

## John Wesley - Lyfe story

Born: June 28 1703 in Epworth, Lincolnshire, England

Died: March 2 1791 (Aged 87)

Spouse: Mary Wesley

**There is probably only one preacher of whom it can be said that his conversion changed British history. By the time of his death, almost the whole nation was asking how religion could become personally meaningful. Not only did the Methodist movement begin with John Wesley, but also some historians argue that the influence of Wesley was a key factor in the British public not following the revolutionary path trod by the French. A short sketch of his life reveals a deeply committed follower of Christ who tirelessly preached the Gospel to all who would listen.**

Three events played decisive roles in forming John Wesley. At the age of five, he was rescued from his attic bedroom as his family home was destroyed by fire. He considered this to be a miraculous escape, one that marked him as providentially set apart for a specific purpose. Later, he went with his brother to work as a minister in the American colony of Georgia. On the voyage there, a violent storm appeared as if it might drown all on board. Whilst he was gripped with panic, he noticed a group of Moravians who calmly prayed and sang hymns in the midst of the storm. Wesley clearly lacked something the Moravians had.

Three years later, back in London, Wesley attended a Moravian meeting about which he later famously wrote, 'I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation.'

These events birthed a deep passion within Wesley to see revival within the church. He began to preach throughout Britain, forming societies that were focused on discipleship and accountability. These societies followed a set of five questions that entailed rigorous self-examination before God and the other members. These groups formed the basis of what was to become the Methodist denomination. John Wesley met fierce resistance from parts of the established church. This is in part due to Wesley's insistence to keep preaching in the open air, despite not having a license. He had other preachers preach sermons against him, and Wesley was often heckled and on more than one occasion attacked by a mob.

John Wesley's passion and energy are astonishing. He rode an estimated 250,000 miles on horseback preaching over 40,000 sermons. He administered charities, wrote over 200 books and even found time to pioneer the use of electric shock treatment for medical purposes. The last letter he wrote was to a young William Wilberforce, encouraging him to persist in his attempt to abolish slavery. John Wesley's life offers an inspiring example of a life committed to proclaiming the good news.