

Emphasis on Grace

The key term in Wesleyan theology is grace – the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in humans through the ever-present Holy Spirit. Wesley believed grace comes to us in three dynamic ways. (the image of a house.)

Prevenient Grace – Present in all creation . . . in the natural order, in the human consciences, in the relationships and heritage into which we are born.

The porch of the house.

Justifying Grace – For Wesley it is another word for pardon . . . forgiveness of all our sins, and our acceptance of God. It is the assurance of pardon; being made right with God.

It is the doorway into the house and the process of walking through it. The door sign says “welcome”.

Sanctifying Grace – Growth toward perfection; the total restoration of the divine image in us. It is the fulfillment of the divinely given potential to reflect the image of God.

This is the fullness of the house of many rooms.

The Christian life is continuous process of responding to God’s grace.

Theological Guidelines – The Quadrilateral

Scripture: We take it as the final authority in matters of faith and practice. We are to study it and interpret it carefully.

Tradition: The Bible speaks of a God whose presence and purposes are known in historical events. The hymns, the psalms, the prayers and liturgies of Judaism and the early church form the storehouse of tradition.

Experience: Our life experiences influence how we perceive God; how we come to know God's grace, and how we express God's grace in daily life.

Reason: The human mind is one of God's most important gifts. Its use as a means of loving God is an expression of responsible stewardship.

Theological inquiry may begin from anyone of the four. They are tools, necessary resources. The four interact with each other.