

THEOLOGY OF JOHN WESLEY



INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT, BIOGRAPHY AND METHODISM



WHY ARE YOU HERE?

REASONS FOR STUDY

- ❖ Historical Roots - what we believe
- ❖ Keel of the ship - sailing across the wind
- ❖ Worship of God with all our mind
- ❖ Develop a language
- ❖ Theology impacts practice
- ❖ Be inspired & motivated

REFORMATION SKETCH

- ❖ Rise of Christendom
- ❖ Luther & 95 Theses
- ❖ Continuing Reformation & Counter Reformation
- ❖ English Reformation - Political & Religious tied
- ❖ Church of England - middle way
- ❖ Puritans & expulsion
- ❖ Toleration Act
- ❖ Pietism & societies

EARLY YEARS

- ❖ Grandparents and parents
- ❖ John: June 28, 1703 - March 2, 1791
- ❖ Charles: Dec. 18, 1707 - March 29, 1788
- ❖ Saved from fire at age 6
- ❖ Oxford for priesthood - begins spiritual journey

LATER YEARS

- ❖ Holy Club at Oxford: study, chapel attendance, communion, and visiting poor & imprisoned
- ❖ Georgia: Parish priest, evangelist to Natives, and organizes society
- ❖ Sophy Hopkey & Return to England
- ❖ Return, Moravians, and Aldersgate

REVIVAL

- ❖ Wesley breaks with the Fetter Lane society and establishes the Foundry
- ❖ Whitefield encourages Wesley to “field preaching” “The world is my parish”
- ❖ Organizing converts into societies, into classes, into bands (including penitential)
- ❖ Adding lay preachers to help with the work
- ❖ Adding conferences for the preachers to ensure consistency in theology and preaching

SUMMARY

- ❖ Wesley comes from a home which took faith with the utmost seriousness
- ❖ Wesley lived in a religious environment which sought a middle way, moving to scientific, that was politically fearful of dissent
- ❖ Socially, there was extremely rich and extremely poor, with systems which oppressed the poor

SUMMARY CONTINUED

- ❖ Wesley taps into a vein which is seeking to develop a heart religion and he seriously begins to pursue it (Love of God and Neighbour)
- ❖ As he develops Methodism he understands it as a renewal movement within the Church of England

THEOLOGY & CONTROVERSY

- ❖ Wesley accused of being a 'Papist'
- ❖ Wesley accused of being an 'Enthusiast'
- ❖ Wesley rejects 'stillness' or 'quietism'
- ❖ Wesley rejects 'antinominism'
- ❖ Wesley wrestles with 'assurance'
- ❖ Wesley articulates doctrine of 'Christian Perfection'
- ❖ Wesley insists on 'universal grace'

TENSIONS IN THE MOVEMENT

- ❖ Many in the Church of England saw Methodism as a separate sect
- ❖ Many in the movement wanted to be a separate sect
- ❖ Need for preachers, need for offering communion
- ❖ Preachers becoming enthusiasts
- ❖ Ordination of preachers for America

WESLEY'S CLAY FEET

- ❖ Struggled with women
- ❖ Made decisions which ensured Methodism would come out of Church of England
- ❖ Pride, sometimes refusing to admit to inconsistency or overstating things

WESLEY'S BRILLIANCE

- ❖ Dynamic leader - from the beginning people looked to him and he stepped up
- ❖ catholic spirit - embracing Christian truth from many camps
- ❖ Balancing between conversion and discipling
- ❖ Organizing: societies, classes, bands and conferences
- ❖ Mission: care of the poor, education, and imprisoned
- ❖ Thoughtful as well as emotive