**Just before the prelude/ welcome at each service, please put up the pyramid slide--full-sized-- and do not show the sanctuary or people in it, let the slide appear for 10 seconds. Then let’s begin with the prelude (9am) or the band welcome (11:15am).**

**8/23 “Radically Engaged”**

**2 Corinthians 5:1-10**

**Matthew 22:37-39**

**Please stand as you are able in honor of the readings from God’s holy word.**

**2 Corinthians 5:1-10**

**5**For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. **2**For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling— **3**if indeed, when we have taken it off[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%205%3A1-10&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-28865a)] we will not be found naked. **4**For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. **5**He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

**6**So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord— **7**for we walk by faith, not by sight. **8**Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. **9**So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. **10**For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

**Matthew 22:37-39**

**37**He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ **38**This is the greatest and first commandment. **39**And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

(Picture of the cans)

1. **Cans of Fruit as an Introduction to Sanctification**

What a thrill it has been to see the cans of fruit piling up in the church’s drive through. Keep it up Pender UMC! You are amazing!

Now, that’s not an announcement, but rather an integral part of this morning’s sermon about sanctification.

I want to ask you, “What does it mean to be a Christian?”

Maybe this fruit holds the answer to this question. (Hold up a can.)

1. **Something happens to me all the time that I want to talk to you about this morning.**

When I ask people, “What does it mean to be a Christian?”I hear two very different answers.

One answer that people give me is, “Belief is all that **matters**. Being saved is **enough**.”

Another answer I hear is, “There’s a connection between following Jesus and feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and making the world a better place. Scripture reminds us that we’re accountable to God for what we do in this life. (2 Cor. 5:1-10)”

So, let me ask you, “Is being saved enough?”

1. **Series Recap**

Friends we are on the 6th week of an 8 week sermon series. If you have been worshipping with us, you know that we have been taking a deep dive into the United Methodist belief that we are called to grow in faith.

The person who established the Methodist movement, John Wesley, wanted us to have a complete understanding of the Bible.

One of the things he meant by that is that faith isn’t a “one” and “done” thing.

You know what a “one” and “done” thing is don’t you? It’s the kind of task that you only have to perform “once” and then you never have to revisit it again. It’s a box that we check off.

* How many times do we have to graduate from High School? Once, and then you are done.
* How many times do we have to pass the driver’s test? Once, and then you are done. *Unless we get into trouble…*
* How many times do we have to have your wisdom teeth taken out? Thankfully, they don’t regrow themselves. If they have to come out, once and then you are done.

(walk over to the pyramid chart, point to “sanctification” **please do not show the pyramid slide** at this time, looks like too much on video)

While, Justification/ salvation experiences cannot be undone, and are the entry point of new life now, and life eternally, that’s not the end of our faith walk, taught John Wesley.

As far as he was concerned, we’re either growing in grace and perfection, or we were backsliding.

* This was a shocking idea in Wesley’s time! People in his day thought that as soon as they were baptized, they had a ticket to heaven, nothing more was required of them for the rest of their lives. They didn’t need to do anything differently, or care about anyone other than themselves. All they needed to do was to show up occasionally, check off the box, “one and done”.
* The idea that we’re called to grow in faith may be shocking to people today as well! Some people I talk to think that all that matters is whether someone is saved or not. And, after they have become justified themselves, they think they can live life in their own bubble, continuing on in a self-centered way. They think faith is just an inward matter and that they don’t need to act on it in any way. Afterall, they’ve checked their box, “one and done”.

But John Wesley challenged this idea.

* He taught that salvation/ justification was only the beginning of our walk with God, not the end.
* He taught that Christians needed to “pick up their own crosses”, that they needed to serve God, AND that they should strive to make the world around them, look a little more like the Kingdom of Heaven.
* To be “Sanctified” means to be engaged in these things.
* In sanctification:
* We’re crucified with Christ.
* We care about the things Jesus cared about.
* Inward faith turns outward.
* We strive to bring glory to God.
* Do you know that if you look up the word “sanctify” on thesaurus.com, one of the synonyms is “glorify”?
* To be “sanctified”, means that we’re radically engaged in glorifying God.

(Picture looking out the window of a house into the world)

1. John Wesley used “the House of religion” to describe faith growth.

* *The porch was the entrance. (Repentance)*
* *Salvation/ Regeneration occur within the house. God welcomes us into the Kingdom. Our hearts and minds are renewed. We love the things Christ loves.*
* *In Sanctification, we begin to look outward toward God’s world, looking for ways to serve Christ, to glorify God.*
* *We become radically engaged in serving Christ in the world.*
* John Wesley understood this.

1. In John Wesley’s England:
   * Children were exploited in factories and mines.
   * Human beings were being bought and sold as slaves.
   * The haves flaunted their wealth in front of people who were starving.
   * People sent to prison were treated worse than animals.
   * The legal system had become corrupt.
     + People were being hanged for:
       - Hanging out with Gypsy’s
       - Vandalism
       - Do those sound like capital crimes to you?
2. Sanctified Methodists responded:

* They spoke out against child exploitation.
* They spoke out against slavery. Wesley said that slavery was, “one of the most heinous, despicable evils ever perpetrated by human beings”.
* John Wesley encouraged people to live more moderately and see to use some of what they had to alleviate suffering.
* Methodists were advocates for prison and legal reform.
* They provided material assistance to the poor.
* They were individually sanctified. They were sanctified together as the body of believers called Methodists.
* God was glorified.

1. And they made a difference:

* Slavery in England was abolished more than 50 years, half a century, before it was abolished in the United States.
* Reforms were made in the prison and legal systems.
* And much, much, more… (*England: Before and After Wesley* by J. Wesley Bready).
* They radically served Christ.

Radical is a loaded term for us these days, isn’t it?

* When we think of “radical”, we may think of violent extremism. That’s not what this means.
* It means that Jesus was radical for caring about the least, last, and lost”.
  + He cared about their material well-being:
* He healed the sick.
* He feed the hungry.
* He cared about their spiritual well-being:
  + - He ate with sinners.

Sanctified Christians and Churches care about these people also. They are radical in that way. By acting on their concerns, they bring glory to God.

1. **Bishop Ken Carder, said he once visited a ghetto in Washington DC. as Divinity School student, doing research for a class.**

* His assignment was to learn about poor peoples’ attitudes toward the churches in their neighborhoods.
* He found himself talking to an elderly man sitting on the front steps of a government low income apartment complex, within sight of the steeple of an enormous United Methodist Church.
* Carder pointed to the steeple and asked, “What do you know about that church?”
* The longtime public housing resident responded, “I don’t know nothing about it, cept it’s there”.
* Carder asked, “Do you know anything about what they do?”
* The man responded, “They don’t do nothing there… cept’ gather on Sundays.”
* He continued, “I do hear them singing sometimes, ‘Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine’.”
* “Anything else?”, Carder asked.
* “Nope, that’s all they do.”, the man responded.

1. **Members and Friends of Pender UMC, may that NEVER be said of this church!**

* Let’s get radical!
  + - Keep those fruit cans coming in.
    - I can’t wait to see the school supplies arrive for those needy children. Don’t forget those earbuds!
    - Think of what that gift will mean to the people who need it.
* Followers of Jesus, as important as being saved is, do you understand now, why it’s not enough?
* Faith is a process. Salvation is just the beginning. We’re called to grow.
* We’re called to be radically engaged in serving the world.
* We’re called to become “sanctified”.
* To God be the glory! Amen.