

As you plan and implement your lesson, please budget at least 10 minutes at the close of the teaching & discussion for Focused Prayer. Focused Prayer is an integral part of this series.

Facilitator's Opening: This morning/evening we (and all Asbury's Discipleship Communities) are starting the first of eight lessons exploring our Wesleyan Christian Heritage. With each session, we encounter a tenant of our Christian Wesleyan faith, a key Scripture verse from the Bible and a noteworthy quote from Methodism founder John Wesley.

Christianity is a powerful faith, diverse and varied in ethnicities, nationalities, cultures and denominations. Yet all of Christianity is united under that banner that declares: "Jesus Christ is Lord."

While the Christian faith has been around since . . . well, Jesus Christ in the first century, Christian Methodism began in the mid-18th century with Anglican priests John and Charles Wesley who started a movement of disciplined Christian living among students and fellow priests in the university town of Oxford, England. We will add more detail to that throughout our series.

When you came to – and maybe even joined the membership of – Asbury, did you come from another Methodist Church or another denomination or faith tradition?

Were you looking specifically for a Methodist Church?

What was the appeal of Asbury?

Present the Faith Tenet, Scripture and Wesley quote of the lesson:

Faith Tenet: Salvation is found in Jesus Christ.

Key Scripture: *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.* - Peter, Acts 4:12

John Wesley: *I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation.*

Show Video #1 Before we go any farther, let's take a look at this video from Pastor Tom Harrison. (6:)

With your group share Pastor Tom's question: "How you relate to this story?"

From your understanding of our Christian faith, what is salvation?

Salvation from what?

Salvation to what?

Salvation for what?

Our understanding from Scripture about salvation is not just something that happened to us in the past tense. It is not just a one time event (like a ball hitting a bat). Rather, salvation is also about what is now happening and what it yet to happen. Therefore,

We / I got saved.

We are / I am being saved.

We are / I am going to be saved.

In what ways are you experiencing this reality?

When did you first enter into salvation?

Did you have a 'conversion' experience like John Wesley and Pastor Tom?

How are you experiencing God's continued salvation through Jesus Christ?

What assurance do you have of future salvation, including life after death?

Facilitator: Let's consider the key Bible text for this lesson.

Jesus' death and resurrection wasn't even a couple of months ago. Closest followers – disciples – of Jesus, Peter and John find themselves standing before a group of men who are from the Jewish ruling council (the Sanhedrin), defending themselves as to their boldness in preaching publicly about this Jesus who had been crucified AND in the name of that Jesus, Peter and John had healed a crippled man. When asked "by what power" they had done this healing, Peter and John declared that it was by the power of Jesus Christ who had indeed been crucified, yet also who had been raised from the dead . . . **and was alive!** And Peter goes on to declare, recorded in Acts 4:12:

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Our Wesleyan Christian faith teaches us that we have a need to be saved from the separation that has happened because of our own sin (rebellion) against God AND that Jesus Christ, the very Son of God (John 3:16), is the means God created for that separation to be repaired – SALVATION. In his declaration to those religious leaders, Peter even said, *there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

Why is that? Because ONLY JESUS CHRIST is Lord! There is no other one capable of solving the problem of that separation between us and God.

In what ways do you understand that Jesus is the only means of salvation, of restoring our broken relationship with God?

Might several of you be willing to share briefly (1-2 minutes) of how you entered into salvation through Jesus Christ?

The New Testament of the Bible reveals and reiterates over and over that salvation is found in Jesus Christ.

What are some of those Bible passages that you know of that reveal that truth? (examples might include: John 3:16 10:9; 14:6 1 Timothy 2:5)

Were there certain Bible passages that were significant in you coming to faith in Jesus Christ?

Facilitator: If you are willing, please consider sharing your personal testimony of entering into salvation through Jesus Christ. Another option is to ask (in advance) a Community member to share their personal testimony of salvation.

Focused prayer:

Thank God that He *desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* 1 Timothy 2:3-4

Ask God to bring you any conviction concerning His salvation plan that you may be missing due to ignorance or stubbornness.

Thank God that He provides assurance of His gift of salvation.

Allow about a minute for Community members to speak aloud the **first names** only of friends and/or family members they crave to enter into God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.