



The Passionate Preaching of

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

STEVEN J. LAWSON



A Long Line of Godly Men Profile

The Passionate Preaching *of*

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

The Long Line of Godly Men Profiles

Series editor, Steven J. Lawson

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by Steven J. Lawson

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The Passionate Preaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones

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This book is fondly dedicated to my brother
Dr. Mark A. Lawson
a devoted Christian, gifted physician,
and lover of British history,
who first encouraged me
to put these church history
and theological studies
into print in this
Long Line of Godly Men Profiles series

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Followers Worthy to Be Followed

Down through the centuries, God has raised up a long line of godly men whom He has mightily used at strategic moments in church history. These valiant individuals have come from all walks of life, from the ivy-covered halls of elite schools to the dusty back rooms of tradesmen's shops. They have arisen from all points of this world, from highly visible venues in densely populated cities to obscure hamlets in remote locations. Yet despite these differences, these pivotal figures have had much in common.

Each man possessed an unwavering faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but more than that, each of these stalwarts of the faith believed deeply in the God-exalting truths known as the doctrines of grace. Though they differed in secondary matters of theology, they stood shoulder to shoulder in embracing these biblical teachings that magnify the sovereign grace of God

in salvation. These spiritual leaders upheld the foundational truth that “salvation is of the Lord.”¹

Any survey of church history reveals that those who have embraced these Reformed truths have been granted extraordinary confidence in their God. Far from paralyzing these spiritual giants, the doctrines of grace kindled within their hearts a reverential awe for God that humbled their souls before His throne. The truths of divine sovereignty emboldened these men to rise up and advance the cause of Christ on the earth. With an enlarged vision for the expansion of His kingdom upon the earth, they stepped forward boldly to accomplish the work of ten, even twenty men. They arose with wings like eagles and soared over their times. The doctrines of grace empowered them to serve God in their divinely appointed hour of history, leaving a godly inheritance for future generations.

This Long Line of Godly Men Profiles series highlights key figures in the age-long procession of these sovereign-grace men. The purpose of this series is to explore how these significant figures used their God-given gifts and abilities to impact their times and further the work of Christ. Because they were courageous followers of the Lord, their examples are worthy of emulation today.

This volume focuses on the man who is regarded as most responsible for reestablishing expository preaching in

1. Ps. 3:8; Jonah 2:9.

major parts of the church in the twenty-first century, Martyn Lloyd-Jones. This soul-arresting expositor, who ministered in Westminster Chapel, London, reintroduced a new generation to the Puritans, the Great Awakening, and Reformed theology. It was Lloyd-Jones who revitalized biblical preaching in a day when the spiritual impetus of many pulpits in England was far too commonly absent. The Doctor stood in his strategic pulpit and preached with a spiritual force that had been long absent in the church. Lloyd-Jones stands as an example of what God can do through a man who honors and heralds His Word. He is worthy of our consideration in the pages that follow.

Before we proceed, I want to thank the publishing team at Ligonier Ministries for their commitment to this Long Line of Godly Men Profiles series. I remain thankful for the ongoing influence of my former professor and current friend, Dr. R.C. Sproul. I must also express my gratitude to Chris Larson, who is so instrumental in overseeing this series. I want to thank Kevin Gardner for his editing of this work.

Moreover, I am indebted to the staff of OnePassion Ministries, who have undergirded my efforts to produce this book. I want to express my gratitude for my executive ministry assistant, Kay Allen, who typed this document, and Dustin Benge, director of operations at OnePassion Ministries, who helped prepare this manuscript. Without their skillful help, this book would not be in your hands.

I thank God for my family, who support me in my preaching and writing ministry. My wife, Anne, has made enormous

sacrifices and given much support to allow me to do what God has called me to do. Heaven will reveal this. Our four adult children, Andrew, James, Grace Anne, and John, remain pillars of strength for me in this work.

May the Lord use this book to embolden a new generation of believers to bring its witness for Jesus Christ upon this world for God. Through this profile of Martyn Lloyd-Jones, may you be strengthened to walk in a manner worthy of your calling. May you be zealous in your study of the written Word of God for the exaltation of Christ and the advance of His kingdom. And for those of you who preach, may you do so with “logic on fire.”

Soli Deo gloria!

—Steven J. Lawson

Series editor

The Doctor's Mantle

The thriving metropolis of London is a city that holds much allure for anyone who loves church history. Within this vast urban center are many remembrances of a glorious past for Christianity. Every time I travel to London, I am energized by the many places where spiritual heroes of the faith once lived and died. Many even gave their lives in martyrdom on this English soil for the advance of the gospel around the world.

Particularly, I am drawn to Bunhill Fields, where many notable Puritans were buried, including John Bunyan (d. 1688), John Owen (1616–83), and Isaac Watts (1674–1748). Nearby is Smithfield, where the first martyr burned by Bloody Mary, John Rogers (c. 1500–1555), was executed. Whitehall Gardens contains the imposing statue of the Father of the English Bible, William Tyndale (1494–1536).

The British Library houses only a fragment, known as the Cologne fragment, of the 1525 Tyndale New Testament and a rare 1526 edition. Northwood Cemetery is where the body of the prince of preachers, Charles Spurgeon (1834–92), was laid to rest.

On a recent preaching trip to London, there was one site that I had not yet visited that remained a must. I had to go to Westminster Chapel, where David Martyn Lloyd-Jones once preached and influenced the evangelical world. Taking the subway, I made my way on foot to this historic building, only a short walk from Buckingham Palace. Upon approaching the chapel on street level, I felt as though I was stepping back in time. The facade of the chapel remains exactly as it was during the days of the Doctor, complete with its landmark tower.

Several knocks on the door yielded no response. But persistence paid off when a maintenance man answered and allowed me entrance. He led me into the sanctuary, where for thirty years Lloyd-Jones had expounded the Word of God. I stepped onto the platform and turned around to look at the pews to see what it was like to stand where the Doctor had once stood as he preached so faithfully. I gazed up into a two-tiered balcony that wraps around the entire sanctuary, as though a cloud of witnesses encircles the pulpit on every side. The sight was awe-inspiring, and since I am a preacher, the sheer sight made me want to preach.

At the rear of the platform was the pulpit from which

Lloyd-Jones once preached. No longer in use, the sacred desk is relegated to a back place, out of view. I approached the pulpit and laid my hands upon it. The janitor could tell that I was enraptured by this discovery, so he asked if I would like to see the vestry where the Doctor received inquirers after he preached. I immediately said yes.

He led me behind the pulpit area, and we walked through a door into a plain, unadorned room with only a small desk and chair for furniture. Hanging above the desk on the wall was a picture of the great English preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon. I could imagine the Doctor in a room very similar to this as he graciously received visitors who wanted to speak with him.

My guide asked if I would like to see the preaching Bible that Lloyd-Jones used. I, of course, answered in the affirmative. He brought out what was to me one of the crown jewels of England, the very pulpit Bible from which the Doctor had expounded the truth. I sat at his desk and opened its pages to Romans 1. My mind raced back to the distinguished sermon series he delivered through Romans, a fourteen-year series that reshaped the landscape of evangelical preaching—a series that he had delivered from this very Bible.

The janitor then asked if I would like to see the black Genevan gown that Lloyd-Jones wore in the pulpit. This was more that my soul could take. In the closet, there was draped on a hanger the actual gown worn by this small Welshman. The janitor pulled it out and before I could think to exercise

self-restraint, I asked if I could put it on. Caught off guard, he agreed to allow me to wear it.

In that moment, my thoughts flew back to the time when Spurgeon was traveling through Europe and came to Geneva, Switzerland, where the great magisterial Reformer John Calvin had preached. Spurgeon's hosts asked him if he would like to wear Calvin's black preaching gown. He was hesitant to decline since he did not want to quench their enthusiasm. The Reformer's gown was brought out and placed upon Spurgeon's broad shoulders. The great London preacher remarked it was one of the great moments of his life. I felt much the same, wearing the Doctor's robe.

Here I was in Westminster Chapel, sitting at Lloyd-Jones' desk, wearing his robe, opening his pulpit Bible, staring at the first chapter of Romans, where his finger once pointed as he preached the Word. In this grand moment, I was hoping that something of this great Welshman would rub off on me. Then my thoughts went to this book I was scheduled to write on Lloyd-Jones. I longed that through these pages on the Doctor, then yet to be written, God would be pleased to place the mantle of Lloyd-Jones upon a new generation of preachers.

This book on Lloyd-Jones focuses upon the life and preaching of this incredible man. I pray that God will use it to light a fire in your soul to fulfill His call upon your life.

The hour is upon us for faithful men of God to step into pulpits around the world and preach the Word. The need has never been greater. In a day that clamors for churches to

THE DOCTOR'S MANTLE

capitulate to the spirit of the age and use entertainment in order to draw crowds, the primacy of biblical preaching must be restored wherever the people of God gather to worship. As it was the need in the time of Lloyd-Jones, so it remains the need today for preachers to herald the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to feed the flock and evangelize the lost.

May the life and ministry of David Martyn Lloyd-Jones serve as an inspiration to your soul that you would give yourself to whatever God has called you to do. No sacrifice will be too great in order to fulfill the good works He has given you to accomplish.

Soli Deo gloria!

Steven J. Lawson

Dallas

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A Life on Fire

*Martyn Lloyd-Jones was without question the finest biblical expositor of the twentieth century. In fact, when the final chapter of church history is written, I believe the Doctor will stand as one of the greatest preachers of all time.*¹

—JOHN MACARTHUR

A diminutive figure, short and compact, entered the pulpit at Westminster Chapel in London, wearing a common black Genevan gown. More than two thousand people made their way to the chapel each Lord's Day to listen to a lengthy exposition of Scripture by this renowned preacher from Wales. There were no gimmicks, no theatrics, no entertainment to attract the crowds. There were no testimonies from famous

1. Quoted on the back cover of *The Christ-Centered Preaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Classic Sermons for the Church Today*, edited by Elizabeth Catherwood and Christopher Catherwood (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2014).

personalities to hold the people. There were no dramatic performances. There was a worshipping and praying congregation eager to hear God's man preach the unsearchable riches of God's Word.

At this time, biblical preaching was regarded as irrelevant. Yet, this fiery Welshman addressed this large congregation three times per week with a commanding authority not his own. He expounded the Bible twice on Sunday and once on Friday evening, each time bringing men face-to-face with the glory of God. Through his preaching, souls were brought low and then lifted up. Sins were exposed and grace was extended. People were converted and lives transformed. Because of his penetrating exposition, this formidable figure came to be widely regarded in his time as "the greatest preacher in Christendom."² The preacher was David Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

Affectionately known as "the Doctor," this physician-turned-preacher became arguably the foremost expositor of the twentieth century. "There is little doubt," Scottish preacher Eric J. Alexander writes, "that Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was the greatest preacher the English-speaking world has seen in the twentieth century."³ His pulpit's strategic location in London and the global distribution of his

2. Wilbur M. Smith, *Moody Monthly* (October 1955): 32; as quoted by Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith, 1939–1981* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 1990), 329.

3. Eric J. Alexander, foreword to *The Cross: God's Way of Salvation*, by Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1986), vii.

printed sermons meant that the influence of the message preached by Lloyd-Jones extended far beyond his city, to the evangelical church in Britain and eventually around the world. Many trace the modern-day resurgence in Reformed theology to the direct influence of Lloyd-Jones' preaching at Westminster.

Affirming this dynamic impact, Peter Lewis writes: "In the history of the pulpit in Britain, the preaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones is outstanding. He takes his place in a long line of great preachers since the Protestant Reformation, who have stood for the reformation and renewal of the church, the evangelization and awakening of the world."⁴ Amidst the spiritual decline in post-World War II England, this gifted expositor stood in the minority in his commitment to biblical preaching. More than any other individual, Lloyd-Jones is most directly responsible for the recovery of true biblical preaching during the latter half of the twentieth century, and the effects of his ministry continue to this day.

Given such a luminous legacy, certain questions must be asked: Who was this twentieth-century British preacher? What characterized his prolific life and ministry? What were the forces that shaped his preaching? What distinguished his expository preaching? What can we learn from his pulpit ministry? In order to answer these questions, we begin in this chapter with an overview of the life of Lloyd-Jones.

4. Peter Lewis, "The Doctor as a Preacher," in *Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Chosen by God*, ed. Christopher Catherwood (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1986), 92–93.

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