

Who was the Prince of Preachers?

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“When I cease to preach salvation by faith in Jesus, put me into a lunatic asylum, for you may be sure that my mind is gone.” CH Spurgeon

Introduction

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (or Spurgeon as he is commonly known) is the topic for this little book. Spurgeon lived during the 19th century in Great Britain and was a Baptist preacher. Having been hailed as the, “prince of preachers” (Piper, 2015:2), Spurgeon is a house hold name for any student of homiletics. This book is based on these five questions: Who was he? When and where did he minister? What was his style of preaching? Why was his preaching so famous?

I chose Spurgeon for this book because he is special to me for many reasons, one being that his parents lived for ten years in Braintree, Essex – a town where Spurgeon once preached

Who was Spurgeon?

In a biography on Spurgeon’s life, Professor Robert H. Ellison recounts that Spurgeon was born “on June 19th 1834 in Kelvedon, Essex and spent his childhood and early years in Stambourne, Colchester” (1998). The place and century he was born in made him a Victorian, since Queen Victoria reigned during his life time. Spurgeon had not much formal education but was an active reader (Ellison, 1998) who, after his conversion began to preach. His preaching took him into the

Baptist church, making him a Baptist preacher of the 19th century.

When and where did he minister?

The place and time of each ministry assignment differed. Spurgeon began preaching in Taversham, Essex at some point in the early 1850's. His second church was the Baptist chapel in Waterbeach (Ellison, 1998). This was all done before he was twenty years old. His success as a minister was impressive and soon a large London church heard about the boy preacher. Through some correspondence Spurgeon accepted a post in London at some point in 1853 which was his main preaching ground until his death in 1892 (Ellison, 1998).

What was his style of preaching?

Spurgeon's style of preaching could be summed up by the word, Eccentric. Spurgeon was an Eccentric preacher, according to Spurgeon's book Eccentric Preachers. In the opening lines of his book he claims, "I have published this little volume very, much in self-defence" (Spurgeon, 1). What did Spurgeon mean by, "Eccentric"? In this book, he quoted this definition of eccentric, "it signifies deviating from the centre, or not having the same centre as another circle." (8). Spurgeon recognised that this word had (even in the 19th century), "...come to mean singular, odd, whimsical, and so forth..." (8).

However, in his mind, all this word meant was that an eccentric person moved in a circle different to the majority. This was how he defined himself as a preacher. Spurgeon was a preacher who thought differently to the majority, acted differently to most. He preached in a different manner to most preachers and this made him eccentric.

Why was his preaching so famous?

In an assessment of his preaching, Steven Lawson claims Spurgeon preached, “The book, the blood and the blessed hope... he preached Christ and him crucified.” (2013). This was undoubtedly what made his preaching so famous; this is what makes his preaching so famous today. Lawson also claims that there were ten marks of his preaching that made him famous. For the sake of brevity, here are three of these ten. 1.) “He had an unwavering commitment to God’s word” (2013). Spurgeon used scripture to encourage people, to rebuke people and to teach people. He believed that we need to put more, not less, of God’s word into our sermons. 2.) “He had a burning passion for God’s son” (2013). Spurgeon believed that if we leave Christ out of a sermon we have failed terribly. Spurgeon said that, “we must have Jesus” in all our sermons. Lawson believed that if we “lifted the hood “on Spurgeon’s ministry we would see that the engine that drove it all was Christ (2013). 3.) “A complete reliance on God’s Spirit” (2013). Apparently in the Metropolitan

Tabernacle, one venue where he preached, there were two platforms. He started the service in the lower platform and then before the sermon Spurgeon would walk up some stairs to the second platform. While we walked up these stairs he would say to himself, “I believe in the Holy Spirit, I believe in the Holy Spirit....” (Lawson, 2013). Spurgeon trusted in the power of the Holy Spirit in his preaching.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, one can clearly see that Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a very interesting man who lived a very interesting life. His preaching was powerful and touched many lives during his days on earth and many lives after. We can learn many important lessons from his life and preaching – one being the importance of preaching God’s word. This Eccentric preacher from the 19th century goes down in Church history as one of the greatest and most influential preachers to have walked this planet.

Reference list.

1. Spurgeon, CH. *Eccentric Preachers*. Britain: Passmore & Alabaster.
2. Lawson, S. (2013). *The life and ministry of Charles Spurgeon*.

URL:<http://www.sermonaudio.com/playpopupvideo.asp?SID=1271395305> (visited on 15/08/2017).

3. Ellison, RH. (1998). *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Brief Biography*.

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