



FOREWORD

I'm a die-hard believer in unction. Uction is an old-fashioned word which describes an effusion of power from the Holy Spirit as one preaches. It is the one thing preachers need above everything else. It is the accompanying power of the Spirit. It's what Charles Spurgeon dubbed 'the sacred anointing.' It is power from on high.

In his book on the preaching of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Sacred Anointing*, Tony Sargent describes unction well. He writes:

[Uction] is the afflatus of the Spirit resting on the speaker. It is the preacher gliding on eagles' wings, soaring high, swooping low, carrying and being carried along by a dynamic other than his own. His consciousness





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of what is happening is not obliterated. He is not in a trance. He is being worked on but is aware that he is still working. He is being spoken through but he knows he is still speaking. The words are his but the facility with which they come compels him to realize that the source is beyond himself. The man is overwhelmed. He is on fire.

Similarly, in his book *Lloyd-Jones: Messenger of Grace*, Iain Murray writes:

Preaching under the anointing of the Holy Spirit is preaching which brings with it a consciousness of God. It produces an impression upon the hearer that is altogether stronger than anything belonging to the circumstances of the occasion. Visible things fall into the background; the surroundings, the fellow worshippers, even the speaker himself, all become secondary to an awareness of God Himself. Instead of witnessing a public gathering, the hearer receives the conviction that he is being addressed personally, and with an authority greater than that of a human messenger.

No one that I've ever heard preach, preached with more unction than Dr Lloyd-Jones. Every time he preached, the voice of God boomed in and through the text. The fire fell and the foundations shook. His preaching embodied both the toughness and tenderness of the gospel. It was sweet and strong—filled with heat and light. Every message was a matter of life and death!

At various times in my life, the preaching of Dr Lloyd-Jones has wrecked me afresh and set me free.

Not long ago I was in desperate need for God to liberate me from the slavish pressure to perform by reminding me that He is big and I am small. So, I went





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back to one of Lloyd-Jones' 1959 sermons on revival. With great unction, he delivered the reminder I craved:

Our supreme need, our only need, is to know God, the living God and the power of his might. We need nothing else. It is just that – the power of the living God, to know that the living God is among us and that nothing else matters ... I say, forget everything else. Forget everything else. We need to realize the presence of the living God amongst us. Let everything else be silent. This is no time for minor differences. We all need to know the touch of the power of the living God.

This kind of reorientation to the size and splendour of God and the gospel is typical in every sermon I ever heard Lloyd-Jones preach. Andrew Bonar once said, 'It is one thing to bring truth from the Bible, and another to bring it from God himself through the Bible.' Lloyd-Jones did this each and every time he stood up to preach—and he does it again in the sermons you're holding in your hands.

A while back I developed a brief list of five characteristics—or marks—of a good and reliable preacher (based on the five 'solas' of the Reformation):

MARK 1 (SOLA SCRIPTURA)

Does the preacher ground everything he says in the Bible? Does he, in other words, begin with the authority and sufficiency of Scripture? A reliable preacher seeks to revel in, wrestle with and expound from the Bible. He starts with the Bible. All of his comments flow from what a particular passage in the Bible says. He doesn't simply use the Bible to support what he wants to say—he submits to what the Bible says and refuses to submit the Bible to what he says. He cares about both the Old and New Testament. He refuses to take verses out of context.





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He recognizes the unity of the Bible. He acknowledges that both the Old and New Testament tell one story and point to one figure, namely that God saves sinners through the accomplished work of His son Jesus Christ.

MARK 2 (SOLA GRATIA)

Does the preacher freely emphasize that because of sin, a right relationship with God can only be established by God's grace alone? Beware of any teaching that emphasizes man's ability over God's ability; man's freedom over God's freedom; man's power over God's power; man's initiative over God's initiative. Beware of any teaching which subtly communicates that a right relationship with God depends ultimately on human response over Divine sovereignty.

MARK 3 (SOLA FIDE)

Does the preacher stress that salvation is not achieved by what we can do, rather salvation is received by faith in what Christ has already done? It has been rightly stated that there really are only two religions: the religion of human accomplishment and the religion of Divine accomplishment. Does the preacher emphasize the former or the latter? A reliable carrier of God's truth always highlights the fact that God saves sinners; sinners don't save themselves.

MARK 4 (SOLA CHRISTUS)

Does the preacher underline that Christ is the exclusive mediator between God and man? Does he affirm and proclaim that Jesus is 'the way, the truth, and the life' and that nobody comes to the Father but by Christ? Does he talk about sin and the necessity of Christ? Preachers must learn how to unveil and unpack the truth of the gospel from every Biblical text they preach in such a way that





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it results in the exposure of both the idols of our culture and the idols of our hearts. The faithful exposition of our true Saviour from every passage in the Bible painfully reveals all of the pseudo-saviours that we trust in culturally and personally. Every sermon ought to disclose the subtle ways in which we as individuals and we as a culture depend on lesser things than Jesus to provide the security, acceptance, protection, affection, meaning and satisfaction that only Christ can supply. In this way, good preachers must constantly show just how relevant and necessary Jesus is; they must work hard to show that we are great sinners but Christ is a great Saviour.

MARK 5 (SOLA DEO GLORIA)

Does the preacher exalt God above all? A reliable preacher will always lead you to marvel at God. A true carrier of God's truth will always lead you to encounter the glory of God. A God-centered teacher is just that: God-centered. He will preach and teach in such a way that you find yourself hungering and thirsting for God. You will listen to sermon after sermon and walk away with grand impressions of Divine personality, not grand impressions of human personality.

I think you will discover after reading through these sermons that Lloyd-Jones passes each test with flying colors.

His text—Psalm 1. His message—the gospel.

Through this Psalm he rightly shows that the Bible tells one story and points to one figure. It narrates how God rescues His world that we wrecked, and exalts Christ as the one who accomplishes the rescue. In the Old Testament God revealed Himself through types and shadows, promises and prophecies. In the New Testament God reveals Himself in Christ who is the substance of





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every shadow and the fulfilment of every promise and prophecy. The Old Testament predicts God's rescuer; the New Testament presents God's rescuer. So, throughout his exposition of Psalm 1 he captivately and convictingly shows that while we are great sinners, Christ is a great Saviour. Over and over again he highlights the fact that while our sin reaches far, God's grace reaches farther and that God's capacity to clean things up is infinitely greater than our capacity to mess things up.

These are sermons filled with heart and hope. They possess a rare combination (compared to much preaching today) of gravity and gladness, depth and delight, doctrine and devotion, precept and passion, truth and love. By God's grace you will find yourself (as I did) weeping over your sin, celebrating your forgiveness, and exalting in God's bigness. These sermons are intended to make you feel your desperation, cry out for deliverance and celebrate your pardon.

Most importantly, I came away from these sermons sensing my freedom in bigger, brighter ways. God used Lloyd-Jones to remind me that my relationship to Him doesn't depend on my performance for Jesus, but Jesus' performance for me. I learned that because Jesus was strong for me, I'm free to be weak. Because Jesus won for me, I'm free to lose. I was reminded that only the gospel can cause you to rejoice and be glad in your expendability: because Jesus was someone, you're FREE to be no one.

Once again, Lloyd-Jones has reoriented my heart and mind to the gospel. My prayer is that God will use these sermons to do the same for you.

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