

A Special Note from Bill Cleveland, Sojourners Group Leader

Hello Sojourners!

Pastor Andy's sermon this past week, "In All Things, Charity," highlighted John Wesley's thoughts found in Wesley's writing, "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered." He mentioned three things in our process of experiencing life and how we see things: apprehension – we see a tree; judgment – we compare it to other trees we've seen (It's an oak tree!); discourse- we learn from interaction with others how to fit our experience into our frame of reference. This leads us to find what is the truth of our experience.

We've all heard of the "Methodist Quadrilateral" - Reason, Experience and Tradition, undergirded with Scripture. Wesley was accused of being an "enthusiast" in his day, someone who gets carried away by emotion in their religious life, but he was definitely not one of those. For him the Christian faith was reasonable, and appeals to our intellect as well as our emotions. Doctrine-the content of what we believe-is crucial in our faith walk. Much of the New Testament is devoted to helping the early church correct errors of doctrine. Our doctrine informs our actions toward others, and Wesley's love for his fellow human beings flowed from his careful understanding of the Bible, and God's claim upon his life. Without the undergirding of scripture, our love for humanity lacks depth and purpose. Just being nice to people does not make you a Christian. Hear some of Wesley's comments on the Bible:

"My ground is the Bible. Yea, I am a Bible-bigot. I follow it in all things, both great and small."
--From the *Journal*: "June 5, 1766"

"But the Christian rule of right and wrong is the word of God, the writings of the Old and New Testament; all that the Prophets and "holy men of old" wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" all that Scripture which was given by inspiration of God, and which is indeed profitable for doctrine, or teaching the whole will of God; for reproof of what is contrary thereto; for correction of error; and for instruction, or training us up, in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16.)

"This is a lantern unto a Christian's feet, and a light in all his paths. This alone he receives as his rule of right or wrong, of whatever is really good or evil. He esteems nothing good, but what is here enjoined, either directly or by plain consequence, he accounts nothing evil but what is here forbidden, either in terms, or by undeniable inference. Whatever the Scripture neither forbids nor conjoins, either directly or by plain consequence, he believes to be of an indifferent nature; to be in itself neither good nor evil; this being the whole and sole outward rule whereby his conscience is to be directed in all things."

--From the *Sermons*: "The Witness of Our Own Spirit."