

What Present-Day Christians Need to Learn and Apply from the Puritans - Part 1

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Host: David Wheaton 00:08

What Present Day Christians Need to Learn and Apply From the Puritans.

That is the topic we'll discuss today on The Christian Worldview Radio Program where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a non-profit listener-supported radio ministry. Thanks to you, our listeners, for your prayer, your encouragement, and your support. You can connect with us by calling our toll free number 1-888-646-2233, writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331, or visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

In 2000 years of church history, the two most prominent eras for the propagation of sound doctrine were in the first century when the apostles of Christ took the Gospel across the Roman Empire, and then in the 1500s and 1600s, when the Protestant Reformation took place.

But as always, Satan, along with those who knowingly or unknowingly are used by him, attack and undermine anything that accurately represents God and His Word.

In the mid 1500s in England, just 40 or so years after Roman Catholic monk Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses for church reform on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany (that was on October 31, 1517), a group of devout Christians, particularly in England, known as the Puritans, emerged. Some Puritans worked within the Protestant Church of England to "purify" it from the influence of Roman Catholicism and the British monarchs, while other Puritans separated from the state church, suffering persecution, dispersion and even martyrdom.

The Puritans-men like John Bunyan of Pilgrims Progress or John Winthrop, or Samuel Rutherford in Scotland, William Perkins, John Foxe and Foxes Book of Martyrs and others, were marked by everything the current day mainstream Evangelical movement is not-a high and holy view of God, the absolute authority of God's word on all matters of life and faith, an accurate proclamation of the gospel, and a deep commitment to personal sanctification. Put another way, the Puritans were laser focused on a precise understanding of who God is and applying His word to every area of life.

So this weekend and next in the lead up to the commemoration of Reformation Day, again, that's what the world celebrates as Halloween today, but what took place on October 31, 1517 was so much bigger than that. And also Thanksgiving. The American Pilgrims were a branch of the Puritans. We will be joined by a man who is an expert on the Puritans, Joel Beeke.

Joel is president of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, minister of the Heritage Reformed Congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and also the host of the excellent documentary film we'll be featuring today entitled, Puritan: All of Life to the Glory of God. As you will hear, there is a lot for Christians and churches today to learn and apply from the Puritans. And so we hope you're able to join us for this two part series. We will also tell you how you can receive a copy of this DVD documentary film, Puritan, throughout the program today.

But first, let's get to the interview with Joel Beeke. Joel, it's so good to have you back on the program. It's actually been many years since you were on The Christian Worldview. Let's start out before we get into the Puritans, with a personal question. Remind us how you came to saving faith in Christ. And then what caused you to take such an interest in the Puritans?

Guest: Joel Beeke 04:09

You know, David, it's great to be with you. I grew up in a very godly home, very conservative home. My parents love the Lord. And when I came to the teen years, I began to question a few things about my dad's conservative convictions. And then went to school. I grew up in a public school actually. The teacher put on the board one day there is no God and signed his name beneath it, and said, Give me three minutes and I'll prove to you there's no God and you can have the rest of the hour to try to contradict me. And I was extremely shy as a young person. And he did the traditional atheistic argument that how could God be kind and merciful and allow the Holocaust to happen? And I had never raised my hand in a classroom in my entire life. I was 14 years old, and I just stood up out of my seat, didn't raise my hand and stood up. I was very angry with him. And I said, I don't know how good the theology is, but I said, But the Jews said that "His blood be upon us and their children" when they crucified the Lord of Glory. And he was like, shocked, and said, he is just shocked to hear me speak. And he said, Come and see me after class. I came up after class, I defended God.

And why is this important? Well, I walked away from the school that day and on my way home, it just hit me. Well, I'm starting to argue against God, at least that's what my conscience was telling me when I challenged some of my dad's ideas. And I was arguing for God in the classroom. And it struck me with power, you don't even know God yourself, so who do you think you are? And that began a search for God and crying out to God. And about a year later, I took a long trip with my brother and a friend 8000 miles from Michigan all the way out to the Pacific Ocean and back through the states. And I was actually converted in Yellowstone

National Park, where God became real to me for the first time and brought me into a profound conviction of sin. I came back home to Michigan, said to all my friends, I cannot have you be my friends until I find God. I just came home every day after school, stopped all my school activities, except to basketball and I holed myself up in my upstairs bedroom, and read the Bible from cover to cover repeatedly, and read my dad's entire bookcase of three shelves about three feet per shelf of Puritan literature, book after book, he let me mark up in the books.

And it was the Puritan writings more than anything else, as well as one visit from a pastor that brought me to liberty in Christ. And so once I came to liberty in Christ, I felt that everybody needed to read these Puritan books. So I started a church library. From there I started Bible Truth Books. And when I was 16 years old, a book ministry selling the Puritans basically. And I've been selling the Puritans for 53 years ever since.

Host: David Wheaton 07:28

Wow! That is quite a story. Joel Beeke with us today on The Christian Worldview. He is the president of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He's also the pastor of Heritage Reformed Congregation in the same city, the founder of Reformation Heritage Books. We have all these links at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

Okay, we're going to talk about this Puritan documentary film that you hosted, Joel. The subtitle is, *All of Life to the Glory of God*. This has the history, the beliefs, the worship, the lifestyle, how the Puritans were civically engaged, the persecution they endured, the influence they've had on Western Civilization. And so I'd like to go through some of the sound bites in the film and ask you some questions about the Puritans. And I want to start out with a basic question. And I'm going to start by playing a brief soundbite of, actually you, at the beginning of the film, where you said this:

Sound bite: Puritan documentary 08:31

It says here that a Puritan is a person with strict and severe moral beliefs, especially about pleasure. They say that Puritanism was fanatical, joyless, judgmental. They say they were obsessed with making rules, and were patriarchal, haunted by the fear that someone somewhere may be happy. Who were the Puritans? Is the reputation deserved? And is there anything they had that you and I might need?

Host: David Wheaton 09:08

Okay, so that's the first question here for someone listening today whose heard of the Puritans but really have no idea who they are. Maybe they confuse them with the Pilgrims. They do get a bit of a bad rap, so to speak. You know, they're kind of these austere people and trying to take all the fun out of life as you mentioned in that soundbite there. The term was used in 1560 the film said. It wasn't a compliment. It was a name given to them. So just tell us briefly

because we're going to get a lot into the Puritans today, but give us a brief description of who they are and how they differed or compared to the Pilgrims, who people know about with regards to Thanksgiving in America.

Guest: Joel Beeke 09:46

The Puritans were a group of people, especially led by ministers, who from about 1560 to the early 18th century, 1710 or so, so for a good 150 years, they were very concerned to take the Reformation truths of the 16th century, and to apply them powerfully to every area of life, so as to live to the glory of God. So think of it this way. The Reformation comes along, you've got Luther, Calvin, and so on. And they rediscover the doctrines of grace that the early church fathers had begun to explore. And they go back to the sources, they learn the Greek and Hebrew well, they base their teaching strictly on the Bible, and they develop a reformed view of worship, reformed view of justification by faith alone, in Christ alone, through salvation, based on the Word, and they're hammering out all these major doctrines.

The second generation, the children that grow up, begin to take some of this for granted. And then it's at the end of the second generation, or you might say, the third generation, where the Puritans come along and say, Wait a minute, we're taking this for granted, and these grand truths of the Reformation, which we embrace all of them, but we need to apply them much more diligently to every area of our lives. How can I be a true godly husband? How can I be a true godly employee or employer? Or how can I be a true godly citizen of the nation and so on. And so the Puritans wanted to thoroughly reform the church according to biblical principles, and apply reformation truth to every area of life and to live a pure life, a godly life.

So at first they rejected the name, Puritans, because it was a derogatory label placed upon them. But later on, they came to embrace it and said, You know what? We do really want to live pure before God, but the joy of the Lord is our strength, because they believed that holiness produces happiness. And so I'm convinced after studying the Puritans for 53 years, that there is no group of people ever on planet earth that were so joyful as the Puritans. Well, how did they get such a bad rap then, but they were joyless? Well, if you're a Christian, you'll be able to identify with this. Anyone who's a little bit more conservative than you, there's a tendency to put them down. And they make you feel guilty, because while you're striving for holiness, maybe at a level beyond what you are, and so Christians are often prone to look at those who are to the right of them and say, "You're just a bunch of legalists". So yes, the Puritans did live conservative lives, but they would say conservative, "biblical lives", we want to live our entire life to the glory of God alone. That was their passion. And of course, that was already the passion of John Calvin, 1509 to 1564. He wanted a Christian to live entirely for the glory of God. The Puritans just put that into practice in every area of life.

Host: David Wheaton 13:20

Joel Beeke with us today here on The Christian Worldview. Before we get to the next question, were the Pilgrims that came to America, I think in around 1619, were they precursors to the Puritans? Or how are they connected if at all?

Guest: Joel Beeke 13:36

So the simplest way, it's a little more complex than this, but allow me a little generalization here, but the simplest way to explain it is that there are really three kinds of English Puritans. You've got the main group that settled in Massachusetts Bay Colony in America, at least in many states in England, who felt that the Anglican Church in England didn't go far enough. They wanted with their reformation, they wanted the Reformation, to be like it was in Calvin's Geneva, more thorough, so they view the Anglican Church as a halfway house between Reformation and Roman Catholicism. And their conscience ran up against The Common Book of Prayer that the Anglican Church said that every minister needs to use. So for example, in 1662, when Queen Elizabeth said, You've got to conform to this book of prayer, 2000 Puritan ministers left their pulpits on that Sunday when that was implemented. And so they left the church but they really cared deeply about the church and they always wanted to reform her but they were outside of her.

The second group of Puritans are those that maybe were protected by the Archbishops who didn't obey the Queen's rule to abide only by The Common Prayer Book, they kind of looked the other way. And they stayed in the Anglican Church, but embraced the strong emphasis of the Puritans and living a godly life to the glory of God. And these Puritans became very popular preachers in the Anglican Church, because their preaching was so personal, so heartfelt, and so passionate.

And there's a third group of Puritans that were more radical. They just thought the Anglican Church wasn't worth even salvaging. They weren't concerned about it anymore, they abandoned it completely, many of them faced persecution, and they came to America as well, but they were known as the Pilgrims. So the Pilgrims are kind of the, you might say, the radical fringe of Puritanism. And they tended to be a bit more uneducated maybe than most of the other Puritan ministers who left the church but were still concerned about the church and wanted to reform the church of England from outside of her and kept writing books with one eye back on the Church of England.

Host: David Wheaton 16:07

That was very helpful, Joel. Thank you for that. Joel Beeke with us today here on The Christian Worldview. We'll take a short break and come back. We have much more coming up. In the meantime, we are offering this DVD documentary film *Puritan: All of Life to the Glory of God* for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview for a limited time. This is a two-hour film

with lots of substance. It features preachers and scholars such as Al Mohler, John MacArthur, John Piper, Sinclair Ferguson, Steven Lawson, Steven Nichols, and many more. Just get in contact with us the usual ways at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org or by calling us toll free 1-888-646-2233 or by writing to us at Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. You are listening to The Christian Worldview. Much more coming up. I'm David Wheaton.

Fall Clearance Sale 17:04

It's that time of year for our fall clearance sale, where you will receive deep discounts, some more than 50% off on dozens of resources in The Christian Worldview store. There are all kinds of books and DVDs for adults and children, Bibles, gospel tracts, even scripture verse greeting cards.

Every item in our store has been carefully selected to be compatible with the mission of The Christian Worldview, to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. The Fall Clearance Sale ends November 15. So this is a great time to select resources for you and your family, your church or small group, and for Christmas gifts.

Go to TheChristianWorldview.org and click on fall clearance sale, or call us toll free at 1-888-646- 2233 for recommendations and order by phone. Again, that's 1-888-646-2233 or TheChristianWorldview.org.

Featured Resource: New Life in Christ18:03

The momentum from the world is like a tsunami that's flooding our entire country. And the only way to change it is for people to be born again, is for there to be a great awakening in our country again and for people to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. And that will never happen until there is first conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment, for people to repent and to turn from their sins and to turn to God and embrace his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That was Dr. Steven Lawson. His book, *New Life in Christ What Really Happens When You're Born Again And Why It Matters* is available for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Regular retail is \$16.99. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Host: David Wheaton 19:10

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website [The ChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org) where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children, and support the ministry. Now back to the interview with Joel Beeke, host of the Puritan documentary as we discuss what present day Christians need to learn and apply from the Puritans. Okay, Joel, let's hear another soundbite

from the film regarding John Wycliffe and William Tyndale, and then I'll follow up with a question.

Sound bite: Puritan documentary 19:45

Wycliffe is there. He's in many ways a trailblazer for at least English translation and English access to the Word of God in our own language.

The mornings before Tyndale, the beginning of the dawn now of reformation light in England.

Institutionally, the Roman Catholic Church of that period, for various reasons, is set against this desire to have the Word of God available, accessible for the common man and woman.

Then the Romish Church hated all of that. And of course, they took his body and they burned it to pieces, and they didn't want there to be any center where people could come on pilgrimages.

And then his ashes were dumped into the river, Swift.

The river took the ashes into the sea, and it went across the seas and washed ashore finally in all the nations of the world, so that the truths that Wycliffe loved spread by his life and by his brave death, to the nations of the world.

Host: David Wheaton 21:09

So Joel, when you listen to that soundbite from the film, Puritan, we should be so thankful for John Wycliffe and then William Tyndale for translating the Bible into English. This changed everything in the English speaking world. So tell us about how John Wycliffe's translation of the Bible and then William Tyndale, in the 1500s, in the opposition of the Roman Catholic Church to this, how did this bring rise to the Puritan movement?

Guest: Joel Beeke 21:37

The translation of the Bible into English by Wycliffe (and Wycliffe died already in 1384) from the Latin Vulgate, and then later, by William Tyndale, in the 1500s, from the Hebrew and Greek texts, laid the foundation for the spread of the English Reformation. S

o God began the Reformation by restoring to his people the principle of Sola Scriptura, so that all human traditions and practices must be judged by this supreme authority of God's Word. Now that was bitterly opposed by the Roman Catholic Church. Believe that of course the pope when he spoke ex-cathedra, sacred pronouncements from his chair, as it were, was a continuing supernatural revelation of God. So the Puritan movement, in a sense, was simply a

call for further reformation, to reform the whole Christian life from the government and worship of the church, to the raising of children in the household according to the Word of God.

So it's hard to conceive of the Puritanism, because it's such a biblical movement without an English Bible. And since the William Tyndale Bible impacted the Geneva Bible, and also later on in the later Puritan days, the Tyndale Bible was hugely influential in the King James version or the Authorized Version of the Bible, puritanism wouldn't have been what it was, without the translations of Wycliffe and Tyndale.

Host: David Wheaton 23:11

Now, speaking of the English and the British monarchy, you mentioned King James there. In the film, it gives great history of this time and an important time in history. The Reformation of course started in 1517, with Luther nailing that 95 Thesis to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. That just started the whole reformation out of the Roman Catholic Church. It changed, Europe, changed the West. But the British monarchy was sort of changing back and forth between Roman Catholicism and then the Church of England and there was lots of happenings within the monarchy. King Henry the VIII had his marriage to Catherine annulled, and then he was married to Anne Boleyn, and then their son, Edward, the VI. And then the persecutions of Mary or known as Bloody Mary. You show in the film how the English monarchy is fueling the growth of puritanism as well. Just tell us briefly how that came to be.

Guest: Joel Beeke 24:09

You're right in your comments. King Henry the VIII, really was no reformer. But his quest for a male heir led him to break with the Roman Catholic Church to establish the Church of England under his royal headship. So on the one hand, that opened the door for the Reformation to enter England. First by the way through some Lutheran influence, and then later through heavier reformed influence. However, it also set up the monarch and the civil government as the enforcers of religious uniformity. So under Queen Elizabeth, who reigned for like 55 years, that uniformity was something of a compromise between reformed doctrine and medieval Roman Catholic Church government and worship. So the Puritans sought to reform the government and the worship and to promote Evangelical holiness all throughout England. Then later on, Charles the first decided that religious uniformity had to move in a more decidedly Armenian and Roman Catholic direction. And so that drift, combined with the authoritarian personal reign of Charles, drove many of the Puritans to seek refuge in the Netherlands or New England, and ultimately led to Civil War and the relatively brief reign of the Puritan Commonwealth in the 1650s.

Host: David Wheaton 25:37

Joel Beeke with us today on The Christian Worldview. He's the host of the documentary film we're talking about entitled, Puritan: All of Life to the Glory of God. He's also the president of

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. Here's another soundbite from the film Puritan, about the kind of deep commitment that the Puritans held to.

Sound bite: Puritan documentary 25:37

The Puritans, like the Christians in the early church, feared heresy more than martyrdom. They believed that heresy would damn men and women to a last eternity. They didn't simply believe that intellectually, they felt it viscerally. It was a reality they lived with. And if we are not ready and willing to lay down our lives for the truth of God, then not only is God being dishonored, people's eternal lives are being imperiled.

Host: David Wheaton 26:38

Now that's a sobering soundbite from the film, Joel. They feared heresy, so false doctrine, more than they feared martyrdom or dying. Oh that we would have that kind of mentality in our life, that they're more concerned for the reputation of God, that he's accurately represented in how we follow Him than the persecution and martyrdom they were facing from the monarchs and also the Roman Catholic Church. And they were concerned that the Church of England was taking on the appearance of the Roman Catholic Church. The question is, What led or what grows that kind of deep commitment to the truth of God's word, even in the face of losing your life?

Guest: Joel Beeke 27:22

Well, David says in the Psalms, "Thy favor is more than life". And the Puritans really believed that. And they believed that if God is the living God of the Bible, which they believed for 110%, then He's worth everything. He's worth far more than your life. This life is not about me or you, they would say, it's about glorifying God, who is our Creator, who's altogether worthy. And so they would say things like this. I think of Jeremiah Burls. The title of his book is The Evil of Evils. But he has five points on his title page. And one point is this, that the smallest sin is greater than the greatest affliction. So they learned to hate sin with holy hatred. They learned to see that affliction, which could go all the way up to martyrdom, would be sanctifying in their lives and bring more glory to God and therefore they didn't ask for affliction but they didn't also run away from affliction. But yes, for them doing God's will, obeying God, being joyful in the Lord, and following His commandments, fearing God, being godly is far more important than whether you live or you die. So heresy, understanding biblical doctrines rightly, that was extremely important to them. In fact, more important than their lives.

Host: David Wheaton 28:46

A lesson in there for all of us today. Joel Beeke with us today on The Christian Worldview. There's another soundbite in the film. I'll just play a short bit of it, where you talk about how they love the gospel. Here it is.

Sound bite: Puritan documentary 28:59

The good news that Jesus Christ had lived the perfect life, and then died a sacrificial death in their place and on their behalf, transformed life for them on a daily basis. And just trusting Christ wasn't merely intellectual for them. It was deep, it was rich, it was emotional.

The Puritans effectively took the baton from reformers like Tyndale, Luther, and Calvin, and they shared with them the five solas of the Reformation. They believed that they were saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. And they believed that scripture alone was their highest and only authority. And those are crucial distinctions between Puritan belief and Roman Catholic belief. Roman Catholicism said and still says, it is grace plus the sacraments that will save you. It is faith plus good works. Christ plus the church. Scripture plus the authority of tradition. And the Puritans were saying, together with all the great reformers, No. Scripture makes it clear that it's by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone that we are saved. Anything else, and you're robbing God of his glory.

Host: David Wheaton 30:24

So they knew what the gospel was and an accurate understanding of what the gospel is. Not just God wants to be your friend. They understood that Christ died for their sins, according to the Scriptures, He rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and how that would affect and impact the way they lived their lives. Then you talk about the five solas that came out of the Reformation. The question, Joel is, Why is the gospel, understanding an accurate version of the gospel and those five solas that came out of the Reformation, grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, scripture alone, for the glory of God alone, why is that what is battled over in every single generation?

Guest: Joel Beeke 31:10

If we don't have an authoritative base for our Christianity, we've got nothing more than all the false religions of the world today. And therefore, you need sola scriptura. That's our authoritative guide for life, the Puritans would say, and directs all our faith, all our doctrine. And so since we believe that with the closing of the canon with the Book of Revelation, supernatural revelation through the Scriptures, has now ceased. We have in these 66 books what the Puritans called the library of the Holy Spirit, combined into one book cover in the Holy Bible, the authoritative guide of how to live and how to die in comfort and in peace. And so that's critical. And the Scriptures reveal that Christ alone is our Savior, and there is no other way we can save ourselves. And he saves us by his double obedience, as Paul puts it so plainly in Romans. That he actively obeys the law for us because we can't do it perfectly. So that earns us the right to everlasting life. And he possibly, that is in his passio, his Latin word for suffering, he suffers for us and pays the price of our sins so he can forgive our sins. In that double obedience, Christ does the two things for us that we cannot do for ourselves, that we

have to have done for us, in order for God to be just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus.

So our religion must be Christ alone, based on scripture alone, and we receive Christ by faith. Hence, faith alone, sola fide, it's a receptive grace. It receives in our hands, in our hearts, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ as our total salvation. And that is an act of God's grace. So sola gratia is critical. And sola gratia is what distinguishes true vital Christianity from all false forms of Christianity, and from every religion in the world. True Christianity is the only religion in the world that affirms what the scripture says that salvation is purely by the sheer, unmitigated, sovereign grace of God. And all of this, of course, then works as Paul points out in Romans 11, to the glory of God, sola de gloria.

So the end goal of Scripture, grace, faith in Christ is that the triune God would receive all the glory forever and ever. And so that's the one supreme purpose of our life. And in every generation, the Christian church has to cling to these five solas that were so beautifully established by the reformers, and solidified by the Puritans in every area of their lives, or we will soon go back to manmade religion, or some kind of Armenian emphasis in which man is contributory to his own salvation. And as soon as we do that, we lose the grounding in Scripture. And we lose the comfort of believing and embracing the gospel, in which God is everything and does everything for a sinner, who is nothing and can do nothing before him.

Host: David Wheaton 34:37

So well put. The second we trust in anything else but Christ's work, we trust in any of our own works, we're basically saying that Christ's work isn't enough and that is just blasphemous even to think that or believe that. Joel Beeke joins us today here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. We need to take a short break, but we have much more coming up with him as we continue discussing this Puritan documentary film which you can get for a donation of any amount of The Christian Worldview. It's a two hour film titled, Puritan: All of Life to the Glory of God. You can order it by going to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, by calling us at 1-888-646-2233, or by writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Stay tuned. There's much more coming up on The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton.

Fall Clearance Sale 35:34

It's that time of year for our fall clearance sale, where you will receive deep discounts, some more than 50% off on dozens of resources in The Christian Worldview store. There are all kinds of books and DVDs for adults and children, Bibles, gospel tracts, even scripture verse greeting cards. Every item in our store has been carefully selected to be compatible with the mission of The Christian Worldview, to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. The Fall Clearance Sale ends November 15. So this is a great time to select resources for you and your family, your church or small group, and for

Christmas gifts. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org and click on fall clearance sale, or call us toll free at 1-888-646- 2233 for recommendations and order by phone. Again, that's 1-888-646-2233 or TheChristianWorldview.org.

Featured Resource: My Boy Ben 36:34

For a limited time, we are offering My Boy, Ben for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. The book is the true story of a Yellow Lab that I had back when I was competing in the professional tennis tour. It's about relationships with Ben, my parents, with a childhood friend I would eventually marry, but ultimately with God who causes all things, even the hard things to work together for good. You can order a signed and personalized copy for yourself or for your friend who enjoys a good story, loves dogs, sports, or the outdoors and most of all needs to hear about God's grace and the Gospel. My Boy, Ben is owned by The Christian Worldview. It's 264 pages, hardcover, and retails for \$24.95. To order go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Host: David Wheaton 37:39

Thanks for joining us today on The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton, the host. Just a reminder that today's program and past programs are archived at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Transcripts and Short Takes are also available. Alright, let's get back to our topic of the day, What present day Christians need to learn and apply from the Puritans. Our guest is Joe Beeke. He's the host of this documentary we're featuring entitled, Puritan: All of Life to the Glory of God. Let's get back to the interview.

Joel, the film Puritan brought out the distinctives, and it was just four of them, the distinctives of the Puritans beliefs. One of them was an accurate view of the Trinity. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Number two was; that the church is crucial to the purposes of Christ, the head of the church. Number three is; the necessity of the new birth. That you must be born again, you can't just be a professing Christian, you must possess genuine saving faith through repenting of your sin and putting your faith for forgiveness and reconciliation and eternal life in who Christ is and what he did on the cross for you. And the fourth distinctive was; that there was a fearsome power through the preaching of God's Word. And let's play another soundbite from the film to talk about how the Puritans ordered their church services. Was it according to their own ideas, or what the Bible said?

Sound bite: Puritan documentary 39:10

One of the phrases that comes up a fair amount in certain literature from that period is this question of will worship. Now that's worship according to the human will. And for most of the Puritans, that's disastrous, it's abominable, because the church is the household of God. It is

the pillar and ground of the truth. So it is not for us to decide what the church is, what it looks like, how it acts, what it does. It is for God to say, and for us to obey.

Host: David Wheaton 39:47

Joel, it seems like there's a huge lesson in that comment and what the Puritans modeled about how they viewed the church. It wasn't about what we want in church. It's about what God has prescribed for how we worship Him in church. So what is the big lesson in what the Puritans modeled about how they approached church for pastors and elders of evangelical churches listening today?

Guest: Joel Beeke 40:14

Well, there's a negative and there's a positive. The negative is the church therefore, because it's based on the scriptures, because it's instituted by the Trinity and because its purpose is to glorify Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, through people being brought to the new birth, which transpires through the powerful preaching of God's word, normatively at least. Because of all that, then idea of me wanting to worship the way I want to worship or wanting to add something to New Testament worship, is just an abomination in the sight of the Holy Trinity, but also a blatant contradiction to the Bible itself. And so too often today, evangelical churches are saying, What can we do to get people in here and they add something to their worship that is not found in the New Testament. And as soon as you do that of course, in order to keep those same people inside the church walls, you got to keep doing what you did to attract them. And before you know it, the church ends up looking like the world.

And it's not just that the church goes out into the world then evangelistically to convert them, but then the world is coming into the church to seek to convert the Christians over to its way of thinking. And that's how you can end up in astonishingly short periods of time once you abandon these Puritan convictions, with churches who actually are saying, Well, we condone the homosexual agenda, which is just so flatly contradictory to what Paul is saying in the Bible. So the Puritans are very insistent, you don't subtract anything from worship, New Testament worship, you don't add anything to New Testament worship. The purpose of church is not to do what you want to do, it's to do what God wants you to do. And so you don't have will worship that is worship of the human will. But you have divine worship. The great goal in church worship is not how did it please me, but how did it please God? My purpose in every worship service, if I'm a true Christian, is to go to church to seek to glorify God in that worship service. So that's radically different than what most people feel like today. When they go to church they just want the Minister to comfort them. And they don't want to hear about their sin and their need for repentance afresh and so on.

Host: David Wheaton 42:51

Well, I hope Christians are listening very closely to what you just said about the church and particularly, pastors and elders, because too much of evangelicalism today in our churches is geared around, "What do we think the people want in a church service?". They'll even go so far as to kind of poll the neighborhood, What would you like to see in a church? That is completely irrelevant and wrong. It is not what we want in a church, it's what God has prescribed in His word for what He wants in the church. And all of it should be for His glory, and not about our human reasonings as to how we think we can grow the church. Our guest today is Joel Beeke. He's the host of this documentary film we're talking about called, Puritan. And our topic today is, what present day Christians need to learn and apply from the Puritans. Okay, let's play a sound bite on that fourth point of the distinctives of the Puritans beliefs. They believed in the fearsome power of preaching God's word. This next soundbite, I think summarizes that so well from the film where you have Steven Nichols of Ligonier. And then John Piper describing what their preaching was like. And Piper talks about Jonathan Edwards, who actually came after the Puritan era. But he's almost considered a Puritan himself, even though he came a little later on. He, of course, influenced so much in the United States, in the northeastern part of the country.

Sound bite: Puritan documentary 44:21

You have to start with the Puritan view of Scripture. It's Thomas Watson, who tells us that in every line of scripture that we read, God is speaking to us.

For Edwards, when he said, I want to raise the affections of, he meant, Holy Spirit produced emotions. I want to raise those as high as I possibly can. We scared the living daylights out of the Boston clergy. I want to raise them as high as I possibly can, provided, I raise them with truth and so that they are in accord with the proportion of the truth being spoken. So he doesn't want laughter if he's talking about hell. He doesn't want weeping if he's talking about heaven. He doesn't want flippancy, if he's talking about guilt. There are emotions in the audience that a preacher wants to see the Holy Spirit do, but he's going to do truth to do it. So I would say Puritan preaching, now that's Edwards, but let's just say in general, Puritan preaching is extraordinarily serious. You'll never find a joke ever, in one single Puritan sermon. In Edwards, you will look in vain for personal testimonies. He didn't talk about himself. Now, I don't think that's ideal. Paul talked about himself a lot in II Corinthians and used himself in his own struggles. I think that's okay. But Edwards didn't. And you might want a refreshing, okay, just give me Jesus, give me God, give me the Bible, don't give me your self and your experience. And it was so saturated with the Bible, and God was always big, and issues were always earnest and eternal.

Host: David Wheaton 46:15

As I listened to that sound clip from the film, Joel, I just thought about how far away from that kind of preaching we are today in the Evangelical Church. The Puritans preached truthfully, seriously, they had confidence in God's Word that it would do His work in the hearts of the hearers. But that's not the case today. People have been, to use a popular expression, dumbed down as to what preaching should be like. How would you advise a pastor listening today to preach considering that people are not used to the length that the Puritan ministers would preach? Or the depth especially that they would preach?

Guest: Joel Beeke 46:58

Yes, David. Well, I've actually written a book on this subject called, Reformed Preaching: How to Preach From the Heart of the Preacher to the Hearts of His People. And as well as of course, preaching to their mind. Though the Puritan goal was that you would preach to the whole man. And you wouldn't only just preach the objective truths of Scripture, but also the subjective truths. So what they did was they did three things really. First of all, they expounded the text, then they applied it. And then they talked about the major doctrine found in the text and applied that. And then they had a whole series of applications at the end of their sermon. I don't think we should do that quite like that today, because people's memories aren't that long.

So I train my theological students today to expound the Word and apply, expound and apply, expound and apply and bring doctrines in throughout. But every point needs application. And that's what the Puritans, ultimately were doing. Maybe not quite in that order. But their goal was to take every single truth they expounded to say, How can you use that? In fact, instead of calling them applications, they called them uses. Use number one, use number two. So you would walk home from a 60 to 70 minute sermon saying, I know what to do with his sermon. So they didn't only expound the text, but they also did, today we would call biblical counseling from the pulpit. In fact, they believe that ministers would have to do very little biblical counseling in the study, if they would take their time in preaching, and really apply the Word to every situation in life.

And so, for them a 60 minute sermon wasn't terribly long, it was average. They would have a salt shaker or a sand shaker. They would turn it over when they started preaching, and it was one hour's worth of salt or sand in there. And when it was ended, they'd pretty much be winding up their sermon. Today, it's probably wiser to preach some people would say 40 to 45 minutes. I would say 50 to 55. I'm a little longer tradition than going over 60. But it depends on your congregation, of course. I wouldn't advise a pastor to go into a congregation that's used to 30 minute sermons with no applications, or one or two short ones, to start out with a 55 minute sermon. It might stretch a little bit, start out with a 35 minute sermon, and start ministering to the whole man from the get go. People will absolutely love it. That's the strength of the Puritans, they ministered to the whole man. And then your sermons will be so interesting to the

people, so useful for their daily lives, that you'll be able to move it up to 40 minutes and 45 in most congregations, but you have to live with a congregation, the people that you're preaching to, and go slowly and bring reform over a period of time.

Host: David Wheaton 49:58

That's good advice. Joel Beeke with us today here on The Christian Worldview. I can't remember which pastor said this, but they like to use the acronym rear, R-E-A-R. Read the text, explain the text, apply the text and then repeat. And I think that jives sort of with what you are saying about how the Puritans did their preaching with the emphasis on application. Well, that's all we have time for today in part one of our conversation with Joel Beeke. The good news is next week is part two. He's going to talk about how later preachers who you have heard of, George Whitfield, Charles Spurgeon, Martyn Lloyd Jones, how these preachers were so strongly influenced by the Puritans. In fact, they were the modern day Puritans of their own time.

And just think in your mind how different churches and preachers are compared to what the Puritans modeled in their own preaching. It's no wonder that so many people were so impacted and had such a deep walk with Christ because they were being fed, they were being influenced by the strength of this Puritan preaching. It not only impacted churches and Christians, but the broader civil society as well. And just a reminder, you can get this DVD entitled, Puritan: All of Life to the Glory of God for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. It's a two hour DVD, there's a lot of substance in this, you will take away a lot by watching this with your family, maybe your small group or your church itself. Just order it by going to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org or by calling our toll free number 1-888-646-2233 or by writing to us, and you can get the address immediately following the program today.

Host: David Wheaton 51:54

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. In just a moment there'll be all kinds of information on how you can hear a replay of today's program, how you can order transcripts and resources, and how you can support this nonprofit radio ministry. Let's be encouraged. We may live in a challenging church environment where not too many pastors strongly and soberly teach the truth of God's Word and actually go the extra step in helping the congregation apply them to their lives. But that's what we can learn from the Puritans. They had a high and holy view of God and absolute trust in the authority of God's Word in all matters of life and faith. And they accurately proclaimed the gospel, and they lived it out in a personal sanctification in their own lives, because they knew that Jesus Christ and His word are the same yesterday, and today and forever. So until next time, "Think biblically, live accordingly and like the Puritans, stand firm!"

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript or find out, "What must I do to be saved?" Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, become a Christian Worldview Partner, order resources, subscribe to our free newsletter or contact us, visit TheChristianWorldview.org call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.