



FOREWORD

Writing a foreword is a funny business. Even though I've asked plenty of people to write a foreword for my books, now that I'm writing one for someone else I have to stop and think what they're for. I suppose a foreword is kind of like a big endorsement, a really long one that gets put at the front of the book instead of the back. The prospective reader is meant to think, 'Hey, would you look at that—someone I know really likes this book written by someone I've never heard of.' The foreword grabs your attention and makes you say, 'I'll give this book a try.'

Herein lies my dilemma with the book in your hands: I should not be writing a foreword for Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. I mean, he never even asked for one!





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Okay, so the fact he died when I was three years old makes a personal invitation from the great Welsh preacher a bit unlikely. But that's precisely my point. By standard foreword protocol, the good Doctor should be writing for me. He's is my elder, my example, my teacher, one of my heroes. It was kind of Christian Focus to ask me to supply a foreword, but there's a chance this could backfire for them. I can hear it now: 'Lloyd-Jones I know, but who is DeYoung?' This is one work where we must hope the foreword writer doesn't distract the reader from noticing the real author of the book.

Having said all that, let's imagine by some strange (and most unfortunate) fluke that you've read something by Kevin DeYoung and nothing by Martyn Lloyd-Jones. So here you are, reading this foreword, looking for a push over the edge into the canyon of consumer spending. I know the feeling. Let me try to give you a nudge.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the medically trained doctor and famous pastor at London's Westminster Chapel, has been one of the biggest influences on my Christian life and pastoral ministry. Here's how it went: First I read *The Puritans*, a collection of his addresses from Puritan and Westminster Conferences. I loved the history and was quickly enthralled with Lloyd-Jones theological acumen. I then poured over his early evangelistic sermons at Aberavon. Then I plowed through his most famous work, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (a book my wife was reading when we first met—a strong indication I had found the right woman!). Later I read and reread *Spiritual Depression*. Ditto for *Preaching and Preachers*. Several other books from the best English-speaking expositor of twentieth century also sit on my shelves.

And I'll never forget getting Iain Murray's two volume biography of Lloyd-Jones as a Christmas present while





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I was still in college. I read it day and night during my break and whenever I got a chance into the spring semester. It was an exhilarating experience, which is saying something for a work that tops out over a thousand pages. Reading about Lloyd-Jones I knew I wanted to preach, and I wanted to preach the same gospel he preached with the same precision, the same fearless passion, and the same unequivocal commitment to the truth of Scripture.

I agreed to write this foreword because it gives me great pleasure to think of a new generation of Christians and ministers finding the same spiritual treasures I've found in Lloyd-Jones. If I can lead anyone to Lloyd-Jones I'm glad to have done my part.

A stubborn Welshman, Lloyd-Jones was far from perfect. He too quickly slipped into superlatives and could be too opinionated at times. But anyone who has read his books or heard his sermons (and his books are more or less typed up sermons) will testify that this man was anointed by God to preach the Word. His writing is theologically precise, without being arid. His prose is conversational, yet without being cloying and colloquial. His exegesis is slow and plodding, but never boring. His ability to take a phrase of Scripture and hold it up the light so we can see all the angles and refractions, all the implications and applications, was Piperesque before there was John Piper. His books are spiritual in the best sense of the word.

This particular book is a searching exposition of Psalm 73, that great chapter that starts with doubt, ends in delight, and has God everywhere in between. In the first chapter, Lloyd-Jones hints that this is a book for the 'battered and beaten,' for the one who can no longer 'give the impression that he or she is always walking on the mountain top.' For anyone who has ever wondered if life is fair, or if God is fair,





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these sermons will speak to your predicament. The Doctor will apply the balm of Scripture to soothe your soul and strengthen your faith.

And yet, like a good doctor, Lloyd-Jones will also expose our real condition. He had little patience for those who used the fine sounding phrases of Scripture 'like drugs' to dull our senses and mask the real problems in our hearts. He always pressed home the hard parts of the Bible, so that by an honest assessment of ourselves we could find grace to help in our time of need. This book is no different. Lloyd-Jones challenges us on everything from thinking spiritually to accepting God's sovereign discipline in our lives. He calls the Christian away from self-pity and introspection. He rebukes the Christian, on the one hand, for believing he has a right to God's mercy, and on the other hand, for fearing that God's mercy will ever let him go. This book has the right mix of affliction for the comfortable and comfort for the afflicted.

So by all means, take advantage of this new book of old sermons. If you haven't read Martyn Lloyd-Jones before, this is as a good place to start as any. *Faith on Trial* makes for wonderful devotional reading. It can also be a supplement to your study of Psalm 73. It's also an engaging, honest look at Christianity perfect for an inquiring non-Christian. The truths are deep, but the approach is accessible. Lloyd-Jones gives you meat, but he cuts it up first.

And yes, the book is better than the foreword. Trust me.

Kevin DeYoung
Senior Pastor, University Reformed Church
East Lansing, Michigan

