

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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A Long Line of Godly Men Profile

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Martyn Lloyd-Jones

STEVEN J. LAWSON

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 Reformation Trust 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 Bengé, 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

August 2015

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.

WELSH BORN AND RAISED

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones was born December 20, 1899, in Cardiff, Wales. He was the second of three sons to Welsh-speaking parents. His parents, Henry and Magdalen, lived a simple, hardworking life. In 1906, the family moved to Llangeitho, a small village in Cardiganshire (now Ceredigion), in South Wales, where his father ran the local general store. There, his family joined the Calvinistic Methodist church that had been established by Daniel Rowland, one of the fiery preachers of the Welsh revival during the eighteenth century. In this distinctly Reformed denomination, Lloyd-Jones was introduced to the transcendent truths of the sovereignty of God over all of life. Though he was not yet converted, this initial exposure began laying the foundation for a God-centered worldview. The Calvinistic Methodists had a history of great preachers and revivals, which sparked a lifelong interest in church history and spiritual awakenings.

Intellectually brilliant, the young Lloyd-Jones proved to be an exceptional child. Possessing a contemplative side, his boyhood studies produced in him an early love of reading. At age eleven, he won a scholarship to Tregaron County Intermediate School in a nearby town. Young David, later known as Martyn, left home each Monday morning in order to attend school, returning home each Friday evening. He grew in his love of history, a passion that would later develop into a study of the Puritans and the subsequent eras of revival.

THE MOVE TO LONDON

In 1914, financial hardship hit the Lloyd-Jones family as bankruptcy forced them to relocate to London. There, his father borrowed money and bought a dairy business, and the family maintained their residence on Regency Street. As providence would have it, the business was in Westminster in central London, the very place where Martyn would later pastor.

Young Martyn rose each morning at 5:30 and delivered milk to local homes. Each day, he walked past Westminster Chapel. The family was invited by some of their customers to attend the chapel, but instead they chose to attend the local Welsh Calvinistic Methodist church, Charing Cross Road Chapel.

On the first Sunday, they sat in front of the family of a successful eye surgeon, Dr. Thomas Phillips, whose daughter, Bethan, Martyn would later marry. Bethan was a medical student at University College Hospital. She was well educated at London University and had distinguished herself by being one of the first women to study medicine at University College Hospital. Her strong character would prove to be an enormous asset to Lloyd-Jones in his future work. With Bethan at his side, it appeared that Lloyd-Jones was poised for a successful career in the field of medicine.

For the next several years, Martyn attended the well-known boys' school St. Marylebone Grammar School, where he completed his preparatory studies. Through all this early

education, God was giving him the tools for a lifetime of inquisitive study of the Bible and church history. Upon completing his prescribed course of study, Lloyd-Jones pursued his passion to study medicine in order to prepare to be a physician. At age sixteen, he was accepted into the highly acclaimed training program at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, one of the leading teaching hospitals in England. At age twenty-one, Martyn earned the bachelor of medicine and of surgery, with distinction. He then became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons (1921) and a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians (1921). At every step, Lloyd-Jones distinguished himself as an outstanding intellect with a bright future as a gifted physician. By his early twenties, Lloyd-Jones stood on the threshold of an extraordinary career in the medical profession.

A DISTINGUISHED YOUNG PHYSICIAN

Lloyd-Jones' abilities in diagnosing illnesses came to the attention of one of the most renowned teachers at St. Bart's Hospital, the eminent Sir Thomas Horder. Horder practiced on London's famous Harley Street, the most distinguished address in British medicine. Further, he was the personal physician to King George V and the royal family. It was no small honor that Horder chose Martyn to become his junior house physician. Eventually, Horder would give Lloyd-Jones the position of chief clinical assistant at the hospital in 1923.

That same year, Martyn earned the highly respected doctorate of medicine from London University at the unusually young age of twenty-three. Next, Lloyd-Jones was awarded the Baillie Research Scholarship (1924) for eighteen months in order to investigate the Pell-Epstein type of Hodgkin's disease (Lymphadenoma).⁵ This recognition gained him yet further distinction.

At age twenty-four, Martyn became the first individual to receive research aid from the St. John Harmsworth Memorial Research Fund, to study a heart condition known as infective endocarditis. The results of his study were published in a highly respected medical journal and are now held in the National Library of Wales. At age twenty-five, Martyn became a member of the Royal College of Physicians (1925). Sir James Patterson Ross, president of the Royal College of Surgeons, referred to Lloyd-Jones as "one of the finest clinicians I have ever encountered." By all accounts, the medical career of Lloyd-Jones was soaring to meteoric heights.

5. Philip H. Eveson, personal correspondence with the author, August 10, 2015. "This may have been the subject of his research that led to his MD (Doctor of Medicine) degree but that cannot be proven, as there is no record of his research either in the library of St. Bart's or the University of London. This was before he received research aid from the St John Harmsworth Memorial Research Fund to study a heart condition known as infective endocarditis, study that he completed just prior to his entering the ministry. His research results were not, to my knowledge, published in a medical journal, but as an appendix to a book by C.B. Perry entitled *Bacterial Endocarditis* (Bristol, England: Wright & Sons, 1936). It records his initial experiments, which are to be found in notebooks held at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth, not a medical journal."

CONVERTED AND CALLED

Despite these significant achievements, Lloyd-Jones was unhappy. Life seemed fleeting and empty to him. Earlier, at age eighteen, Martyn had been sobered by the death of his brother Harold. His father died when Martyn was twenty-two. Amid these losses, God began to convict him of personal sin and his guilt before God. Though a very religious person, Martyn realized he was spiritually dead. Though outwardly he lived a moral life, he realized this was simply a facade, a mere attempt to put on a respectable front. He saw his desperate need for a true relationship with Jesus Christ. No exact date can be assigned to his conversion, but Lloyd-Jones, age twenty-five, was born again. He later described this turning point in his life:

For many years I thought I was a Christian when in fact I was not. It was only later that I came to see that I had never been a Christian and became one. . . . What I needed was preaching that would convict me of sin. . . . But I never heard this. The preaching we had was always based on the assumption that we were all Christians.⁶

6. Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The First Forty Years, 1899–1939* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 1982), 58.

A LIFE ON FIRE

This conversion experience would have a profound effect upon his preaching in the years to come. In the pulpit, Lloyd-Jones would always be doing the work of an evangelist. He knew what it was to be in church but not be in Christ.

CALLED TO PREACH

Newly converted, Lloyd-Jones became convinced that the greatest need of his patients lay far deeper than their physical ailments. He now understood that anyone apart from God is spiritually dead. He realized that he was healing his patients so that they could return to a life of sin. For the next two years, Martyn was embroiled in a deep struggle over how he should invest his life. He lost twenty pounds as he wrestled with whether God was calling him into the ministry.

In June 1926, he made the life-altering decision to leave his medical career in order to pursue what he believed to be the highest calling: the call to preach. He wrote in a letter: "I want to preach . . . and am determined to preach. The precise nature of my future activities remains to be settled, but nothing can or will prevent my going about to tell people of the good news."⁷ Once this decision was made, Martyn never looked back.

This change of profession by Lloyd-Jones caused no small sensation in the medical field. That this young, brilliant

7. *Ibid.*, 104.

physician would leave a successful and advancing medical career in order to enter the ministry was shocking to most. This new pursuit was made in a day when the advances of modern-day science seemed to be contradicting the claims of the ancient Bible. No intelligent, well-educated person would leave medicine for mere myths, they reasoned. However, Lloyd-Jones was gripped with an unwavering confidence in the Scripture and a need to proclaim its gospel truth regardless of what people thought.

Martyn chose not to pursue a formal seminary education due to the theological liberalism that had infected the British universities. He believed he was divinely gifted by God to fulfill the task to which he had been called and had no need of formal education that compromised Scripture.

In June 1926, Martyn proposed to Bethan Phillips. Though she had many suitors, he won the hand of this beautiful woman. The two were married on January 8, 1927, at Charing Cross Chapel, London. Martyn then faced yet another major decision: Where would he serve the Lord? Though he had cared for many of the London elite, he desired to minister among the poor in his homeland of Wales. Lloyd-Jones traveled there to pursue ministry opportunities but was rebuffed. To the Welsh church officials, a Harley Street doctor serving the working class hardly seemed like a good fit. However, Martyn persevered in what he believed to be the call of God upon his life. On Christmas 1926, he accepted the call to be a pastor in a financially deprived area of South Wales.

MINISTERING IN WALES

Leaving the bright lights of London, Martyn and Bethan arrived in Port Talbot, Wales, on February 1, 1927. Martyn began pastoring a small church, the Forward Movement Mission Hall, in Sandfields, at Aberavon.

On October 26, Lloyd-Jones was officially ordained into the ministry as a Calvinistic Methodist. His home church in London was not large enough to house the curious crowd that gathered to see this eminent physician set apart for gospel ministry, so the service was held in George Whitefield's Tabernacle in London.

Humanly speaking, this could not have been a worse time to come to South Wales. Unemployment, drunkenness, and illiteracy were rampant among the townspeople. The Great Depression would hit in 1929. The people were not well educated. Only a small percentage of the local people attended the church, and the previous pastor had left quite discouraged.

Nevertheless, Lloyd-Jones believed they needed to hear straightforward, doctrinal preaching from the Scripture. Such preaching would later be called "logic on fire." He based his pulpit ministry exclusively on the Bible. He never cracked jokes, nor used any kind of anecdotes or personal stories. He was simply consumed with a zeal for the glory of God, and he sought to proclaim it from the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

By the beginning of his pastorate, the church in Sandfields had shrunk to only ninety-three members. Worse, many in the congregation had become enamored with the social gospel. Lloyd-Jones chose to pursue the old paths of biblical exposition to build the church. The drama society was suspended. Musical evenings were canceled. Gospel preaching was reestablished. And as Lloyd-Jones preached the Word, the church began to grow.

STRAIGHTFORWARD BIBLICAL PREACHING

Immediately, the church came alive. Church members were converted. Even the church secretary was saved. A spiritualist medium came to faith in Christ. Bethan herself was converted to Christ. She testified, “I was for two years under Martyn’s ministry before I really understood what the gospel was. . . . I thought you had to be a drunkard or a prostitute to be converted.” Only those with a credible profession of Christ were allowed to remain in the church membership. Those empty confessors of Christ were removed from the church roll. In his eleven years at Sandfields, numerous people were converted to Christ and joined the church.

This congregation was transformed by the power of the Word of God delivered by this passionate preacher. Iain Murray describes what took place during these early years of ministry:

He seemed to be exclusively interested in the purely “traditional” part of church life, which consisted of the regular Sunday Services (at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.), a prayer meeting on Mondays and a mid-week meeting on Wednesdays. Everything else could go, and thus those activities particularly designed to attract the outsiders soon came to an end. The demise of the dramatic society posed a practical problem, namely, what to do with the wooden stage which occupied a part of the church hall? “You can heat the church with it,” the new minister told the Committee. . . . The church was to advance, not by approximating to the world, but rather by representing in the world the true life and privilege of the children of God.⁸

GROWING INFLUENCE ABROAD

By the 1930s, Lloyd-Jones’ powerful preaching was drawing attention on a wide scale. Invitations took him to conferences around Wales, where thousands came to hear him preach. In one year, he preached in fifty-five meetings away from Sandfields. The secular press was describing him as the most prominent preacher in Wales since the revival of 1904. On one occasion, in 1935, he preached to seven thousand at the Daniel Rowland’s Centenary Meeting. On another

8. *Ibid.*, 135.

occasion, he returned to London and preached to thousands in the Royal Albert Hall. In 1937, Lloyd-Jones traveled to the United States, where he preached in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and New York.

G. Campbell Morgan, the well-known minister of Westminster Chapel, London, was so impressed with Lloyd-Jones that in 1938, he asked him to join the work at Westminster. Lloyd-Jones initially declined because an academic teaching post at his denomination's theological college in Bala, North Wales, had been discussed with him. But due to a strange twist in providence, the position was not offered. In July 1938, he accepted the call to assist Morgan at Westminster Chapel in central London, the largest free church in the city.

TO WESTMINSTER CHAPEL

In September 1938, Lloyd-Jones arrived in London to be the assistant to Morgan. At the time, Martyn believed this appointment would only be for six months. However, the pending offer to be the head of another theological school in Wales was not extended to him. It was clear that Lloyd-Jones was to remain in the pulpit.

That same year, he became president of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Students. He eventually became copastor with Morgan until, in 1943, the elder preacher retired, leaving Lloyd-Jones to be the sole pastor of Westminster Chapel.

He would fill its pulpit for the next twenty-five years, during which time Westminster Chapel would become a great gospel beacon that shone forth the light of the gospel, resulting in countless lives' being transformed.

By the time World War II ended, most of the members of Westminster Chapel had moved out of London for the safety of the countryside. The membership had dwindled considerably from the pre-war years. There was some question as to whether the congregation could survive if strategies other than Bible preaching were not used. Some in the chapel wanted to add a choir and evening organ recitals to build up attendance. But Lloyd-Jones refused to capitulate. He set his gaze to preach and in time, the first balcony was opened again. Then, the second balcony was reopened. Eventually, the sanctuary was full.

A LONELY VOICE IN ENGLAND

In this hour, Lloyd-Jones preached in such a way that the Word of God greatly stirred the hearts and consciences of his hearers. As he stood in the Westminster pulpit, he modeled an unwavering commitment to the centrality of a biblically centered ministry that desperately needed to be recovered. Despite the opposing drift of society, Lloyd-Jones refused to cave in to the surrounding pressures that clamored for worldly entertainment to attract people. Instead, he relied entirely on the power of God in the preaching of His word. Iain Murray writes:

In the 1950s Martyn Lloyd-Jones was virtually alone in England in engaging in what he meant by “expository preaching.” For preaching to qualify for that designation it was not enough, in his view, that its content be biblical; addresses which concentrated upon word-studies, or which gave running commentary and analyses of whole chapters, might be termed “biblical,” but that is not the same as exposition. To expound is not simply to give the correct grammatical sense of a verse or passage, it is rather to set out the principles or doctrines which the words are intended to convey. True expository preaching is, therefore, *doctrinal* preaching, it is preaching which addresses specific truths from God to man. The expository preacher is not one who “shares his studies” with others, he is an ambassador and a messenger, authoritatively delivering the Word of God to men. Such preaching presents a text, then, with that text in sight throughout, there is deduction, argument and appeal, the whole making up a message which bears the authority of Scripture itself.⁹

Lloyd-Jones was the personification of his own definition of preaching, namely, “theology coming through a man who is on fire.” Preaching, he believed, is “God’s method,” that is, the

9. Murray, *The Fight of Faith*, 261.

primary means by which the truth of Scripture is to be made known. In this way, Lloyd-Jones stood with the Reformers and Puritans, who centuries earlier insisted that preaching is the chief means by which the grace of God is administered to the church.

In October 1954, Lloyd-Jones began his famous, verse-by-verse exposition of the Sermon on the Mount with saving and sanctifying power. That same year, he enthusiastically supported the inaugural Puritan Conference at Westminster Chapel, a gathering that focused upon the Puritan movement. He believed such a resurgence of Puritan convictions was desperately needed again in the sterile churches of England. In 1952, he launched his monumental Friday-evening preaching series that would continue for the next sixteen years until his retirement in 1968. This began with a three-year series on great doctrines of the Bible (1952–55), which would be followed by his thirteen-year-long exposition of Romans (1955–68). From small beginnings in the fellowship hall, the growing numbers forced it to be moved into the sanctuary, where it became a main staple for many eager listeners who devoured every word.

SEEKING REVIVAL

The underlying desire of Lloyd-Jones for the church was for a genuine revival, such as had been experienced in the

Evangelical and Great Awakenings of the eighteenth century. He longed for a day when preaching like that of George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and others would come to England. Consequently, he knew two life-threatening extremes would have to be avoided. On one hand, he wanted to avoid the dead orthodoxy of a cold Calvinism. On the other extreme, he knew the emotional excesses of the Pentecostal and other emotional movements had to be guarded against.

What Lloyd-Jones desired was an experiential Reformed movement. On the centennial anniversary of the Revival of 1859, he preached a series of sermons on revival in which he proclaimed his desire for God to restore the fullness of His power to the church. Only a genuine awakening, he believed, could resuscitate churches that had grown confident in themselves, resulting in worldliness, weak doctrine, and shallow spiritual experience.

Some evidences of a spiritual revival came to Westminster. People were drawn to the chapel from a broad cross-section of life to hear the Word of God. Doctors and nurses from the medical community were found among the congregation. Members of Parliament sat under the preaching. Students from all parts of the world attended. Servants of the royal household came. Beyond the great numbers though, it was what God was doing in the lives of those who came. Countless people were converted. Students were called into ministry and the mission field. There is no explanation for what occurred apart from the presence and power of God.

The remainder of the 1950s for Lloyd-Jones proved to be more of the same, year after year, as he saw the divine hand of blessing upon his labor. He remained a fixture in the pulpit and would not be moved. On Sunday mornings, he preached on experiential Christianity for believers. On Sunday evenings, he gave evangelistic messages for the unconverted. On Friday night, he taught doctrinal messages in systematic theology and Romans. Beyond Westminster, he served as a pastor to other pastors by presiding over numerous ministerial fraternals and conferences. In addition, he helped establish the Banner of Truth Trust, which began republishing Puritan classics and other Reformed works.

The 1960s would prove to be the hardest decade in the Doctor's ministry. He would face challenges on several fronts, some involving men with whom he had much in common. First, he feared the spiritual conditions in Britain were worsening and demanded much more attention than he had previously thought. Second, many men who were a part of the doctrinal recovery of the 1950s were now slipping into the modern thinking that these same Reformed truths were too exclusive. He observed the onslaught of ecumenical thought then circulating around Britain. The 1960s were flooded with books, articles, lectures, and conferences in favor of transforming the existing denominations. Many evangelicals, like Lloyd-Jones, had ministered within their various denominations even when those denominations accepted liberal ministers and their original orthodox statements of faith were no longer deemed

acceptable. The ecumenical movement in Britain during this time comprised those denominations that urged everyone to come together as “one church” by 1980.¹⁰ This movement caused evangelicals to carefully consider a proper response.

TRUE ECUMENISM

For Lloyd-Jones, the real issue was the need for a proper definition of who a Christian is, an understanding of how we receive forgiveness of sins, and a doctrine of what makes a church.¹¹ There were some evangelical leaders, including J.I. Packer and John Stott, who wanted to work within their denominations to be an evangelical voice and influence, while other evangelical ministers had already left their denominations to found independent churches. Philip H. Eveson, former minister of Kensit Evangelical Church in London, said, “Lloyd-Jones found it inconsistent that those evangelicals attached to doctrinally mixed denominations were happy to work together with other evangelicals from differing denominational backgrounds in evangelical parachurch organizations, but were not interested in being more together as churches.”¹² Lloyd-Jones was most interested in a loose kind of association of evangelical denominations and churches over against the liberal kind of ecumenism.

Lloyd-Jones believed this ecumenical movement was

10. Eveson, personal correspondence with the author.

11. Iain H. Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 2001), 48.

12. *Ibid.*

threatening the very life of the churches. This subject was the topic of two addresses which he gave to the Westminster Fellowship in Welwyn in the summer of 1962. In his expositions of John 17 and Ephesians 4, he showed the biblical definition of what it means to be a Christian and how this must precede an understanding of Christian unity. He pointed out that in the term *Christian*, there is the necessity for both orthodox belief and personal experience. True Christians are those who have confessed and repented of their sin, embraced Christ as their only hope, and now possess a new life because of a new birth. These timely addresses were published by the IVP in December 1962 under the title *The Basis of Christian Unity*.¹³

In response, many ecumenists criticized Lloyd-Jones. From major universities and prominent pulpits in England, Lloyd-Jones was openly assaulted. However, this type of criticism did not deter Lloyd-Jones from addressing the shift in British evangelicalism. The ecumenical movement had raised some serious questions that would have to be properly addressed doctrinally. The Doctor believed this crisis presented a unique opportunity to speak to what constitutes true unity. He lamented that doctrinal commitment was weakening among many evangelicals in order to achieve wider success and influence. In fact, he had witnessed this earlier in the wider position Billy Graham had assumed in the 1950s. Graham became well known in England during his crusade in Harringay Arena in 1954.

13. Reprinted in Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Knowing the Times* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 1989), 118–63.

In 1963, Lloyd-Jones and Graham asked Lloyd-Jones to chair the World Congress on Evangelism that was to take place in Europe. Meeting in the vestry of Westminster Chapel in July 1963, Lloyd-Jones expressed to Graham that he would be very happy to chair the upcoming World Congress on Evangelism if Graham would cease the general sponsorship of his campaigns, forfeit his involvement with liberals and Roman Catholics, and drop the invitation system at the end of the sermon.¹⁴ The American evangelist could not meet these conditions, instead calling for a “new day of understanding and dialogue.”¹⁵ Graham would later go on to participate in ministry involvement with those leading the ecumenical movement in Europe. This was unacceptable for Lloyd-Jones, and he declined Graham’s invitation.

By the end of 1965, the lines of division were clearly drawn. Lloyd-Jones wrote to Philip Hughes in the United States, “I am sure that we are heading up during this next year to a real crisis.”¹⁶ Lloyd-Jones was calling for a new, visible group of evangelicals and introduced the idea of schism if those in the ecumenical movement did not cooperate. In essence, this made unity something other than just spiritual. Lloyd-Jones believed that the way to lasting cooperation was

14. Iain H. Murray, *The Life of Martyn Lloyd-Jones, 1899–1981* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 2013), 371.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Letter of December 12, 1965, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Letters, 1919–1981* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 1994), 167.

for churches and preachers alike to wholeheartedly submit themselves to the authority of Scripture on all the essential doctrines of the Christian faith.

In October 1966, the controversy became public. At the second assembly of the National Association of Evangelicals, Lloyd-Jones became entangled in a public confrontation that divided the evangelical movement. In his address, he called for a wide expression of unity by the formation of a federation of evangelical churches that held orthodox convictions. His desire was for a “fellowship or an association of evangelical churches.” John Stott, rector of All Souls Church, London, was the chairman of the meeting and responded by rejecting this plea for a new association. He feared that ministers would leave their denominations, including the Church of England, of which he was a part. The inevitable result was separation. Eventually, for this and other reasons, the Puritan Conference was canceled and the Westminster Conference was founded for ministers who held a stricter allegiance to the Word of God.

RETIRED FROM WESTMINSTER

In 1968, the preaching ministry of Lloyd-Jones at Westminster Chapel came to an unexpected end when he was found to have colon cancer. On March 1, Lloyd-Jones preached his last sermon at the chapel, and the following Thursday, he

underwent successful surgery. But rather than return to the chapel, Lloyd-Jones announced his retirement and stepped down without allowing any ceremonial farewell. He withdrew into a ministry of writing and itinerant preaching, where his influence would be more widespread. He spent much of his time editing his sermon transcripts for publication, the most significant being his Friday-night sermons on Romans. Through the printed page, his pulpit ministry shaped a new generation of preachers and believers. He also spoke occasionally on British television and radio. Moreover, as he had done for several years, he accepted preaching invitations throughout the country and abroad. Many of these assignments were taken in order to encourage young ministers in their pastorates. One significant trip took him to Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, where he gave sixteen lectures on preaching that became his classic book, *Preaching and Preachers*. Through these messages put into print, he has influenced countless preachers in expository preaching.

FAITHFUL TO THE END

Lloyd-Jones preached what would be his last sermon at Barcombe Baptist Church on June 8, 1980. Two days before his death, in 1981, he wrote with a trembling hand a note to his wife and children: “Do not pray for healing. Do not hold me

back from the glory.”¹⁷ The next Sunday, on March 1, exactly thirteen years to the day after he preached his last sermon at Westminster, he died peacefully in his sleep and entered into glory to meet the God whom he so cherished. John Stott said, “The most powerful and persuasive voice in Britain for some thirty years is now silent.”¹⁸ Lloyd-Jones had been a student of church history, and among his most treasured thoughts was a statement by John Wesley, who said of the early Methodists, “Our people die well.” In his own death, he knew the blessed reality of those words.

Lloyd-Jones was buried at Newcastle Emlyn, near Cardigan, west Wales. This burial place was personally selected by Lloyd-Jones not only because of a personal connection with his own family and his childhood, but also because of his great affection for his wife, Bethan, whose family was buried there.

In this Welsh graveyard lies a simple tomb. On it are inscribed the words of the biblical text that he preached in his first sermon at Aberavon fifty-five years earlier:

Martyn Lloyd-Jones 1899–1981

“For I determined not to know anything among you
save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

17. Michael Rusten and Sharon O. Rusten, *The One Year Christian History* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2003), 115.

18. Back cover of Murray, *The Life of Martyn Lloyd-Jones*.

Written by the Apostle Paul, this inspired verse, 1 Corinthians 2:2, is a fitting summary of the life and ministry of Lloyd-Jones. He was one who had resolved to proclaim the person and work of Jesus Christ. To this calling, he remained true until his death.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Steven J. Lawson is president of OnePassion Ministries, a ministry designed to bring about biblical reformation in the church today, and former senior pastor of Christ Fellowship Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama. He served as a pastor for thirty-four years, having previously served in Arkansas and Alabama. He is a graduate of Texas Tech University (B.B.A.), Dallas Theological Seminary (Th.M.), and Reformed Theological Seminary (D.Min.).

Dr. Lawson is the author of nearly two dozen books, his most recent being *John Knox: Fearless Faith* and *In It to Win It: Pursuing Victory in the One Race That Really Counts*. His other books include *The Daring Mission of William Tyndale*; *Foundations of Grace* and *Pillars of Grace* from the Long Line of Godly Men series; *Famine in the Land: A Passionate Call to Expository Preaching*; *Psalms* volumes 1 and 2 and *Job* in the Holman Old Testament Commentary Series; *Made in Our Image*; and *Absolutely Sure*. His books have been translated into various languages, including Russian, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Albanian, and Indonesian. He has contributed articles to *Bibliotheca Sacra*, *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology, Faith and Mission*, *Decision* magazine, *Discipleship Journal*, and *Tabletalk*, among other journals and magazines.

Dr. Lawson's pulpit ministry takes him around the world, including Russia, Ukraine, Wales, England, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, New Zealand, Japan, and to many conferences in the United States, including The Shepherd's Conference at Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California.

He is a teaching fellow and board member for Ligonier Ministries and visiting professor for the Ligonier Academy of Biblical and Theological Studies. He also serves as professor of preaching and director of the doctor of ministry program at The Master's Seminary and as a member of the board of directors for The Master's College and Seminary. He hosts The Expositors' Conference at Christ Fellowship Baptist Church and has participated in the Distinguished Scholars Lecture Series at The Master's Seminary. He also serves on the advisory council for Samara Preachers' Institute and Theological Seminary in Samara, Russia.

Dr. Lawson and his wife, Anne, have three sons, Andrew, James, and John, and a daughter, Grace Anne.