



# Four Great Emphases of United Methodism

## 1) God's love includes everyone!

*(Universal Atonement)*

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,  
that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise ... but is long-suffering ...  
not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

“In this new life one's nationality or race or education or social position is unimportant;  
such things mean nothing. Whether a person has Christ is what matters,  
and He is equally available to all.” (Colossians 3:11 Living N.T.)

**THIS IS THE MOST WONDERFUL TRUTH IN THE WORLD:  
GOD LOVES EACH OF US, WHOEVER WE ARE, WHATEVER OUR LOT IN LIFE!**

Everyone of us can say, “I am loved by the Creator God.”

With Charles Wesley, we sing:  
*“Come, sinners to the gospel feast;  
Let every soul be Jesus' guest;  
Ye need not one be left behind,  
For God hath bidden all mankind.”*

God's love does include everyone, but everyone does not experience this love.

The next emphasis tells what God has done  
that we might all know for ourselves love so tremendous!

## **2) Though tragically separated from God by sin, we can be saved through faith in Jesus Christ!**

*(Salvation By Faith)*

”... and you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.”  
(Matthew 1:21)

### **STEPS TO SALVATION FROM SIN:**

#### **(1) We Must Admit That We Have Sinned -**

“For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves ...” (1 John 1:8)

“To him therefore that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin.” (James 4:17)

#### **(2) We Must Realize That We Cannot Save Ourselves -**

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

#### **(3) We Must Acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Only Savior -**

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but through me.’” (John 14:6)

#### **(4) We Must Receive Christ by Faith as Our Personal Savior -**

“But as many as receive Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe in His name.” (John 1:12)

Receiving Christ is more than giving mental assent to the truth of Christ, or merely having an emotional experience. To receive Christ means turning from sin to Christ, and relying upon Him to forgive our sins, to live in our lives, and to help us to become what we ought to be.

## **3) God’s Spirit brings assurance that we belong to Him**

*(Witness of the Spirit)*

“The Spirit itself bears witness with our Spirit, that we are children of God.” (Romans 8:16)

The “Witness of the Spirit” is more than an emotion that we feel, or a voice that we hear. It is an inner confidence that God is faithful, and that He does indeed keep His promise with us! This inward confidence is confirmed by outward change - i.e., a new style of life. As John said; “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.” (1 John 3:14)

**John Wesley**, founder of Methodism, received this witness at a meeting on Aldersgate Street, London, as he listened to one reading Luther's Preface to The Book of Romans: "... about a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart, through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation: and *an assurance was given me* that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." (Wesley's Journal, May 24, 1738).

**For some, this confidence dawns gradually.  
For others, it is a sudden discovery at the moment of faith.  
EACH OF US CAN BE ASSURED OF OUR ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD!**

## **4) A life dominated by perfect love is the goal of Christian experience.**

*(Perfect Love)*

Jesus said: "... you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

### **(1) WHAT KIND OF PERFECTION DOES JESUS COMMAND OF US?**

Matthew 5:43-48 indicates a "perfection in love." Jesus spoke of such love when He said; " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.' That is the greatest commandment. It comes first. The second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' " (Matthew 22:37-39) To live in "perfect love" is to seek God's will in every situation, and to desire the best for every individual. It is not a physical attraction, nor a mere friendly feeling. It is unending goodwill, even to the most unlovable. As Edwin Markham wrote:

"He drew a circle that shut me out  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But Love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle that took him in!"

### **(2) HOW CAN WE LIVE A LIFE OF PERFECT LOVE?**

Paul says, "... the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:5) Surrender to the Holy Spirit brings purity of motive, singleness of purpose, and liberation for a life of love toward God and humankind. The Holy Spirit enables us to express love in all our relationships.

Perfect love is both *an experience in the heart* and *a way of life in the world*.

The Holy Spirit desires to perfect God's love in us and through us!

## The following questions may help personalize these four emphases:

- (1) Do I need to receive Jesus the Christ as my Savior and Lord?
- (2) Do I need assurance that Jesus has accepted me and pardoned me from my sin?
- (3) Assured that Jesus is my Savior, do I need to surrender to the Holy Spirit's control, so as to live in the power of His Love?

*Following are suggested prayers that can be used according to the need represented above. Remember, God is anxious to answer every single prayer. Your attitude is more important than the words you use.*

**TO RECEIVE CHRIST:** "Lord God, I confess that I have sinned. I acknowledge Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation and receive Him into my life as Savior and Lord. As evidence of my faith in Your faithfulness, I thank You now."

**TO RECEIVE ASSURANCE:** "Lord God, I trust Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. On the authority of Your promises in Scripture I claim the assurance that You have pardoned and accepted me. As evidence of my faith in Your faithfulness, I thank You now."

**TO RECEIVE THE SPIRIT'S CONTROL:** "Lord God, I want your love to dominate my life and to be expressed in all my actions. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Empower me to do Your will daily. As evidence of my faith that what I have asked You have done, I thank You now."

*Which prayer would you say best expresses your own need? Pray this prayer.*

### SOME HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

1. Read this page again, especially the Scriptures which apply to your situation. Get a Bible and look up the verses in it also.
2. Remember that it is your *faith* (commitment and trust) which connects you with God's promises, not your *feelings*.
3. Read your Bible daily. Let God talk to you.
4. Pray daily. You talk to God.
5. Witness to others. You talk for God, tell others what He has done for you..
6. Participate in group worship, study, and service to others, at least weekly.
7. For further assistance, you are invited to contact your local United Methodist Church.