The God centered life and ministry

Of D. Martin Lloyd Jones

1. **JONES AND PREACHING**: J. I. Packer comments about the preaching of D. Martin Lloyd Jones [DMLJ], “I have never heard such preaching. The preaching of Lloyd Jones came with the force of an electrical shock bringing more of a sense of God than any man I have ever known.”

* Jones said “Preaching was to be a magnification of the God of the Word. Preaching is first of all a proclamation of the being of God. Preaching worthy of the Name starts with God, and with the declaration of His being and power and glory. Our business, our work, our first call is to declare in a certain and unequivocal manner the sovereignty, the majesty, and the holiness of God. True preaching after all is God acting. It is not just a man uttering his words. It is God using him. He is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.”
* When Jones became an itinerant preacher toward the latter portion of his life while battling with cancer, he slipped into the back of many churches and listened to the preaching. He said, “I can forgive the preacher almost anything if he gives me the sense of God, if he gives me something for my soul, if he gives me the sense that he is inadequate in himself, if he is handling something that is very great and glorious, if he gives me some glimpse of the majesty and glory of God.” For Jones, preaching was to pull back the veil and to showcase the glory and the greatness of God.
* John MacArthur stated “Martin Lloyd Jones was without question the finest biblical expositor of the 20th century. In fact, when the final chapter of church history is written, I believe the doctor will stand as one of the greatest preachers of all time.”
* RC Sproul said regarding Jones, “Martin Lloyd Jones was to 20TH Century England what Charles Spurgeon was to 19th century England. Jones was a man deeply committed to verse by verse preaching of the word of God with a pathos that is rare in the history of the church.” Jones took theology in one hand and passionate evangelism in the other.
* John piper states “Martin Lloyd Jones combined Calvin’s love for truth and sound reformed doctrine with the fire and passion of the 18th century Methodist revival.

1. **BORN AND BORN AGAIN**: He was born 11 days before the start of the 20TH century, December 20, 1899 in Cardiff, Wales. The great revival in Wales was in 1905. The revival impacted the culture and surroundings in which Jones grew up. He would always carry within him this Welch revivalist influence.

* In 1914, a financial hardship due to World War I, forced the Jones family to move to London. And there they attended a Welch, Calvinistic Methodist church.  The founder and the leader of this church was George Whitfield. He started Methodism, not John Wesley. He was Calvinistic in doctrine, and Methodist in zeal, fervor and passion.
* Jones was accepted into a medical training program at the age of 16 in London at Saint Bartholomew’s Hospital. It was the leading institution in western civilization. Jones immediately distinguished himself with his brilliance. We learn from the Puritans, the Reformers, and men like DMLJ that they used their minds in the study of the Word of God.
* At age 22, Jones became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons. That same year, he became a member of the Royal College of Physicians. He began to distinguish himself from his classmates. One of the leading physicians in all of England, Sir Thomas Hoarder, noticed Jones. Hoarder who was the personal physician to the King of England and the personal physician to the Royal Family. He asked Jones to practice with him as an assistant. The career path for Jones as a physician was such that he would skyrocket to the head of the medical community. At age 23 he received the Doctor of Medicine from London University. At age 24 he received research aid to study a heart condition. His research became very well-known, and it is located in one of the leading libraries of Wales to this day.
* Despite of all this, Jones was empty on the inside. He suffered the deaths of his brother and his father, and was deeply sobered by the shortness of life and the length of eternity. He came under deep conviction of his own sin. He was attending church. He was outwardly moral. But on the inside he was unconverted. He had never been born again. When he was then converted to Christ, he stated, “For many years I thought I was a Christian. When in fact I was not. It was only later that I came to see that I had never been a Christian, and I became one. What I needed was preaching that would convict me of sin, but I never heard it. The preaching we had was always based on the assumption that we are all Christians.” The church itself is always our first mission field.
* In his 20s, Jones was converted to faith in Christ after a soul-searching time of deep conviction of his sin. Then almost immediately he felt called to preach. He became involved in an intense struggle about how he should invest his life, and about the call of God upon his life. He wrestled with this so much that he became physically ill. He would nurse his patients to health and watch them go back into a life of sin. The futility of this struck DMLJ - to heal the body, but never address the most important part of a person’s life, their soul, their spirit before God?
* The pivotal moment came one night as he and his wife Beth Ann [along with another couple], attended a theater in London. He came out of the theater onto the street, and there on the street corner was a salvation band ensemble. No one was paying attention to that band. One man was standing up and preaching the gospel. In that moment, Jones said these are my people. And in his heart of hearts, he crossed the line stating, “O I am going to stand with these people.” In that moment he turned his back to one of the most prominent and promising medical careers that anyone in all of England could’ve had. He walked away from that to follow what he believed was a higher call upon his life - to spend the rest of his life telling people about Jesus Christ and the gospel.
* People said to him that he had given up so much. Jones’ response was, “I gave up nothing. I have received everything.  I count it the highest honor that God can confer on any man to call him to be a herald of the gospel.” In his mind, he gave up the world to serve the King of kings. In June of 1926, DMLJ made the radical decision to leave his medical career. Jones said, “I want to preach, and I am determined to preach. The precise nature of my future activities remains to be settled, but nothing can or nothing will prevent my going about to tell people of the good news of Jesus Christ.

1. **HIS MINISTRY IN WALES**: In 1926, he accepted a call to one of the most financially deprived areas in all of Wales. He married Beth Ann Phillips. DMLJ became pastor of Forward Movement Mission Hall, a church in decline in Sandfields, Whales. This church was known for its programs and its social gospel. This church was big into theater and into plays. The church would remove the pulpit off to the side for these entertaining events. The first thing that Jones did when he got there was to nail the pulpit to the floor. He fired the drama team within the church. He fired the theater club. He opened the Bible and began to preach the Word of God. The results were extraordinary. The church grew from 93 to over 500 within the next few years. The church grew not through a transfer of membership but through people coming to faith in Christ. [Beth Ann Jones’ salvation is discussed. She was under Jones’ preaching for two years until she understood the gospel. DMLJ never went to seminary or Bible College. He was self-taught and self-trained. Invitations arrived from all kinds of churches. Jones was traveling on trains through Wales and England and preaching to large crowds of thousands of people while ministering to this tiny little church.
2. **WESTMINSTER CHAPEL MINISTRY**: G. Campbell Morgan was the pastor of Westminster Chapel in London, the largest evangelical church in London. In 1938, under Morgan’s influence, Jones accepted the call to a place where he would preach for the next 30 years.

* He first became the associate pastor under G. Campbell Morgan, and then became the copastor with G. Campbell Morgan. World War II broke out. Morgan retired in 1943. Jones became the sole pastor. The Church was shrinking because everybody was moving out of London for their own personal safety.
* His preaching was theology on fire. It was theology coming through a man who is on fire. Jones is responsible for bringing expository preaching and reformed theology back to the front lines of the Church.  Ian Murray writes, “In the 1950s Martin Jones was virtually alone in England.”
* Describing what he meant by expository preaching, Jones states, “To expound is not simply to give the correct grammatical sense of a verse or passage. It does include that. It is rather to set out the principles of doctrine which the Word is intended to convey. True expository preaching is there for doctrinal preaching. It is preaching which addresses specific truths from God to men.”
* The leading authority on the history of preaching today said of Jones, “He was thought of as one of the leading evangelists of his day although he was even more famous as an expository preacher. In fact, he is a beautiful example of how these two genres of preaching are at their best when they are combined.”

1. **TWO MAIN CONTROVERSIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DM LJ**:

* **Billy Graham**: In 1963, DMLJ was asked by Billy Graham to be the Chair of the World Congress On Evangelism. This was a huge conference. The conference invited evangelists from all around the world to come and sit under the preaching and teaching of Billy Graham as well as others. Jones said he would accept the chairmanship on two conditions. 1) That you will stop giving a public invitation for people to get up out of their seat and walk forward and give the false impression that they are coming to Christ with their feet. 2) The second condition was that Billy Graham would stop having Roman Catholics sit on the platform and give the impression that they are born again when they are not. Graham said that he could not give up having Catholics sit on his platform and could not give up a public invitation.
* **John Stott**: The second controversy dealt with John Stott. Jones believed in the unity of true Bible believing Christians, in the inerrancy of the Word of God, the purity of grace, the necessity of the new birth in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. Based on this alliance, he DMLJ believed we could stand together and have fellowship with one another. This would exclude the liberal churches because they did not believe in inerrancy or in the exclusivity of salvation in Jesus Christ. After Jones made his presentation, John Stott, the chairman of the meeting, opposed this position. It brought about a painful breach in evangelicalism. Once again Jones was forced to stand alone.

1. **COLON CANCER:** Jones was diagnosed with colon cancer in 1968. He preached his final sermon at Westminster Chapel on March 1, 1968. He did not allow a farewell. He would not allow any recognition. It was to be a worship service like any other worship service with Christ in the very center. Through God’s providence, God took Jones from preaching to the desk so that DMLJ could take his sermon transcripts and compose them into books.  These commentaries are an invaluable resource to believers up to this day.
2. **WHY WAS HE SUCH A POWERFUL PREACHER?**:  The authority of Scripture; the primacy of Scripture in the pulpit; Jones understood that the preaching is what defined the worship, the fellowship, the evangelism, the ministry, and missions. He was committed to the continuous exposition of Scripture, to the integrity of study [digging into the Word of God]. Jones was committed to the purity of doctrine, and to the sufficiency of the Spirit as he preached the Word of God.
3. **ITERNANT MINISTRY**: DMLJ spent the last years of his life in itinerant ministry - 1968 to 1980. He continued to work on his manuscripts during these last 11 years. He traveled far and wide to preach. During this time, he wrote the very best book on preaching in the world according to Lawson, entitled, Preaching and Preachers.
4. **HE WAS FAITHFUL TO THE END**: He preached his last sermon on June 8, 1980. Two days before his death, he wrote this to his family: “Do not pray for healing. Do not hold me back from the glory of the Lord.” This God centered life longed for the world to come in order to be in the immediate presence of Him in whom he had put his trust. The legacy of Jones is incalculable due to the restoration of expository preaching. If you preach the Bible, you preach a big God.
5. **AT THE END OF A SERMON ON ROMANS 11:36** - “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” Jones stated, “What does this mean? It means that you confess that you are nothing. That you confess that you are a vile, hell deserving sinner. That you acknowledge gladly that you are what you are by the grace of God. That you have ceased to defend yourself. You have ceased to try to excuse yourself. You have ceased to try to justify yourself in anyway whatsoever. I go further. That you have ceased to try to put your mind against God’s way. Are you still arguing with the doctrine of election? If you are, you have not said your “amen” to all of this. Do not forget the mighty demonstration of Romans 9–11, the purposes of God according to election. Are you still standing up and putting your mind and opinion against God? If so, you are not saying “amen” to this doxology. The man who says, “amen”, is the man who says I am nothing. He is all. I know nothing. I can do nothing. I can have nothing. I am simply a vile sinner. I owe all things to the grace and the glory of the mercy of God. And I give it to Him, meaning the praise, with my lips. I confess Him and I say I am nothing. And I say all is of Him.” Lawson believes this quote is the punctuation mark on the life and ministry of D. Martin Lloyd Jones - this God focused, God centered, God exalting, God magnifying life.