

The Absolute Basics of the Wesleyan Way – Chapter 10

1. Since the early days of the Methodist movement, our life together has been structured around what we call “the General Rules.” These are: (1) Do no harm; (2) Do good; (3) Attend to all the Ordinances of God. Wesley originally provided concrete examples of each of these, not leaving them to individuals to figure out. As he formulated them, they cut against the grain of his culture, identifying ways Christians were distinctly different from the people around them.
 - a. What are some *harmful* things our culture approves of (or even encourages) that we should avoid?
 - b. What are some *good* things Christians do that set us apart our host culture?
2. The “Ordinances of God” are the activities and practices God offers us to help us grow in grace and likeness to Christ. In Wesley’s list these include: Public worship, the ministry of the Word (read & preached), the Lord’s Supper, Family & Private prayer, Searching the scriptures, and fasting & abstinence.
 - a. Which of these practices are we strongest at these days?
 - b. Which of these practices do we need to work at more?
 - c. Which of these do we need more teaching on?
3. Our tradition recognizes two sacraments, baptism and communion.
 - a. Looking at our baptismal liturgy, who are the actors? What do we think is happening in baptism? What are the three elements in baptism that the authors identify?
 - b. Repentance has been associated with baptism since the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus. Why is repentance important?
 - c. Considering Romans 6:1-4, what does Paul say happens in baptism?
 - d. What is the connection between baptism and justification and the new birth?
4. The Holy Spirit is intimately related to both baptism and communion.
 - a. What is the role of the Spirit in Jesus’ baptism in Matthew 3?
 - b. What is the role of the Spirit in our baptism?
 - c. What do we ask the Spirit to do in our communion liturgy?
5. Charles Wesley’s hymn, *Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast* is an invitation both to enter life with Christ (which we do in baptism) and to feast with Christ (as we do in communion). Which of the stanzas speak to you most powerfully? Which are most challenging?

Come, sinners, to the gospel-feast,
Let every soul be Jesu's guest,
You need not one be left behind,
For God hath bidden all mankind.

Sent by my Lord, on you I call,
The invitation is to all.
Come all the world: come, sinner,
thou,
All things in Christ are ready now.

Jesus to you his fulness brings,
A feast of marrow, and fat things:
All, all in Christ is freely given,
Pardon, and holiness, and heaven.

Do not begin to make excuse,
Ah! Do not you his grace refuse;
Your worldly cares and pleasures
leave,
And take what Jesus hath to give.

Yet must I, Lord, to thee complain,
The world hath made thy offers vain,
Too busy, or too happy they,
They will not, Lord, thy call obey.

Go then, my angry Master said,
Since these on all my mercies tread,
Invite the rich and great no more,
But preach my gospel to the poor.

Come then ye souls, by sin opprest,
Ye restless wanderers after rest,
Ye poor, and maim'd, & halt, & blind,
In Christ an hearty welcome find.

Come, and partake the gospel-feast,
Be sav'd from sin, in Jesus rest:
O taste the goodness of our God,
And eat his flesh, and drink his blood.

The worst unto my supper press,
Monsters of daring wickedness,
Tell them, my grace for all is free,
They cannot be too bad for me.

Tell them, their sins are all forgiven,
Tell every creature under heaven,
I died to save them from all sin,
And force the vagrants to come in.

Ye vagrant souls, on you I call,
(O that my voice could reach you all)
Ye all are freely justified,
Ye all may live, for God⁸⁴ hath died.

His love is mighty to compell,
His conqu'ring love consent to feel,
Yield to his love's resistless power,
And fight against your God no more.

See him set forth before your eyes,
Behold the bleeding sacrifice!
His offer'd love make haste to
embrace,
And freely now be sav'd by grace.

Ye who believe his record true.
Shall sup with him, and he with you:
Come to the feast; be sav'd from sin,
For Jesus waits to take you in.

This is the time, no more delay,
This is the acceptable day,
Come in, this moment, at his call,
And live for him who died for all.