

**"METHOD TO OUR MADNESS!!"**

10 / 1 / 17

Acts 18: 1, 4-11 (NRSV) (Was SERM\_301, 9/8/96; 763, 9/21/03; 1064, 9 / 16 / 07; 1463, 10 / 7 / 12)

**INTRODUCTION — SCHOOL HAS STARTED AGAIN!**

One young fellow was having a REAL HARD TIME in his college class. HIS professor called him up the day after their FIRST TEST, and he said, "WHAT IS THIS YOU WROTE IN THE MARGIN? B.A.I.K.?"

The student said, "IT MEANS, 'BOY, AM I CONFUSED!'"

"WELL, you should have used a 'C' instead of a 'K' in spelling 'CONFUSED'," said the professor.

"Well, that just shows how confused I am!!" admitted the student.

People are just as confused today as that student! LIFE seems to be moving too fast, and few people are sure what is TRUE and DEPENDABLE any more. TO WHOM CAN WE TURN?!

WE CAN TURN to JESUS CHRIST, our *LORD and SAVIOR*, and to those who PREACH the ETERNAL WORD!! Our example is the APOSTLE PAUL—

**I. PAUL PREACHED THE GOSPEL EVERYWHERE HE COULD!!**

A. FIRST— he PREACHED in the SYNAGOGUES. He always testified FIRST to the JEWISH people in a town, because JESUS was the JEWISH MESSIAH!!

Paul believed that Jesus had come for ALL peoples, but JESUS came FIRST to the people of ABRAHAM, the people of the COVENANT of MOSES— therefore, PAUL ALWAYS went FIRST to the JEWISH "meeting house"— the SYNAGOGUE in any town.

B. WHEN HIS MESSAGE WAS REJECTED by the JEWISH LEADERS, THEN he went to the GENTILES and preached to them.

C. HIS VISION — God spoke to PAUL (in a dream— maybe we ought to be open to the LORD talking to us in a dream, also— or else let Him speak to us

**AS WE READ THE BIBLE!!).**

1. ANYWAY— the LORD spoke to PAUL in a dream— to ENCOURAGE PAUL to KEEP on *PREACHING and TEACHING about JESUS CHRIST!!*
  2. SO— PAUL stayed on there in CORINTH for 1-½ YEARS— one of the longest stays he ever made as a MISSIONARY PREACHER.
  3. God's MESSAGE to him— *NEVER STOP PREACHING & TEACHING @ JC!!*
- D. WE NEED SOLID PREACHING and TEACHING TODAY— The**  
***METHODIST CHURCH WAS FOUNDED ON POWERFUL PREACHING!!***

**II. JOHN WESLEY PREACHED — BOLDLY !!**

You are in a METHODIST CHURCH today. HOW DID IT GET HERE??

**\*\*\* A. BECAUSE JOHN WESLEY and the EARLY METHODISTS WOULD NOT STOP PREACHING THE GOSPEL FOR ANY REASON!**

1. JOHN WESLEY LIVED to be the age of 88. In his 60+ year ministry as a MINISTER and EVANGELIST in the CHURCH of ENGLAND, he rode 250,000 MILES, mostly on HORSEBACK, to PREACH THE GOSPEL EVERYWHERE HE COULD!! (FINALLY, at age 80, his friends convinced him to ride in a BUGGY!!)
2. WHY DID HE PUSH HIMSELF SO HARD?!? *BECAUSE HE WAS UTTERLY CONVINCED THAT ONLY JESUS CHRIST CAN CHANGE LIVES, AND SAVE US FOR ETERNITY !!!!!!!*
3. The EARLY METHODISTS were often called “*ENTHUSIASTS*” and were closed out of the VERY PROPER, VERY BRITISH, VERY DIGNIFIED CHURCH of ENGLAND. IN FACT, the term “*METHODIST*” was another term used IN JEST and to make fun of WESLEY'S FOLLOWERS— it described that WESLEY'S CONVERTS had a “*METHOD*” for EVERYTHING— for *PRAYING*, for *READING the BIBLE DAILY*, for VISITING in the JAILS and VISITING the SICK, and so on.
4. I'VE OFTEN WONDERED— what if JOHN WESLEY had let the name

**“ENTHUSIASTS”** stick to him and his FOLLOWERS instead of **“METHODIST”???** What would it be like to see 38,000 **“UNITED ENTHUSIAST”** churches around AMERICA? What if THIS CHURCH was **“FIRST UNITED ENTHUSIASTIC CHURCH of ONEIDA!!”??**  
**CAN I HEAR AN “AMEN” TO THAT?????????**

5. **WESLEY** once, during the **“METHODIST REVIVAL”** in ENGLAND, went to the town of **EPWORTH**— where he had GROWN UP, while his father was the PASTOR of the large CHURCH in town. IN FACT, HIS FATHER WAS **BURIED** in the CHURCH CEMETERY THERE.

6. **BUT** the **LOCAL BISHOP** was **OPPOSED** to JOHN WESLEY and his **“ENTHUSIASTIC”** PREACHING, and sent word that WESLEY COULD **NOT** PREACH in the EPWORTH CHURCH. When John and a crowd arrived at the church, they FOUND IT LOCKED, so WESLEY WENT OUT INTO the **CEMETERY**, with that **GROWING CROWD** who gathered to HEAR HIM— HUNDREDS wanted to hear little JACKIE, the HOME-TOWN BOY, so JOHN WESLEY **STOOD ON his FATHER’S GRAVESTONE** and **PREACHED the GOSPEL**— telling that **“WE NEED to be ‘BORN AGAIN,’ to EXPERIENCE the ‘NEW BIRTH,’ to REPENT of our SINS and RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST as LORD and SAVIOR!!”**

7. **SOMEONE** once asked WESLEY why so many people came to hear him preach. He answered, **“I SET MYSELF ON FIRE [for CHRIST], and PEOPLE COME TO WATCH ME BURN.”**

**B. WESLEY, like the APOSTLE PAUL, *WENT WHERE the PEOPLE WERE!!***

2. **CORINTH** was a SEAPORT TOWN of over 200,000, with all kinds of WEIRD RELIGIOUS CULTS and a **DEEP SPIRITUAL HUNGER** in MOST of the PEOPLE!!

3. KIND of LIKE— people in **AMERICA, TODAY!!!**

4. **MOST AMERICANS ARE AS SPIRITUALLY HUNGRY AS PEOPLE in CORINTH in PAUL'S DAY, or in ENGLAND in JOHN WESLEY'S DAY!!**

### ***III. UNITED METHODISTS MUST PREACH and TELL the GOSPEL— TODAY!!!!***

**A. A FEW YEARS AGO, I HAD THE PRIVILEGE TO HEAR JAMES KING PREACH:**

1. To 150 YOUTH at the SENIOR HIGH ASSEMBLY, the YOUTH WEEK held every summer at EMORY & HENRY COLLEGE. ***THAT MAN CAN PREACH!!*** He reminded us that the SAVING POWER OF JESUS CHRIST our LORD is not given to us to JUST be held in and make us FEEL “BETTER” than UNSAVED, NON-CHRISTIAN PEOPLE — GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS HOLY SPIRIT TO “***REACH OUT***” with the GOOD NEWS and GOOD DEEDS, to SPEAK and ACT in ways to ***GET THE LOVE OF JESUS OUT to the WORLD AROUND US!!*** (Gesture in a wide circle)
2. **HE TOLD US—** GOD’S SPIRIT gives us “**POWER FOR THE FUTURE!!!**”
3. **LET ME TEACH YOU HIS SAYING ABOUT the continued POWER and LOVE and SELF-CONTROL that GOD’S SPIRIT BRINGS to US:**  
(I’ll say it once, then everyone JOIN IN)

**‘I HAVE POWER, FOR EVERY HOUR;  
I HAVE LOVE, AS PRETTY AS A DOVE;  
I HAVE CONTROL, TO HELP MY SOUL!!!’**

***(AGAIN----- and AGAIN....)***

**B. THAT IS what UNITED METHODIST CHRISTIANS— and all CHRISTIANS,**

1. of EVERY CHURCH and DENOMINATION— ***HAVE TO SHARE!!***
2. **THE GREATEST NEWS IN THE UNIVERSE IS THAT:**  
***JESUS SAVES!! AND MAKES OUR LIVES WORTH LIVING!!***
3. **SO----- SHARE THAT MESSAGE!!!!**
4. **BE at CHURCH every time you can, to *FELLOWSHIP with GOD’S PEOPLE!***
5. **STUDY the BIBLE— on your OWN, and in GROUPS— WEDNESDAY eve.,  
or THURSDAY evening in ....**

6. BE SURE TO SPEND TIME WITH GOD EVERY DAY!! IN PRAYER—
7. *FALL in LOVE with JESUS !!!! Because He loves you !!!!*
7. The METHODIST WAY of LIVING the CHRISTIAN LIFE, according to JOHN WESLEY, was to MAKE YOURSELF FOLLOW some **“HOLY HABITS!!”**
8. SO— GET the **“METHOD to our MADNESS!!”** And DEVELOP SOME **“HOLY HABITS”** FOR LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE!!!

**CONCLUSION** — When I stand in front of you and say, **“SHARE THE GOSPEL WHEREVER YOU GO!”** — That is what JESUS and the Apostles told us to do. **BUT MOST OF US WILL NOT BE “PREACHERS,” TO STAND BY PULPITS or ON TREE STUMPS, to PREACH SERMONS. BUT ALL OF US CAN PREACH SERMONS BY the WAY WE LIVE, and the CHOICES WE MAKE.**

A writer once heard that the little FRENCH VILLAGE OF Le CHAMBRON was unlike any other in FRANCE during WORLD WAR II, because, UNLIKE ANY OTHER VILLAGE, **THEY HID JEWISH PEOPLE from the NAZIS.** The WRITER visited there, WONDERING WHAT SORT of **COURAGEOUS, ETHICAL HEROES** could risk ALL to do such extraordinary good. He interviewed people in the village and was struck by their ORDINARINESS. They weren't HEROES, or BRILLIANT, GIFTED PEOPLE.

The WRITER decided that **the ONE FACTOR** that UNITED them was their ATTENDANCE, SUNDAY AFTER SUNDAY, at their little CHURCH, where they heard the SERMONS of PASTOR TROCHME. OVER TIME, they became **BY HABIT people who just KNEW WHAT TO DO— and DID IT.** When it came time to be COURAGEOUS, the day when the NAZIS CAME TO TOWN, **they quietly did what was right.**

ONE OLD WOMAN, who had faked a HEART ATTACK when the NAZIS came to search her house, later said, **“PASTOR ALWAYS TAUGHT US THAT THERE COMES A TIME IN EVERY LIFE WHEN a PERSON IS ASKED TO DO SOMETHING for JESUS. WHEN OUR TIME CAME, WE KNEW WHAT TO DO.”** **That is what the Apostle PAUL taught — that is what JOHN WESLEY TAUGHT!!!!**

**BUILD a FAITHFUL, “HOLY HABIT-FILLED” LIFE BY FOLLOWING JESUS EVERY DAY. WHEN the TIME COMES, CHRIST WILL HELP YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO. THAT is the “METHOD” to our MADNESS of METHODIST CHRISTIAN LIVING— of CHRIST-CENTERED LIVING.**

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