November 15, 2026 | ***Grace Others See*** | Pastor Eddie Eddy

Scripture: Micah 6:6-8 (NIV)

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Week 4 — Grace Others See

Church, for the past several weeks we've been asking a question I believe every Methodist ought to be able to answer. **Why are we Methodists?** And we explained that it's not simply because our parents or grandparents were Methodists, or because this happens to be the church we've always attended. **But what do we believe, why do we believe it, and what difference should those beliefs make in the way we follow Jesus Christ?**

We began with John Wesley, a man who discovered that knowing about God wasn't the same as having a personal relationship with Him. We talked about God's grace. Prevenient grace, reaching for us before we even recognize Him. Justifying grace, bringing us into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. And sanctifying grace, continuing to change us into the people God created us to be.

Last week, we talked about Wesley's three General Rules: Do no harm. Do good. And stay in love with God. We discovered that Wesley didn't believe Christianity is simply something we **talk about**…**it's something we live.**

But today, as we finish this series, I want to bring it home with this. **Why are we Global Methodists**, and what does that mean for us here at Back Roads Church?

Before we answer that question, there are two important parts of our Methodist heritage we need to understand: the sacraments and our responsibility to the world around us.

Let's begin with the sacraments.

As Methodists, we recognize two sacraments instituted by Jesus: **Baptism and Holy Communion**. A *sacrament* is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. In other words, God uses something we can see, touch, and experience to communicate something **spiritual** He is doing in our lives.

We don't practice the sacraments just because they're church traditions. We practice them…because **Jesus gave them to His Church**, and because **we believe God continues to work through them**.

Think about Baptism. Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, and following His resurrection, He commanded His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Baptism is the outward sign of God's covenant with us. The water reminds us of cleansing, forgiveness, and new life in Jesus Christ. It also marks our entrance into the community of faith.

As Methodists, we baptize both infants and adults because we believe God's grace is at work before we're even capable of fully understanding it. Remember prevenient grace?

When we baptize an infant, we're not claiming that child has already made a personal profession of faith. We're recognizing God's love for us and His covenant promises to us. And as a congregation, we're **accepting the responsibility** to help that child grow in faith until they can personally respond to Jesus.

When an adult is baptized, we celebrate that same grace as they **publicly** profess their faith.

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We also believe in **one baptism**. We don't need to repeat it every time we stumble or wander away from God. Baptism is grounded in **God's faithfulness**, not our ability to live perfectly.

Then there's Holy Communion.

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus gathered His disciples around a table. He took bread, broke it, and told them it was His body given for them. He took the cup and spoke of the new covenant in His blood. And He told them **to continue doing this in remembrance of Him.**

But hear this…Communion is more than remembering something that happened two thousand years ago.

Wesley believed Holy Communion was one of the most important means of grace available to Christians. He encouraged believers to receive it as often as they could…because he believed God strengthens our faith, nourishes our souls, and draws us closer to Christ through the bread and the cup.

Here's the thing…Methodists don't believe these are merely empty symbols. We believe the Holy Spirit is at work as we receive these gifts in faith.

And sometimes…I think we forget that.

Communion can become so familiar that we simply go through the motions, like cows heading into the milking parlor. We receive the bread and cup, return to our seats, and move on with the service.

But something more meaningful is taking place. We're remembering Christ's sacrifice…were acknowledging our dependence upon Him…and we are receiving the grace that strengthens us to continue following Jesus.

Baptism reminds us that we belong to Christ. Communion nourishes us as we walk with Him.

And when we gather around the Lord's Table, we don't come because we've earned a place there. We come…because we need the mercy Jesus offers.

The wealthy and the poor come to the same table. The lifelong believer and the person just beginning to seek Jesus both need His grace. There's no special section for people who have everything figured out. And thank God for that, because I don't know that any of us would truly qualify.

In our Methodist tradition, we invite those who sincerely seek Jesus and desire to turn from sin and toward Him…to come to the Table.

And here's where all of this connects to the rest of our lives. The grace we receive isn't intended to stop with us. It should change the way we see and treat the world around us.

That brings us to something John Wesley took very seriously: **social holiness and justice**.

Our Scripture this morning comes from Micah 6:8, where the prophet tells us what the Lord requires: to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

Notice that Micah doesn't separate our relationship with God from our responsibility to other people. Justice, mercy, and humility…they all belong together.

Wesley understood that. He didn't just preach about personal salvation while ignoring the suffering around him. He visited prisoners, helped the poor, encouraged education, and spoke out against slavery and the exploitation of vulnerable people.

He understood that the Gospel had something to say about how people are supposed to be treated.

And Church, I believe it still does.

Now, the phrase social justice makes some people uncomfortable today. It immediately brings to mind politics, protests, or government policies. But before we let politicians define justice for us, maybe we ought to ask what Jesus said about it.

Jesus told us to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit those in prison. He didn't tell us to check their political affiliation or make sure they agreed with our theology before showing them some compassion.

Christian justice begins with recognizing that every human being is created in the image of God and deserves to be treated with dignity. But it doesn't end there.

Sometimes loving our neighbor means helping someone through a tough situation. Other times though…it means asking why that situation continues to exist…and what we…as the church can do about it.

Church, this brings us to an important part of our identity as Global Methodists.

Many of us came from the United Methodist Church, either by choosing to leave or by remaining with a congregation that disaffiliated. We know there were significant disagreements that led to the formation of the Global Methodist Church, and those differences matter.

While both denominations share a Wesleyan heritage and a commitment to serving others, we differ in how we interpret and apply Scripture, particularly concerning marriage and human sexuality.

But John Wesley once asked a question that I believe is especially important for us today:

"Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?"

Think about that for a moment. Wesley wasn't suggesting that our convictions don't matter or that we should compromise what we believe. He was reminding us that disagreement doesn't have to destroy Christian love.

As Global Methodists, we believe Scripture must remain the authority for how we live out our faith, even when it challenges the culture around us. But holding firmly to biblical truth should never prevent us from extending grace to others.

Please hear this…

We didn't become Global Methodists simply to be against something. We became Global Methodists because we believe God is calling us to stand for something…and then to live it.

We believe in biblical truth, the transforming power of God's grace, and the responsibility of every Christian to examine their own life in the light of Scripture.

Now, some interpret our traditional understanding of marriage and human sexuality as condemnation of the LGBTQIA+ community. And sadly, some Christians have given people reason to feel that way.

But Church, **we can stand boldly on biblical truth without abandoning Christian love.** In fact, Jesus calls us to do both.

Remember the rich young ruler we talked about a couple of weeks ago? Scripture tells us that before Jesus challenged him, **"Jesus looked at him and loved him."**

Jesus didn't compromise the truth to make the man comfortable. But neither did He stop loving him when the man walked away.

Love doesn't require us to abandon our convictions. But our convictions should never give us permission to abandon love.

And that applies to every one of us. It's easy to recognize somebody else's need for repentance while overlooking our own. That's why sanctifying grace is so important. God isn't finished with any of us yet.

Church, I believe that God wants Back Roads to be a place where people encounter biblical truth, experience genuine Christian love, and discover the transforming power of God's grace. We can point people toward Jesus, but we can't make their decisions for them. That's where we have to trust the Holy Spirit to do His work.

And that love must extend beyond our church walls.

We have families struggling with hunger, addiction, financial hardship, and loneliness. We have children who need encouragement and neighbors who simply need someone to care.

We can't solve every problem in southwest Wisconsin, but **Jesus never told us to wait until we could fix everything before we started helping somebody.**

Imagine our seven campuses becoming seven centers of Christian mission, where we not only share the Gospel but put it into action.

You see…We can feed somebody who's hungry and tell them about the Bread of Life. We can help somebody through a crisis and introduce them to the One who offers eternal hope.

That's what our mission at Back Roads is all about: inviting others to meet Jesus and then…grow in faith together.

Friends, over these past four weeks, we've learned about our Methodist heritage, God's amazing grace, the sacraments, and our calling to live out our faith.

But as we finish this series, I want to leave you with one question.

If somebody knew nothing about John Wesley, nothing about the Global Methodist Church, and nothing about our denominational history, but they watched the way we lived...would they recognize Jesus in us?

Pause.

Because ultimately, that's what matters.

Our calling isn't simply to preserve what John Wesley started nearly three hundred years ago. **Our calling is to faithfully live the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world God has placed before us today.**

That's why we're Methodists.

And that's why we're Back Roads Church.

To God be the glory. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Throughout this series, we've been reminded that John Wesley believed faith should be more than something we talk about on Sunday morning. It should make a difference in the world around us.

Our giving is one way we put that faith into action. Through these gifts, we support ministries that share the Gospel, care for our neighbors, and bring hope to people who are struggling.

As we receive this morning's offering, may we remember that God isn't simply interested in what we place in the offering plate. He's interested in what we're willing to do with the lives He's given us.

Let us give with grateful hearts and a willingness to serve.

Closing Prayer and Dedication

Heavenly Father, as we bring this series to a close, we thank You for the faithful people who have gone before us and for the rich heritage of faith they have passed down. But Lord, don't let us become so concerned with preserving our history that we forget the mission You've placed before us.

Give us the courage to stand firmly on Your Word, the humility to recognize our own need for grace, and the compassion to love others as Jesus has loved us.

We dedicate these gifts, our seven campuses, and every ministry of Back Roads Church to Your service. Open our eyes to the needs of our communities, and give us willing hearts and working hands to respond.

May we be known not simply by the name on our church buildings, but by the evidence of Your grace at work in our lives.

Send us out to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, we pray. Amen.