

One Master Theme:
Preaching and the Glory of God
STEVEN J. LAWSON

The Reason for
Everything
JOHN MACARTHUR

Why Expository Preaching Is
Particularly Glorifying to God
JOHN PIPER

EXPOSITOR

A PUBLICATION OF ONEPASSION MINISTRIES



**PREACHING AND
THE GLORY OF GOD**



ISSUE
02
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“The Lord has entrusted us with the gospel; He has filled us with a treasure with which we are to enrich the world. He has bestowed upon us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and it is ours to reflect the light, to impart the knowledge, to reveal the glory, to point to the Savior’s face, and to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Having such a work before us, we do not faint, but press onward with our whole heart.”

CHARLES H. SPURGEON

SHOW ME YOUR GLORY!

God's glory must be primary in all things, and nowhere is this more true than in the pulpit.

The theme of the glory of God in preaching has fallen on hard times. Many people, even in evangelical circles, have adopted a man-centered message that conforms to prevailing human desires. This user-friendly god of man's devising has diminished what A. W. Tozer calls the "Godhead of God" and compromised the picture of the wonder and glory of God's holy attributes. All too often, the church is ignorant of, if not totally indifferent toward, the weighty issue of the glory of God.

We see this downward trend in the church in many ways. The art of preaching, once reserved for men who were courageous couriers of God's Word and whose highest aim was to uphold God's greatness, has become in too many circles nothing more than the dispensing of a man-centered message intended to pamper a worldly congregation. Preaching that attempts to unveil the supremacy of God is rare. Seldom is His majesty presented as the deepest need of the human heart. As John Piper has observed, preachers no longer believe that people are starving for the greatness of God. God-centered preaching has been replaced with user-friendly rhetoric that veils His glory.

God's glory must be primary in all things, and nowhere is this more true than in the pulpit. It is when men stand behind the sacred desk that they must showcase not themselves, but the glory of God. Tragically, though, too many



preachers are anything but God-focused. As they stand before God's people, they are often consumed with being culturally relevant, preoccupied with playing politics, and seized with society's visions of success. Others are even enamored with themselves, whether it be their own victories or vices, ambitions or advancements. Instead, they should be riveted upon the supremacy of God.

To address this often unspoken cry of the hearers' hearts, the preacher must be continually showcasing the greatness of God. To this end, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the second issue of *Expositor Magazine*. The purpose of this issue is to rivet your mind and heart on the overwhelming glory of the Sovereign God of the universe and how we, as expositors, put this glory on dramatic display in the pulpit.

God calls us to have a high view of who He is and to be jealous for the honor of His name. A. W. Tozer said it years ago: "God is looking for men in whose hands His glory is safe." God is searching for men who will lay down

their glory before His throne and give Him the glory He alone deserves. He is looking for men who are absorbed in His surpassing glory and who are zealous for His fame. We need divinely sent messengers who do not seek their own accolades, but rather the acclaim of Him who enlisted them. We need heralds of the Word who will magnify and exalt the honor of His name. We need preachers who will demonstrate an unwavering passion for the display of His glory.

In the end, all that matters is the glory of God. If we fail to live for and put on display the glory of God, we endure empty, hollow lives and ministries. But if we seek God's glory, our lives will be full and abundant, and our ministries will count for time and eternity. Let this be our chief end, driving passion, and highest purpose—the glory of God! ♦

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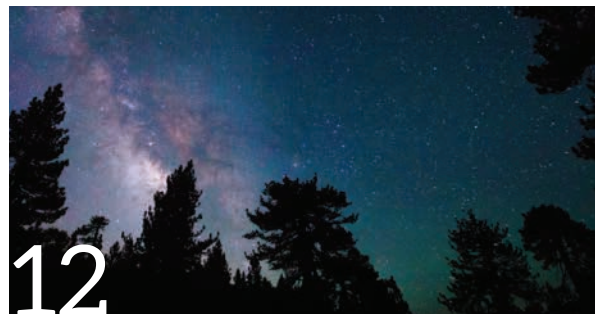
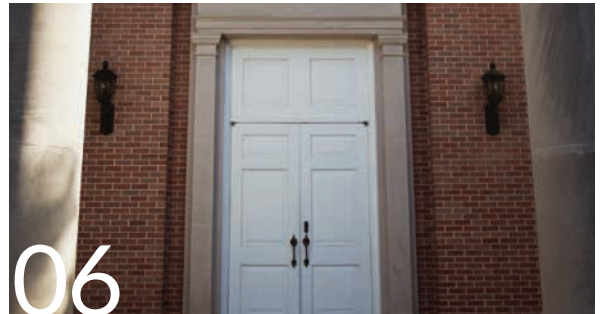
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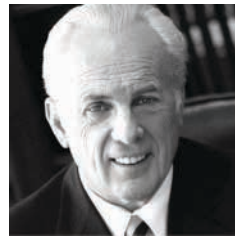
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IN THIS ISSUE

PREACHING AND THE GLORY OF GOD



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We stand in a long line of faithful men who courageously stood united in their commitment to this inerrant and unfailing Truth...



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by Steven J. Lawson

ONE MASTER THEME:

The Glory of God

Every generation of expositors bears the weighty responsibility of being guardians of the glory of God. By this we mean that every new generation of heralds of God's Word must uphold the honor of their God in the world. They must teach, preach, defend, fight, and uphold a high view of God. This responsibility, which has fallen to so many others in years and centuries past, now falls to us.

This is now our moment in history, our day of opportunity. Let it be said of us that we were vigilant guardians of the glory of God. This lies at the heart of our *raison d'être*, our reason for being, our purpose for existence. Our driving heartbeat is the glory of God.

As preachers, we long for God to be known for who He is and to be esteemed above all else. Let history record that we were filled with one holy passion to magnify the honor of His name. Let future generations say that we were consumed with holy zeal for the supreme majesty of His character. If we feel deep-

ly about anything, may it be said of us: They were filled with a burning jealousy for the glory of God.

Likewise, past generations will bless us for maintaining this glorious vision. The blood of the martyrs cries out to bless us for preserving that for which they gave their lives. Great men of the past, valiant champions of the faith, spiritual stalwarts, noble men, who fought to defend the character of God, rise up to bless us. We find ourselves as a link in history—a vital link—that connects the past with the future.

Further, the angels join with us in declaring God's glory. Four "presence" angels surround God's throne, guarding His glory. The seraphim (literally, "the burning ones") around the throne, angels burning with passion for God's glory, are calling out, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isa 6:3). They are consumed with a passion for God's glory. Thus, heaven and earth converge as one in this highest pursuit of magnifying and glorifying the Sovereign of the universe.

There is nothing for which God is more passionate than His own glory. All that God does in history, He does to promote His own glory.

But most of all, God Himself will bless us for preaching and defending the honor of His all-perfect name. There is nothing for which God is more passionate than His own glory. All that God does in history, He does to promote His own glory. The Westminster Confession asks, “What is the chief end of man?” The answer is, “To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” We can then ask the higher question: What is the chief end of God? The answer is the same. It is for God to glorify Himself and enjoy Himself forever. Thus, this passionate pursuit of God’s glory, too, is God’s own chief end and highest goal. May this be our one holy passion. May God’s heartbeat become our heartbeat to the extent that we are passionate to this same end: to declare, guard, proclaim, and enjoy God’s matchless glory.

So, what is the glory of God? If God’s glory is the driving reason for all that He is and does, what specifically does that glory entail?

The Intrinsic Glory of God

When we speak of God’s glory, we mean, first, what has been called His “intrinsic glory,” which is the sum total of the greatness of His divine being. It is all that God is, the whole of all of His attributes. In this sense, we do not *give* God glory. We cannot add to His

intrinsic glory one iota. He already is all-glorious. As the God who was, is, and is to come, He is forever glorious and perfect, eternally the same, unchanging in His glory. Therefore, the glory of God is intrinsic to Himself, never diminished nor increased, unaffected by outward forces or circumstances.

In the Old Testament, the primary Hebrew word for glory (*kabod*) meant a heavy weight, such as a rich man’s possessions which, when weighed, were very heavy. The richer he was, the more his possessions would weigh. With this wealth came a degree of “clout,” or a heavy influence upon others in the community. Thus, glory came to represent the greatness of a man which commanded the respect of others.

God’s “weight” or glory is the greatness of who He is. His glory is the awesome gravity of His name, the infinite wealth of His divine attributes as is found in His holiness, sovereignty, wrath, grace, goodness, and so forth. Every aspect of His character is immeasurably heavy, incomparably great, beyond any human’s character or ability. Being absolutely perfect, God is awesome in every way. He is a true “heavyweight” in every one of His divine attributes.

Tragically, in the church today, we often lack a corresponding weightiness regarding the utter profoundness of God’s character and attributes. Instead, frivolity and superficiality—fueled by a user-friendly God—pervades much of Christianity. This development can be traced back to our failure to consider the heaviness of His most holy character.

Years ago, Donald Grey Barnhouse, pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, delivered a message that aired on CBC radio. In this national address, the noted Bible teacher speculated about what would

be the most diabolical strategy that Satan could employ against the church in the years to come.

To the astonishment of many listeners, Barnhouse imagined that all of the bars in Philadelphia would be closed. Prostitutes would no longer walk the streets. Pornography would no longer be available. The streets would be clean, and all the city neighborhoods would be filled with law-abiding citizens. All swearing and cursing would be gone. Children would respectfully say, “Yes, sir” and “No, ma’am.”

Every church in town, Barnhouse added, would be packed to overflowing. There would not be one church pew that could contain one more citizen. What, you ask, could be wrong with this? Barnhouse then delivered the knockout punch. The deadliest, most diabolical danger, he said, would be that in each of these filled-to-capacity sanctuaries, Jesus Christ would never be preached, and if I might add, the glory of God would never be exalted.

Sadly, this is all too common in far too many pulpits today. There is much religious talk, but nothing said about the glory of God revealed in the supreme authority and saving work of Christ upon the cross. There is mention of morality, but no Christ. There are expressions of cultural concern and political commentary, but no Christ. There is positive thinking and inspirational stories, but no Christ. There are plenty of external trappings of Christianity, but no internal reality of the glory of God revealed in Christ.

If we are to preach the Scripture, we must exalt the glory of God. This is the case because God’s glory represents the greatness of who He is, His name (Deut 28:28), His majesty (Ps 93:1), His power (Exod 15:1, 6), His works (Ps 19:1), and His holiness (Exod 15:11). God’s glory is described as great (Ps 138:5), eternal (Ps 104:31), rich (Eph 3:16), and most highly exalted (Ps 8:1). This glory we call His “intrinsic glory,” or the glory which

inherently belongs to Him because of His holy character.

Because God is God, He is the only being of whom it can be said that He possesses inherent glory. We cannot give this glory to Him. This glory belongs to God by virtue of who He is. Accordingly, God's intrinsic glory cannot change. It would be impossible for Him to increase in His glory, because that would mean that He was previously less than perfect. Nor can God diminish in His glory, because He is always the same, forever glorious. God was, is, and shall be glorious throughout all the ages to come.

Blazing Light of Glory

Another Hebrew word found in the Old Testament for glory (*shekinah*) describes the visible manifestation of God's holy presence, usually as light so brilliant that it could not be looked

upon or approached. Such was the glory which Moses saw on Mount Sinai after spending time with God and which was transferred to his face (Exod 34:29–35). It was the bright, shining glory cloud that descended into the tabernacle to fill the Most Holy Place (Exod 40:34–38), which, when taken up and moved forward, signaled God's people that they were to move out and follow it (Num 9:15–23). This divine presence—the glory of God—was visibly seen in an illuminating cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Later, the same glory cloud filled the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 8:10–11).

Thus, God's glory was the radiant manifestation of the greatness of His holy presence. It was the visible revelation of His awesome being, most often represented by blinding light. It is God making known to man His attributes and character through creation, history, providence, His people, Christ, and

His Word.

The Greek word for glory (*doxa*) also pictured a bright, shining light, such as when the shepherds were watching their flocks by night. It was then that the glory of God appeared before them, shining as brightly as the noonday sun (Luke 2:9). This same glory, as light, burst forth before Saul of Tarsus as he was traveling to Damascus. A blinding light shone all about him, knocking him to the ground (Acts 9:3). This light was characteristic of the appearance of God's glory. When God's glory bursts forth it is the outshining revelation of His greatness, the manifestation of His holy character to this world, the emanation of His divine attributes.

Preaching this intrinsic glory of God is rooted and grounded in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest manifestation of the intrinsic glory of God is found in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.



“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

“In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Cor 4:4)

The Ascribed Glory of God

There is a second aspect of the glory of God, distinguished from His intrinsic glory, which is His ascribed glory. While His intrinsic glory pertains to who He is and the making known of His attributes to us, ascribed glory pertains to our proper response to His intrinsic glory. Although we cannot add to His intrinsic glory, we can give to Him ascribed glory. This calls for our praise and for living in a manner worthy of our calling.

In the New Testament, the Greek word for glory meant “to seem, to appear.” Later, it took on the meaning, “to hold an opinion of,” especially a good or proper opinion. This word came to represent “praise” or giving “honor” to a great person who is vastly superior in worth and value. Thus, glory meant to have and to express a right opinion of God.

Giving glory to God means ascribing greatness to His name because of His infinite holiness and surpassing majesty. This we call His ascribed glory, or the glory that is to be given to Him.

After people hear any preacher expound the Word, they should not say, “What a great preacher I heard.” Instead, they should exclaim, “What a great God I have.” This is the true measure of the greatness of any preacher. People should have their minds renewed by and their hearts lifted up to the greatness of God. The center of gravity for any pulpit should be to lead people in the giving of glory to God.

The chief purpose of expository preaching is the magnification of the glory of God. The chief aim of the pulpit is to promote the worship of His name. We are called to be expositors who exalt, that is, expositors who continually promote the awesomeness of God in our preaching. In all exposition, men are to open the Scripture and be constantly lifting up the greatness of God.

In this sense, the preacher should be the true worship leader of any gathering together of God’s people. The one who opens and expounds the Word is the one who reveals the intrinsic glory of God, which, in turn, urges people to give ascribed glory to God. It is our theology that produces our doxology. It is our doctrine that produces our devotion. It is the Word that inspires our worship.

Peter: A Preacher Who Glorified God

This is the kind of God-revealing preaching that Peter proclaimed on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14–36). Early in this discourse, Peter announced, “God says” (v. 17), which is the equivalent to “Thus says the Lord.” This entire exposition of Joel 2:28–32 was an exaltation of God. He declared that Jesus was “attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed” (v. 22). Upon the cross, Jesus was “delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” (v. 23). Though they put Christ to death, Peter made it known that “God raised Him up again” (v. 24).

As Peter continued his exposition, he maintained his Godward focus in preaching. Quoting Psalm 16:8, the apostle explained that Jesus “saw the Lord always in my presence” (v. 25). This is clearly a reference to God. After His death, the Lord Jesus would be raised from the dead. Peter then declared that “God had sworn” (v. 30) in a covenant to David that one of his

Preaching the intrinsic glory of God is rooted and grounded in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

descendants would rule on his throne. Peter announced that Jesus had been raised up “to the right hand of God” (vv. 32–33). There “the Lord” addressed Him as “My Lord” (v. 34). God the Father addressed God the Son as “Lord,” a title signifying the absolute deity and supreme authority of Christ. It was there that “God has made Him both Lord and Christ” (v. 36).

This first sermon by Peter was a thoroughly God-oriented message. This exposition on the day of Pentecost was theocentric from beginning to end. It should not be any wonder that God attended this exposition with many conversions.

This first sermon at the birth of the church is a model sermon for every preacher to emulate. As Peter magnified the preeminence of God, he has demonstrated the pattern to follow.

Conclusion

Where are such men who will give themselves unreservedly to uphold a high view of God? Where are such men who have holy zeal for God? Where can they be found?

May we be those men who in this age will fight the good fight and guard the honor of our God. May we not be those men in this generation who proclaim a shallow, syrupy, sentimental character of God, but rather, may we proclaim the conquering, refulgent, radiant glory of God, which is potent and pure. ♦



DISCOVER YOUR HISTORY
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by John MacArthur

THE REASON FOR

Everything

“Praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven.”

PSALM 148:13

In the entire universe, there is nothing loftier or more important than the glory of the Lord. God’s glory constitutes the whole purpose for which we were created. Indeed, this is the ultimate reason for everything that has ever happened—from the dawn of creation until now. “The heavens are telling of the glory of God” (Ps 19:1). The sun, the moon, and the stars of light all praise Him (Ps 148:3). “His glory is above earth and heaven” (v. 13). “The whole earth is full of His glory” (Isa 6:3). Even the beasts of the field bring Him glory (Isa 43:20).

This is what gives meaning to our existence: God is putting His glory on display, and it is our unspeakable privilege to participate in that demonstration and to savor the joy of it without ceasing.

That, of course, is the very first lesson taught in both the Larger and Shorter Catechisms:

Q1: What is the chief and highest end of man?

A: Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.

That is also a succinct summary of everything Scripture teaches about why God made us in the first place. He did not create us because He was bored or lonely. He made us so that He could glorify Himself through us.

Despite all the talk among contemporary evangelicals about “purpose-driven” life and ministry, the most important point of all is too often obscured or omitted. *Our one ultimate purpose is to glorify God*—to celebrate and reflect His glory; to magnify Him; and to “tell of His glory among the nations” (Ps 96:3).

That is God’s eternal plan, and it was not thwarted or changed when the entire human race fell because of Adam’s rebellion. In fact, it is the whole reason for the gospel. The redeemed are “predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, *to the end that we . . . would be to the praise of His glory*” (Eph 1:11-12, emphasis added).

God is doing all of this *for His own name’s sake* (Ps 25:11; 31:3; 79:9; 109:21; Jer 14:21; Rom 1:5; 1 John 2:12). His mercy and our salvation are not granted in our honor, as if to exalt us. We’re not

raised from our fallen condition for our own sake, to give us an elevated sense of self-esteem. All glory belongs to the Lord, and to Him alone. As David prayed, “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all” (1 Chr 29:11).

God is very jealous of His glory. He says emphatically: “I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another” (Isa 42:8).

Too often we speak of “God’s glory” without really contemplating what the expression means. It is not an easy concept to define. We are dealing with something that is infinite, unfathomable, inconceivable, and utterly foreign to fallen human minds—something so pure and powerful that an unobstructed, unmediated view of it would be fatal to our sinful flesh (Exod 33:20; Isa 6:5; 1 Tim 6:16).

The Captivating and Terrifying Glory of God

The Oxford English Dictionary defines *glory* as “resplendent majesty, beauty, or magnificence.” But the glory of God entails much more than that. It includes His holiness, His absolute perfection, and the stunning radiance of unapproachable light. God’s glory is the very essence of beauty, majesty, and splendor. It likewise includes His justice, power, and wrath. It is at once captivating and terrifying. It is a reality so sublime that if we were permitted one glimpse of it, we would never want to look away.

God’s glory embodies everything praiseworthy and everything we ought

to desire. It is the centerpiece of heaven’s joys, so radiant and all-pervasive that it totally eliminates the need for any other source of illumination in the realm where God dwells (Rev 21:23). Heaven will never be boring or monotonous, precisely because God’s glory will be on full display throughout every detail of the new heavens and new earth. In short, no other charm or pleasure could conceivably provoke more

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wonder, interest, or delight. Best of all, God’s glory will never lose its appeal or its luster.

John Gill (London’s leading Baptist preacher a century before Spurgeon’s time) pointed out that if God’s glory occupies so lofty a place in the plan of God, it ought therefore to have first place in every Christian’s priorities. He wrote,

God’s glory is the end [the goal and purpose] of all his works and actions; in creation, providence, and grace; in election, in the covenant, in the blessings and promises of it, in redemption, in the effectual calling, and in bringing many

sons to glory. The same is the end of all Christ’s actions, as man and Mediator, of his doctrines and miracles, of his obedience, sufferings, and death in this world, and of his interceding life in the other; who, as he lives to make intercession for us, lives unto God, to the glory of God; and therefore the glory of God should be the end of all our actions: besides, without this no action can be truly called a good one; if a man seeks himself, his own glory, and popular applause, or has any sinister and selfish end in view in what he does, it cannot be said, nor will it be accounted by God to be a good action.

Gill’s observation applies in particular to preachers. To paraphrase him: If a preacher exalts himself; seeks to exhibit his own glory; craves admiration or applause; or has any greedy or self-serving design in his sermon, it cannot be said (nor will it be accounted by God) to be legitimate preaching.

The preacher’s one job is to proclaim the whole counsel of God in a way that makes the gospel clear and magnifies the glory of God. “We do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord . . . For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts *to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ*” (2 Cor 4:5–6, emphasis added). The Word of God is our text; the gospel message is the crux of it; Christ is its main theme and central character; and the glory of God is the ultimate purpose. All of that is implied in the apostle’s instruction to Timothy: “Preach the word . . . in season and out of season” (2 Tim 4:2).



Notice: “*We do not preach ourselves.*” That statement is contrary to every dominant style of contemporary ministry. Pulpits today are full of narcissists and self-promoters. But no preacher who is thinking properly about the glory of God would ever want to uplift himself or make himself the focus of a sermon. Humility is the natural expression of a God-glorifying attitude. The person who is egotistical or self-absorbed has never really understood the grandeur of God’s glory.

At the same time, our knowledge of God’s glory ought to make us bold for the truth. You can tell a preacher is focused on God’s glory when he fearlessly proclaims the hard or unpopular truths regardless of whatever opposition, criticism, or persecution he receives as a result.

The preacher who keeps God’s glory in proper focus will likewise be indifferent to praise and flattery. To see the glory of God is to understand that nothing else really matters in the ultimate sense.

Obviously, the supreme renown of God’s glory is a priority no minister should ever lose sight of. But remember, the same principle governs every activity in every believer’s life: “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). *Everything* we do—mundane things as well as Christian ministry—must be done for the

glory of God. That is the top priority and the bottom line in all our lives. It is the most important thing in the universe.

The Creation Glorifies God

Consider this: a universe full of galaxies was made to glorify God, and for the most part all of His vast creation cooperates. The animal kingdom never rebelled against God. The earth is still full of His glory. The stars continually bear mute but powerful testimony to His glory, just as they have done from the dawn of creation. “The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples have seen His glory” (Ps 97:6). “Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made” (Rom 1:20).

Out of all creation, only the two highest of God’s creatures ever rebelled against Him. A third of the angelic host (Rev 12:4), and all of humanity, sinned. They tried to refuse the singular purpose for which they were made. They disclaimed the glory of God and wished instead to exalt themselves. “Even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Rom 1:21).

This rebellion will ultimately only

amplify the glory of God, because He will glorify Himself in the defeat of evil and the triumph of divine justice. Even the wrath of men will praise Him (Ps 76:10).

The Ultimate Goal

Meanwhile, glorifying God is the ultimate goal of every duty God has ever given us. It remains the supreme purpose for which He created and then redeemed us. So the fundamental issue and the basic consideration that should govern everything we do is summed up in this simple question: *Will it glorify God?*

Alongside that simple query is a host of related factors to consider. Can this thing that I am doing (and the way that I am doing it) truly honor God? Does it reflect His character or exemplify His goodness or otherwise pay homage to Him? Can I sincerely praise and thank Him while doing it? Does it make me more fit to serve Him, or otherwise enhance my labor in the Lord? Is it Christlike—consistent with the righteous character of our glorious God?

Now, this seems like a simple principle, and it is. It’s *simple*, but it’s not *easy*. We all know from bitter experience what a struggle it is to maintain a proper focus on the glory of God in this fallen world. In Paul’s words, “I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is,



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in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not” (Rom 7:18). Evil and temptation continually assault us, and it is much too easy to become preoccupied with the cares and crises of our mundane lives. Our priorities continually need to be reordered to keep the first thing first.

Scripture is full of encouragement and instruction that addresses this very problem. For example, the apostle Paul reminds us that we belong to the Lord and His Spirit indwells us. Sins of the flesh dishonor His dwelling place. “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore *glorify God* in your body” (1 Cor 6:19-20, emphasis added).

Furthermore, because the Holy Spirit permanently indwells believers today, we have a lasting connection with God’s glory such as no Old Testament saint ever enjoyed. In fact, Scripture highlights the stark difference between the experience of Moses and the way Christians in this era relate to the glory of God.

Moses’ face shone temporarily with a brilliant reflection of God’s glory. The Israelites were so frightened by the

phenomenon that Moses had to hide the glow behind a veil. But over time, the reflected glory faded away (2 Cor 3:7).

In sharp contrast to that, Scripture says, God’s glory actually indwells today’s believers in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is transforming us from the inside out—conforming us to the image of Christ—“from glory to glory” (2 Cor 3:18). In other words, God’s glory shines from within us; it is not merely a reflection. And it shines with ever-increasing brilliance rather than diminishing with time.

Meanwhile, “with unveiled face, [we behold] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord” (v. 18). Moses saw only a shielded view of God’s back as He passed by. We are invited to gaze intently and face-to-face at God’s glory from an up-close perspective (“as in a mirror”), without a veil of any kind. Through the Spirit who indwells us we have an unbreakable union with Christ. (“By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit” [1 John 4:13].) God’s glory is perfectly revealed in Christ (John 1:14). So, we have unfettered access to the divine glory.

Pastors, bear these truths in mind as you preach the Word. I am an un-

If the theme of God’s glory doesn’t permeate, energize, and anchor all your preaching, you’re doing it wrong.

apologetic advocate of verse-by-verse biblical exposition. I am committed to preaching that is Christ-centered and gospel-oriented. But the glory of God is the singular goal and the all-important thread that ties all those ideas together and keeps them in proper focus.

Here’s the point: if the theme of God’s glory doesn’t permeate, energize, and anchor all your preaching, you’re doing it wrong. It is not enough simply to follow a certain format in your preaching. What is most essential is that God be glorified. ♦





by John Piper

WHY EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING

is Particularly Glorifying to GOD

George Whitefield believed in preaching and gave his life to it. By this preaching God did a mighty work of salvation on both sides of the Atlantic. His biographer, Arnold Dallimore, chronicles the astonishing effect that Whitefield's preaching had in Britain and America in the eighteenth century. It came like rain on the parched land and made the desert spring forth with the flowers of righteousness. Dallimore lifts his eyes from the transformed wasteland of Whitefield's time and expresses his longing that God would do this again. He cries out for a new generation of preachers like Whitefield.

Dallimore's words help me express what I long for in the coming generations of preachers in America and around the world:

Yea...that we shall see the great Head of the Church once more ... raise up unto Himself certain young men whom He may use in this glo-

rious employ. And what manner of men will they be? Men mighty in the Scriptures, their lives dominated by a sense of the greatness, the majesty and holiness of God, and their minds and hearts aglow with the great truths of the doctrines of grace. They will be men who have learned what it is to die to self, to human aims and personal ambitions; men who are willing to be "fools for Christ's sake," who will bear reproach and falsehood, who will labor and suffer, and whose supreme desire will be, not to gain earth's accolades, but to win the Master's approbation when they appear before His awesome judgment seat. They will be men who will preach with broken hearts and tear-filled eyes, and upon whose ministries God will grant an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, and who will witness "signs and wonders following" in the transformation of multitudes of human lives.



Mighty in the Scriptures, aglow with the great truths of the doctrines of grace, dead to self, willing to labor and suffer, indifferent to the accolades of man, broken for sin, and *dominated by a sense of the greatness, the majesty, and holiness of God*. Dallimore, like Whitefield, believes that preaching is the heralding of God's Word from that kind of heart. Preaching is not conversation. Preaching is not discussion. Preaching is not casual talk about religious things. Preaching is not simply teaching. Preaching is the heralding of a message permeated by the sense of God's greatness and majesty and holiness. The topic may be anything under the sun, but it is always brought into the blazing light of God's greatness and majesty in His Word. That was the way Whitefield preached.

That is my longing for our day—and for you: That God would raise up thousands of broken-hearted, Bible-saturated preachers who are dominated by a sense of the greatness and the majesty and the holiness of God, revealed in the gospel of Christ crucified and risen and reigning with absolute authority over every nation and every army and every false religion and every terrorist

and every tsunami and every cancer cell, and every galaxy in the universe.

God did not ordain the cross of Christ or create the lake of fire in order to communicate the insignificance of belittling His glory. The death of the Son of God and the damnation of unrepentant human beings are the loudest shouts under heaven that God is infinitely holy, and sin is infinitely offensive, and wrath is infinitely just, and grace is infinitely precious, and our brief life—and the life of every person in your church and in your community—leads to everlasting joy or everlasting suffering. If our preaching does not carry the weight of these things to our people, what will? VeggieTales? Radio? Television? Discussion groups? Emergent conversations?

God planned for His Son to be crucified (Rev 13:8; 2 Tim 1:9) and for hell to be terrible (Matt 25:41) so that we would have the clearest witnesses possible to what is at stake when we preach. What gives preaching its seriousness is that the mantle of the preacher is soaked with the blood of Jesus and singed with the fire of hell. That's the mantle that turns mere talkers into preachers. Yet, tragically,

some of the most prominent evangelical voices today diminish the horror of the cross and the horror of hell—the one stripped of its power to bear our punishment, and the other demythologized into self-dehumanization and the social miseries of this world.

O that the rising generations would see that the world is not yet overrun with a sense of seriousness about God! There is no surplus in the church of a sense of God's glory. There is no excess of earnestness in the church about heaven and hell and sin and salvation. Therefore, the joy of many

Christians is paper thin. By the millions, people are amusing themselves to death with DVDs, and 107-inch TV screens, and games on their cell phones, and slapstick worship, while the spokesmen of a massive world religion write letters to the West in major publications saying, "The first thing we are calling you to is Islam . . . It is the religion of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil with the hand, tongue and heart. It is the religion of jihad in the way of Allah so that Allah's Word and religion reign Supreme." And then these spokesmen publicly bless suicide bombers who blow up children in front of falafel shops and call it the way to paradise. This is the world in which we preach.

And yet, incomprehensibly, in this Christ-diminishing, soul-destroying age, books and seminars and divinity schools and church growth specialists are bent on saying to young pastors, "Lighten up." "Get funny." "Do something amusing." To this I ask, Where is the spirit of Jesus? "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for

My sake will find it” (Matt 16:24–25). “If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell” (Matt 5:29). “None of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions” (Luke 14:33). “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26). “Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead” (Matt 8:22). “Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all” (Mark 10:44). “Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt 10:28). “They will put some of you to death . . . Yet not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives” (Luke 21:16–19).

Would the church growth counsel to Jesus be, “Lighten up, Jesus. Do something amusing”? And to the young pastor: “Whatever you do, young pastor, don’t be like the Jesus of the Gospels. Lighten up!”? From my perspective, which feels very close to eternity these days, that message to pastors sounds increasingly insane.

A Portrayal of the Glory of God

What you believe about the necessity of preaching and the nature of preaching is governed by your sense of the greatness and the glory of God and how you believe people awaken to that glory and live for that glory. From beginning to end, nothing in the Bible is more ultimate in the mind and heart of God than the glory of God—the beauty of God, the radiance of His manifold perfections. At every point in God’s revealed action, wherever He makes plain the ultimate end of that action, the goal is always the same: to uphold and display His glory.

Nothing affects preaching more

deeply than to be struck almost speechless—almost—by the passion of God for the glory of God. What is clear from the whole range of biblical revelation is that God’s ultimate allegiance is to know Himself perfectly, and to love Himself infinitely, and to share this experience, as much as it can be, with His people. Over every act of God flies the banner: “For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; for how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another” (Isa 48:11; cf. 42:8).

The way that God’s glory becomes visible in the world is not mainly

When the glory of God is the treasure of our lives, we will not lay up treasures on earth, but spend them for the spread of His glory.

through passionate acts of corporate worship on Sunday morning—as precious as those moments are—but through the changes that it produces in our lives. Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt 5:16). The light that shines through our deeds and causes people to see God, not us, is the all-satisfying worth of His glory.

It works something like this: When the glory of God is the treasure of our lives, we will not lay up treasures on earth, but spend them for the spread

of His glory. We will not covet, but overflow with liberality. We will not crave the praise of men, but forget ourselves in praising God. We will not be mastered by sinful, sensual pleasures, but sever their root by the power of a superior promise. We will not nurse a wounded ego or cherish a grudge or nurture a vengeful spirit, but will hand over our cause to God and bless those who hate us. *Every sin flows from the failure to treasure the glory of God above all things.* Therefore one crucial, visible way to display the truth and value of the glory of God is by humble, sacrificial lives of service that flow only from the fountain of God’s all satisfying glory.

The Implicit Call for Expository Exultation

If it is the purpose of God that we display His glory in the world, and if we display it because we have been changed by knowing and enjoying it, and if we know and enjoy it by beholding the glory of the Lord, and if we behold that glory most clearly and centrally in the gospel of the glory of Christ, and if the gospel is a message delivered in words to the world, then what follows is that God intends for preachers to unfold these words and exult over them—which is what I call *expository exultation*.

Each word matters. It is *expository* because there is so much about the gospel that cries out to be explicated (opened, unfolded, elucidated, clarified, explained, displayed). We see this when we focus on five essential dimensions of the gospel message.

- The gospel is a message about *historical events*: the life and death and resurrection of Christ—summoning us to open them with thorough expositions of texts.
- The gospel is a message about what those events *achieved* before we experienced anything or even existed: the completion of perfect

May God raise up from among you a generation of preachers whose exposition is worthy of the truth of God and whose exultation is worthy of the glory of God.

- obedience, the payment for our sins, the removal of the wrath of God, the installation of Jesus as the crucified and risen Messiah and king of the universe, the disarming of the rulers and authorities, the destruction of death—all of these summon us to open them with thorough expositions of texts.
- The gospel is a message about the *transfer* of these achievements from Christ to particular persons through our union with Christ by faith alone apart from works—which summons us to open for our people the nature and dynamics of faith by the exposition of dozens of texts.
 - The gospel is a message about the *good things that are now true about us* as the achievement of the cross is applied to us in Christ: that God is only merciful to us now instead of wrathful (propitiation), that we are counted righteous in Christ now (justification), that we are freed now from the guilt and power of sin (redemption), that we are positionally and progressively made holy (sanctification)—all of which summons us to open these glorious realities for our people

week after week with thorough expositions of texts.

- And, finally, the gospel is a message about the glorious God Himself as our final, eternal, all-satisfying Treasure. “We . . . exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (Rom 5:11, emphasis added). The gospel we preach is “the light . . . of the glory of Christ who is the image of God” (2 Cor 4:4, emphasis added). If our gospel stops short of this goal—enjoying God Himself, not just His gifts of forgiveness and rescue from hell and eternal life—then we are not preaching “the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor 4:6). Our ultimate goal is knowing and enjoying God. As we saw in the beginning of this chapter, that is why we were created—that God might share with us the knowledge and enjoyment of Himself. This is what it means for Him to love us. This is what the cross ultimately obtained for us. And this too, by every text of Scripture—all of it inspired by God to awaken hope in His glory—calls for the richest exposition that our people may be fed the best and highest food of heaven.

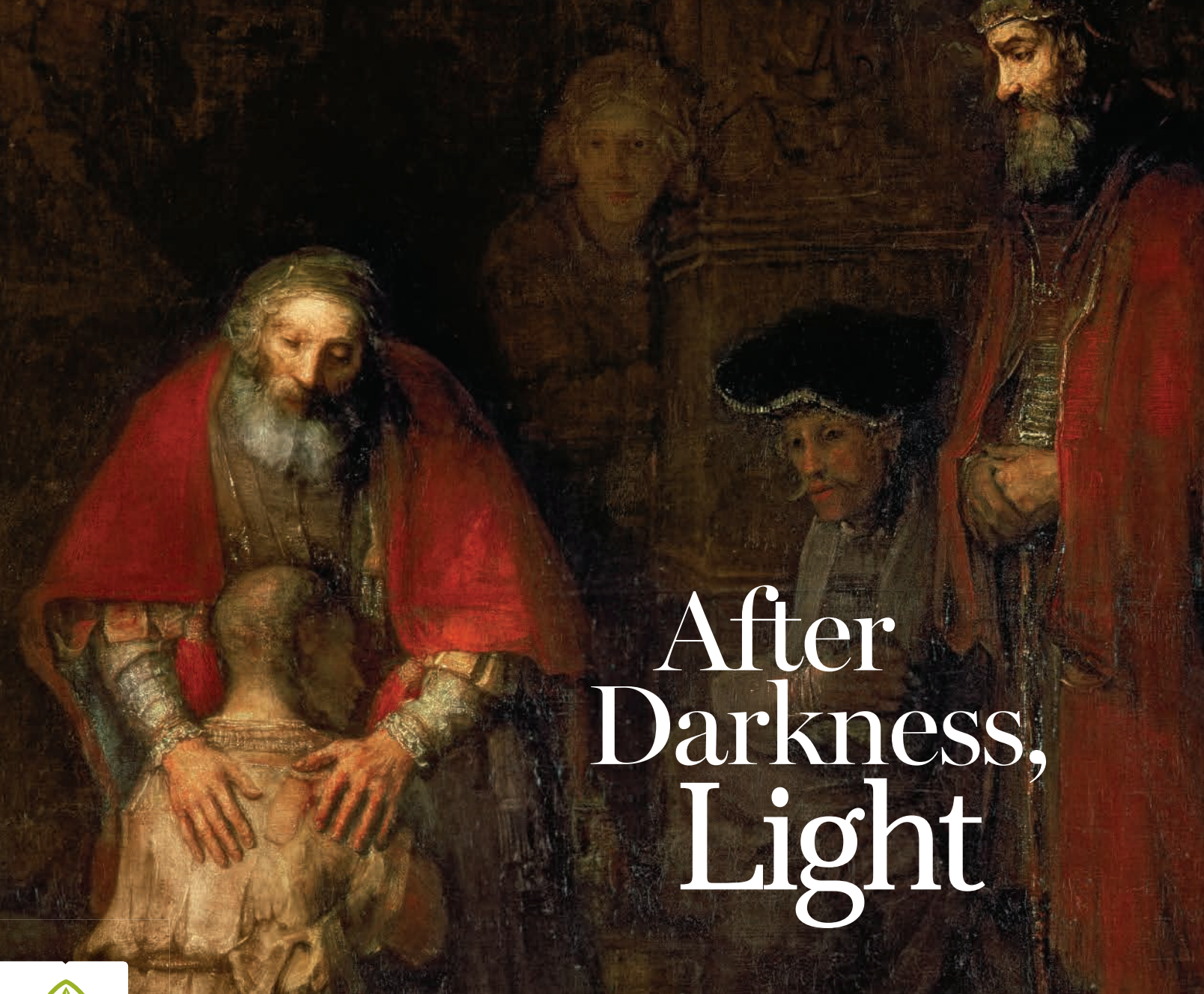
Exposition of texts is essential because the gospel is a message that comes to us in words, and God has ordained that people see the glory of Christ—the “unfathomable riches of Christ” (Eph 3:8)—in those gospel words. That is our calling: to open the words and sentences and paragraphs of Scripture and display “the glory of Christ who is the image of God.”

This leads us, finally, to the second word in the phrase *expository exultation*. Woe to us if we do our exposition of such a gospel without exultation—that is, without exulting over the truth we unfold. When Paul says in 2 Corinthi-

ans 4:5, “For we do not *preach ourselves* but Christ Jesus as Lord” (emphasis added), the word he uses for “proclaim” is *kērussomen*—we herald Christ as Lord, we announce Christ as Lord. The *kērux*—the proclaimer, the “preacher” (1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11)—may have to explain what he is saying if people don’t understand (so teaching may be involved). But what sets the herald apart from the philosopher and scribe and teacher is that he is the herald of news—and in our case, infinitely good news. Infinitely valuable news. The greatest news in all the world.

The Creator of the universe, who is more glorious and more to be desired than any treasure on earth, has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ to be known and enjoyed forever by anyone in the world who will lay down the arms of rebellion, receive His blood-bought amnesty, and embrace His Son as Savior, Lord, and Treasure of their lives.

O brothers, do not lie about the value of the gospel by the dullness of your demeanor. Exposition of the most glorious reality is a glorious reality. If it is not *expository exultation*—authentic from the heart—something false is being said about the value of the gospel. Don’t say by your face or by your voice or by your life that the gospel is not the gospel of the all-satisfying glory of Christ. It is. And may God raise up from among you a generation of preachers whose exposition is worthy of the truth of God and whose exultation is worthy of the glory of God. ♦



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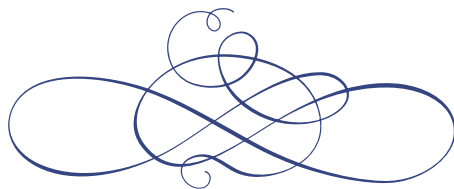
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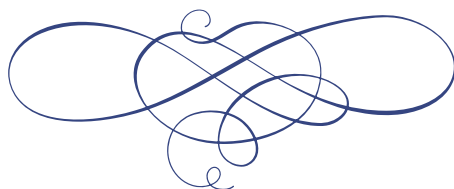
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THE GLORY OF
Puritan Preaching



by Joel Beeke



The Puritan movement from the mid-sixteenth century to the late seventeenth century has been called a golden age of preaching. Through the preaching and the publication of sermons, the Puritans sought to reform the church and the everyday lives of the people. With few exceptions, Puritan ministers were great preachers who lovingly and passionately proclaimed the whole counsel of God set forth in Holy Scripture. No group of preachers in church history has matched their biblical, doctrinal, experiential, and practical preaching. This article underscores the glory of Puritan preaching by looking at the primacy of preaching, passion for preaching, power in preaching, and plainness in preaching.

Primacy of Preaching

The Puritans had a profound sense that God built His church primarily by the instrument of preaching. This un-

derstanding created an ethos in which preaching stood at the center of worship and devotion.

The substance of preaching is declaring God's Word to men. John Preston said that the preacher is "an ambassador . . . who speaks to the people instead of God, in the name of Christ."

Preaching is God's great converting ordinance, they said. Seldom would anyone be converted apart from it. William Ames wrote, "Preaching is the ordinance of God, sanctified for the begetting of faith, for the opening of the understanding, for the drawing of the will and affections to Christ." Thomas Cartwright said that preaching is vitally necessary above the mere reading of the Bible. He wrote, "As the fire stirred giveth more heat, so the Word, as it were blown by preaching, flameth more in the hearers, than when it is read."

Other than the Holy Spirit, the ascended Christ bestows no higher gift on earth than the call to preach to His New Testament church, said Richard

Sibbes. "This is a gift of all gifts, the ordinance of preaching. God esteems it so, Christ esteems it so, and so should we esteem it." Therefore, the Puritans put the pulpit rather than the altar at the center of their churches, put preaching rather than the sacraments at the center of their worship, and regarded a personal call to the ministry as essential.

Such a perspective made each sermon a momentous occasion. "There is not a sermon which is heard, but it sets us nearer heaven or hell," wrote John Preston. One of John Cotton's listeners wrote in response to a sermon, "Mr. Cotton preaches with such authority, demonstration, and life that, methinks, when he preaches . . . I hear the Lord Jesus Christ speaking in my heart." As Richard Sibbes put it, "Preaching is the chariot that carries Christ up and down the world."

Passion for Preaching

Puritan preaching was driven by an in-

ward passion created by the Spirit of God. The Puritans loved the gospel of Christ. They loved to proclaim the entire gospel, which included diagnosing the plight of man in his sin, stressing the sufficiency of Christ in His humiliation and exaltation, and offering grace together with proclaiming the demands of evangelical repentance and faith.

Puritan preaching involves declaring redemption by focusing on the saving work of all three Persons of the Trinity, while simultaneously calling sinners to a life of faith and commitment and warning that the gospel will condemn forever those who persist in unbelief and impenitence.

The Puritans loved to glorify the Triune God by preaching Christ—biblically, doctrinally, and typologically. Preaching Christ with winsomeness and grace was the most essential task of the Puritan preacher. Samuel Rutherford said he had but “one joy” next to Christ, that is, “to preach Christ.” The best sermons, they said, are those that the preacher first preaches to his own heart—especially when that heart is ravished with Christ.

Furthermore, the Puritans loved the people they preached to and relentlessly sought their conversion and edification. Puritan preachers understood that the minister with great preaching gifts who failed to love his people would fail miserably in his calling. They knew that to fail in love is to fail in all.

They said a minister must strive to preach and shepherd his people with so much love that he mirrors the Father’s love as pictured in the father’s reception of the prodigal son and his response to his elder brother (Luke 15:11–32). They tenderly invited the weak, doubting Christians to draw near to the Father through Christ. Baxter wrote, “The whole course of our

ministry must be carried on in a tender love to our people When the people see that you unfeignedly [sincerely] love them, they will hear anything, and bear anything, and follow you the more easily.”

Power in Preaching

Puritan preaching addressed the *mind* with clarity. This preaching was directed to people as rational beings. The Puritans viewed the mind as the palace of faith. They refused to set mind and heart against each other, teaching that

“The principal duty of a pastor is to feed the flock by diligent preaching of the word.”

JOHN OWEN

knowledge was the soil in which the Spirit planted the seed of regeneration. John Preston stressed that reason is elevated in conversion, and Cotton Mather added that ignorance is the mother of heresy rather than of devotion. Thus they informed the mind with biblical knowledge and reasoned with the mind through biblical logic. They understood that a mindless Christianity fosters a spineless Christianity.

Puritan preaching confronted the *conscience* pointedly. The Puritans regarded the conscience of a sinner as the “light of nature.” Plain preaching named specific sins, then asked questions to press home the weight of those sins upon the consciences of men,

women, and children. As one Puritan wrote, “We must go with the stick of divine truth and beat every bush behind which a sinner hides, until like Adam who hid, he stands before God in his nakedness.” Only then will he cry to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. So, the Puritans preached urgently, directly, and specifically to the conscience, taking seriously Christ’s command “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name” (Luke 24:47, KJV).

Puritan preaching wooed the *heart* passionately. Their preaching was affectionate, zealous, and optimistic. Walter Cradock said to his flock, “We are not sent to get galley-slaves to the oars . . . but He sends us to woo you as spouses, to marry you to Christ.” The Puritans used compelling preaching, personal pleading, earnest praying, biblical reasoning, solemn warning, joyful living—any means they could—to turn sinners from the road of destruction and to God via the mind, the conscience, and the heart—in that order.

Plainness in Preaching

In terms of style, the Puritans believed in a plain style of preaching. This plainness did not mean anti-intellectualism, but a simple and clear communication from the Bible to the mind, then into the heart, and then outward to direct the conduct. Henry Smith said, “To preach simply, is not to preach unlearnedly, nor confusedly, but plainly and perspicuously [clearly], that the simplest which doth hear, may understand what is taught, as if he did hear his name.” Cotton Mather wrote in his eulogy for John Eliot, a great Puritan missionary to the Native Americans, that his “way of preaching was very plain; so that the very lambs might wade into his discourses on those texts and themes, wherein elephants might

swim.” Increase Mather wrote of the preaching of his father, Richard: “His way of preaching was plain, aiming to shoot his arrows not over his people’s heads, but into their hearts and consciences.”

The first part of a Puritan sermon was exegetical and expositional; the second, doctrinal and didactic; and the third, applicatory. First, Puritan preaching was biblical, that is, an exposition of the text of the Bible. “The faithful Minister, like unto Christ, [is] one that preacheth nothing but the word of God,” said Puritan Edward Dering. John Owen agreed: “The first and principal duty of a pastor is to feed the flock by diligent preaching of the word.”

Second, the exposition of Scripture led the Puritans to develop clear and well-defined doctrines. Puritan preaching recognized that all biblical doctrine centers on Christ. According to Thomas Adams, “Christ is the sum of the whole Bible, prophesied, typified, prefigured, exhibited, demonstrated, to be found in every leaf, almost in every line, the Scriptures being but as it were the swaddling bands of the child Jesus.” “Think of Christ as the very substance, marrow, soul, and scope of the whole Scriptures,” Isaac Ambrose said. Robert Bolton agreed: “Jesus Christ is offered most freely, and without exception of any person, every Sabbath, every Sermon.” Preaching the doctrines of Christ naturally led them also to preach other doctrines in connection to Christ, such as the doctrines of the triune God, of sin, and of sanctification and self-denial.

Third, the teaching of doctrine led to the application, often called the “uses” of the text, which could become lengthy as the minister applied Scripture to various listeners. The goal

always was to drive the Word of God home or, as Baxter put it, “to screw the truth into their minds, and work Christ into their affections.”

Puritan preaching was experimental and practical. Experimental preaching stresses the need to know by experience the truths of the Word of God. Experimental preaching seeks to explain in terms of biblical truth how matters ought to go and how they do go in the Christian life. It aims to apply divine truth to all of the believer’s experience in his walk with God as well as his relationship with family, the church, and the world around him.

These applications must target the right people, or they might do more spiritual harm than good. Puritan preaching was marked by a discriminating application of truth to the non-Christian and the Christian. Puritan preachers took great pains to identify the marks of grace that distinguish the church from the world, true believers from merely professing believers, and saving faith from temporary faith, as Jonathan Edwards did in *Religious Affections*.

Puritan preaching aimed to be transforming. The applicatory part is “the life of preaching,” wrote James Durham. “Hence, preaching is called persuading, testifying, beseeching, entreating, or requesting, exhorting.” The Puritans taught that when God’s Word is preached experimentally, the Holy Spirit uses it to transform individuals and nations.

Conclusion: The Puritan Preacher and His Preaching

To aim for the goal of transforming the hearers for the glory of God alone, the Puritans called preachers to conduct themselves in the fear of the Lord. The

preacher must walk in humility, not flaunting his abilities. “A crucified style best suits the preachers of a crucified Christ,” wrote John Flavel. “Words are but servants to the matter. An iron key, which fits the lock, is more useful than a golden one, which will not open the door to the treasure.”

Ministers must show a profound dependence on the Holy Spirit in everything they say and do. They must feel keenly their inability to bring anyone to Christ as well as the magnitude of conversion. “God never laid it upon thee to convert those he sends thee to. No; to publish the gospel is thy duty,” William Gurnall said to ministers. The Puritans were convinced that both preacher and listener are totally dependent on the work of the Spirit to effect regeneration and conversion in whom He will. As Thomas Watson wrote, “Ministers knock at the door of men’s hearts, the Spirit comes with a key and opens the door.”

Dependence on the Holy Spirit requires the minister to pursue holiness in his own life. Owen wrote, “If a man teach uprightly and walk crookedly, more will fall down in the night of his life than he built in the day of his doctrine.”

Therefore, ministers must give themselves to prayer, prayer for themselves and prayer for their ministries. Robert Traill wrote, “Some ministers of meaner gifts and parts are more successful than some that are far above them in abilities; not because they preach better, so much as because they pray more. Many good sermons are lost for lack of much prayer in study.”

Therefore, the glory of Puritan preaching was not in the preacher, nor in the sermon itself. The glory of Puritan preaching was the glory of their Lord. ♦






HOW THEN SHOULD WE PREACH ABOUT GOD'S BEAUTY?

Wisdom from Jonathan Edwards



by Michael A.G. Haykin



Down to the eighteenth century, pastors and theologians regularly considered the concept of beauty to be central to any discussion of the divine nature. As these pastors and theologians read the Bible, especially the Hebrew Scriptures, they were struck by various places where God is described as beautiful. For example, in Psalm 27:4, the Psalmist asserts, “One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord” (NKJV). Here, beauty is ascribed to God as a way of expressing the Psalmist’s conviction that the face-to-face vision of God is the profoundest experience available to a human being. Again, in Psalm 145:5 the Psalmist states that he will meditate “on the glorious splendor” or beauty of God’s majesty (NKJV). Similarly, the eighth-century (BC) prophet Isaiah can predict that there is coming a day when God will be “a crown of glory

and a diadem of beauty” to His people (Isa 28:5, NKJV).

One of the most important biblical concepts in this connection is that of “glory.” When used with reference to God, this concept emphasizes His greatness and transcendence, splendor and holiness. God is thus said to be clothed with glory (Psalm 104:1), and His works to be full of His glory (Ps 111:3). The created realm, the product of His hands, speaks of this glory day after day (Ps 19:1-2). But it is especially in His redemptive activity on the plane of history that God’s glory is revealed. The glory manifested in this activity is to be proclaimed throughout all the earth (Ps 96:3), so that one day “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord” (Hab 2:14, NKJV). In other words, it was their encounter with God on the plane of history that especially enabled the biblical authors to see God’s beauty and loveliness shining through the created realm.

Augustine and Aquinas on the Beauty of God

Later theologians built upon these biblical foundations. The fourth-century North African thinker Augustine (354–430), for instance, identifies God and beauty in a famous prayer from his *Confessions*:

I have learnt to love you late, Beauty at once so ancient and so new! I have learnt to love you late! You were within me, and I was in the world outside myself. I searched for you outside myself and, disfigured as I was, I fell upon the lovely things of your creation . . . The beautiful things of this world kept me from you and yet, if they had not been in you, they would have had no being at all.

The material realm is only beautiful because it derives both its being and its beauty from the One who is Beauty itself, namely, God. Augustine intimates that if he had been properly attendant

to the derivative beauty of the world, he would have been led to its divine source.

Similarly, Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274), the quintessential medieval theologian, argues that God is called Beauty because, as Aquinas comments, “He gives beauty to all created beings.” He is, Aquinas goes on, most beautiful and super-beautiful, both because of His exceeding greatness (like the sun in relation to hot things) and because He is the source of all that is beautiful in the universe. He is thus beautiful in Himself and not with respect to anything else. And since God has beauty as His own, He can communicate it to His creation. He is, therefore, the exemplary cause of all that is beautiful. Or, as Aquinas puts it elsewhere: “Things are beautiful by the indwelling of God.”

Jonathan Edwards Reflects on the Beauty of God

As one enters the modern era, a profound reconstruction takes place in thinking about beauty in general. The watershed is the eighteenth century, when there is a dramatic movement away from the question of the nature of beauty to a focus upon the perceiver's experience of the beautiful. The perception of beauty now becomes the basic concept in the writing and thinking about this subject. And it is intriguing that there is a corresponding diminution of interest in the ascription of beauty to God. Nevertheless, one can still find vital representatives of the older tradition. One such figure is the New England theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), who stands at the center of eighteenth-century evangelical spirituality and who was deeply conversant with earlier theological

thought, especially that of the Augustinian tradition. There is no doubt that beauty is a central and defining category in Edwards' thinking about God. He regards beauty as a key distinguishing feature of the divine being: “God is God,” he writes in his *Religious Affections*, “and distinguished from all other beings, and exalted above ‘em, chiefly by His divine beauty, which is infinitely diverse from all other beauty.” Unlike creatures who receive their beauty from another, namely, God, it is “peculiar to

“... the beauties of nature are really emanations or shadows of the excellencies of the Son of God.”

JONATHAN EDWARDS

God,” Edwards writes elsewhere, “that He has beauty within Himself.” Typical of the older tradition in aesthetics, his central interest is not in what he calls “secondary beauty,” the beauty of created things, but “primary beauty,” that of God. His writings contain no extended discussion of the nature of the fine arts or of human beauty. Even his occasional rhapsodies regarding the beauties of nature function chiefly as a foil to a deeper reflection on the divine beauty. Secondary beauty holds interest for him basically because it mirrors the primary beauty of spiritual realities.

Preaching the Beauty of God

Edwards' focus on the beauty of God does not mean he has no interest in the beauty of this world. In his *Personal Narrative*, for example, while he is describing his conversion to Christianity, he indicates that his conversion wrought a change in his entire outlook on the world:

The appearance of everything was altered: there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything. God's excellency, His wisdom, His purity and love, seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon, for a long time; and so in the daytime, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things...

This passage helps us answer the question: How does the preacher present the glorious beauty of God to His people? The answer is, not only by preaching on biblical passages that reference this divine beauty, but by taking the time to meditate on the glory of God visible in the secondary beauty of the created realm. Edwards' sermons communicated the glory of God since they were grounded in part in his own experience of that glory as he spent time gazing upon the created beauty all around him.

What is also striking about this passage is what Michael McClymond has recently called Edwards' “capacity for seeing God in and through the world of nature.” For Edwards, the beauty of creation exhibits, expresses and



communicates God's beauty and glory to men and women. In nature God's beauty is visible. Thus, he could state with regard to Christ:

...the beauties of nature are really emanations or shadows of the excellencies of the Son of God.

So that, when we are delighted with flowery meadows, and gentle breezes of wind, we may consider that we see only the emanations of the sweet benevolence of Jesus Christ. When we behold the fragrant rose and lily, we see His love and purity. So the green trees, and fields, and singing of birds are the emanations of His infinite joy and benignity. The easiness and naturalness of trees and vines are shadows of His beauty and loveliness. The crystal rivers and murmuring streams are the footsteps of His favor, grace, and beauty. When we behold the light and brightness of the sun, the golden edges of an evening cloud, or the beauteous bow, we behold the adumbrations

of His glory and goodness; and, in the blue sky, of His mildness and gentleness. There are also many things wherein we may behold His awful majesty, in the sun in His strength, in comets, in thunder, in the hovering thunder-clouds, in ragged rocks, and the brows of mountains.

Again, this passage is rooted in Edwards' spending time meditating on God and Christ in creation, and his determination to have a God-centered approach to all things, in strong contrast to the man-centered perspective that was coming to the fore in Western culture in the eighteenth century.

Edwards' Advice to Today's Preacher

How then should the gospel preacher today speak about the beauty of God? He first needs to recognize the loss of the concept of divine beauty that is part of even his own evangelical heritage. Evangelical theologians and

authors simply have not talked about beauty as a divine attribute for the best part of two centuries. Though evangelical theologians are beginning to realize what has been lost in this regard, the evangelical pulpit rarely sounds this vital note about our God. Then, time must be taken to meditate on God's beauty in creation. Here, Jonathan Edwards is such a good model to follow: he saturated himself with God in His material world, soaking up the beauty of God displayed in manifold ways in His creation. This helped to prepare him to preach on texts that bespeak God's beauty and glory. Of course, the biblical text was primary for Edwards. Charged with the glory of God, it provided Edwards—as it does today's preacher—with an inerrant basis for declaring to the world this great truth: our triune God is a glorious being of such awe-inspiring beauty that the prospect of catching but one glimpse of His face in Christ in the new heavens and new earth will forever provide purpose for living all-out for Him in this world. ♦



PREACHING THE GLORY OF GOD FROM THE

Old Testament



by Iain D. Campbell



Moses said, “Show me your glory” (Exod 33:18). This request was made by Moses following the Lord’s acceptance of his intercession on behalf of idolatrous Israel. God had threatened the removal of His presence from His people because of their sin, and, according to the narrative, Moses’ pleading for God to relent from this unthinkable occurrence was successful.

Moses is subsequently emboldened to ask God to reveal to him His glory, and, on a rock in Horeb, he is shown the “back parts” of God—His grace, mercy and covenant faithfulness. Protected by the hand of God, safe from being exposed to, and annihilated by, the full measure of the glory of God, Moses glimpses something of God’s sovereign goodness as “The Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the Lord” (Exod 34:5).

In a sense, this dramatizes for us what we are about as preachers called to proclaim the glory of God from the Old Testament. We want both to see and to show the sov-

ereign wonder and eternal majesty of the God who speaks to us in the Law, the Writings, and the Prophets. He is the God who, in the fullness of the new covenant, mediates His glory to us in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6). Yet it was the spirit of the same Jesus who was in the prophets (1 Pet 1:11), who themselves were instruments of revelation of the same glory. Our people come to the Word saying to God, “Show me your glory.” As preachers, we must wrestle with the text of the Old Testament with the same prayer.

So, what is the relation between the Old Testament and the glory of God? Let’s explore this along four trajectories.

Revealed Glory

First, the glory of God is revealed. It has to be; how would we know it otherwise? Moses has to request God to show His glory, and God accedes to his request, accommodating Himself to Moses’ understanding. He does that by proclaiming His own name, and by republishing the words of the covenant (Exod 34:1, 10). God dis-

closes Himself, revealing Himself to be a personal God who enters into covenant with His people.

The most fundamental way, therefore, in which we as preachers handle the text of the Old Testament, is with the premise that a personal God is speaking to us in the language of covenant and commitment. Our handling of the text—our reading of it, our singing of it, our preaching of it, our translating of it—must be done reverently and cautiously. In the text of the Old Testament the God who cannot be seen makes His voice heard, and He enters into a relationship with His people. In our preaching, God shares His secrets with and befriends those who fear Him, making His covenant known to them (Ps 25:14). They, in turn, ought to respond with awe, gratitude, and delight as the house of God becomes for them a theater in which the beauty of the Lord may be seen (Ps 27:4).

Creative Glory

Second, the glory of God is creative. The Old Testament opens purposefully with

the narrative of creation, carefully weaving a pattern of distinctions. God is distinct from His creation. Light is distinct from darkness, day from night, earth from sea, humans from animals, male from female, Sabbath from the other six days of the week. The stage is being built upon which the great dramatic purpose of God will be enacted, and its grandeur praises its Maker well.

Little wonder the text of the Old Testament marvels that the heavens declare the glory of God (Ps 19:1) or says that God silences us by asking if we were present when He made the earth (Job 38:4). In our preaching we extol the God whose invisible attributes are displayed in everything He has made (Rom 1:20), reminding our hearers that He made us, and not we ourselves (Ps 100:3), that the awesome nature of His creation sets His special love to man in glorious disproportionate perspective (Ps 8:3–4), and that the power of the Creator of the ends of the earth is deployed for the help and protection of His people constantly (Isa 40:28–31).

Preaching the Old Testament means emphasizing the core doctrine which is there from the beginning: that God is the sovereign God of creation, history, and all that transpires in the providences that shape this world. Before Him we are less than nothing and vanity (Isa 40:17), yet in covenant the Lord remembers us (Ps 40:17).

Redemptive Glory

Third, the glory of God is redemptive. It is particularly as the redeemer of His people that God displays His glory. He promised deliverance to mankind by intimation of the ultimate destruction of Satan (Gen 3:15); He redeemed His people out of Egypt because of His covenant faithfulness (Exod 2:23–25), and He restored them to their land out of the exile of Babylon for the sake of His own name (Ezek 36:23–24).

The history of Israel in the Old Testa-

ment is thus bracketed by concrete acts of redemption, from bondage in Egypt and from exile in Babylon, and both of these redemptive acts are displays of the glory of God (Exod 15:11–13; Neh 9:31). The same redemptive glory that is displayed in our salvation in Christ is displayed throughout the Old Testament. Our preaching of the gospel from the Old Testament is to direct the attention of men and women to that great fact.

There are at least four elements to this. First is the fact that *the Old Testament supplies us with the vocabulary of redemption*. By the time we have read through Genesis and

If we do not highlight the glory of God in the work of redemption as we handle the text of the Old Testament, we have missed the key element of the record.

Exodus, the first two books of the Bible, we have mastered the basic vocabulary necessary for the communication of the gospel. We have learned about God, creation, sin, covenant, redemption, blood, law, grace, sacrifice: They are all there, like the building blocks which the New Testament will use to construct the completed, glorious gospel.

To preach through the Old Testament, therefore, is to be constantly interacting with the grand themes and rich word groups in which the good news of God's salvation comes to us. When Christ and the apostles proclaimed the forgiveness of sins through faith in the blood of the Lamb, they already had the lexical and conceptual framework in which to do it.

The glory of God in the Old Testament is couched in a language one jot and tittle of which will not fail.

Second is the fact that *the Old Testament tells a history of redemption*. Every Old Testament text or passage is located on a line of history that runs from creation to consummation, a history of which Jesus Christ is alpha and omega, pivot and foundation. Into the darkness of man's fall a light shines, almost imperceptibly, gradually rising like the slow dawning of the sun, so that over time the world is prepared for the coming of Jesus Christ. By the time the sun has risen, so much glory light has been revealed that only one person can fulfill every prophecy and prediction, every type and analogy. Our gospel proclamation must do justice to the nature of the revelation given at particular points along the line, illuminating to the biblical story as a developmental axis of redemption.

That fact ought to guard us from a mere moralizing of the Old Testament, from treating it only as a compilation of examples of how we are to live. To be sure, we will miss some of the great themes of the Old Testament if we do not take to ourselves lessons of faith, just as the author of Hebrews does in Hebrews 11. But the story is a story of warfare, the story of God championing the cause of His people. The song of Moses contains the glorious insight that "The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is His name" (Exod 15:3). That is the song of heaven, and the song of the Lamb (Rev 15:3). The Bible's story is a particular interpretation of history, in which every detail is designed to highlight the theme of God's determination to rescue His people from the grip of sin and Satan. If we do not highlight the glory of God in the work of redemption as we handle the text of the Old Testament, we have missed the key element of the record.

Third is *the fact that the Old Testament provides a theology of redemption*. In addition to being located on a historical timeline, every Old Testament passage is also locat-

ed within the circle of the Bible's theology. So if we are preaching on the tabernacle, for example, the special tent constructed purposefully to domesticate the glory of God within the camp of Israel (Exod 40:34), we must do justice both to the primitive nature of revelation at the time, and the full disclosure of that revelation in the wider canon of Scripture, in which tabernacle language is used of Jesus (John 1:14) and of His people (2 Cor 5:1). We cannot preach all our theology in any given sermon; but we can, and must, shape our sermon in the light of the totality of the theology God has given.

Can we preach on the Passover redemption of Exodus 12 without bringing to bear on our exposition the deep theology of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, whose substitutionary death and vicarious bloodshed are the very heartbeat of the gospel? Can we preach on Isaiah 6 and the prophet's vision of God without shining onto it the light of John 12, where the New Testament tells us that it was Jesus whom Isaiah saw? Can we preach the passages of the Old Testament which are quoted in the New without nuancing our interpretation in the light of the use which the New Testament makes of them?

I think not. The Scriptures, no less than the heavens, declare the glory of God, and to isolate texts from contexts, or pericopes of Old Testament theology from the wider

context of the completed canon of Scripture, is to do a disservice to the God whose Word we are proclaiming. We show the glory of God in our preaching of the Old Testament precisely as we demonstrate how each individual passage is organically connected to the whole, and how God's covenant of grace with us in Christ is the theological principle which binds all of Scripture together.

Fourth is the fact that *the Old Testament produces a hymnody of redemption*. The worship wars of our churches are an interesting window into the cultural impact of society on the church. Our churches are what our churches sing. And whatever our position on singing the Psalms, there is no doubt that the Old Testament, in supplying its own praise book, calls us to magnify, and exult in, the glory of God. It does that by rehearsing the great acts of redemption, such as in Psalms 78 and 105. It does it by describing the perfections of the God who redeems His people, such as in Psalms 111 and 145. And it does it by expressing the personal experience of redemption, in both the best and the worst circumstances of the believer's life. To sing—or at least to preach—the Psalms is to proclaim the glory of God within both a public and a private context.

Expectant Glory

Ultimately, of course, the glory of God in the Old Testament is seen in anticipation. The ministry of the law was glorious, but that of the Spirit, though organically connected to it, excels in glory (2 Cor 3:7-11). Moses could see only the back parts of God; we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6).

Everything in the Old Testament looks forward to that moment, since the prophets, through the Spirit of Christ, spoke beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and subsequent glory (1 Pet 1:11). But that was because everything in the Old Testament drew its significance from that great act of God's self-disclosure when the Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

Like Mary, the mother of the Lord, the Old Testament is pregnant with the expectation of an even greater revelation of glory than any—even its most significant figures—could anticipate. And as we preach the Old Testament to our people, may they be able to say, like Mary, "For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name" (Luke 1:49). ♦



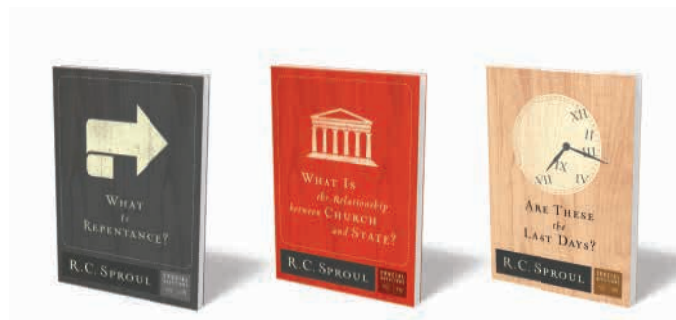


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EXPOSITOR Q&A

INTERVIEW

PREACHING FOR GOD'S GLORY

with Alistair Begg

What is expository preaching?

Expository preaching is not so much a methodology as it is a way of approaching the Scriptures. We approach the Scripture in such a way that they define for us what is to be said and how it is to be said. As a result, the Scripture constrains us by our examination, study, and understanding of them. So, the Scripture sets the agenda for what is being said. Therefore, it is the unfolding and expounding, whether slowly or

quickly, of the interpretation of the particular text before us. It becomes very clear to the listener that this man is not seeking to *make* the Bible relevant, because he couldn't, but he is showing us just how relevant the Bible *is* by unpacking what it actually has to say. The expounding of the actual text itself defines for us everything that takes place. I don't subscribe to what I often find in some seminaries where they teach expositional preaching as one idea. I think it's the only idea. In fact, I believe it is the only way to teach the Bible.



ALISTAIR BEGG has been in pastoral ministry since 1975. Following graduation from The London School of Theology, he served eight years in Scotland at both Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh and Hamilton Baptist Church. In 1983, he became the senior pastor at Parkside Church near Cleveland, Ohio. He has written several books and is heard daily and weekly on the radio program

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Why is expository preaching important?

For pastors, expository preaching is not simply an optional style that God offers to them. The exposition of Scripture prevents the preacher from avoiding difficult passages and makes the biblical text central to the sermon's framework. This ensures that the preacher studies the Bible and that the congregation is provided a balanced diet of biblical theology.

Why does biblical expository preaching glorify God?

In essence, expositional preaching glorifies God because, very simply, it declares His glory. The preaching of the Word is worship. You are extolling His greatness, you are worshipping His majesty, and you are identifying the fact that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. Scripture takes men and women there—to the glory of God.

Unfortunately, there is a form of preaching that is preaching for our own glory. But real biblical preaching, like that of John the Bap-

tist, is only a voice talking and a finger pointing to the divine glory of God.

What is the task of the expositor?

In this high and sacred calling, the task of expository preaching, we are to be men of spiritual wisdom and understanding in the mysteries of the gospel. We must each have a genuine experience of the power of the truth we proclaim. It is incumbent upon us to be able to divide the Word correctly and to feed the sheep as we discern their condition by spending time among them. There must be zeal about us for the glory of God and a compassion for the souls of men.

What in your past put you on the path of being expositional in your preaching and ministry?

I think it was simply being exposed to that mode of teaching the Bible. Not exclusively, because I was raised in the city of Glasgow in a large international mission hall what was established by D. L. Moody at the turn of the century. As a boy, my exposure to church life was in this large building that seated 2,200 people, and it was routinely packed with people. I often attended Saturday and Sunday services that combined evangelistic fervor with social engagement. In this context I was made aware of the revivalistic hymns and of a kind of preaching that was absolutely Christ-centered and cross-focused, but not necessarily expositional.

Later on, when I got my driver's license, I would drive with friends to York to hear evangelical Anglicans such as John Stott and became exposed to exposition in a way I had not been before. I finally heard someone stand and say, "This is the Bible, this is what the text means, this is why it matters, come back next week and I'll tell you more." I then began to seek out people who did this and was inevitably drawn to these men. Then when I went to be with Derek Prime in Edinburgh, that's what he was doing in every service of the week. When I was eventually called to a church of my own, it never occurred to me to do anything else than verse-by-verse exposition.

What is the primary job of the expositor?

He is to preach the Word. He is to proclaim the gospel. That was the compulsion of Paul and that is the commission of Timothy. You remember Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel." Now we may say to ourselves, well, we can move on very quickly from this, because after all we all know what the gospel is. It's the *euangelion*. It's the Good News. But not so quickly! To proclaim the gospel means explaining what God has done in Christ on behalf of sinners. It means making clear that Christ's obedience is reckoned to the sinner on the ground that the penalty of the sinner's disobedience has been borne in Christ—He died, the righteous for the unrighteous. It is only when we

have made the gospel plain that we can then go on to explain the benefits of receiving the gospel and announce the perils of rejecting the gospel. If you are to be gospel men and women, whether in a pulpit or in a counseling context, it is the gospel that we must affirm. Telling people about the sovereignty of God is not the gospel. Pressing on people the nature of the new birth and the necessity of regeneration is not preaching the gospel. Both of these things are related to it; both are involved in it, but they are not the essential message of salvation that needs to be believed. In this, there is a great challenge in these days, of which you must be aware as you prepare to go.

Why do you believe the pulpit should be central in the life of the church, both physically and metaphorically?

I've never been a fan of churches where the pulpit is off to the side, but it must be central in the life of the church. I am also not a fan of the "plastic" pulpits. The pulpit should be seen as something quite substantial, not only physically but somewhat spiritually as well. I like to be hidden a bit behind the pulpit so as not to draw attention or focus to myself but only to draw people's attention to the centrality of Scripture and what I am trying to do in explaining it.

Every expositor has a place they prefer to study. Where do you find it most comfortable for you to study for your sermons each week?

In Scotland, my study was in my home on the ground floor, and I relied upon my wife to field the interruptions. I was able to work there until the children came along. At that point I moved to my vestry in the church building, but this caused me to have to carry my books with me each day. There was no telephone there to interrupt me, but its absence also isolated me in an unhelpful way. For the past twenty years, my study has been in the church building. As our pastoral team has grown and as the busyness of the office has increased, I have created what I refer to as "the cave." This is simply another room away from everything else that affords me the kind of privacy that helps me to stay focused on the task at hand. Some of my colleagues seem able to study well for short periods of time. However, once I get airborne I need to stay there for long stretches.

What is your method of sermon preparation?

Whenever I am asked to summarize my own method of preparation, I mention the following points, which I learned from an old minister when I was still a theological student. Five steps or pointers that I like to keep in mind: think yourself empty, read yourself full, write yourself clear, pray yourself hot, and be yourself, but don't preach yourself. These pointers help keep me focused from beginning to end.

Now, what exactly do I mean by these?

1. Think yourself empty. As strange as it may sound, we

must be careful to ensure that we do not avoid sound thinking. The temptation to respond emotionally to a passage (“this is how this makes me feel”) is not unique to our listeners. If we are to have “thinking” congregations, it is incumbent upon us to be “thinking” pastors! We do not want to be uncertain by the time our study ends, but it is surely right and proper to begin with the perspective, “I must know what this says, and I must learn what this means.”

2. Read yourself full. Every preacher must read, and not only read, but read well.

3. Write yourself clear. Aside from the essential empowering of the Holy Spirit, if there is one single aspect of sermon preparation that I would want to emphasize, it is this. Freedom of delivery in the pulpit depends upon careful organization in the study. We may believe that we have a grasp of the text, only to stand up and discover that somewhere between our thinking and our speaking things have gone badly awry. The missing link can usually be traced back to the absence of putting our thoughts down clearly.

4. Pray yourself hot. There is no chance of fire in the pews if there is an iceberg in the pulpit! Without prayer and communion with God during the preparation stages, the pulpit will be cold. In 1752 John Shaw reminded the incumbent pastor beginning his charge in Cambridge, Massachusetts: “All will be in vain, to no saving purpose, until God is pleased to give the increase. And in order to do this, God looks for prayers to come up to His ears. A praying minister is always the way to have a successful ministry.”

5. Be yourself, but don’t preach yourself. A good teacher, like John the Baptist, clears the way, declares the way, and then gets out of the way. If people leave worship saying, “What an amazing preacher!” we have failed. Instead we must long for them to say, “What a great God, and what a privilege it is to meet Him in His Word, as we have just done.” A good teacher clears the way, declares the way, and then gets out of the way.

What would you say to young men who listen and watch the popular expositors of our day and try to mimic them in the way they preach?

There is nothing quite so ridiculous as the affected tone and adopted posture of the preacher who wishes he were someone else. Sadly, it is common to listen to someone preach, recognize the tone of voice and the style of delivery, and know that it does not conform to the individual who is preaching. While we can and must learn from those whom God has used to great effect in the pulpit, our admiration dare not lead to imitation. We are delivering messages of eternal consequences to the souls of men; we dare not miss the seriousness of this.

What role does prayer play in the life of the expositor?

When the apostles did some reorganization of the early

church, it was because they realized how crucial it was for them to give themselves continually to “prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). To borrow from the marriage ceremony, it is imperative that “what God has joined together, no man should put asunder.” We dare not divorce our preaching from our praying.

What role do you see evangelism having in the pulpit?

I try to constantly remind myself that God loves saving people. In some circles, the predominant notion is that “we gather for edification and we scatter to evangelize.” Although this encourages the congregation to engage in personal evangelism, it also results in an absence of evangelistic preaching. Some contemporary books on preaching do not even have a chapter on evangelistic preaching. I keep the following quote from J. I. Packer: “If one preaches the Bible biblically, one cannot help but preaching the gospel all the time, and every sermon will be, as Bolton said, at least by implication, evangelistic.” I try consistently to ensure that our congregation has regular opportunities to invite friends to hear the good news being preached. The morning services have traditionally had more unbelievers in them than the evening ones. However, our baptism services in the evening provide suitable occasions for evangelistic preaching.

When do you begin your weekly preparation for your sermon?

As early as possible. My normal program is that I meet on Monday morning with a colleague and our pastoral staff and interns as we deal with pastoral issues. When I arrive at Parkside late in the morning I handle administrative tasks. I normally take Tuesday off. Every week is different in the life of a pastor. You try to stay close to a set schedule but you have people drawing you in many different directions.

It is my normal practice to make a start on Monday so that when I come back to the church on Wednesday, after my day off, I have at least made a start on the preparation. How long do I spend? I can only answer that by saying I spend as much time as it takes. There are some Sundays when I come out of the pulpit feeling I could have done better than I did, and that’s a terrible feeling.

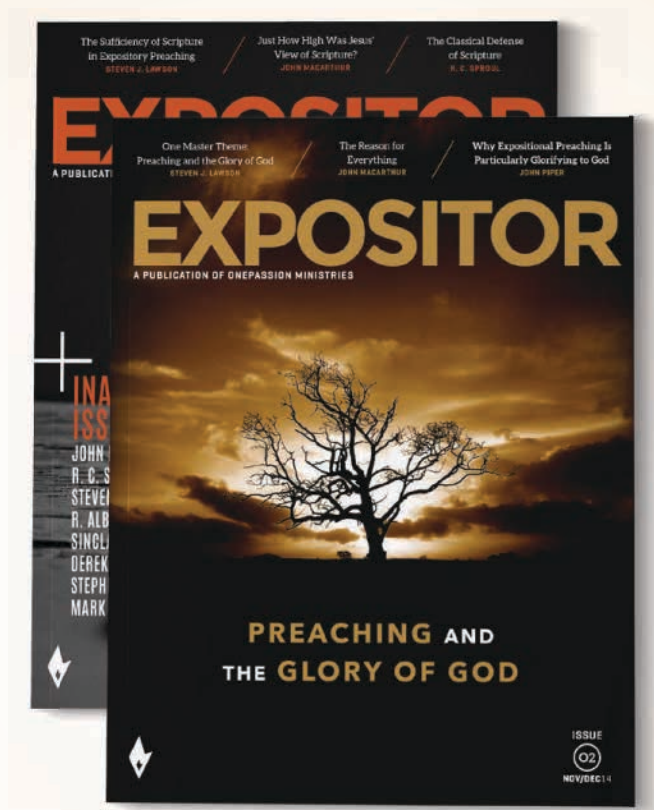
What is the relationship between preaching and worship?

The music or choir director is not the “worship leader.” The Scripture is very clear that Jesus is the worship leader during a gathering of His people. Christ preaches through the preacher; He sings with us and leads us through our praise. This view of worship ties in with a high view of preaching. If we leave aside style for a moment, it is necessary for our people to understand that the ethos is not about men and women and their need, but it’s about God’s glory.

I'm not at all a fan of a "casual" atmosphere in a worship service. Worship must start in the right place, which cannot be "I," but God. The average person coming into worship has a stony heart and cannot begin with themselves in worship except in repentance and confession. We must be reminded of the gospel in worship to get us back in line. For instance, the

singing of the Psalms will transform a congregation because the focus is not upon the worshiper but upon the One who is worthy of our worship. We must be turned to the glory of God and the gospel. ♦

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THE LECTERN

LIVING & DYING FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

by Nathan Busenitz

To live well is to live for Christ, and to die well is to die for His glory. A brief article in the 1857 edition of *The Scottish Christian Journal*, entitled “Dying Well,” summarized that truth with these words: “Would ye die well? then, through Christ, live well. The right way to die well is to live well.”

Three years later, on December 2, 1860, a man named Charles Thomas Studd was born into a wealthy family in England. Charles was a teenager when his father committed his life to Christ after attending an evangelistic meeting led by D. L. Moody. A short time later, at the age of 16, Charles himself came to saving faith in the Lord Jesus.

Charles would go on to Cambridge, where he became one of the most celebrated cricket players of his day, famous not only in Britain but around the world. When his time at Cam-

bridge ended, Charles realized that he did not want to pursue a career in athletics. As he said it, “I know that cricket would not last, and honour would not last, and nothing in this world would last, but it was worthwhile living for the world to come.”

Armed with an eternal perspective and motivated by a desire to glorify the Lord no matter the cost, Charles Thomas Studd (often referred to by his initials, C. T.) left England to serve as a missionary in China under the direction of Hudson Taylor. Explaining his missionary zeal, Studd quipped, “Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.”

The former cricketer spent a decade in China, working for much of that time in a rehabilitation center for opium addicts, sharing the gospel and seeing lives transformed by the truth. While he was in China, his father died and left him a sizable inheritance. But rather than keeping it, he immediately gave it all away to support evangelical ministries such as those led by George Müller and D. L. Moody.

After a short time back in England, Charles and his wife (along with their four daughters) moved to India, where he pastored a local congregation for seven years. Though he struggled with severe asthma, often staying awake most of the night barely able to breath, he faithfully preached the gospel, and many souls in Southern India were converted to Christ.

Shortly thereafter, Charles became convinced that God was calling him to take the gospel to the innermost jungles of Africa. He eventually reached the Belgian Congo in 1913, though it was not easy. At one point, he



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Master's Seminary, and joined the faculty full time in 2009. He is currently working to complete his Th.D. in church history, with a specific focus on patristic theology. He has written and contributed to several books, including *Living a Life of Hope, Reasons to Believe*, and *Right Thinking in a World Gone Wrong*. He and his wife, Beth, have four children.

contracted a severe case of malaria; on another occasion, he woke up in the morning to discover that a poisonous snake had been sleeping by his side all night long.

Along with his fellow missionaries, Charles established a number of missionary stations in the heart of Africa—bringing the gospel to tribes that had never previously heard the name of Jesus Christ. He wrote over 200 hymns, translated the New Testament into the native language, and witnessed thousands of African people turn to the Lord.

C. T. Studd died in Africa, at the age of seventy, having spent most of his adult life in missionary service: ten years in China, seven years in India, and roughly twenty years in Africa. The pioneering missionary work he did was rigorous. But it was fueled by a simple and sincere conviction. He said, “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”

His unwavering commitment to serve Christ no matter the cost is perhaps best captured in the words of a well-known poem he penned:

Two little lines I heard one day,
Traveling along life’s busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart,
And from my mind would not depart;
Only one life, ’twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in “that day” my Lord to meet,
And stand before His Judgment seat;
Only one life, ’twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.

Nineteen centuries earlier, the apostle Paul articulated that same perspective in these words, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil 1:21). The apostle’s mission was to glorify his Savior in everything. As he explained to the Corinthians, “Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent [meaning in life or in death], to be pleasing to Him” (2 Cor 5:9).

Armed with that resolve, Paul joyfully endured numerous hardships for the sake of the gospel, including imprisonments, beatings, stoning, and shipwrecks. As he explained to the Corinthians,

I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many

“There is no greater honour, after living for Christ, than to die for Him.” – C. T. STUDD

sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. (2 Cor 11:26–29)

Incredibly, Paul wrote those words when his career as a missionary was only about half over (around AD 55–56). The unwearied apostle had not yet faced many of his best-known trials, including his arrest in Jerusalem, his two-year incarceration in Caesarea, his shipwreck on the isle of Malta, and his two Roman imprisonments (cf. Acts 21–28).

Even a brief survey of Paul’s life evidences his passion to live and die for the glory of God. Because he belonged to Christ, his one aim was to live for Him (cf. Gal 2:20). As he told the Romans, “For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s” (Rom 14:7–8).

At the end of Paul’s earthly sojourn, as he awaited execution in a dank Roman dungeon, the faithful apostle could look back on decades of Christ-exalting ministry and say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim 4:7–8).

Just a few verses later, at the close of his final epistle, Paul again articulated the hope-filled theme that had characterized his entire Christian life: “The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (v. 18). Soon he would enter the presence of his Savior and hear Him say, “Well done.”

It was C. T. Studd who said, “There is no greater honour, after living for Christ, than to die for Him.” Clearly, his perspective was patterned after Paul’s. As both men understood, to live well is to live for Christ; to die well is to die for His glory. ♦



LONG LINE OF GODLY MEN

TRUTH REMAINS

WILLIAM TYNDALE: THE FATHER OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE, PT. 2

by Steven J. Lawson

In 1523, Tyndale traveled to London to seek official authorization for a sanctioned translation and publication of an English Bible. He arranged a meeting with the bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, a scholarly man, well-known classicist, and friend of Erasmus, with whom he had worked to compile his Greek New Testament. Because of this association with Erasmus, Tyndale presumed Tunstall would be open to his translation project. Instead, Tyndale was met with great resistance to the idea of an English translation. Tunstall became highly suspicious of Tyndale's theology, which he feared would spread Luther's Protestant doctrines and a subsequent upheaval in England such as was occurring in Germany. Luther's newly translated German Bible, released in September 1522, had thrown the Saxony region into turmoil. Tunstall believed that a Bible in English, accessible to the people, would produce much the same mayhem in England. So, Tunstall stonewalled Tyndale.

But this tactic only deepened Tyndale's convictions that England desperately needed a Bible the common man could read. The only question was how or where it could be done. Tyndale preached numerous times at St. Dunstan's Church in west London. While at St. Dunstan's, a wealthy cloth merchant, Humphrey Monmouth, heard Tyndale preach and decided to financially underwrite his expenses. This benefactor allowed Tyndale to remain in London for one year as he developed a plan for his Bible translation. If he was to accomplish this daring mission, he realized, "there was no place to do it in all England." Opposed by both the church and crown in England, Tyndale realized he must leave the country and undertake this epic work elsewhere.

To the European Continent

At age thirty, Tyndale sailed to the European Continent in

order to launch this new translation and publishing endeavor. He would do so without the King of England's consent, a clear breach of the established law. In so doing, every biblical text he would translate, he did so illegally. When he departed his native shore, Tyndale lived in exile for the remainder of his life. Never again would he return to his beloved homeland. For the next twelve years, Tyndale would live on foreign soil as a fugitive and outlaw of the English crown.

Arriving first in Hamburg, Germany, in 1524, Tyndale soon journeyed to Wittenberg to sit under the influence of the great German Reformer, Martin Luther. British scholar Tony Lane writes, "An entry in the matriculation register for 27 May 1524 reading 'Guillelmus Daltici Ex Anglia.' If the final 'ci' is a copyist's error for 'n' we have an anagram of 'Tindal' with the two syllables reversed."

If this is, indeed, the name William Tyndale listed on the matriculation register in Wittenberg, he would have met Luther. Moreover, this encounter would have come at a time when the German reformer had thrown off the last vestiges of popish alliance. Such an influence upon Tyndale would have been significant. While in Wittenberg, Tyndale began the work of translating the New Testament from Greek into English. It appears Tyndale undertook a major portion of this translation work at this time, from May to July 1525. The impact of Philip Melancthon, a master of the Greek language, would have also been invaluable.

Accompanied by his amanuensis, Tyndale traveled to Cologne, the most populous city in Germany, in August 1525, where he completed his translation work of the New Testament. In this bustling city, it was easy for the two Englishmen to be lost in the shuffle. Here, Tyndale found a printer, Peter Quentell, who agreed to print his new translation. However, the secrecy of the printing was breached when one of the

print workers came under the influence of wine and spoke openly of the clandestine endeavor. John Cochlaeus, a bitter opponent of the Reformation, overheard talk of this forbidden project and immediately arranged for a raid on the print shop. Tyndale was forewarned and quickly gathered the few printed leaves along with the rest of his unprinted New Testament translation, escaping under the cover of night.

The First Printed English New Testament

Fleeing down the Rhine River to the more Protestant-friendly city of Worms, Tyndale arrived in 1526. This was the very city where Luther had stood trial for heresy a mere five years prior. Luther's teachings had exerted a strong influence on the city, making it sympathetic to the Protestant cause. Tyndale again found a printer, Peter Schoeffer, to continue his translation work. This initial edition was the first New Testament to be translated from the original Greek into English. Further, it was the first English Bible to be mechanically printed. Previously, there were only a few handwritten copies of John Wycliffe's Bible in English, translated a century and a half earlier. But Wycliffe's rendering was loosely translated from Latin, not Greek. Tyndale's work was far superior. Schoeffer completed the initial print run by producing some 3,000 copies.

Over the next eight years, there would be two additional revised editions of Tyndale's New Testament that would follow, as well as several pirated editions by unauthorized printers.

Ready for delivery in the spring of 1526, Tyndale's Bibles were shipped, hidden in bales of cotton, along the international trade routes to England. German Lutheran cloth merchants in England received the disguised shipment, ready to distribute the Bibles. Once past the royal agents, these forbidden books were picked up by a secret Protestant society, the "Christian Brethren," and taken throughout England to various cities, universities, and monasteries. The newly printed Bibles were sold to eager Englishmen—merchants, students, tailors, weavers, bricklayers, and peasants alike—all hungry to read and grow in their knowledge of God's Word. Each New Testament cost three shillings and two pence, a week's wages for a skilled laborer, a remarkably accessible price for the average person.

By the summer of 1526, church officials in England had discovered this underground circulation of Tyndale's Bible. The archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London were enraged, confiscating every Tyndale Bible they could find. Church officials immediately declared the purchase, sale, distribution, or possession of this Bible a serious crime, resulting in severe punishment. At St. Paul's Cross in London, Bishop Tunstall preached a scathing sermon against the Tyndale Bible and ceremonially burned copies of this unlawful volume.

Tyndale's Bible Burned

In May 1527, an ingenious plan was hatched to stop the spread of Tyndale's Bibles. William Warham, the archbishop of Canterbury, conspired to purchase the remaining copies of



the Bible in order to destroy them. At first, this diabolical plot seemed brilliant. But it quickly backfired as the money from the sales provided the needed resources for Tyndale to then produce a revised second edition of his work. What Warham meant for evil, God meant for good. This allowed an even better version to be produced, with a larger print run.

In May 1528, Tyndale published his first major theological work, *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*. This writing focused upon the very heart of the gospel, namely, justification by faith alone in Christ alone. Tyndale proclaimed that faith alone saves, and true faith produces a living obedience to God's Word. This significant work drew heavily upon Luther's writings on this same subject. In places, Tyndale's writings are merely a translation or paraphrase of the German reformer's own words. As hostility toward Tyndale grew, he disguised his location by having the name of a non-existent printer, "Hans Luft," printed on the title page, along with a false place of

publication, “Marburg.” In reality, this important doctrinal work was printed by John Hoochstraton in Antwerp.

Orders to Arrest Tyndale

A more aggressive step to stop Tyndale was implemented. On June 18, 1528, an English cardinal, Thomas Wolsey, dispatched three agents to the continent of Europe in order to search for Tyndale. Wolsey also ordered John Hacket, English ambassador to the Low Countries (the Netherlands), to demand that the Regent of the Low Countries authorize the arrest of Tyndale. A manhunt was launched for this notorious enemy of the state, whose only crime was to bring God’s Word to the English-speaking people. What is more, anyone who assisted Tyndale was to be punished. Still, all attempts to catch this elusive reformer were unproductive as he shrewdly withdrew to Marburg for safety. Hacket reported back to England that Tyndale was nowhere to be found.

While in Marburg, Tyndale penned a second book, *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, published in 1528. Tyndale was calling upon every Christian to submit to every authority, including kings and magistrates. The existing hierarchy of the church, he further claimed, possessed no real spiritual authority. When King Henry VIII read this work, he immediately approved its message, commenting, “This book is for me and all kings to read!” Apart from his New Testament translation, *The Obedience of a Christian Man* was Tyndale’s most influential work.

Translating the Pentateuch

Yet another serious attempt was undertaken to track down Tyndale. In September 1528, John West, a friar, was dispatched from England to the European continent to find, seize, and bring this runaway reformer back to England. West arrived in Antwerp, dressed in civilian attire, and began scouring cities and interrogating printers, searching for this stealthy translator. At the same time, Hermann Rinck, a Cologne senator, was buying and destroying all the Tyndale Bibles he could locate. Sensing the pressure, Tyndale remained undercover in Marburg, improving his ability in Hebrew, a language unknown in England. With this new skill in hand, Tyndale immediately set out to translate the Hebrew Old Testament into English, while continuing a careful revision of his New Testament.

To camouflage his whereabouts, Tyndale shifted his location from Marburg to Antwerp in 1529. This thriving metropolis offered him access to capable printers, fellowship with reform-minded Englishmen, and a more direct shipping route to England. Under this cover, Tyndale completed his translation of the five books of Moses. With a new manhunt underway, Tyndale concluded the danger was too great to remain in this large city. Realizing the Pentateuch must be printed elsewhere, he boarded a ship in Antwerp, sailing to

the mouth of the Elbe River in Germany. His plan was then to venture south to Hamburg. However, the voyage was halted by a severe storm, causing shipwreck off the coast of the Low Countries. Tragically, all his books, writings, and translation of the Pentateuch were lost.


Retranslating the Pentateuch

After enduring such a devastating loss, Tyndale finally arrived in Hamburg. He was received into the house of the von Emerson family, who were strongly sympathetic to the cause of the Reformation. While there, Tyndale was reunited with Miles Coverdale, a former Cambridge classmate. Coverdale would eventually complete his own translation of the Bible into English, though not from the original languages, and publish it in 1535 in what is known as the Coverdale Bible. In this cloistered environment, Tyndale undertook the laborious task of retranslating the Pentateuch from Hebrew into English. This arduous work, with the assistance of Miles Coverdale, took him from March to December of 1529.

That same year, Sir Thomas More, a devout, intelligent Roman Catholic and Lord Chancellor, was commissioned by the king and the church in England to launch a character assassination upon Tyndale. The attack escalated with the publishing of *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, a vicious work in which More assaulted Tyndale, labeling him “the captain of English heretics,” “a hell-hound in the kennel of the devil,” “a new Judas,” “worse than Sodom and Gomorrah,” “an idolater and devil-worshipper,” and “a beast out of whose brutish beastly mouth cometh a filthy foam.” More maintained the Roman Catholic Church was the only true church. Whoever opposes the infallible teaching of Rome, he pronounced, is a heretic. This was a shot fired across Tyndale’s bow. Tyndale, to the contrary, contended the very opposite is true, that faith must be placed in Scripture alone. Anything short of this, Tyndale insisted, is of the spirit of Antichrist.

Undeterred, Tyndale published the five books of Moses in January 1530 in Antwerp. Just as before, these books were smuggled into England and distributed. Tyndale’s plans remained ambitious, namely, to complete the translation of the entire Old Testament. In late 1530, *The Practice of Prelates* appeared from the reformer’s pen. This work was a strong polemic against the Catholic clergy, documenting the corrupt relationship between the English crown and the Roman papacy. As a result, this book transformed King Henry VIII into an avowed enemy of Tyndale. ♦

Excerpt from *The Daring Mission of William Tyndale* by Steven J. Lawson, to be published by Reformation Trust in 2015.

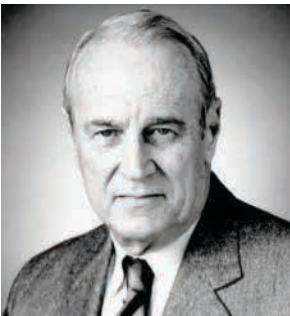


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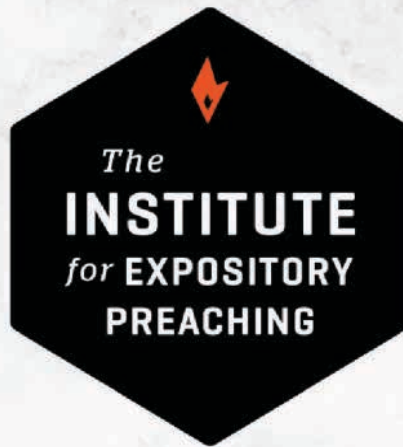
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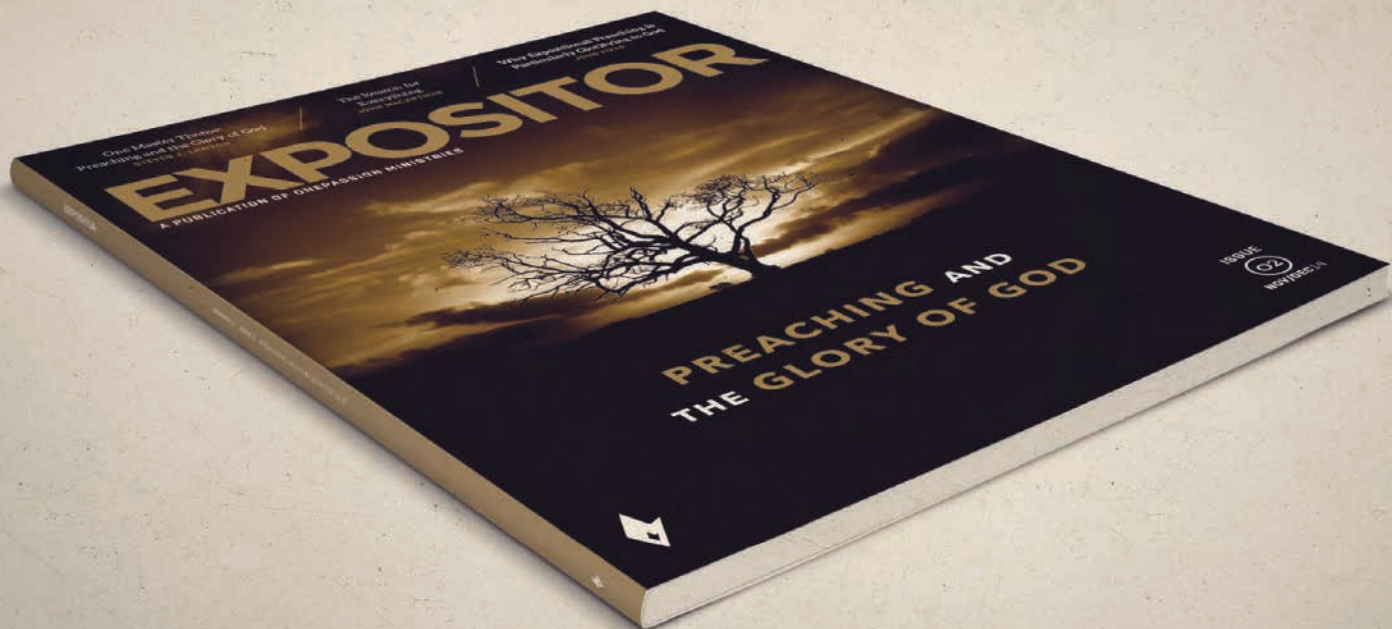
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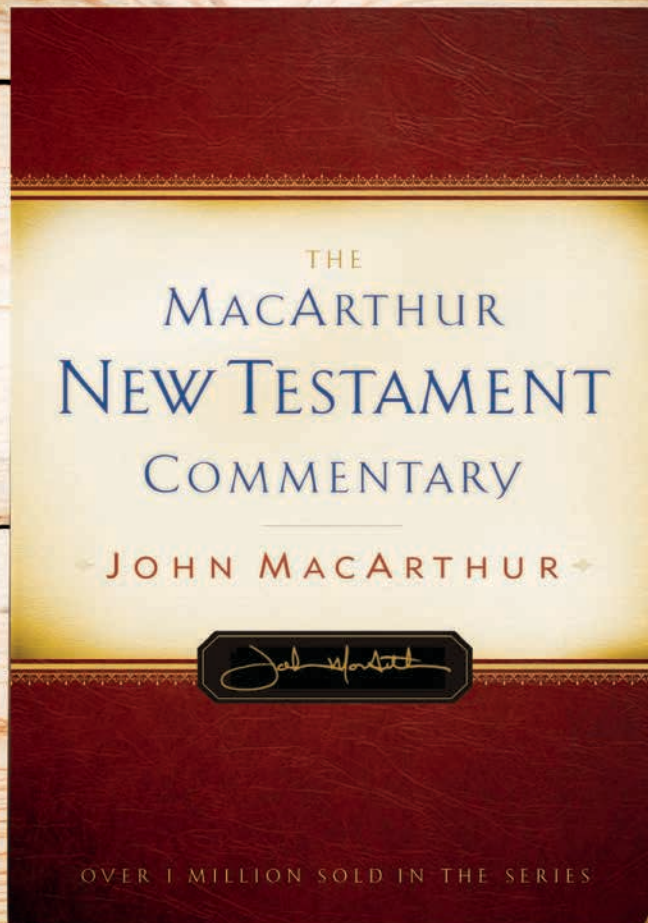




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