.C.E. - "Gifts

Received At Christ's Expense." Grace is free gifts from God, blessings, benefits. We receive it free, but that doesn't mean it was without cost. Jesus paid the price, on the cross, and then extends salvation to us free. All we do it receive it, and the taking it, we call faith.

PP#6: Salvation by GRACE alone through faith

1. Prevenient Grace
2. Justifying Grace & Regenerating Grace
3. Sanctifying Grace
4. Perfecting Grace

Now, I know I've preached on all this before, because when I was packing up my office, I came across this handy dandy chart.

[*Show chart on grace.*]

It lists the five biblical kinds of grace, which Wesley preached on a lot. Prevenient grace, justifying grace, regenerating grace, sanctifying grace and perfecting grace. Whew, big words! *But this, all together, is salvation!* To understand all this, we—like Wesley—need to go to Romans.

PP#7: *Image of Paul's 3rd missionary journey*

Romans was written by the Apostle Paul. Paul was traveling all around Turkey and Greece, planting churches, making disciples for Jesus and teaching others the Christian walk. When he was at Corinth, he also wanted to get to Rome, to teach the Christians there, too. But he found himself needing to head back to Jerusalem, so Rome will have to wait. In the mean time, instead of going there personally, Paul writes them a long letter, explaining what He would have taught them had he been able to come. So, we find in Romans, the most systematic explanation of salvation through Jesus Christ. That's why it's put as the first in our Bibles. The other letters only talk about parts of it, or wrestle with how to live it out in specific situations. But in Romans, basically, we find the best explanation of who Jesus was, is, and what it means to take Him as our personal Lord and Savior.

PP#8: *Images of Paul, Augustine, Luther and Wesley*

One interesting bit I can't pass up. Romans has a unique heritage for us United Methodists. You see, Paul, listening to the Holy Spirit, wrote Romans. Three hundred years later, Augustine, the great saint, was reading Romans when he was converted. Augustine wrote a commentary on Romans. Martin Luther, the great Reformer, was reading Augustine's commentary on Romans when he was converted. We're talking about A.D. 1500. Martin Luther also wrote a commentary on Romans. A couple hundred years later, it was during the reading of Martin Luther's preface to Romans that John Wesley felt his heart strangely warmed. Wesley then went on to become the founder of Methodism, a tradition we are part of today. Romans—a letter about salvation—has a heritage of salvation among the great founders of our church.

Now, I just shared that story to get us back to John Wesley. Wesley read Romans a lot. And it was because he did that he saw that salvation is much more than just conversion.

PP#9: The House of Salvation

Porch - Preventive Grace - God invites us - Romans 1:18-3:20

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” -Romans 3:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” -Romans 6:23

“But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” -Romans 5:8

Paul first outlines the human condition. All people have sinned and fallen short of God’s will. This sin has separated us from God. So, the human condition is that all people are separated from God. This is true even before we do anything. We *do* sins, but we also *are* sinful.

Now, this is hard for us to understand logically, but we see it is true everywhere. We want to believe that everyone is naturally good and kind, but then we meet someone else, or read the news. Anyone who’s ever had kids gets this. A young mother put it to me one time: “Boy, do I believe in original sin! Just look at Caleb. I don’t have to teach him to hit or be selfish, but I do have to teach him to share and be nice.” We have a natural bent to selfishness. It’s our preferred way of acting.

Years ago my then 12-year-old young nephew gave me a great way to understand this. We had gone to pick him up to have him stay with us for a week, and on the way home we were having some *light* conversation about sin and salvation! I, the great learned preacher was trying my hardest to explain to my little, ignorant nephew how people are stuck in sin. After I went on and on for a few minutes, Jason turned to me and said, “So it is kind of like a father who abuses his child. The child grows up and abuses his child. That child grows up and also abuses his child, and so on.” Wow. The abused child never wanted to abuse his child, but it was the family system he is trapped in. It is how he naturally relates to his child also. Yet his abusiveness is still wrong and hurtful, and he is to be held accountable for it because he is wronging his child. “And,” Jason elaborated, “that behavior continues on to future generations until someone breaks in and corrects it, and teaches them how wrong it is, and how to live differently.”

He said it better than I ever could. That’s how sin works. We start out already stuck in it. And we continue that way until Jesus breaks in and corrects it and makes us able to live differently.

The Good News is that God doesn’t leave us where He finds us. Before we are even aware of God, He acted in Jesus to save us, and, in the Holy Spirit, to draw us to Himself. Wesley called this “preventive grace,” or grace that is “pre,” “coming before.” God works to save us, and then invites us into it. God throws a party and sends you an invitation! We get to go. It’s like the porch. It gives us access to the door, makes us able to get to the door. We’re invited, and we have a way there.

PP#10: The House of Salvation

Porch - Preventive Grace - God invites us - Romans 1:18-3:20

Door - Justifying Grace - God restores/forgives/renews us - Romans 3:21-5:21

“Justified” = “Just-as-if-I’d” never sinned!

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” -Romans 10:9

“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” -Romans 10:13

God wants us back with Him. He works to restore us, reconcile us, join us with Him again. This is what we often call conversion. God has invited us, and we have responded. God then opens

the door, and invites us in with Him. That door, biblically, is Jesus. It is through Jesus that we come to God. Jesus died to pay the price for our sin. Jesus offers us forgiveness for our sin. We choose to receive it. We confess our sin, put our faith in Jesus, and choose to live with God. Because of Jesus, our sins are forgiven, washed away, and we are justified: become *just-as-if-I'd* not sinned. We are restored in our close relationship with God. We are “in.”

PP#11: The House of Salvation

Porch - Preventive Grace - God invites us - Romans 1:18-3:20

Door - Justifying Grace - God restores/forgives/renews us - Romans 3:21-5:21

-Regenerating Grace - The Holy Spirit living inside us makes us new

“Those who God decided in advance would be conformed to His Son, He also called.

Those whom He called, He also made righteous. Those whom He made righteous, He also glorified.” -Romans 8:30

But there is also something else that happens as we cross through the door. You know those doorways that have the air portal, so when you go in you feel the rush of air on you? The door of salvation is like that. As we choose Jesus, the Holy Spirit blows on us and fills us. When we choose Jesus, we are forgiven for the sins we have committed and He gives the Holy Spirit to blow onto—and into—us. And it is by the Holy Spirit that we are born again: made new from the inside out. Our past sins are forgiven, and the power of sin inside—our bent to sinning—is also broken. We no longer have to sin. We have the power not to. When we choose against it, the Holy Spirit works within us to resist it. The Bible calls this being born again or the second birth. Wesley called it regeneration. Justification and regeneration happen at the same time. It’s a new start.

PP#12: *Picture of our Rochester house’s entryway, looking at the door.*

So, we step into the house of salvation. Now, as you know we are moving to Rochester. Here’s a picture of the entryway of our new town home. I want to personally invite each and every one of you to come visit! I hope you get to see this entryway. But I hope you won’t just stay in the entryway! I want to invite you into the rest of the house, so we can sit and visit together.

Same with the house of salvation! God invites us into His house of grace. We are invited to live with God, day by day. The problem, however, is that sometimes we just stay in the entry. We think that we have arrived, have been saved, and we are good. But Wesley pulls out Romans and says that we have only just begun. You see, God invites us in to “make ourselves at home,” to live with Him. God takes us just the way we are, but God does not leave us that way. God begins to work on us, mold us, correct us, shape us, knock off the lingering sins that we tend to go back to. God intends for us to be holy, perfect in our loving. He wants in our hearts no room for hatred, bitterness, resentment, animosity, only love for God and loving others. Think about that. God wants in our hearts only love. And that’s the direction He is pushing us.

PP#13: *Image of a figure with a halo standing among others who look angry and difficult*

So, living with God is: daily living with the Holy Spirit working on us. He works on us to make us always more holy, and He works through us, calling us to live out our love for others. It is in the doing of it, the living of it, that we are stretched and grown. It would be easy to love others if we never had to live with them, work with them, deal with them: they stay in the dining room and

we stay in the entry. So, to help us grow in our holiness, God pulls us into the house! We live out our salvation by loving others. In fact, God pushes us towards them: “Go!” Jesus said.

PP#14: The House of Salvation

Porch - Preventive Grace - God invites us - Romans 1:18-3:20

Door - Justifying Grace - God restores/forgives/renews us - Romans 3:21-5:21

House - Sanctifying Grace - God changes us - Romans 6:1-8:39

“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.” -Romans 6:22

That’s why, I think, it’s easier just to stand in the entry way. We’re “in.” We’ve made it. But we don’t want God to start messing with our lives. Don’t be pointing out my shortcomings and weaknesses and problems. Leave me the way I am. Don’t make me have to deal with those annoying people. Don’t bring up the bitterness I’m nursing. Don’t expose the pain I’ve buried deep within. Let me do it my way. Let me be in control. If we think of salvation merely as conversion, then we can just stay standing in the entry. It’s safe, but after awhile, it gets awkward.

God invites us into daily living with Him. He invites us to “make ourselves at home.” He takes us through all the rooms. Sometimes He takes us into the living room, where we can visit and talk with others, enjoying good fellowship. Sometimes He takes us into the family room, where we can be ourselves and feel good about who we are. Sometimes He takes us into the dining room, where we feast, eat and are filled. Sometimes He takes us into the kitchen, where we cook and prepare to feed and serve others. Sometimes He takes us into the shop, where we work and serve and create blessings for others. Sometimes He takes us into the den, where we go to pay bills and commit our resources for God’s work. Sometimes He takes us into the bedroom where we can finally find true rest. Sometimes He takes us into the bathroom where He wants to clean us up, to wash us off, find medicine, have us leave behind our sins. Personally, I spend a lot of time in God’s bathroom!

PP#15: The House of Salvation

Porch - Preventive Grace - God invites us - Romans 1:18-3:20

Door - Justifying Grace - God restores/forgives/renews us - Romans 3:21-5:21

House - Sanctifying Grace - God changes us - Romans 6:1-8:39

Eternal Home - Perfecting Grace - God makes us perfect in love

“Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.” -Romans 12:2

God’s plan for us is to have no room in our hearts for anything but love, love for God and love for others. This may seem impossible—and it is, without God’s help—but we have the Holy Spirit living in us. And there are times even now when we feel our hearts full of love. Yes, anger, irritation, resentment, bitterness do creep in, but there are times we are at peace in love. Ask the Holy Spirit to extend those times of love, making them longer and longer. And some day, maybe even before Jesus takes us home to live in God’s mansion in heaven, we will experience and feel only love, all the time. But for sure in our heavenly mansion.

PP#16: *Image of a person being the bride of Christ, choosing to be married to Jesus*

Salvation is this living with God. It's not something we achieve. It's not something we "get." It's a process, a relationship. Here's another analogy. Paul brings it up in Romans 7 to talk about the Law, but I want to use it a bit differently. Salvation is kind of like being married. There is the wedding, and then there is the marriage, right? The wedding ceremony, the marriage ceremony, is the making the commitment, choosing the other person, crossing the threshold into being married. But once you make the vows, now you live them out in your daily lives. The ceremony is not the marriage. Marriage is now living differently than you had before. You know those people who have shared a wedding, but really don't live out their marriage. You all know people who have committed their lives to Jesus but really don't live out their salvation. It's just standing in the entry.

PP#17: *Image of a person standing in front of an open house door pondering to go in.*

I don't know where you are with this whole house of salvation thing. But wherever you are, God uses Romans to urge you to take a step. If you are just "getting" for the first time God's invitation, if you are finally feeling God's love for you breaking into your life, if you are becoming aware that God has already worked to save you and wants you with Him, *take that step across the porch*. Come to the door. God is waiting eagerly to see if you will answer His invitation.

If you have rung the doorbell, if you have heard God's invitation to come in, if you are at the threshold with the door open, *take that step in*. Confess your sins. Agree to give Jesus your life. Receive the forgiveness for your sins, and the Holy Spirit within you to make you new. God's arms are open waiting to hug you!

If you are standing in the entry way, nervous to go further in, and God has invited you to make yourself at home, *take the step*. Don't stay where you were when you were first converted. Live into your salvation. Walk throughout the house with God. Go from room to room, letting God work on you, bless you, cleanse you, use you.

If He is leading you into the bedroom, go and rest awhile. If He is inviting you into the bathroom, step in and get cleaned up. God wants to make you into whom He has created you to be. He wants you to live with Him, day by day. Take that step. Cross that threshold.

If He is calling you to have His love spread through your heart, so there is room for nothing else, then respond in your inner self, making the inner commitment that, "I am going on to perfection. Lord, make me perfect in love."

PP#18-20 Romans 5:1-11

1 Therefore, since we have been made righteous through His faithfulness, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand through Him, and we boast in the hope of God's glory. 3 But not only that! We even take pride in our problems, because we know that trouble produces endurance, 4 endurance produces character, and character produces hope. 5 This hope doesn't put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

6 While we were still weak, at the right moment, Christ died for ungodly people. 7 It isn't often that someone will die for a righteous person, though maybe someone might dare to die for a good person. 8 But God shows His love for us, because while we were still sinners Christ died for us. 9 So, now that we have been made righteous by His blood, we can be even more certain that we will be saved from God's wrath through Him. 10 If we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son while we were still enemies, now that we

have been reconciled, how much more certain is it that we will be saved by His life? 11 And not only that: we even take pride in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, the one through whom we now have a restored relationship with God.

Lets read the first eleven verses of Romans 5. As we do, listen for this living with God and growing in grace! Romans 5:1-11,

“1 Therefore, since we have been made righteous through His faithfulness [justifying grace], we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand through Him, and we boast in the hope of God’s glory [perfecting grace]. 3 But not only that! We even take pride in our problems, because we know that trouble produces endurance, 4 endurance produces character, and character produces hope [sanctifying grace]. 5 This hope doesn’t put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us [regenerating grace].

“6 While we were still weak, at the right moment, Christ died for ungodly people [prevenient grace...see? It’s all there!]. 7 It isn’t often that someone will die for a righteous person, though maybe someone might dare to die for a good person. 8 But God shows His love for us, because while we were still sinners Christ died for us. 9 So, now that we have been made righteous by His blood, we can be even more certain that we will be saved from God’s wrath through Him. 10 If we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son while we were still enemies, now that we have been reconciled, how much more certain is it that we will be saved by His life? 11 And not only that: we even take pride in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, the one through whom we now have a restored relationship with God.”

“Welcome! I was hoping you would come. Won’t you come in? Please, make yourself at home.”

Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION -Pastor David

Prayers of Confession

Words of Assurance

The Great Thanksgiving

Words of Institution

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Receiving of the Elements

Song: *Glory to Glory* -Sanctify

[Live Worship Only] CLOSING SONG: *Those Who Trust* -Sanctify

ANNOUNCEMENTS -Pastor David

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

“Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.” -Romans 12:2

BENEDICTION -Pastor David

POSTLUDE -Sanctify (live)