

The Life and Ministry of George Whitefield
(1714-1770)
Hebrews 13:7-9
Covenant of Peace Church
November 6, 2016

⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ⁹ Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.

Introduction

The command to remember is a command that is given quite often in the Bible. At the Passover, the Jews were commanded to remember that this was the day they were rescued from slavery. This day we remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. In Deuteronomy 8, the Israelites were commanded to remember the Lord their God who provided for them. Paul told the Ephesians to remember that at one time they were separated from God and alienated from the promises of God. But now they have been brought near through the work of Christ. This tells us that our memories are very important things. When I have the opportunity to preach a funeral service, one of the first things that I tell the family and friends is to spend time remembering their loved one. Remember the good times and the conversations and the laughter. Think upon these things because in them you and I see the goodness of God. God did not have to give us a memory. One event could check off right after the other and we could have no recollection of it whatsoever and you and I would be none the wiser. But God gave us a brain that has for one of its very important functions the capability of storing up the information about a certain event and then reaching back into the hard drive we can access those files and think about a past event. And this is good for us especially in light of the three commands in verse 7.

What are the three commands? The first is to remember your leaders. Now these are not your leaders that you will vote for in the upcoming election. These are not your bosses at work. These are particularly those leaders, those pastors and elders and teachers, who taught you the Word of God. These are the ones who invested their lives in learning the Holy Scriptures which will make you wise unto salvation and then poured their heart and soul and energy in helping you understand the sacred text. Remember them. Think upon them. Remember their words and instructions. Recall it to your mind and roll it around. Remember them.

The second command is to consider. We are to observe carefully their way of life and their outcome. Now let's establish this truth right up front. There is no such thing as a perfect leader. All leaders except Jesus Christ had and have flaws and blind spots. You have them and so do I. None of the apostles were perfect. They have now been perfected as they are standing before the throne of God. None of the heroes of the faith were perfect. What the Bible demonstrates and what history teaches us and what we should know about ourselves is that there is only one perfect one and that is Jesus Christ our Lord. So in our considering of the way of life of our

leaders, we should not only consider what was amazing about them, but we should consider their failures, sins, and flaws. And what is true of all people is that we are flawed very deeply. We have the innate ability to easily see the flaws and sins of others and yet not see our own.

When I was in college and seminary, my friends would often ask me to proof read their papers. The reason is because I was very good at it. I find grammatical errors, typos, and misspellings in published books. But here is the funny thing. I very often cannot find them in my own work. This is simply the way we view sin. I can see yours and often I am blind to my own. And I believe the same thing is true of our heroes. So we are to remember and we are to consider the outcome of their lives.

The third command is to imitate. This Greek word is where we get our word mimic from. What are we to imitate? Their sins and flaws? No. We are to imitate their faith. And the two reasons that we do this is because of verses 8 and 9. Look at those verses:

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. 9 Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings...

The first reason is because Jesus Christ is immutable; He never changes. So the faith that our leaders had should be the same faith that we have. We should be looking into the mirror of church history and see our own reflection. This is why we do this kind of sermon once per year. This is why we should be students of Scripture, our own hearts, and church history. There is a common cord of doctrine that runs from Pentecost to the present day and we should as 21st Century Christians find ourselves hanging on to that same cord. We should look back and see the Apostle Paul and Augustine and Luther and Calvin and Edwards and Spurgeon and a great cloud of witnesses. Why? Because of the fourth command in our text and that is verse 9. If we do not remember, if we do not consider, if we do not imitate then we will, I assure you, find ourselves led away by diverse or different and very strange teachings or doctrine.

The modern American church is tossed about by every wave of doctrine precisely because they do not have a firm grip of Scripture and they do not know church history or the heroes of the faith who came before us. So my goal this morning is to remedy that by adding one person to your historical and doctrinal arsenal. I want to present before you a man who can only be imitated to a certain degree simply because of the extraordinary gifts that God gave to him. That man is George Whitefield, the great evangelist of the First Great Awakening in the American Colonies.

There are people who have amazing gifts from the Lord. I think of great athletes. Arguably the greatest basketball player in history was Michael Jordan. Some of us tried that dunk. You know the one I am talking about. He gets a running start and jumps from the foul line and dunks the basketball. On my best day, I could touch the rim. I couldn't dunk and I guarantee you I could not recreate that dunk. When you think about the 100-meter race at the Olympics, who do you think about? Usain Bolt. When he races against other world class sprinters, he looks like he is

playing around out there. He is just toying with them giving them just a little hope and then he pulls away. Michael Phelps, the Olympic swimmer, is another great example. The list simply could go on and on of great athletes that you and I simply could not be on the same playing field with. Their physical gifts are just far superior to us normal, ordinary folks.

George Whitefield had amazing physical gifts from the Lord. He had a huge voice. A normal human voice when yelling can go as high as about 73 decibels. That is about as loud as a vacuum cleaner. Sustaining that level of sound is extremely difficult. That is why we have microphones and amplification equipment. George Whitefield preached to a crowd that is estimated to have been somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000 people in Philadelphia and he did not have a microphone. One of the founding fathers of America, Benjamin Franklin, who was friends with Whitefield attests to this fact. So how could one man be heard by so many? The estimate is that Whitefield's voice was capable of a sustained 90 plus decibels. A rock concert is 110 decibels. 90 decibels is what your lawn mower sounds like. Being as loud as your lawn mower would be amazing but doing that for 45 minutes is beyond imitating.

Not only was Whitefield loud, he was extraordinarily eloquent. He was so expressive that it was said that he could move people to tears by simply saying the word, "Mesopotamia." Actor David Garrick said that he would pay 100 guineas if he could say the word "Oh!" like Mr. Whitefield. The stamina that this man had in preaching is what really amazes me. He preached for less than 34 years and yet in those 34 years preached over 18,000 times. Now compare that with a man who preaches three times a week for 50 years. If he does this without a sick day or vacation he will preach 7800 times in his life. The normal pastor would have to preach for almost 125 years to match Whitefield.

This means that George Whitefield preached an average of 520 times per year in his less than 34 years of ministry. Now any preacher will tell you this. After you preach, you usually want to go hide in a hole somewhere for a few hours and lick your wounds. You know that you could have done better. You wished you would have spent more time in prayer and in the text. The guilt you often feel as a preacher is often overwhelming. You know you did not do the text its full justice. If you really preach there is typically a physical toll on your body and on your voice. By the time this day is done with question and answer this afternoon, my throat will be sore tomorrow. And if you have a cold or a respiratory infection, these problems are worse. Whitefield often preached, especially in America, several times per day, every day, seven days a week. And often his preaching took place in fields and on courthouse steps and in town squares in the rain and in the cold and the heat with no amplification and no Hall's throat lozenges, or even pineapple juice which is really good for the throat.

So what do you do, especially if you preach regularly, with the example of these amazing gifts? The voice, the eloquence, and the stamina cannot be matched by the ordinarily gifted preacher. You can certainly get training for your voice and you can work to be more eloquent, and you can exercise to get more stamina. But just like not being able to compete with Usain Bolt in a footrace, we could never compete with Whitefield in his natural gifts no matter how hard we

tried. So what do we do? We bless the God of Heaven who would create such a man and give him to us as a gift. We remember that pastors and elders and evangelists are a result of Jesus Christ's life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension and we thank Him for His amazing grace toward us. And we remember what Charles Spurgeon said of George Whitefield when he compared his own preaching with this giant of a man. "Whitefield may have preached the Gospel better, but he could not preach a better Gospel."

Here is where the rubber meets the road for us. We can and must learn from George Whitefield and what he did well and correctly. We must imitate that. Where he trusted and prayed and preached and evangelized, we must do our best to do the same as God gives us opportunity. We must not look upon the gifts and graces of others and think that because we have not received the same gifts that we could be no use to the Savior. Let us not fall into the trap of Satan that way. In one of his letters to a man who wrote to him, he spoke this way in response to this man's pseudo-humility. This man obviously wrote to Whitefield telling him how unworthy that he was in comparison to Whitefield. Here is what Whitefield wrote back and here is where I am envious of his gifts of counsel. "You are kept in a bondage by a false humility. It is good to see ourselves poor and exceeding vile; but if that fight and feeling prevent our looking up to, and exerting ourselves for our dear Savior, it becomes criminal and robs the soul of much comfort. I can speak this by dear bought experience. How often have I been kept from speaking and acting for God by a sight of my own unworthiness; but now I see that the more unworthy I am, the more fit to work for Jesus, because He will get much glory in working [through] such mean instruments..."

George Whitefield was born in England, December 27, 1714. He died a little over 1500 miles from downtown Gulfport, MS in what is today Newbury Port, MA. The day of his death was September 30, 1770. Pneumonia took his life. The story is told that he was staying at a manse (parsonage) of a friend who was a pastor. He was wanting to go to bed and rest because he was so sick. A crowd gathered outside the First Presbyterian Church and began to plead with Whitefield to preach to them. Would that people would plead for preaching today as they did then! He had a candle and he stood at the top of the stairs and he preached to them until the candle went out. It was Whitefield who first said things like this. "I would rather wear out than rust out." He said to the Lord, "I am weary in Thy work, but I am not weary of Thy work." After he preached, he went to bed and by the next morning, he had died and gone to his eternal reward.

I can sympathize with Whitefield here but I still stand in amazement. In 2008, as a result of a simple surgical procedure, I developed double pneumonia. I spent 7 or 8 days in the hospital and three or four of those days in ICU. I got out of the hospital after my pulmonologist sang "I'll Be Home for Christmas." Our church had an annual Christmas Eve service and I decided that I would lead the devotional that evening just about four days since being released from the hospital. I only spoke for about twenty minutes. But let me tell you that there were several times when I was pretty sure I was going to pass out. And for months and months after that, I found myself very lightheaded and dizzy. You just cannot get enough oxygen. How he preached dying

with pneumonia is beyond me. But the Lord sustained him to preach that one last time. And rest assured, he probably preached his favorite subject, "You must be born again."

More than anything else, George Whitefield was an evangelist. His main concern was for the souls of men, women, and children. And his favorite subject to preach upon was the new birth or regeneration. The reason, I believe, for this was because he was a highly religious man before he was born again. When you were a false convert or merely a church member and you receive the new birth and your whole life is altered you desire for others to have this same experience. Whitefield was born into an Anglican household. Like most in his day, he grew up attending the Church of England. He was the youngest of seven children born to Thomas and Elizabeth Whitefield and shortly after entering the world he was baptized in the Church known as St. Mary de Crypt. His parents owned an inn and he grew up working in that inn because his father died when George was two years old.

At age twelve his mother sent him to the grammar school and George loved to read and act in plays. He had a flare for the dramatic that would make its way into his preaching later in life. By fifteen, George decided that he had had enough schooling and convinced his mother to allow him to work in the inn. After all, a single woman running a business would need her son's help. He did work with and for his mother until he finally made his way to Oxford.

His religious upbringing was stunted. The reason that it was stunted is because the Church of England by that time was in need of another reformation. They had all but lost the Gospel. There was religious platitudes and exhortations from the priests to be good people and to help others. But the Gospel was almost completely lost and if Whitefield ever heard the Gospel, which he probably did not, it fell on deaf ears.

Now here is where the story really gets interesting and something I want to point out now that I am going to come back and deal with a little later relating to George Whitefield's major flaw and blind spot. This falls squarely into the category of considering his way of life. Whitefield learned from a friend that he could attend Oxford if he became a servitor for other students. Students from wealthy families would have servants who took care of all their needs and then attended classes and did their work in their own time. And these wealthy families would pay the tuition and room and board for the servitors. Whitefield became a servant to a student from one of these wealthy families. He would rise early in the morning and prepare the student's clothing and breakfast. He would help him dress and then see to it that he had everything he needed for class. He did the same thing three times a day and took care of any other need this young man may have. So Whitefield and the English culture had no problem with slavery and indentured servitude. After all, Whitefield himself was a type of indentured servant. Again, I will come back to this a little later.

While attending Oxford, Whitefield is still lost. If you would have asked him if he was a Christian he would have told you that he was. He started to get serious about religion. He joined what was pejoratively called the Holy Club. This was the club for those who were borderline

enthusiasts. Enthusiasts were those who took Christianity far too seriously and took the Bible far too literally is what the nominal church would have said. After all, it was such enthusiasm that led to the English Civil War under Oliver Cromwell and the beheading of King Charles I. Enthusiasm would have been another way to refer to the group known as Puritans. Isn't it interesting that we who take the Bible seriously and truly believe that God has spoken to every area of life and that we have a serious view of Christianity is an offense to so many church people. It has always been that way. The false Christian will always tell us that we are too serious. Don't listen to them. We are not serious enough.

So what was this Holy Club all about. Again, the Gospel had almost been completely lost. These young men were trying to earn heaven by doing good works and inflicting suffering upon themselves. Whitefield would fast twice a week. He would wear the simplest of clothes and eat the food that no one else wanted. He thought warmth and eating good would lead to worse sins. He attended church services daily and took the Lord's Supper. He prayed for hours and he was as serious a churchman as you could possibly find. I am sure that in our day if you met someone like Whitefield, you would say with most that if anyone is a Christian it was Whitefield. But you would be wrong. They were seeking to earn their salvation and no person can do that.

The turning point began with breakfast with Charles Wesley one morning. Yes, that Charles Wesley that is known as the founder of the Methodist Church. The Charles Wesley that would be spinning in his grave if he knew of the heresy and apostasy of the organization he helped found in the 1700's. Wesley gave Whitefield a puritan book. You can still get this book today. It is *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* by Henry Scougal. In this book Scougal attacked the false Christianity of his day that rested in either knowing and affirming a certain set of doctrinal facts or the seeking of merely reforming the external life to be known as a Christian. Listen to what Whitefield wrote about this experience: "At my first reading it, I wondered what the Author meant by saying, "That some falsely placed Religion in going to Church, doing hurt to no one, being constant in the Duties of the Closet, and now and then reaching out their Hands to give Alms to their poor Neighbours,"—Alas! thought I, "If this be not Religion, what is?" God soon shewed me. For in reading a few Lines further that "true Religion was an Union" of the Soul with God, and Christ formed "within us;" a Ray of divine Light was instantaneously darted in upon my Soul, and from that Moment, but not till then, did I know that I must be a new Creature."

All of Whitefield's outward works had to be cast off. All of his effort at saving himself needed to be cast into the flames. He understood for the first time that salvation was by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God alone. He needed the double cure, saved from wrath and to be made pure. Whitefield was born again. He left off trusting in his own works and began to trust in Christ Jesus and Christ's work alone. And now everything changed. God would take this man who knew nothing of Christ and make him into one of the greatest preachers of Christ the English-speaking world would ever know.

The problem that Whitefield had was he was too good at preaching. The established church soon shut their doors to this dynamic preacher. He was labeled (you guessed it) an enthusiast. But God had called him and gifted him to preach. So after the church doors were closed to him, he decided to take up preaching outside which again was very strange in that day. Let me just insert what I think is a great application point here. The people of England in his day were divided into classes. It was the upper and middle classes that attended the established church. Those of the lower classes did not attend church because they merely thought church was for the wealthy. And who in their right mind would want to go sit through a service where the preacher was merely telling you to be good and do good. There was no Gospel. So Whitefield developed this really strange idea that he should go to where the people are and preach the Gospel to them there. Now that is really radical. Who else did that besides Jesus and the Apostles?

I think we live in a very similar time. Many people see the church today as a place for the middle class. This idea of simply inviting people to church really does not work well. Christian, your home, your dinner table and living room is probably the best opportunity for your neighbor to hear the Gospel. They may not come to church until you have spent time with them in your home. Use the biblical commands for hospitality to bring your neighbors and coworkers and friends into your home and into your life. And stop thinking in terms of mass evangelism and start thinking in terms of investing in a couple of people. We Americans think big when thinking small may be the best way. If your family can reach one person, who knows how many people that one person may be able to reach. Mack Styles in his very good book on evangelism states that the church needs older believers to keep the church rooted and grounded in biblical truth and it needs new believers because they know all the lost people. I think he is right.

Whitefield preached in England and in Wales and in Scotland. But he really wanted to come to the American Colonies to preach. And let me mention that Whitefield got married on November 14, 1741 to a widow, Elizabeth James. Where did they go on their honeymoon? They went on a preaching tour. Whitefield was a born romantic. In 1743, George and Elizabeth had a son. They named him John and he died at four months even though George had declared that his son would grow up to be a great preacher of the Gospel. The couple would be childless and Elizabeth would have to stop traveling with George because she wrote that she had had four miscarriages. She died on August 9, 1768 and Whitefield preached her funeral. He planned to be buried beside her if he died while in England. We know that he did not.

Whitefield crossed the Atlantic Ocean thirteen times. I don't know what to compare that to because we travel so much in our day but this was amazing considering it took eight weeks to get from England to America or vice versa. He came to America to preach the Gospel. And that is exactly what he did. He preached in towns across the Atlantic seaboard to crowds that were larger than the population. It is estimated that in the 18,000 times that he preached, he preached to over ten million people. One estimate is that Whitefield preached in person to 80% of the population of the American colonies. That is absolutely astounding. This is without radio, television, or amplification. Many people were converted to Christ under his preaching and he

was instrumental in the First Great Awakening when 25% of the population of the colonies was converted to Christ.

He was invited to preach in the church of Jonathan Edwards. While Whitefield preached, Edwards wept the entire time sitting on the front pew. Sarah Edwards spoke very highly of Whitefield and said that he was a godly man. But his preaching was not always well received. He was heckled and was abused in various ways while he preached. People would get in trees behind him and in front of him and take off their clothes to distract the crowds and to distract him. They threw things at him and tried to hit him with rocks. People urinated on him when he preached under trees. And yet this did not discourage him. He kept preaching. He kept preaching despite poor health and sickness. He preached in season and out of season. He preached when the people wanted him to and he preached when they did not want him to. And he preached the new birth because he knew that if people were going to be saved, they must be born again.

I want to give you a flavor of Whitefield's preaching. Now imagine this in the open air, preached evangelistically, as loud as your lawn mower. This is from a sermon entitled, Marks of True Conversion.

“Are ye God's children? Are ye converted and become as little children? Then will ye not long to go home and see your Father? O happy they that have gotten home before you; happy they that are up yonder, happy they who have ascended above this field of conflict. I know not what you may think of it, but since I heard that some, whose hearts God was pleased to work upon, are gone to glory, I am sometimes filled with grief, that God is not pleased to let me go home too. How can you see so much coldness among God's people? How can ye see God's people like the moon, waxing and waning? Who can but desire to be forever with the Lord? Thanks be to God, the time is soon coming; thanks be to God, he will come and will not tarry. Do not be impatient, God in his own time will fetch you home. And though ye may be brought to short allowance now, though some of you may be narrow in your circumstances, yet do not repine; a God, and the gospel of Christ, with brown bread, are great riches. In thy Father's house there is bread enough and to spare; though thou art now tormented, yet by and by thou shalt be comforted; the angels will look upon it as an honor to convey thee to Abraham's bosom, though thou art but a Lazarus here. By the frame of my heart, I am much inclined to speak comfortably to God's people.”

But also want you to hear a true Gospel call from Whitefield. He held firmly to the doctrines of grace and spoke of them often. He debated Charles Wesley and they parted ways over these doctrines that Wesley called evil and so many in our day would say kills evangelism. It does not and don't you ever believe it. The sovereignty of God and the free grace of Jesus Christ has been the motivation for thousands of preachers, evangelists, and missionaries down through the ages and in the present day to go and preach this glorious Gospel knowing that indeed Christ Jesus has a people that He redeemed on that cross. Listen and learn from Whitefield on how to call people to salvation. This is from a sermon called, The Potter and the Clay.

“Why will you not rather bring your clay to this heavenly Potter, and say from your inmost souls, “Turn us, O good Lord, and so shall we be turned?” This, you may and can do: and if you go thus far, who knows but that this very day, yea this very hour, the heavenly Potter may take you in hand, and make you vessels of honor fit for the Redeemer's use? Others that were once as far from the kingdom of God as you are, have been partakers of this blessedness. What a wretched creature was Mary Magdalene? And yet out of her Jesus Christ cast seven devils. Nay, he appeared to her first, after he rose from the dead, and she became as it were an apostle to the very apostles. What a covetous creature was Zaccheus? He was a griping cheating publican; and yet, perhaps, in one quarter of an hour's time, his heart is enlarged, and he made quite willing to give half of his goods to feed the poor. And to mention no more, what a cruel person was Paul. He was a persecutor, a blasphemer, injurious; one that breathed out threatenings against the disciples of the Lord, and made havoc of the church of Christ. And yet what a wonderful turn did he meet with, as he was journeying to Damascus? From a persecutor, he became a preacher; was afterwards made a spiritual father to thousands, and now probably sits nearest the Lord Jesus Christ in glory. And why all this? That he might be made an example to them that should hereafter believe. O then believe, repent; I beseech you, believe the gospel. Indeed, it is glad tidings, even tidings of great joy. You will then no longer have anything to say against the doctrine of Original Sin; or charge the Almighty foolishly, for suffering our first parents to be prevailed on to eat such sour grapes, and permitting thereby their children's teeth to be set on edge. You will then no longer cry out against the doctrine of the New Birth, as enthusiasm, or brand the assertors of such blessed truths with the [contemptuous] names of fools and madmen. Having felt, you will then believe; having believed, you will therefore speak; and instead of being vessels of wrath, and growing harder and harder in hell fire, like vessels in a potter's oven, you will be made vessels of honor, and be presented at the great day by Jesus, to his heavenly Father, and be translated to live with him as monuments of rich, free, distinguishing and sovereign grace, for ever and ever.” That is how you close out an evangelistic message.

I want to close this morning by talking about the one glaring flaw in Whitefield. What is true of all of us is that we are people of our own times. This is why it is good to read and hear of men and women from church history. Our eyes can be opened to our own flaws. And yes we have them and we have blind spots. Whitefield lived in a time when slavery was very common. Those of you who have heard of William Wilberforce, the man who was responsible for ending the British slave trade, know that the trade did not end in England until 1807. Whitefield had been dead nearly forty years at that point. It would not be until 1865 that slavery was abolished in the United States.

Whitefield saw nothing wrong with owning slaves. We look at someone now and think to ourselves how in the world could he not see that this whole institution was not only wrong but an affront to God? Whitefield even had African slaves work his orphanage that he established in Georgia in the 1700's. The wrongful enslavement of any human being is a gross sin. But before we cast stones at Whitefield, we should wonder what blind spots we have. Some of the statements of Martin Luther were used by Hitler to justify the holocaust. What are we blinded to by the age in which we live? It is really easy to sit back and wonder why people in history did

what they did or didn't do what we think we would have done. How could the German Christians allow the murder of so many Jews and not do anything about it? Could it be that they were powerless over their oppressive government? We cannot throw stones. Over fifty million babies have been murdered in the wombs of their mother since January of 1973, the year I was born. We have done many things legally to bring this atrocity to an end but we have not. How will history view us? Will we be labeled cowards and lukewarm Christians? This is why I say that we must be careful at throwing stones at those who have gone before us when our houses are glass.

Some slave owners were converted under the ministry of Whitefield. And as you are probably aware, many slave owners did not want their slaves to be evangelized. Some were even convinced that these slaves did not have a soul. Whitefield decried such non-sense. He wrote letters to newspapers advocating for the evangelizing of the slaves. And some historians view Whitefield as the father of the African American Church. Whitefield stated that he was willing to face the whip of the slave owners if they did not want him to preach the new birth to the slaves. In his journal recounting his second trip to the colonies, he writes of his activities.

“I went, as my usual custom . . . among the negroes belonging to the house. One man was sick in bed, and two of his children said their prayers after me very well. This more and more convinces me that negro children, if early brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, would make as great proficiency as any among white people's children. I do not despair, if God spares my life, of seeing a school of young negroes singing the praises of Him Who made them, in a psalm of thanksgiving. Lord, Thou has put into my heart a good design to educate them; I doubt not but Thou wilt enable me to bring it to good effect.”

Do you want to hear Whitefield's preaching that infuriated some slave owners? Listen to this portion of a sermon as he brings it to a close.

“Here, then, I conclude; but I must not forget the *poor negroes*: no, I must not. Jesus Christ has died for them, as well as for others. Nor do I mention you last, because I despise your souls, but because I would have what I shall say make the deeper impression upon your hearts. O that you would seek the Lord to be your righteousness! Who knows but he may be found of you? For in Jesus Christ there is neither male nor female, bond nor free; even you may be the children of God, if you believe in Jesus. . . . Christ Jesus is the same now as he was yesterday, and will wash you in his own blood. Go home then, turn the word of the text into a prayer, and entreat the Lord to be your righteousness. Even so. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly in all our souls. *Amen*. Lord Jesus, *amen*, and *amen*!”

When Whitefield died, the greatest mourners were those African slaves who had heard the Gospel from this man and had believed. They turned out in great number for his funeral and many wept. Phyllis Wheatley, a 17 year old black girl from Boston wrote this eulogy for Whitefield and I believe it is a fitting way to end this biographical sermon. She wrote:

*Hail happy saint on thy immortal throne!
To thee complaints of grievance are unknown:
We hear no more the music of thy tongue,
Thy wonted auditories cease to throng.
Thy lessons in unequal'd accents flow'd!
While emulation in each bosom glow'd;
Thou didst, in strains of eloquence refine'd
Inflame the soul, and captivate the mind.
Unhappy we, the setting Sun deplore:
Which once was splendid, but it shines no more;
He leaves the earth for Heaven's unmeasure'd height:
And worlds unknown, receive him from our sight;
There WHITEFIELD wings, with rapid course his way,
And sails to Zion, through vast seas of day.*

Let's pray.