SERIES: ALL SAINTS DAY • BIOGRAPHICAL LISTENING GUIDE

George Whitefield (1714–1770)

"God's Anointed Servant in the Great Awakening" — Sunday Message Outline & Study Notes

~18,000	13 Crossings	Up to 30,000	80% of Colonists
Sermons Preached	Across the Atlantic	Single Open-Air Crowd	Heard Him Preach

BIOGRAPHICAL MESSAGE OUTLINE

1. Early Life & Oxford Conversion (1714–1735)

- Born at the Bell Inn tavern in Gloucester; entered Pembroke College, Oxford as a **servitor** and joined the Wesleys' "Holy Club."
- Tried to earn salvation through severe self-denial until reading Henry Scougal's *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*.
- Discovered that true Christianity is a union of the soul with God and that he desperately needed to be **born again**.

2. Ordination & Launch of Ministry (1736–1738)

- Ordained at age 21 by Bishop Benson; first sermon compared Christian fellowship to **kindled coals** heaped together for lasting heat.
- Left fame in London to serve in **Georgia**, founding the **Bethesda Orphan House** near Savannah (oldest extant charity in North America).

3. Open Air Revival & the Great Awakening (1739–1740s)

- When church pulpits closed, he preached outdoors to Kingswood coal miners, seeing *"white gutters made by their **tears**"* on soot-blackened cheeks.
- Befriended skeptic **Benjamin Franklin**, who was so moved in Philadelphia that he emptied his pockets of copper, silver, and gold.
- Preached with weeping passion to "out-act the **actors**" because eternal truths are real.

4. Marriage, Expansion & Kingdom Humility (1741–1748)

- Married Elizabeth James (1741); deeply humbled after the infant death of his son John taught him not to confuse emotional impulses with God's voice.
- Organized London's Tabernacle and the Calvinistic Methodist Association, but stepped down in 1748 to become *"simply the **servant of all**."*

5. Later Ministry, Blind Spots & Final Years (1750–1770)

- Preached ~500 times a year from coal pits to nobility, yet carried a tragic blind spot in purchasing enslaved workers for Bethesda—reminding us that only Jesus is our flawless Savior.
- Preached a two-hour final field sermon in Exeter, NH, spoke by **candlelight** on a Newburyport staircase until the flame burned out, and died at age 56.

UNFORGETTABLE QUOTES

"Kindled coals, if placed asunder, soon go out, but if heaped together, quicken and enliven each other."

"We are immortal till our work is done."

"I will not be a velvet-mouthed preacher."

"Other men may preach the gospel better than I, but no man can preach a better gospel."

On seeing John Wesley in heaven: *"No, sir, I fear not. For he will be so near the eternal throne, and we at such a distance, we shall hardly get a sight of him."*

"I would rather wear out than rust out."

"Lord Jesus, I am weary in Thy work, but not of Thy work."

"Let my name be forgotten… if Jesus may thereby be glorified."

KEY HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1714	Born Dec 16 at the Bell Inn, Gloucester
1732	Enters Oxford as servitor; meets Wesleys
1735	Converted after reading Scougal
1736	Ordained at age 21 in Gloucester
1738	First voyage to Georgia; Bethesda founded
1739	Preaches to Kingswood coal miners
1740	Great Awakening tours across America
1748	Surrenders Methodist leadership for unity
1770	Final sermon in Exeter; dies in Newburyport

CONCLUSION: FOUR TIMELESS TRUTHS FOR OUR CHURCH TODAY

1. Complete Dependence on Grace ("The Lord Our Righteousness")
We can never earn heaven by religious striving. Our only hope is the **righteousness of Jesus Christ** credited to our account by faith alone.

2. A Heart Transformed ("Christ Without & Christ Within")
We need *Christ without* (His cross to forgive us) and *Christ within* (His Spirit to change us)—refusing to be an "**almost Christian**."

3. A Relentless Passion for the Lost
Refusing to keep the gospel locked inside four walls, we step into the "**highways and hedges**"—our neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces.

4. Radical Kingdom Humility
Holding personal ambitions loosely so that our own names fade into the background and the name of **Jesus Christ** alone is magnified.

Personal Reflection & Prayer Response: *Which of these four truths is the Holy Spirit pressing on your heart today?*