

ALFRED STREET BAPTIST CHURCH PRESENTS

CAN I PUSH IT?

LIVE ON YOUTUBE 

TUESDAY
7:00 PM ET

WITH
REV. DR.
HOWARD-JOHN
WESLEY



EPISODE 5:
"IS JESUS THE ONLY
WAY?" PT. 1
MAY 19, 2020

PREFACE

The method of Can I Push It?

1. Raise a controversial issue
2. Share different perspectives
3. Invite you to see where you stand and why
4. Understand and validate the opinions of others
5. Consider the various implications of all sides

INTRO

Pastor Wesley mentioned 2 types of Christians he's not fond of:

- Christians who never mature, evolve, or change the way they think about God
- Those who don't create space for others to change

Reflection Question: What do you do when someone's interpretation of scripture conflicts with your experience of God?

- *Deny experience, hold to interpretation?*
- *Allow experience to be valid and change how you see that scripture?*

Consider John 14:6: "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

From this passage emerges the traditional Christian view that outside of Jesus there is no salvation. Tonight, we push it to ask two difficult questions:

1. Is Jesus the only way to be saved?
2. Is there salvation outside of Christ/Christianity?

PART 1

DEFINITIONS **Soteriology:** The study of Salvation

There are several areas of discussion within the field of Soteriology:

- A. **Predestination** - Is salvation the will of God or is it an individual choice?
- B. **Doctrine of Hell** - What is the fate of non-Christians when they die?
- C. **Love & Nature of God** - Does God allow people to be born to go to hell?
- D. **Christian Perspectives of other Religions** - How do we interact with people of other faiths?
- E. **Judaism Issue** - How do we deal with the fact that Jesus was a Jew? How do we interact with our Jewish sisters and brothers?
- F. **Uniqueness of Jesus Christ** - What makes Jesus and Christianity unique among all world religions?
- G. **Nature of Salvation** - How do we obtain it? Is it eternal? How does one become a Christian?
- H. **Sola Scriptura** - Is our theology based on scripture alone? Are there other things that help to shape our understanding of God?

Let's begin by developing your own definition of salvation. What does it mean to be saved? Pastor Wesley offered some questions that will help to shape our definition:

1. If someone is saved they are: _____ (fill in the blank)
2. If salvation is an answer to a problem, what is that problem?
 - a) Remember to go beyond the one word answer of sin
3. Is the Bible the only source for defining and examining salvation?
4. What is the end result and state of someone who is saved? What is their life like?
5. Is salvation eternal? Once you're saved are you always saved? Can we do anything to revoke our salvation?
6. Is salvation purely ethereal or is there an ethical component and responsibility? Is salvation about heaven or about how we live on earth?
7. What is the opposite of salvation? What's the eternal fate of a non-Christian?

PART 2

Exclusivist: Jesus and Jesus alone is the only way to be saved

- Most traditional perspective built on John 14:6
- Denies possibility of any salvation outside of Jesus
- Emphasizes Acts 4:12: "*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.*"
- Mission to make everyone around you believe in Jesus

Inclusivist: Jesus and confession of Jesus leads to salvation

- Also believes it is possible, though uncertain that salvation exists outside of Jesus
- Considers Genesis 18:25: "Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
- Argues that the fate of an individual is in the hands of God
- Also considers Isaiah 55:8-9: "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'*"

Pluralist: Confession of Christ is one way to be saved, but not the only way

- Honors the reality of salvation in other religions
- Recognizes the ethical or moral similarities between major world religions
- Honors other sacred texts
- “We can’t see God clearly so we grab on to God in different ways from different angles.”
- Book recommendation: [God Has Many Names by John Hick](#)

Universalist: The death of Jesus was so efficacious that it saved the entire world

- Everyone is in right relationship with God
- Focuses on the love of God rather than on a particular scripture
- Believes a loving God wouldn’t put anyone in hell
- For more check out the episode [“Heretic” from the This American Life](#) podcast (Originally aired December 2005)

Concluding Question: Where are you?

REMEMBER OUR JOB IS NOT TO TELL YOU WHAT TO THINK, JUST TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU’RE THINKING.

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- Join us for next week’s episode on Women in Ministry**
- **How do we dismantle patriarchy in the Black church without destroying the Black church?**