

SUMMARY OF

SERMONS OF THE GREAT EJECTION

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- Key Insights
- Best Quotes
- Study Questions

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Sermons of the Great Ejection



MAIN IDEA

The effects of the [Great Ejection](#) reach far beyond the year of 1662, spanning across three different centuries. “The Act of Uniformity, which silenced the vast majority of England’s evangelical preachers, was no sudden act of kingly folly or parliamentary misgovernment; rather it was the turning point in a great and long-drawn-out struggle.” (p. vii) Just like the preceding efforts of the Reformation, this 24th of August, also known as Black Bartholomew’s Day, would forever impact the history of the church.

This small collection of farewell sermons shows the heart and true motives behind the ministers in their decisions of [nonconformity](#). In their own words, they tell us that it was never about themselves or their own opinions but that they believed their position to be not only a requirement of their consciences but of God Himself. They gave up all for the sake of the gospel that was at risk of being lost.

These ejected Puritan ministers would continue to be persecuted by those who would silence them for many years to come. Some of them even lost their lives or were imprisoned to keep them from preaching. So it remains for Puritanism even to this day.



Be a Berean

Everything must be tested against the Word of God.

The motivation of the Nonconformists was never about their own personal well-being or reputation, but was about fidelity to the Word of God. This was not only evidenced in their sermons but in their lives as well. They suffered hardship, loss of possessions, ridicule, smeared reputations, imprisonment, and even execution for their efforts. They certainly wouldn't have endured all that — or caused their families to — for anything short of the very gospel of Christ itself.

With a sense of urgency they hoped to impress upon their listeners, they admonished their congregants to test everything against the Holy Scriptures just as the Bereans did ([Acts 17:11](#)). They knew the spiritual dangers that lay ahead, and they did all they could to arm their people for the battle. When the faithful shepherds were removed, the sheep would be exposed to peril. With no one to watch over them, they would need to be on their guard against every assault of false gospel, heresy, and temptation to sin.

The only way we can protect ourselves from these fallacies is by knowing the truth, and the only way to know the truths of God's Word is to study them for ourselves. These pastors reminded their people multiple times and urged them to:

1. Be faithful in their devotions.
2. Not be passive about their studies.
3. Always be in the Word.
4. Be sure to supplement any bad teachings they might hear with sound teachings from faithful ministers of the gospel.

This was timely advice, not for their age alone but for every age.

KEY QUOTES

- “When the gospel is gone, your souls are in hazard. There is cause of sadness.” (p. 14)
- “The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, by which we slay heretical doctrines and by which we are to slay sinful practices.” (p. 64)
- “Strange doctrines are the greatest fetters that assault a sound judgment.” (p. 104)
- “It is our work to open the oracles of God, even those sacred profound things that the angels search into; and if God did not help us, we might soon sink under the weight of such a burden.” (p. 160)
- “The godly man is a man ‘set apart’ ([Psa. 4:3](#)), not only because God has set him apart by election, but because he has set himself apart by devotion.” (p. 165, hyperlink added)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- What similarities can you identify between the time of the Great Ejection and our own?
- What are some things you can do to better arm yourself against heretical doctrines?
- Think about a time when a false teaching or dangerous doctrine has crept into your church. Did you feel prepared to handle it? If not, how can you be better prepared in the future?



Be Prepared

We must be prepared to suffer and sacrifice for the sake of the gospel.

Leaving their congregations was exceedingly difficult for the ministers of the Great Ejection because they cared so deeply for their congregants' souls. They were not about to leave them unprepared for the trials they surely would face, and they did not want them to be caught off guard. Not only would they need to test everything against the Scriptures, but they would need to hold fast to those truths and never compromise on them. As humans, that can be very difficult for us to do. There are times when we grow weary from long battles or we risk giving into strong temptations. Some are afraid of experiencing such hardships. The ministers saw this potential and felt it necessary to make their people aware of the likelihood of these things so they would be equipped to stand firm in their faith.

What must we be willing to sacrifice for the sake of the gospel?

Everything. If our reputation be ruined, we must say as David, "If this be

vile, I will yet be more vile” (cf. [2 Sa. 6:22](#)). When they come for our lives, we must be willing to say with Esther, “If I perish, I perish” ([Est. 4:16](#)). We must “choose rather to suffer than sin” (p. 210). “He that will commit sin to prevent suffering, is like a man that lets his head be wounded to save his shield and helmet.” (p. 173) Let us not be like the rich young man who departed from Christ in despondency ([Mat. 19:22](#)). Let us put our faith into practice and truly take up our cross and deny ourselves for the sake of Christ ([Mat. 16:24-26](#)). It’s easy to say when things are easy, but what will we do when they are not?

KEY QUOTES

- “To keep the faith, you may lose your liberty, your life, your estate.” (p. 61)
- “And because I see a hurricane a-coming, keep your ground, stand fast, and live in the Lord here, that you may live with him hereafter.” (p. 99)
- “In the worst of times, in the most shaking seasons...if ever you would stand, stand now.” (p. 103)
- “Hold fast to a God who decrees, to a Christ who redeems, to a Spirit who quickens, to a gospel which promises, to a heaven which is prepared, to a God who is infinitely more ready to save you than you can possibly be desirous to be saved by him.” (p. 107)
- “We never cast a deeper blot on the honour of Christ than when we cease to be steadfast.” (p. 108)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- In what ways have you compromised or given into temptation in order to avoid hardship or suffering?
- What things would be hard for you to sacrifice when the time comes?
- What are some things other than God that you are trusting in to get you through difficulties?



Be Encouraged

We are blessed when we are persecuted.

Just as gold is purified in fire, so persecution causes purification within the church. The testing of our faith produces steadfastness, so we are to count it as joy ([Jam. 1:2-3](#)). We are to rejoice in suffering knowing that it produces endurance, character, and hope and it will not put us to shame ([Rom. 5:3-5](#)).

The very worst that can happen to us in this world is we lose our physical life, but for the man who has Christ's righteousness imputed to him, "the day of his death is his marriage-day with Jesus Christ" (p. 147). We can look beyond this life to our eternal destination knowing that whatever hardships we endure here are but a vapor in comparison. Yes, we may experience persecution, but we can have joy and peace knowing that we have a crown of righteousness awaiting us in eternity. In the words of Thomas Watson, "Affliction may be lasting, but it is not everlasting" (p. 177).

These words of encouragement are relevant and valuable to all generations, not just to those of the Ejection. We will all face trials and suffering as Christians. By looking to Christ instead of ourselves and our circumstances, we will be able to see the great work that He is doing through them, not only in ourselves but in those whom we influence. The way we endure hardship speaks volumes to outside observers. We can either be a testimony for the gospel or against it. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can flourish in every adversity and reflect the goodness of God.

KEY QUOTES

- “However things may go in the world, it shall be well with the righteous man.” (p. 140)
- “God takes them away in mercy that they may not see approaching evils.” (p. 146)
- “Fire melts the hardest metal; and the fire of love, with God’s blessing, will melt the most obdurate sinner.” (p. 162)
- “The higher the bird flies, the sweeter it sings; and the higher the heart is raised above the world, the sweeter joy it has.” (p. 170)
- “Eternity to the godly is a day that has no sunset; eternity to the wicked is a night that has no sunrise.” (p. 176)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- What would you say to encourage a brother or sister who is enduring persecution or hardship for the sake of the gospel?
- What are some things you can do to remind yourself to look beyond your difficult circumstances?

SECTION

1

Edward Calamy: Trembling for the Ark of God ([1 Sa. 4:13](#))

[Edmund Calamy](#) was a Presbyterian leader who preached this sermon at a moment's notice. From his opening prayer, before he even began to preach, it's clear how highly he esteems the Lord God, how dependent he is upon His grace, and how fervent his desire for God's holiness to be remembered among His people. His love for his hearers is evidenced by his humble and heartfelt intercession for the forgiveness of sins and the salvation of souls.

The gospel, just as the ark of God was ([1 Sa. 4](#)), is in danger of being lost. Eli watched, trembling with fear, as it was taken. His daughter-in-law, who had just given birth to a son, was inconsolable when given the news of its capture. Proper reverence was not given the ark, “the holiest of all the things of God” (p. 8), and it was taken from them in judgment.

So it is with the gospel, but where are those who would sit and tremble in fear that it might be lost? There should be great sorrow among God's

people when the gospel is in danger of being lost. Our love and affection for the gospel should drive us to endeavor fervently for its protection, both from capture and defilement. We must strive after holiness and purity, keeping ourselves and our churches from the calamity that comes from the gospel being lost.

KEY QUOTES

- “Woe be to you that enjoy your fulness of outward things, and make merry therewith, and never consider the afflictions of God’s people and the danger of the ark.” (p. 19)
- “Where false religion comes in at one door, true religion goes out at the other.” (p. 23)

SECTION

2

Thomas Brooks: A Pastor's Legacies

Not much is known about the life of [Thomas Brooks](#). However, [his writings](#) have contributed greatly to the Protestant Church. He was, at one point, at risk of being removed from his pastorate at [St. Margaret's](#) due to his refusal to administer the sacraments indiscriminately, but those efforts were unsuccessful. When other conforming ministers were fleeing the [Great Plague of 1665](#), he stayed and continued to preach. That alone testifies to his character and love for God and His people.

People oppose the gospel so fiercely because:

1. It exposes their sinfulness.
2. It subjects them to hardship and difficulty.
3. It separates the regenerate from the unregenerate.
4. People are influenced by Satan to despise its glory just as he does.

Where the gospel is lost, so are peace, plenty, commerce, safety, security, civil liberty, honor, glory, happiness, blessedness, and the special presence of God.

As believers, Christ and Scripture are our firm foundation and we must stand firm upon them. Our sufferings may increase, but so will our faith, courage, zeal, and resolve. We must pursue holiness, steering clear of the immorality of the age. Studying and meditating on the Holy Scriptures, testing everything by them, resting in them, and examining ourselves through them will give us everything we need to endure. If we do these things, we will be able to rejoice in every blessing we receive.

KEY QUOTES

- “When it is nearest day, then it is darkest.” (p. 37)
- “This is not an age, an hour, for a man to be between fears and hopes, between doubting and believing.” (p. 38)

SECTION

3

John Collins: Contending for the Faith ([Jude 3](#))

[John Collins](#) was born in England around 1632, and his family later emigrated to New England. After a fellowship at Harvard, he returned to England where he remained until his death. He ended up pastoring a congregation that had been started by [Thomas Goodwin](#), and also preached alongside other notable Puritans such as [John Owen](#) and [Richard Baxter](#). His son would later become a close friend of [Matthew Henry's](#).

In the book of [Jude](#), we are instructed to “contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints” ([Jude 3](#)). That sounds like a simple prospect when things are going well, but what about when trials and sufferings abound? It’s easy to know what to do when you have a pastor to guide you, to chase away the wolves, and to protect the flock, but what will you do when that pastor is taken away? Will you continue to contend for the truth of the gospel as if contending for your very life?

All Christians must:

1. Study the Scriptures diligently.
2. Test everything by the Scriptures.
3. Be sure not to neglect or add to the Scriptures.
4. Be deeply rooted in the truth in order to defend ourselves against the deceptions of the enemy and of our own hearts.
5. Count the cost of following Christ, looking to the example left by the Apostles and the martyrs of the past.
6. Be willing to give literally everything for the sake of the gospel.

KEY QUOTES

- “He that loves the Word above his life will let life go rather than the Word.” (p. 72)

SECTION
4a**Thomas Lye: A
Pastor's Love for His
People ([Phi. 4:1](#))**

[Thomas Lye](#) was a preacher and teacher who had a special fondness for the education of children. He was a supporter of the [Westminster Confession of Faith](#) and was in trouble with the authorities on multiple occasions for his nonconformity. He published numerous sermons and some catechetical writings during his lifetime. With a fierce sense of urgency and zeal to preserve the gospel, he preached as if he might never preach again.

Just as Paul described his great care for those in the Philippian church as his “brethren dearly beloved and longed for” and his “joy and crown,” ([Phi. 4:1](#)), so is the heart of every loving minister to his congregation. To be faced with removal from that position for simply preaching the truth of God’s Word is a terrible prospect indeed. “How sad it is for the father to be plucked from the child, the shepherd from the flock, the nurse from the child!” (p. 95)

The Philippians also had great affection for Paul in return, as is

evidenced by their special attention to his needs. As the pastor loves his congregation, so should the people love him, just as a husband away from his wife, even when they are separated, find their love for one another remains. They must continue to stand firm in the faith, walking in steadfast obedience to the gospel, even when their pastor has been taken away from them.

KEY QUOTES

- “I would do anything to keep myself in the work of God, but to sin against my God I dare not.” (p. 97)

SECTION
4b**Thomas Lye: Stand
Fast in the Lord
(Phi. 4:1)**

As Christians, we must prepare for suffering and be resolved to stand firm in our faith in Christ, and all the more as the days grow darker. We must guard our hearts and minds against strange doctrines and false gospels that attempt to draw us away from God's truth. We must be continuously in the Scriptures and be steadfast in prayer, to know what we believe and why so we might not waver. We also must be watchful that we don't do these things in word only but also in practice.

It is our duty to be steadfast. It dishonors Christ when we aren't. "Christ died that you might live, that you might stand; and what dishonour to the eternal Saviour of the world, to a dying Saviour, to see a flying Christian!" (p. 108) It casts a shadow on His sacrifice, His Spirit, His truth, and His all-sufficiency. He alone can keep us from falling, so we must stand firm on the Rock of our salvation.

KEY QUOTES

- “It is an infinite mercy that God will give to any of us to leave relations, estates, congregations, anything for Christ.” (p. 107)
- “Our miseries have been great, but our mercies have been greater.” (p. 115)

SECTION
5a**Thomas Watson: Weal
to the Righteous but
Woe to the Wicked ([Isa.
3:10-11](#))**

[Thomas Watson](#) was one of the most popular preachers of his time. After the Ejection, he continued to preach privately in London and was reported to the authorities on multiple occasions. He was an avid supporter of the Westminster Confession and his most popular publication is a collection of his sermons on the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#).

Isaiah 3:10-11 displays a stark contrast between righteousness and wickedness. Both have clear consequences: “the one has a reward of mercy, the other a reward of justice” (p. 139).

God bestows an abundance of mercy upon those who have had Christ’s righteousness imputed to them:

1. The burden of sin is removed.
2. Comfort and protection abound.
3. Troubles are turned into good.
4. Humility and grace are multiplied.
5. Inward peace is experienced.

6. Physical death becomes an act of mercy.

Above all, God gives Himself as a gift, and what greater gift is there?

It is not so with the wicked. While it may appear to be well with them in this life, it will not remain that way. “Floods of wrath hang over the head of a wicked man” (p. 149), and he will experience every curse written in God’s Word. All his trembling at the thought of judgment will be as nothing compared to the actual judgment he faces on the last day.

KEY QUOTES

- “God is the righteous man’s portion, and can God give a greater gift to us than himself?” (p. 142)
- “Though trouble come, though death come, yet it will go well with the righteous.” (p. 148)

SECTION

5b

Thomas Watson: Parting Counsels ([2 Co. 7:1](#))

A minister of the gospel ought to be filled with love for his people. All his efforts, his exhortations, comforting words, and reproofs must all come from a place of love not simply a duty. He will gladly sacrifice his own life to protect his flock from harm.

What shall we do, then, when our good gospel ministers are taken from us? In such circumstances, we must take great care in looking after our own souls. Spending much time with God and studying His Word are of utmost importance. We must be like the [Bereans](#) and be careful of:

1. What we read
2. Who we spend time with
3. Who we listen to.

We must:

1. Walk in holiness, and associate with others who not only do the same but encourage us to as well.
2. Be about the Lord's work.
3. Guard ourselves against temptations to sin.

KEY QUOTES

- “The work of the ministry is a labour of love.” (p. 163)
- “We cannot catch health from another, but we may soon catch a disease; the disease of sin is very catching.” (p. 166)

SECTION

6

John Oldfield: Stumbling at the Sufferings of the Godly ([Psa. 69:6](#))

John Oldfield never attended university, but was still regarded as a great scholar. He dearly loved his congregation at Carsington in Derbyshire and did not take non-conformity lightly. All four of his sons followed him into the ministry. However, his oldest son ended up conforming to the Church of England.

“**L**ord, let me not by any weakness or despondent behaviour cast a stumblingblock before them that fear thee.” (p. 192) This should be the plea of every Christian. If we truly stand for the cause of Christ, if we have a genuine affection for the body, we would desire more that our sufferings wouldn't cause a brother or sister to stumble rather than our sufferings be removed. Our earthly reputation means nothing, but the honor of the name of Jesus is what is really at stake.

We must guard ourselves against such temptations to sin and fall away

from the path of righteousness. None of us are truly innocent, so God is always justified in His allowing suffering to happen. We also must not allow the sufferings of fellow Christians to cause us to stumble. Instead, we should see them as an encouragement since they suffer for the sake of the gospel.

KEY QUOTES

- “As for the afflictions of the godly, men look on what they suffer and accordingly judge them miserable, but they consider not how often they are pronounced blessed who suffer for righteousness’ sake, or what precious promises are made to them, what reviving cordials are laid in, or what a crown of glory is laid up for them.” (p. 196)

SECTION

7

John Whitlock: Remember, Hold Fast and Repent ([Rev. 3:3](#))

John Whitlock performed the majority of his ministerial service at St. Mary's in Nottingham. He was removed for a time even before the Act of Uniformity went into effect for not reading the common prayer and was also imprisoned seven years later for his preaching. He resumed his service at Nottingham after the [Indulgence of 1687](#), where he remained until his death in 1708, at the age of 83. His son then took over his ministerial position.

Christians have a duty not to simply hear sermons and partake of the sacraments but to remember what and how we've received them, hold fast to them, and repent. This is all the more important considering the potential for faithful ministers and the Word to be taken from us. We must use the doctrinal truths to guard our hearts and minds, to build each other up, and to protect us from error and from offending God.

We must be sure to hold fast to our faith. It is the fountain that sustains us when the streams have all dried up. We need to be continually examining ourselves and repenting of those ways in which we have fallen short of the commands of God. “Repentance is a sovereign means to repair decayed religion and godliness in a church and in the souls of men.” (p. 244)

KEY QUOTES

- “The reason why men slide into new errors or old ones newly patched up is because they let slip old truths.” (p. 228)
- “A man will remember what his mind and heart is set upon.” (p. 237)

SECTION

8

The Nonconformist's Catechism

The [Nonconformist's Catechism](#) was written as a supplement to the Westminster Shorter Catechism to further address the reasons for the Nonconformist's dissent from the Church of England. These ministers determined that the Church of England had not reformed far enough away from the errors of the Church of Rome, and the traditions, rituals, and ordinances they imposed were antithetical to the Holy Scriptures.

Question six of this catechism breaks down the foundational reasons for their dissent:

1. The authority of the Church as a national institution
2. Concerns about church officers
3. The required liturgy and its contents
4. Extra- and unbiblical ceremonies
5. The inability of the people to choose their own ministers
6. Corruption within the disciplinary system.

It concludes with a plea to each of the Nonconformists to stand firm in their convictions for the sake of truth and conscience and to impress these doctrines upon their children after them lest they should be forgotten.

KEY QUOTES

- “Certainly, in the affairs of religion, every man ought to judge for himself, since every man must render an account of himself to God, who has given us an infallible rule in his Word to guide us and the promise of the teaching of his Spirit to enable the believer to understand for himself the way of truth and duty.” (p. 254)



CONCLUSION

The consequences of the Great Ejection can still be seen even today, more than 300 years later. The truths of the gospel contained in the Holy Scriptures remain a point of contention among the wicked who strive to silence them. However, the same spirit that existed in the ejected ministers lives on today in every faithful preacher who stands fast on the Word of God.

3 KEY INSIGHTS

1

Be a Berean

Everything must be tested against the Word of God.

2

Be Prepared

We must be prepared to suffer and sacrifice for the sake of the gospel.

3

Be Encouraged

We are blessed when we are persecuted.

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