

# 8 of the Greatest Preachers of All Time, and What They Taught Us

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Photo credit: Unsplash/Bogomil Mihaylov

God ordains different roles, offices, and talents for each person He creates, and when they begin a relationship with Him and are saved by the blood of Jesus, He cultivates them for His glory. Some men are called to be preachers, evangelists, and missionaries, and for a select few through the centuries, their sermons and impact are recorded for posterity. Understanding who these influential preachers were can help a believer understand the Bible better and solidify their own beliefs.

The following list is a selection of eight influential preachers whose sermons were or are a part of their legacy. For preachers whose sermons are written down, there are links provided to read some of their work, though this was not possible for each person.

## 1. **Voddie Baucham**



Photo credit: ©Voddie Baucham Facebook

This preacher has made waves in the 21st century with his commitment to a proper understanding of the Bible, a Christian education, and standing strong in the faith. He started his academic career playing football as a tight-end, but transferred to Houston Baptist University. He became a Christian in 1987.

Baucham also attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He pastored a church in Texas for several years before moving to Africa to serve as a missionary, as the Dean of Theology at African Christian University. He aligns himself with the southern Baptist denomination and follows the Reform tradition, encouraging home-schooling, and believing in the importance of strong families.

## Quotes

“The key is to understand that our children don't belong to us — they belong to God. Our goal as parents must not be limited by our own vision. I am a finite, sinful, selfish man. Why would I want to plan out my children's future when I can entrust them to the infinite, omnipotent, immutable, sovereign Lord of the universe? I don't want to tell God what to do with my children — I want Him to tell me!”

“Folks, if we could lose our salvation, we would.”

“Our Heavenly Father doesn't count to three when He gives us a command. It is not a sin to disobey God when He counts to three; it is simply a sin not to obey God. And delayed obedience is disobedience.”

## What He Teaches Us

Standing firm in the faith and God's Word is important, especially when the world seems to be falling away from God's will.

Sermons: <https://www.voddiebaucham.org/sermons-listing/>

## 2. John Sung



Photo credit: Courtesy ccinternational.org

Sung was a Chinese pastor and evangelist who became famous for his passion for the Gospel. He influenced Christian revival in Taiwan, China, and other areas of southeast Asia in the early 20th century. The son of a Methodist minister, he studied in the United States,

earning a PhD in chemistry in five years. He attended Ohio Wesleyan University and Ohio State University.

He also attended Union Theological Seminary, a university so progressive at the time, some professors openly questioned the bodily resurrection of Christ. While there, he began to practice tenants of Buddhism, but re-committed himself to the Gospel around Christmas 1926, becoming so on fire for the Lord that his university had him committed to an asylum for a brief period. He became a passionate evangelist, and returned to China, sharing the Gospel with many. He died of tuberculosis at the age of 42, but is considered the most influential Chinese evangelist of the 1930s. Because of him, Christianity grew tremendously in China.

## Quotes

“Man’s works do not even come close to the works of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit does not work, all the efforts of man will come to naught.”

“Faith is watching God work while you are on your knees.”

“Though the sufferings of my trials is beyond the description of words, my advancement in the spirit during this period of time is also beyond the description of words. Therefore, brothers and sisters, be prepared for suffering and follow the example of our Lord. He came to this world and left the footsteps of suffering, so that all who desire His revelation will follow in His steps willingly and happily.”

## What He Taught Us

Being on fire for the Lord may seem strange to the world, but can be used mightily by God for the Kingdom.

## 3. George Whitefield



Photo credit: ©Getty Images/Photos.com

Born in England in the early 18th century, he was an Anglican at first but became part of the Methodist movement and the Great Awakening. He would go on to preach 18,000

times in Great Britain and the American colonies over the course of his life. He chose to live as an itinerant minister, travelling for much of his time serving the Lord. Whitefield spent a great deal of time working in the colonies, where he would die in 1770 the day after preaching in Massachusetts.

## Quotes

"Come poor, lost, undone sinner, come just as you are to Christ."

"What! Get to heaven on your own strength? Why, you might as well try to climb to the moon on a rope of sand!"

"If we once get above our Bibles and cease making the written Word of God our sole rule both as to faith and practice, we shall soon lie open to all manner of delusion and be in great danger of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience."

## What He Taught Us

The best time to come to the Lord is right now, today, and then to spend the rest of our lives pursuing His Word.

Transcripts of Select Sermons: <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/whitefield/sermons.toc.html>



Photo credit: ©Getty Images/Kean Collection/Staff

## 4. Richard Allen

Born into slavery in the late 18th century in Delaware, Richard Allen taught himself to read and write while attending the local Methodist church, which encouraged enslaved people to come to their services. The man who owned the plantation was touched by the sermons of an abolitionist minister and offered enslaved people the opportunity to purchase their freedom, which Allen did in 1780.

He became a minister in 1784, and was one of two black attendees at the first General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and eventually, the first bishop of African

descent in North America. He became famous for his preaching style, focusing on themes and persuasion. He was part of the founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He passed away in his home in 1831.

## Quotes

“The Lord was pleased to strengthen us, and remove all fear from us, and disposed our hearts to be as useful as possible.”

“This land which we have watered with our tears and our blood, is now our mother country, and we are well satisfied to stay where wisdom abounds and the gospel is free.”

## What He Taught Us

The Gospel is for all people, and can overcome the most wicked of barriers that men create for themselves and one another.

## 5. Dwight L. Moody



Photo credit: ©Getty Images/Kean Collection / Staff

D.L. Moody was an American evangelist who defined the 19th century church in many ways. Born in Massachusetts in 1837, he became an evangelical Christian in 1855, and followed God’s calling into the ministry. He consciously objected to enlisting to fight in the Civil War, but did preach to the Union Troops on certain occasions. He started the Moody Church in Chicago, which still operates today, as well as two schools.

One of the greatest setbacks in his ministry was during the Great Chicago Fire, where he lost everything he possessed and had built. He became famous in Sweden, as well as across the United States for his passion for the Gospel, and for seeing souls won to Christ. Moody spoke before thousands on a regular basis. He died in 1899, but his church, his schools, and the Bible Institute still exist today and operate for the Gospel.

## Quotes

“The Bible was not given for our information but for our transformation.”

“All ministers and laymen, and those women who are helpers and laborers together with us in the Kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ – and, indeed, all Christians who are hungering for intimate fellowship with God and for power to do His work – are most cordially invited to assemble with us.”

“All the churches in the world can’t save a soul. It is not to have faith in this church or that church, this doctrine or that doctrine, this man or that man, but it is to have faith in the man Christ Jesus at the right hand of God. That is the only faith that will ever save a soul.”

## **What He Taught Us**

The only way to get saved is to put our faith in God, and to cling to him during immense loss and suffering.

Select Sermons:

<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=category&cid=11>

## **6. Johnathan Edwards**



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons/Henry Augustus Loop

One of the famous Calvinist preachers, Edwards was born in the English colony of Connecticut in 1703, and grew up pursuing both religion and Enlightenment thinking. His preaching was focused on sin, God’s righteousness and sovereignty, and he was part of the Great Awakening. Many revivals would follow in the wake of his sermons. He became acquainted with George Whitefield during this period of his life.

Many of his sermons were written down and kept for posterity. His most famous was Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God, which is still in print today. It is a sermon that focuses on calling to repentance, and the rightness of God’s judgment. He died as a result of the smallpox inoculation in 1758.

## **Quotes**

“Some make gods of their pleasures; some choose Mammon for their god; some make gods of their own supposed excellencies, or the outward advantages they have above their neighbors: some choose one thing for their god, and others another. But men can be happy in no other God but the God of Israel: he is the only fountain of happiness.”

“What are we, that we should think to stand before him, at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down?”

“There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God.”

## **What He Taught Us**

It is important to put God in His rightful place, as a holy and righteous God with authority to judge, clinging to the cross for His mercy.

Link to Selected Sermons: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34632/34632-h/34632-h.htm>

## **7. Stephen - The First Martyr**



Photo credit: ©SparrowStock

Very little is known about the life of Stephen the martyr. What is recorded about him is that he was a servant of the church after the Ascension of Jesus Christ, and after Pentecost and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He was performing signs and wonders and speaking the truth of God, but people began to resent him for it. They accused him of advocating for the demolition of the Temple before the High Priest.

In response to the accusation, Stephen gave a sermon outlining the history of the Hebrew people, how God was working during those days, and how historically they rejected God and His messengers. He highlighted the Jews of the day were also rejecting the work of the Lord by rejecting the teachings and Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. He was stoned for saying these things.

## **Quotes from his sermon**

“Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says, ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?’” (Acts 7:48-50).

“Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it” (Acts 7:52).

## **What He Taught Us**

Be willing to call sin for what it is, and that sometimes there is a great cost to following the Lord.

## **8. J. Vernon McGee**



Photo credit: Courtesy of Facebook/Thru the Bible with Dr. J. Vernon McGee

The impact of this Texas pastor cannot be understated. This Presbyterian minister came from an itinerant family, because his father would take various jobs in different locations. He worked as a bank teller before submitting to the call to ministry. He pursued degrees at Columbia Theological Seminary and Dallas Theological Seminary. He served at various churches, but wound up settling in Los Angeles for most of his life.

McGee's biggest contribution was a radio program called Thru the Bible, which walked through the entire text of the Bible, passage by passage, for five years. His folksy way of delivering his sermons made difficult concepts and passages accessible to many people from many backgrounds. This radio program has been translated into 130 languages and is often used in countries where pastoral training and education is hard to come by to teach exegesis, Biblical understanding, and preaching. He died in 1988.

## **Quotes**

“What is in the well of the heart will come up through the bucket of the mouth.”



“When I hear Christians say, ‘I don’t do this, and I don’t do that, and I am following a set of rules,’ I immediately recognize that they know very little about the grace of God. They are trying to live the Christian life in their own strength. But Paul says, ‘Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.’”

“You can believe a whole lot of foolish things, but God doesn’t want you to do that. He wants your faith to rest upon the Word of God.”

## **What He Taught Us**

God wants everyone to understand His Word fully, and that it will take a lifetime to pursue that understanding.

Link to Thru the Bible: <https://ttb.org/>

There are many other great preachers whom God used in powerful ways, including Charles Spurgeon, Paul Washer, Daniel Taylor, and Yu Kil-Chun. Exploring their teachings is an important part of learning about what it means to have a relationship with the living God.