



A Quarterly Journal for Church Leadership
Volume 9 • Number 1 • WINTER 2000

**DR. D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES:
HIS VIEWS OF PREACHING**

Cecil Siriwardene

In a church cemetery in the Welsh town of Newcastle Emlyn is a gravestone with this inscription:

In
Loving Memory of
D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones,
the beloved doctor
1899-1981
"For I determined not to know anything
among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

These words of the apostle Paul to the church in Corinth summarize for us the life and ministry of a man whom many regarded as one of the foremost preachers of the twentieth century.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones entered medical school at age sixteen, and after graduation he joined the staff of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, also known as Bart's, one of the premier teaching hospitals in the United Kingdom.

"The Doctor," as he came to be known, was drawn to saving faith in Christ in the mid 1920s and not long after was called by God into Christian ministry. Dr. Lloyd-Jones gave up a successful medical career as well as his research work at Bart's to go to a somewhat impoverished industrial town in South Wales in 1926 to become pastor of Bethlehem Forward Movement Church. He ministered there for

eleven years, and some have testified that this congregation experienced a spiritual awakening during his ministry.¹

In 1938 Dr. Lloyd-Jones accepted a call to Westminster Chapel, London, where he ministered until his retirement in 1968.

For half a century Martyn Lloyd-Jones exercised a powerful preaching ministry throughout the United Kingdom, Europe and in North America. Men and women who were converted under his ministry or who were greatly helped by his preaching went to many parts of the world to preach, plant churches, pastor congregations, and teach in schools and colleges or be salt and light in their homes and communities. His books, which are really his sermons in print form, continue to be of immense help to people, some of whom are found in the remotest corners of the world.

In a day when preaching continued to be relegated to a secondary place in the life of the church, Lloyd-Jones argued strongly for what he called "The Primacy of Preaching."² In his meetings with pastors, such as at the Westminster Fellowship of Ministers of which he was chairman, Lloyd-Jones never ceased to remind his colleagues that their primary task was, "the preaching of the gospel along with the private preparation for that work."³

He argued that God had not changed and man had not changed. He said that "never has there been a greater opportunity for preaching . . . because we are living in an age of disillusionment."⁴

Though spoken in the 1960s this statement is surely as true today as it was more than thirty years ago.

In this article I want to bring an introduction to Dr. Lloyd-Jones' views on preaching. I do so with the conviction that what he had to say about preaching is as relevant today as when he preached and wrote.

THE CENTRALITY OF PREACHING

Preaching was central to the ministry of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. His convictions concerning the centrality of preaching were rooted in the very nature of the Scriptures and in the practice of the prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles.

Lloyd-Jones held uncompromisingly to the authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. To him belief in the authority of Scripture was crucial to preaching. He stated the matter in this way: "If you have not got authority, you cannot speak well, you cannot preach."⁵ When men began to deny the authority of Scripture, preaching declined. The end of all this was that preaching was reduced to speculation and theorizing. Dr. Wilbur Smith, commenting on the preaching of Lloyd-Jones, stated, "You cannot hear him preach for three minutes without realizing that he believes God is speaking in his Word, that the Word is infallible, and that what we do with the Word of God will determine our eternal destiny."⁶

Undermining the centrality and primacy of preaching was the element of entertainment that had entered churches. This entertainment included the giving of testimonies, especially a well known public figure, a pop-singer or a sports star. To this he added the desire for more singing with choruses repeated over and over again and the addition of dramatic performances. In reminding us that the Protestant Reformation got rid of all these things that either displaced preaching or relegated it to a secondary place, Lloyd-Jones stated that the Reformation

swept away the medieval "mystery plays", as they are called, and dramatic performances in the church. The reformation got rid of all that and it is very sad to observe that people who claim an unusual degree of spirituality should be trying

to lead us back to that which the Reformers saw so clearly had been concealing the gospel and the truth from the people. If you mime the Scriptures, or give a dramatic representation of them, you are distracting the attention of people from the truth that is conveyed in the Scriptures; whereas preaching . . . is essentially concerned with bringing out the truth of Scripture.⁷

Commenting on a sermon by Dr. Lloyd-Jones, Dr. J. I. Packer wrote:

The sermon blew me away. What was special about it? It was the simple, clear, straightforward, man-to-man stuff. It was expository, apologetic, and evangelistic on the grand scale. It was both the planned performance of a magnetic orator, and the passionate, compassionate outflow of a man with a message from God that he knew his hearers needed. He worked up to a dramatic growling shout about God's sovereign grace a few minutes before the end; then from that he worked down to businesslike persuasion, calling on needy souls to come to Christ. It was the old, old story, but it had been made wonderfully new. I went out full of awe and joy, and a more vivid sense of the greatness of God in my heart than I had known before."⁸

I ask you: Can a brief dramatic performance, or even a television production, have that kind of an effect on anyone?

Dr. Lloyd-Jones argued for the centrality of preaching from the examples of the prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ, and his apostles. The prophets were proclaimers of the revealed Word of God. Our Lord came "preaching the gospel," and he sent his apostles to preach the word. Jesus' ministry of healing, Lloyd-Jones argued, was a sign, and when he sent out his disciples, he commanded them to preach and to heal. The preaching preceded the healing in

terms of priority. On the day of Pentecost, as soon as the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to preach. The gathered people said, "In our own languages we heard them speaking about God's deeds of power" (Acts 2:11). A little later Peter stood up, raised his voice and began to preach, resulting in "about three thousand persons" being added to the number of the disciples (Acts 2:40-41).

Turning to the history of the church Dr. Lloyd-Jones points out that renewed preaching heralded the dawn of a reformation, or a revival, whereas decadent periods in the history of the church had always been those periods when preaching declined.⁹ Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Knox were first and foremost preachers, as were the Puritans who followed them. Lloyd-Jones states:

Nothing was so characteristic of the Puritans as their belief in preaching and their delight in listening to preaching. Then the number of sermons printed by them was remarkable. This raises the very interesting point, which we tend to forget, namely, that so much of the theological teaching of the Puritans was given in the form of preaching and sermons. I suggest that in passing that we must consider once more whether the best way of teaching theology is not through preaching, through exposition of the Word.¹⁰

Next, Lloyd-Jones argues for the centrality of preaching from a theological perspective. Man's real trouble, he maintained, is not that he is sick, unhappy, or the victim of circumstances. His real trouble is that "he is a rebel against God and consequently under the wrath of God. . . ." He is "dead through trespasses," which means man without God is spiritually dead. He is dead to the life of God, to the spiritual realm and to all the beneficent influences of that realm upon him. Further, man is blind, he is in darkness, he is igno-

rant. The god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). He is alienated from the life of God through the sin that is in him (Ephesians 4:17ff.).¹¹

That being man's true condition, it is not surprising that biblical teaching on salvation corresponds to this expression of the need. Salvation is coming to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). The message of salvation committed to the preacher who is an "ambassador for Christ" is to call men and women to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). Salvation means being made alive by God (Ephesians 2:4-5). Dr. Lloyd-Jones described the Athenians who heard Paul's sermon (Acts 17:22-31) on the Areopagus, "They were ignorant though they were philosophers, and he is the one who can teach them and give them light in the matter."¹²

Only the preacher can tell men and women what their true state is before God. Only the preacher can tell people what they need to hear. "The preacher alone is the one who can do this. He is the only one who is in a position to deal with the greatest need of the world."¹³ Paul tells the Corinthians that he has been entrusted with "a commission," i.e., preaching the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:17ff.). And he also says that "God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1: 21).

Are we ministers of the gospel convinced that the preaching of the gospel has the highest priority in our calling as pastors and to the ministry of the Christian church in the world?

I have heard pastors and denominational leaders argue that people do not want preaching and they will not listen to it. Growing churches have introduced the element of entertainment into their services. Evangelical seminaries have introduced courses on the use of drama and dance in

worship. Dr. Lloyd-Jones responds by saying, "When the pulpit is right, and the preaching is true, it will attract and draw people to listen to the message."¹⁴ It may take some time, the growth may be slow, but God will surely bless the faithful preaching of his Word. In any case numbers alone should not be the principal measure of the success of our ministries. Rather, success is evidenced by the lives which God has been pleased to transform through our work. Our calling is to preach: to sow and water the seed of the Word of God. It is God's prerogative to give "the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6).

THE CALL TO PREACH

Dr. Lloyd-Jones was absolutely convinced that the work of preaching is not a profession a man takes on himself. His position was that "A preacher is not a Christian who decides to preach, he does not just decide to do it. It is God who commands preaching, it is God who sends out preachers."¹⁵ This conviction was not unique to Lloyd-Jones. Referring to the ministerial office, John Flavel says, "What daring presumption it is to intrude ourselves into so great and weighty an employment without any call or warrant of Christ."¹⁶ C.H. Spurgeon declares:

No man may intrude into the sheepfold as an under-shepherd; he must have an eye to the Chief Shepherd, and wait his beck and command. Or ever a man stands forth as God's ambassador, he must wait for the call from above; and if he does not so, but rushes into the sacred office, the Lord will say to him, "I did not send them or appoint them; so they do not profit this people at all, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:32).¹⁷

Again he says, "It is a fearful calamity to a man to miss his calling, and to the church upon whom he imposes himself, his mistake involves an affliction of the most grievous

kind."¹⁸

Dr. Lloyd-Jones also rejected what is called "lay preaching." He was quite insistent that not all Christians were called to preach. Turning to Acts 8:4-5, he argued that all Christians are responsible to make known the Word, to evangelize. But only those called, as Philip was, are to preach. He goes on:

What "the people" who went everywhere did was, as someone has suggested it might be translated, "to gossip" the Word, to talk about it in conversation. Philip on the other hand did something different; he was "heralding" the gospel. This is strictly speaking what is meant by preaching in the sense that I have been using it.¹⁹

Now, how does one know that God has called him to preach? Lloyd-Jones mentions a number of factors which assure a person of his call by God to preach. He begins by asking, "What is a preacher?" and answers that a preacher is a Christian like every other Christian. That is basic and essential. But he is something more, and this is where the question of a call comes in.²⁰

What constitutes a call to preach? First:

A call generally starts in the form of a consciousness within one's own spirit, an awareness of a kind of pressure being brought to bear upon one's spirit, some disturbance in the realm of the spirit, then that your mind is directed to the whole question of preaching. . . . This is something that happens to you, and God acting upon you by His Spirit; it is something that you become aware of rather than what you do.²¹

To some this sense of call may come suddenly and immediately. But with others it develops over time until it becomes "the most dominant force in their lives."²² Com-

menting on Dr. Lloyd-Jones' own call to the ministry, Mrs. Bethan Lloyd-Jones writes:

In 1925 he had almost come to think that he had been mistaken about his call to the ministry, and he had plunged back into his research and medical work. But in 1926 the call returned with a power and insistence that he could not resist—nor did he want to.²³

Second, Lloyd-Jones mentions the influence of others: people who are spiritually minded, a pastor, an elder, or a member of the church who has observed a worthy candidate and suggests that he may be called to preach the gospel. In this context, Andrew Fuller writes, "Whether we are 'apt to teach' is a question on which we ought not to decide ourselves: those are the best judges who have heard us, and been taught by us."²⁴ In similar vein, C.H. Spurgeon says, "Considerable weight is to be given to the judgment of men and women who live near to God, and in most instances their verdict will not be a mistaken one."²⁵

Third, Lloyd-Jones mentions a development of a concern for others, an interest in them and a realization of their lost condition and the desire to do something about it.

Fourth, there is "a sense of constraint. It means that you have the feeling that you can do nothing else."²⁶ At this point Lloyd-Jones counsels anyone to stay out of the ministry if he can, and argues that only a man called to preach and who senses that he can do no other should enter the ministry. I am reminded here of the story of T.W. Medhurst, one of the first students of the Pastor's College which C.H. Spurgeon founded. Spurgeon writes:

When Medhurst began to preach in the street, some of the very precise friends, who were at that time members at New Park Street, were greatly shocked at his want of education, so

they complained to me about it, and said that I ought to stop him, for, if I did not, disgrace would be brought upon the cause. Accordingly I had a talk with the earnest young brother, and, while he did not deny that his English was imperfect, and that he might have made mistakes in other respects, yet said, "I must preach, sir; and I shall preach unless you cut off my head."²⁷

The apostle Paul writes, "If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

Fifth, there is a sense of diffidence, a sense of unworthiness, a sense of inadequacy. The greater the preacher, the more hesitant he has been to preach. Lloyd-Jones says:

My argument is therefore, that a man who feels that he is competent, and that he can do this easily, and so rushes to preach without any sense of fear or trembling, or any hesitation whatsoever, is a man who is proclaiming that he has never been "called" to be a preacher. The man who is called by God is a man who realizes what he is called to do, and he so realizes the awfulness of the task that he shrinks from it. Nothing but the overwhelming sense of being called, and of compulsion, should ever lead anyone to preach.²⁸

Paul Cook, preaching in January 1988 at the induction of a pastor in Leicestershire, England, stated, "One mark of a truly called preacher is that he fears the pulpit. He does not enter it with a hop, a skip and a jump, thinking that he is well fitted to be there."²⁹

Finally, Lloyd-Jones says that a man's personal call to preach should be checked and confirmed by the church. He argues from Romans 10:13-15 that preachers are "sent." The church needs to look for those qualities and qualifica-

tions that indicate to her that a man has been called to preach. She must then in recognition of that call set that man apart for the gospel ministry.

It is interesting that in this matter of a man's qualifications to preach, Dr. Lloyd-Jones makes no mention of theological degrees. When he helped establish the London Theological Seminary he made it clear that the seminary was not interested in awarding diplomas and degrees. His reasoning and arguments can be found in the address he gave at the opening of this seminary.³⁰ Dr. Lloyd-Jones maintained that preachers are born, not made. His position was that you can never teach a man to be a preacher if he is not already one. He added that if a man was a born preacher you can help him a little—but not much.

These comments about not awarding degrees and preachers being born and not made should not be interpreted to mean that Dr. Lloyd-Jones minimized study and preparation for the Christian ministry. Quite the opposite is true. He mentions that a man must have general training, general knowledge and experience of life. In the area of special training there must be a knowledge of the Scriptures and systematic theology, an understanding of the original languages in which the Scriptures were written so that a man might be accurate in his exegesis, and a study of church history and homiletics. He encouraged those preparing for the ministry to read the sermons of Spurgeon, George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. He also recommended the sermons of Samuel Davies whom he regarded as one of the greatest preachers the United States produced. But Lloyd-Jones then adds, "The chief thing is the love of God, the love of souls, a knowledge of the truth, and the Holy Spirit within you. These are the things that make a preacher."³¹

This matter of a man's call to be a minister of the gospel of our Lord is of vital importance for the church and

for the man considering the Christian ministry. For us who have been called into the ministry it can be the one thing that at times will encourage us to keep on keeping on especially when opposition arises and we are discouraged and tempted to leave this high calling for some other work.

THE NATURE OF PREACHING

In a lecture titled "The Sermon and Preaching," Dr. Lloyd-Jones defines the nature of preaching:

Any true definition of preaching must say that that man is there to deliver the message of God, a message from God to the people. If you prefer the language of Paul, he is "an ambassador for Christ." That is what he is. He has been sent, he is a commissioned person, and he is standing there as the mouthpiece of God and of Christ to address these people. In other words he is not there merely to talk to them, he is not there to entertain them. He is there—and I want to emphasize this—to do something to these people; he is there to produce results of various kinds, he is there to influence people. He is not merely to influence a part of them; he is not only to influence their minds, or only their emotions, or merely to bring pressure to bear upon their wills and to induce them to some kind of activity. He is there to deal with the whole person; and his preaching is meant to affect the whole person at the very center of life. Preaching should make such a difference to a man who is listening that he is never the same again. Preaching, in other words, is a transaction between the preacher and listener. It does something for the soul of man, for the whole person, the entire man; it deals with him in a vital and radical manner.³²

Again he asks, "What is preaching?" And answers, "Logic on fire! . . . it is theology on fire. And a theology, which does not take fire, I maintain is a defective theology; or at least the man's understanding of it is defective. Preaching is

theology coming through a man who is on fire."³³ For Lloyd-Jones, preaching meant being passionate about the truths we preach. The truths we preach must grip our own hearts first. John Bunyan said, "I preached what I did feel, what I smartingly did feel." Lloyd-Jones was insistent that a man who could speak dispassionately about the truths of God's Word or could speak in a detached manner should never be allowed to enter the pulpit.

Something else that he emphasized was that preaching was not lecturing. I believe that there are men in the ministry who are confused on this very point. I have known brethren who came to the pulpit, not only with their Bible and notes, but also with a chalkboard or an overhead projector. As they spoke they wrote down their points for the benefit of the people. All very helpful, but it is not preaching; it is lecturing.

Further, preaching is not even giving a running commentary on a certain passage of Scripture. There are some who refer to this work as expository preaching. To Lloyd-Jones, however, true preaching was a transaction, a situation in which something is happening between the preacher and the listening congregation. He quotes Philips Brooks's definition of preaching with approval as "Truth mediated through personality." He goes on to say:

The whole man is involved in preaching; that is where the difference between the sermon and the preaching lies. It is not merely what the man says, it is the way in which he says it—this total involvement of the man; his body is involved, every part of him, every faculty is involved if it is true preaching, the whole personality of the individual; and, at the same time, as I said, the congregation is also making its contribution. . . . There is a unity between the preacher and hearers and there is a transaction backwards and forwards. That, to me is true preaching.³⁴

Lloyd-Jones illustrates this point by the example of Jonathan Edwards as he listened to the preaching of George Whitefield. He says:

There was this genius, Jonathan Edwards listening to Whitefield who was not in the same sphere, of course, from the standpoint of genius and ability. But as he was listening to Whitefield, Edwards' face, says Whitefield, was shining and tears were streaming down his face. Edwards was recognizing this authentic, authoritative note, this true preaching. Whitefield was in the Spirit, Edwards was in the Spirit, and the two were blended together. The whole congregation and preacher were in the hand of God. That is preaching.³⁵

Now, what is preaching meant to achieve? What is its purpose or chief end? Lloyd-Jones tells us, "It is to give men and women a sense of God and His presence."³⁶ He continues:

I can forgive a man a bad sermon, I can forgive the preacher almost anything if he gives me a sense of God, if he gives me something for my soul, if he gives me the sense that though he is inadequate in himself, he is handling something which is very great and glorious, if he gives me some dim glimpse of the majesty and glory of God, the love of Christ my Saviour, and the magnificence of the gospel. If he does that, I am his debtor, and I am profoundly grateful to him.³⁷

I think that Dr. Lloyd-Jones would agree with Charles Koller who wrote, "Preaching is that unique procedure by which God, through his chosen messenger, reaches down into the human family and brings persons face to face with himself. Without such confrontation it is not true preaching."³⁸

I wonder if this confrontation takes place in our own-

preaching? Do our hearers sense that they have been brought face to face with God and his Word?

At my request Geoffrey Thomas sent me a description of Dr. Lloyd-Jones' preaching. He wrote:

I loved his visits to Aberystwyth, every two years, Welsh in the afternoon and English in the night. He never let us down. Homing in on his subject in that familiar way, catching our interest and then a flash or two of some anecdote and illustration after ten minutes, and then on again, steadily gripping us more and more, developing his favourite theme of the impotence of man. Then the answer of God, the coming of Christ, and how redemption has been achieved. The long conclusion was vigorous warning and urging men to close with Christ. Heartening, faith-enriching, motivating, inspirational preaching. . . . It was that sense of the greatness of God that he transmitted so earnestly which was his single great benison.

How we need God to enable us, and how we need to pray that God will raise up men who will preach so as to bring people face to face with the Living God.

EVANGELISTIC PREACHING

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was not only a pastor/teacher; he was also a man of prayer and an evangelist. He divided his Sunday preaching into the edification of the saints in the morning and preaching evangelistically in the evening. In his introductory essay to Dr. Lloyd-Jones' *Old Testament Evangelistic Sermons*, Iain Murray writes:

On a Sunday night or when he was preaching around the country as he so often did, he had to treat each occasion as possibly the only one he might have with his hearers. He had therefore to be sure that they heard the complete message of the gospel. The idea that he was always "expository" in the sense of consecutive is therefore erroneous. For evangelistic preaching he mainly used individual, single texts—

texts likely to bring to mind the necessity of salvation even when all else was forgotten.³⁹

Dr. Lloyd-Jones maintained that evangelistic preaching should be regarded as something special and distinct. Let me quote again from Murray's essay:

For him, . . . gospel preaching was the main part of preaching and the priority which he gave to it can be seen by the fact that it was his Sunday night evangelistic sermon which he generally wrote in full while he was at Aberavon. Today there is the need to re-establish the recognition that the type of sermon most likely to be used to aid the non-Christian is not the same as one intended for those who already believe.⁴⁰

What is it that distinguishes evangelistic preaching from all other types of preaching? While all true preaching is biblical, expository and doctrinal, evangelistic preaching is narrower in its scope. Its aim is to bring men and women to the point where they are "cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37), and want to know how they can be saved.

Before we proceed further, we need to ask if there is still a place for evangelistic preaching in our gatherings for congregational worship. We are living in a day when increasing numbers of churches meet for worship only on the Lord's Day morning. In this context there are pastors who believe that their responsibilities are to edify the saints by their preaching, and these people in turn will go outside the walls of the sanctuary to do evangelism. One hopes that our people who are Christian believers will seize every opportunity to witness to the Lord Jesus Christ whenever and wherever they can, but must we then ignore evangelistic preaching altogether?

I think Dr. Lloyd-Jones would encourage us to preach

evangelistic sermons regularly in our gatherings for worship for at least two reasons. First, there are always visitors present in our worship services, and we may not know if they were Christians. These people may hear the gospel for the first and only time from us. Second, Lloyd-Jones warns us against assuming that even all our members are Christians because they profess to be so. He says, "The main danger confronting the pulpit . . . is to assume that all who claim to be Christians, and who are members of the church, are therefore of necessity Christians. This, to me, is the most fatal blunder of all; and certainly the commonest."⁴¹

Dr. Lloyd-Jones and his brothers were brought up to think of themselves as Christians. In his growing up years and even after he entered his medical practice he heard nothing from the pulpit that touched his conscience. In later years, he said that what he needed at that time was preaching to him of sin and make him see his need, which would convict him to repentance and faith in Christ.

In my own church, since the larger of the two services is the morning service when we are most likely to have a number of visitors, I have adopted the practice of preaching either through a chapter or a shorter book of the Bible. However, sandwiched between such a series has been a number of evangelistic sermons which I will usually preach from individual texts of Scripture. In this way I can preach to the edification of the saints while not neglecting the needs of those who are not Christians. At the same time it is helpful for us to remember that an evangelistic sermon can benefit a Christian, although its intent is to bring sinners to conviction of sin, repentance and saving faith in Christ.

Further, as The Doctor himself would encourage, we must not hesitate to break into a series if the need arose for us to do so. What do I mean? Just this: We are preaching through one of the books of the Bible when suddenly there is the disaster somewhere which makes headline news, or

there is a sudden death of someone in the congregation. I pity the pastor who ignores such an opportunity to preach evangelistically, perhaps on the brevity of life, or on how death entered the world, or on the folly of trusting in "the uncertainty of riches" (1 Timothy 6:17). Of course we must do so with compassion, but these are opportunities which we must use with profit, both to ourselves and to our hearers.

Let me close this section with a quote from C.H. Spurgeon, writing in *Faith's ChequeBook* for May 29:

We must keep to our preaching as our Master did, for by this means souls are saved. We must preach our Lord's doctrine, and proclaim a full and free gospel; for this is the net in which souls are taken. We must preach with his gentleness, boldness, and love; for this is the secret of success with human hearts. We must work under divine anointing, depending upon the sacred Spirit. Thus coming after Jesus, and not running before him, nor aside from him, we shall be fishers of men.

THE DIVINE UNCTION UPON THE PREACHER AND THE PREACHING

Dr. Lloyd-Jones makes both a strong scriptural and a historical argument for this need of the unction of the Holy Spirit in preaching. He says that it is this unction that makes for true preaching and that it is the greatest need today.⁴²

What then is this unction of the Holy Spirit? He says:

It is the Holy Spirit falling upon the preacher in a special manner. It is an access of power. It is God giving power, and enabling, through the Spirit, to the preacher in order that he may do this work in a manner that lifts it beyond the efforts and endeavors of man to a position in which the preacher is being used by the Spirit and becomes the channel through whom the Spirit works.⁴³

The unction of the Spirit does not negate the preacher's responsibility to make careful study and preparation. The Doctor says, "Careful preparation, and the unction of the Holy Spirit must never be regarded as alternatives but as complimentary to each other."⁴⁴ To illustrate this point he calls attention to the example of Elijah at Carmel. Elijah had to build the altar, cut the wood and put it on the altar, and then he had to kill the bullock, cut it in pieces and put the pieces on the wood. Then having done all that, he prayed for the fire to descend; and the fire fell. That is the order.⁴⁵ Again he says, "The way to have power is to prepare your message carefully. Study the word of God, think it out, analyze it, put it in order, do your utmost. That is the message God is most likely to bless. . . ."⁴⁶

Turning to the Scriptures Lloyd-Jones argues from the experience of John the Baptist, our blessed Lord, and that of his apostles. The apostles were regenerated men, yet they needed to be empowered by the Spirit in their preaching ministry. Peter repeatedly was filled with the Holy Spirit as was Paul. Referring to Paul's ministry as recorded in Acts 13:9ff., where he was filled with the Holy Spirit, Lloyd-Jones says:

When the record says there, "filled with the Holy Ghost", it is not referring back to the fact that he was filled with the Holy Ghost in connection with his conversion and as a result of his meeting with Ananias. It would be ridiculous to repeat this if it happened once and for all. This is again a special endowment of power, a special crisis, a special occasion, and he was given this special power for this special occasion.⁴⁷

Other references to this unction of the Spirit coming upon the apostle Paul are mentioned (1 Corinthians 2:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Colossians 1:28-29).

Turning to the history of the church and especially that of some of her notable preachers, Lloyd-Jones gives examples of men who knew this unction of the Spirit. He reminds us that Martin Luther was not only a great theologian but also an extraordinary preacher who was a man filled with the Holy Spirit. He also refers to John Livingstone who, filled with the Spirit, preached one sermon at a place called Kirk O'Shotts, and five hundred people were added to the churches in that part of Scotland. The remarkable thing about Livingstone was that though he lived and preached for many years after, he never again knew such an unction of the Spirit. David Morgan was mightily used of God in the Welsh revival of 1859. Morgan was filled and empowered for about two years and as suddenly as the power was given, it was suddenly withdrawn. Lloyd-Jones says, "The power came, and the power was withdrawn. Such is the Lordship of the Spirit! You cannot command this blessing, you cannot order it; it is entirely the gift of God."⁴⁸ For this very reason he claims:

. . . that the most romantic place on earth is the pulpit. I ascend the pulpit stairs Sunday after Sunday; I never know what is going to happen. I confess that I come expecting nothing; but suddenly the power is given. At other times I think I have a great deal because of my preparation; but, alas, I find there is no power in it. Thank God it is like that. I do my utmost, but he controls the supply and the power, he infuses it.⁴⁹

How does one recognize this unction of the Spirit? Lloyd-Jones says:

The first indication is in the preacher's own consciousness. "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only," says Paul, "but also in power and the Holy Ghost, and much assur-

ance." Who knew the assurance? Paul himself. He knew something was happening, he was aware of it. You cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit without knowing it.⁵⁰

Continuing to respond to the question as to how one knows that one is filled with the Holy Spirit, he says, "A preacher is taken up; he is in the realm of the Spirit and God is giving a message through this man to the people."⁵¹ As a result of the Holy Spirit's unction the preacher is given

Clarity of thought, clarity of speech, ease of utterance, a great sense of authority and confidence as you are preaching, an awareness of power not your own thrilling through the whole of your being, and an indescribable sense of joy. You are a man "possessed", you are taken hold of, and taken up. I like to put it like this—and I know of nothing on earth that is comparable to this feeling—that when this happens you have a feeling that you are not actually doing the preaching, you are looking on.⁵²

If this unction is the sovereign gift of the Spirit, what is the preacher's responsibility, if any, other than that of making careful preparation of the sermon? Lloyd-Jones exhorts,

Seek him! . . . But go beyond seeking him, expect him. . . . Seek this power, expect this power, yearn for this power; and when the power comes yield to him. . . . I am certain, as I have said several times before, that nothing but a return of this power of the Spirit on our preaching is going to avail us anything. This makes true preaching, and it is the greatest need of all today—never more so.⁵³

Dr. Lloyd-Jones was deeply concerned that our preaching should never be dry and lifeless, it should never be viewed as an address we have just prepared and delivered.

He was concerned that those who preached God's Word should know the power of the Spirit of God coming upon them and God using them for his glory.

The preacher empowered by the Holy Spirit will know it, and the people listening to him will sense it also. Lloyd-Jones says,

They are gripped, they become serious, they are convicted, they are moved, they are humbled. Some are convicted of sin, others are lifted up to the heavens, anything may happen to any one of them. They know at once that something quite unusual and exceptional is happening. As a result they begin to delight in the things of God and they want more and more teaching.⁵⁴

Perhaps right there we have some explanation of why two thousand plus people made their way each Lord's Day to a church in the heart of London to listen to forty-five minutes of preaching of the Word. There were no gimmicks; Sunday by Sunday the worship services followed the same format, both morning and evening. The people were drawn in because we knew that God was there and because we sensed this unction of the Spirit of God upon the preacher and upon us, drawing us and creating a desire in our hearts for more of His truth.

May God grant to us to know that same unction of the Spirit which rested upon Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and may the God of Lloyd-Jones be pleased to own our preaching for his honor and glory, Amen!

- *The content of this article was originally given as an address at the Banner of Truth West Coast Conference held on the campus of Nazarene College, San Diego, California, in 1998. It might also interest readers to know that the year 1999 marked the one-hundredth*

anniversary of the birth of Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

Author

Cecil Siriwardene has been pastor of Redondo Beach Evangelical Free Church, Redondo Beach, California, since 1995. Brought to Christ under the ministry of John R. W. Stott, he received formal training at the South Wales Bible College, now the Evangelical College of Wales. He attended Westminster Chapel, London, for a time and there sat under the ministry of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. He is married and has two adult children. This is his first contribution to *Reformation & Revival Journal*.

Notes

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