

# John Owen

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Now, most of you probably know the name John Owen. He was a Puritan. He was a contemporary of men like John Bunyan, whom we learned about just a few weeks ago.
- But I suspect that most of you probably don't know that much about him personally. If you've ever read any of his works, particularly his lengthy ones, because very few people have probably read all the way through them from start to finish.
- Why is that? Well, first of all, we don't know that much about John Owen, at least not on a personal level, not about his personal life. According to one of his biographers, not one of Owen's diaries has been preserved, and the letters in which he lays bare his soul are very few, and recorded personal reactions of others to him are brief and scarce.
- He goes on to write, We have to rely on a few letters and a few remarks of others to seek to understand him as a man, and these are insufficient to probe the depths of his character.
- So Owen must remain hidden, as it were, behind a veil. His secret thoughts remain his own. Even so, Owen produced volumes of theological writings.
- [ 1 : 2 9 ]     John Piper says, When you read the more practical works of Owen, the man shines through in a way that I think reveals the deep places of his heart, but still, the details of his personal life are frustratingly few.
- So that's the first difficulty of John Owen. We simply don't know that much about him on a personal level. But the second reason more people aren't familiar with him is because his writings are very challenging.
- They can be hard to read. That's certainly true for a contemporary audience, but it was also true for people in his own day. So while generations of people have devoured books like *The Pilgrim's Progress*, have loved it, cherished it, generation after generation, other books by Owen, they tend to collect dust on our shelves, if we own any of them at all.
- So chances are, Owen has not been especially influential on most of us, at least not directly. But he probably has been influential indirectly.
- How many of us have been influenced by J.I. Packer? Or Sinclair Ferguson? Just to name a couple. Both of these men have said that no Christian writer influenced them more than John Owen.
- [ 3 : 0 3 ]     According to Packer, John Owen is the greatest among the Puritan theologians. The greatest. And that's saying a lot because the Puritan movement produced many great theologians and pastors.
- John Bunyan was among them. Matthew Henry was another. Richard Sibbes, Jeremiah Burroughs, Thomas Brooks, Richard Baxter, Thomas Watson.
- The list goes on and on. And then we could think about all of those men who came, I guess technically, after the Puritan era. Many of their ministries were built on top of what the Puritans built.

Jonathan Edwards, for example, would fall into that category. Some have referred to Charles Spurgeon as the last of the Puritans. I've heard it said that Martin Lloyd-Jones was the last of the Puritans.

Well, Hebrews 12 tells us to run with endurance the race that is set before us, while implying that we also need to look back at that great cloud of witnesses, those people of faith who have gone before us.

[ 4 : 10 ] So the Christian race is kind of like a relay race, where one generation passes the baton on to the next. God certainly blessed the Puritan generation to do a lot of good for the church.

But, you know, eventually men like Owen and Bunyan, they had to pass that baton on to the next generation. Men like Jonathan Edwards, who eventually passed it on to men like Spurgeon or Martin Lloyd-Jones.

And then eventually, in our day or in more recent times, men like J.I. Packer or Sinclair Ferguson have been carrying that baton. So even if Owen has not been directly influential on you and me, he has influenced us indirectly.

That's certain. In his book, *A Quest for Godliness*, J.I. Packer talks about how he personally came under the influence years ago of perfectionist teachings.

That's the idea that says a Christian can become perfectly holy and never sin again. And since that isn't true, you can imagine what it might do to a person who thinks he's striving for perfection.

[ 5 : 26 ] Well, it was John Owen, he says, who brought Packer back to reality. Packer says, without Owen, I might as well have gone off my head or got bogged down in mystical fanaticism.

In short, he credits Owen with saving his life. And he's not the only one. Sinclair Ferguson wrote an entire book about Owen called *John Owen and the Christian Life*.

In it, he says, My personal interest in Owen as a teacher and theologian began in my late teenage years when I first read some of his writing.

Like others before and since, I found that they dealt with issues which contemporary evangelical literature rarely, if ever, touched. Owen's penetrating exposition opened up areas of need in my own heart, but also correspondingly profound assurances of grace in Jesus Christ.

Ever since those first encounters with his works, I have remained in his debt. To have known the pastoral ministry of John Owen during these years, albeit in written form, have been a rich privilege.

[ 6 : 40 ] And I love this last part. To have known Owen's God, an even greater one. So, despite not knowing all that much about Owen, at least his personal life, and despite the difficulties that we may find reading his work, he is still massively influential to this day.

By the way, I think there's been a renewed interest in John Owen. Crossway, publishers of the ESV Bible, they are slowly but surely releasing 40 volumes of his writings.

And I think that has sparked new interest. I've heard a lot of buzz around John Owen in recent years, and I think maybe that new set of books is a big part of it.

But, anyhow, what do we know about John Owen? Well, we know that he was born in England in 1616.

That's the same year William Shakespeare died. That's five years after the first King James Bible is published. It's about four years before the pilgrims set sail for America.

[ 7 : 53 ] And it's right in the middle of what we call the Puritan era. Unfortunately, Puritanism doesn't have the best reputation these days.

And I mean even among Christians. A lot of people seem to think Puritanism is a kind of old, strict, old-fashioned backwardness.

I remember talking to one gentleman, and I happened to mention something about the Puritans, and he said to me, when I hear Puritan, all I can think is people dressed like the Amish burning witches at the stake.

That's not Puritanism. Here's what one article says about it as a kind of definition. The Puritans were a widespread and diverse group of people who took a stand for religious purity in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries in Europe.

Their rise was directly related to the increased knowledge that came to the common people in the Age of Enlightenment. As people learned to read and write, and as the Bible became more accessible to commoners, many began to read the Bible for themselves, a habit that was strongly discouraged in the established church.

[ 9 : 13 ] Some Puritans were connected with Anabaptist groups in continental Europe, but the majority were connected with the Church of England. The word Puritan was first coined in the 1560s as a derisive term for those who advocated, again, more purity in worship and doctrine.

That's not a bad thing. J.I. Packer, he summarizes Puritanism this way. He says, Puritanism was at heart a spiritual movement, passionately concerned with God and godliness.

It began in England with William Tyndale, the Bible translator, Luther's contemporary. A generation before the word Puritan was coined, and it continued till the latter years of the 17th century, some decades after Puritan had fallen out of use.

Puritanism was essentially a movement for church reform, pastor renewal and evangelism and spiritual revival. The Puritan goal was to complete what England's reformation began, to finish reshaping Anglican worship, to introduce effective church discipline into Anglican parishes, to establish righteousness in the political, domestic, and socioeconomic fields, and to convert all Englishmen to a vigorous evangelical faith.

So that's the Puritan movement in a nutshell. We could use another in our day. Well, John Owen, he was born right in the middle of this movement.

[ 10 : 49 ] He was born in 1616. And the movement lasted roughly 1560 to 1660. That's a baseline anyhow. It's impossible to say when it really began and when it really ended.

But I think the thrust of Puritanism fell within those hundred years. John Owen's father, he was a pastor just north of Oxford, whom he once described as a nonconformist all his days and a painful laborer in the vineyard of the Lord.

Owen, he became a very well-educated man. He went to grammar school in Oxford. He went to Queen's College in Oxford at the age of 12.

He got a Bachelor of Arts at 16. He received his Master of Arts at 19. And he worked hard for all of it.

One of his biographers, Peter Toon, says, he often allowed himself only four hours of sleep each night. His health was affected. And in later life, when he was often on a sickbed, he regretted these hours of rest that he missed as a youth.

[ 12 : 03 ] I can imagine. He tried to get his BD, his Bachelor of Divinity, but he ran into some conflict with the university's theological views, which leaned heavily Arminian.

So he eventually quit to become a personal chaplain for several wealthy families in the area. Now, keep in mind that Owen lived during a time when there was virtually no separation between church and state.

Colin talked about this a little bit when he addressed John Bunyan. Conflicts within the church meant conflicts within the state, and to some degree, vice versa.

So in 1642, the tension between the established church and the Puritans, or the nonconformists, that is, the Presbyterians and the Independents, created a civil war, primarily between King Charles I and the Parliament.

Now, we'll come back to this, but for now, all we need to know is that Owen sided with the Puritans, namely the Independents, which forced him to leave his chaplain position, and he moved to London.

[ 13 : 22 ] Now, in one of his books, John Piper says that five significant things happened to Owen while he was in London, and all of these things kind of happened within the span of about four years, and they would prove to shape him into the man we now know, that great theologian, John Owen.

According to Piper, the first thing that happened when Owen was in London was his conversion. Now, it's very well possible that he was converted before he went to London.

However, Owen himself says he never had personal assurance of his salvation until he was in London. Before that, he was a Calvinist.

He already had a mind full of theology, but he says he didn't have assurance until 1642. What happened was, and this sounds very familiar to Spurgeon's story, if you know the story of Spurgeon's conversion.

When Owen was 26, he went with his cousin to church, and they were going because this big-name Presbyterian preacher was going to be there, and they were very excited to hear him. But when they arrived, they find that this Presbyterian preacher could not be there.

[ 14 : 39 ] So some lay preacher was going to fill in for him. And Owen's cousin says, come on, let's go. We don't want to stay for this guy. But for whatever reason, by the providence of God, John insisted they stay.

The preacher's text was Matthew 8, 26, which is the story of Jesus calming the storm. And in verse 26, Jesus says to his disciples, why are you afraid, oh, you of little faith?

According to one of his biographers, this was the moment that all of Owen's doubts, all of his worries just disappeared. He says he felt born again. He felt free from all his fears.

And for perhaps the first time in his life, he felt certain that he was a redeemed child of God. Now, the second thing that happened in London was his marriage.

He married Mary Rook in 1644. But it wasn't just his marriage that shaped him. John and Mary had 11 children together.

[ 15 : 48 ] Only one of them survived to adulthood. And the surviving child, a daughter, she got married, she left home, she got divorced, she came back home, and she died from what the history books describe as consumption.

So ultimately, he lost all 11 children. Mary died about eight years before John. And Piper does the math on this. He says, Owen experienced the death of 11 children and the death of his wife.

That's one child born and lost on average every three years of Owen's adult life. Now, believe it or not, and I've tried to search, I don't think Owen ever mentions his wife or his children in all of his writings.

He never talks about his pain from losing them. But as Piper says, and I think aptly so, God has his strange and painful ways of making his ministers the kind of pastors and theologians he wants them to be.

I am certain these experiences shaped and refined Owen to become the man of God that he was.

[ 17 : 13 ] Well, the third thing that happened in London was that Owen published his first book in April, 1643. And the title of that book was, and I'll read this slowly in case you want to write it down, I know many of you take notes, a display of Arminianism, being a discovery of the old Pelagian idol free will, with the new goddess contingency, advancing themselves into the throne of God in heaven to the prejudice of his grace, providence, and supreme dominion over the children of men.

Did you get that? In the past, it seems that authors enjoyed putting the book's description right into the title, which I guess kind of makes it convenient if you're trying to choose your next read, but you have to understand, Owen came along at a time when the Calvinism versus Arminianism debate was quite strong.

Both sides had released their official positions, if you will, just a few decades prior. The Arminians published theirs in 1610.

The Calvinists published their response in 1618. That's where we get the TULIP acronym or the five points of Calvinism, at least in their summarized, systematic form.

And that debate continued to persist and often erupt throughout Europe during Owen's lifetime. Now, at the heart of this debate for Owen was the matter of predestination.

[ 18 : 51 ] Does God predestine his people for salvation? Does he sovereignly choose whom he will save and subsequently accomplish everything that's necessary to save them?

Or, does man have complete free will? He's a blank slate when he comes out and he gets to choose and God opens it up to everyone. And as you can probably surmise from the title of his book, if you followed the title of his book, Owen strongly believed in the doctrine of predestination.

He believed in it because number one, he saw it in Scripture and number two, he was convinced that his own conversion was all of God and nothing of him.

So he wrote and published his book which thrust him into public view as both a Calvinist and a very controversial figure.

This was also served as the first step in a lifetime of writing theological material. He would still be writing even in the last month of his life and we'll actually come back to that.

[ 20 : 03 ] Well, the fourth thing that happened to Owen is that he became a pastor on July 16, 1643. It was a small church and he wasn't there for very long but he was now a pastor and more to the point, he proved himself to have a pastor's heart.

He's a lot like John Calvin in this way. While we may think of Calvin and Owen and men like them as mere theologians, they were so much more than that. They cared about God's people.

They cared about his church. This is why they studied. This is why they wrote. They weren't trying to appeal to the academics and fellow theologians.

They wrote for the church and they wrote out of a love for the church and they wrote out of a sense of pastoral duty, a care for the church. Well, fifth and final, Owen was invited to speak before the parliament.

Now, this was kind of a regular affair for the House of Commons. They frequently invited pastors to come in, especially during like a time of fasting. but it was considered a great honor.

[ 21 : 12 ] As you might expect, I mean, imagine a pastor being invited to the White House today. It was a great honor. But this time was a little different. The Civil War had forced King Charles out of London.

The Presbyterians had essentially taken over parliament and the government for that matter. And Owen, a known independent by this time, was invited to preach the day after King Charles was executed.

His sermon was titled Righteous Zeal Encouraged by Divine Protection. Now, if you heard that title, you might think you know where it's going.

Well, Owen doesn't actually mention the king's execution in his sermon. It may have been hinted at just a little. But it was more than enough to gain the favor of Oliver Cromwell.

You heard about him a few weeks ago. He is a prominent figure in parliament. He eventually becomes not officially a king, but a kind of lord and protector over Europe or over England.

[ 22 : 22 ] Supposedly, Cromwell said to Owen, Sir, you are a good person I must be acquainted with. And allegedly, Owen replied, that will be much more to my advantage than yours.

Well, this led Owen to become Cromwell's personal chaplain and a traveling companion. He traveled with Cromwell to Ireland and to Scotland.

He preached to the troops. He would assess the religious situation in these places and he would offer Cromwell some theological guidance regarding his politics.

Now, I'm skipping over a lot of rich and fascinating history for the sake of time, but if you want to learn a little bit more about Oliver Cromwell or the English Civil War or the politics of church and state during this time and place, there's a great series of books called 2,000 Years of Christ's Power.

Very easy read, but not so much so that they water down the history. Nick Needham writes this series and volume 4 of that series actually covers this part of church history.

[ 23 : 35 ] It's a great series of books if you're interested. Well, beyond his role as a chaplain, Cromwell also chose Owen to be both dean and vice chancellor of Christ Church College in Oxford and this kept him very busy.

He had a lot of responsibilities. He was responsible for their worship services because it was a cathedral and a college. He was responsible for preaching during those worship services.

He was responsible for the choice of students, for the appointment of chaplains, for the discipline of students, for oversight of the property, for collecting rent, and on and on it went.

He had a lot of responsibilities. His biographer, Peter Toon, says he was responsible to, quote, establish the whole life of the college on the word of God.

Now, how many of you are pretty tired at the end of a work day? Come home and all you want to do is rest, if not sleep. Well, Owen didn't stop with his job at the college. He was under a lot of what we might call ordinary pressure at work with his position at the college, but he also faced a great deal of hostility during this time.

[ 24 : 52 ] God. We are talking about a man who was committed to godliness. He was committed to the Puritan cause, if you will. And this created enemies, which only added to the pressure of his ordinary responsibilities.

You know, as we see in universities today, it's a tremendous challenge for someone to remain faithful to the word of God in those kinds of environments, including so many so-called Christian colleges.

So after a hard day at work, after all of the pressure, the hostility, what did Owen do with his free time? He studied and he wrote.

Perhaps instead of sleeping, he published 22 books during those years, something like 12 years of the college. One of those books, for example, was The Saint's Perseverance.

It originally had a longer title, of course. He noticed some errors spreading regarding the doctrine of perseverance and he decided to address it. And he addressed it not with a 280-character tweet as a pastor might be tempted to do today or a 500-word blog post, but with a 600-page book.

[ 26 : 12 ] One biographer says this book is the most masterly vindication of the perseverance of the saints in the English tongue. In other words, Owen worked late into the night after long, hard days at the college to produce substantial theological material for the church.

And when you read his works, as difficult as they may be, you get a real sense of his deeply personal concern for his readers. They are not purely academic works.

They are pastoral. As Piper says, he wasn't just fighting doctrinal battles, he was fighting sin and temptation. And he wasn't just fighting, he was fostering heartfelt communion with God in the students.

By the way, I don't want us to forget something I mentioned earlier. During this time at the college, while he's writing all of these books, he lost several children.

He lost at least two of his sons who died in the plague of 1655. And here's what Owen himself said at the end of his tenure as vice chancellor of the college during his closing address.

[ 27 : 30 ] This is what he says to his students, to fellow faculty members. He says, labors have been numberless. Besides submitting to enormous expense, often when brought to the brink of death on your account, I have hated these limbs and this feeble body which was ready to desert my mind.

The reproaches of the vulgar have been disregarded, the envy of others have been overcome. In these circumstances, I wish you all prosperity and bid you farewell.

You can sense that tiredness in him. So in 1660, Owen left the college. Now, he may have been tired, he may have been ready for a break, but there was more to his departure than that.

Oliver Cromwell died in 1658, two years earlier. The monarchy was restored after King Charles, the first son, King Charles, the second, took charge.

And to give you a sense of where things were going, the act of uniformity was just two years away. And that is what led to what we call the Great Ejection.

[ 28 : 46 ] This is when thousands, and I mean thousands, of Puritan ministers were forced out of the Church of England. J.C. Ryle later referred to the Great Ejection as an injury to the cause of true religion in England, which will probably never be repaired.

And he's saying this in hindsight. So things were changing, and not for the better. From 1660 until his death in 1683, Owen more or less became a kind of fugitive pastor in London.

His days of political and academic success were now behind him. But Owen continued to write. He became a primary spokesman for the independence, the independent wing of the nonconformist, if you will.

He started as a Presbyterian, but later became a Congregationalist independent. Perhaps even more significant, though, is that he became a primary spokesman for religious tolerance.

He believed in freedom of religion, at least within Christianity, because that's all I've ever known him to have addressed. And this was true even before the Puritans were really persecuted during that great ejection.

[ 30 : 10 ] At the college, for instance, he could have put a stop to a number of groups worshiping, but he, in fact, let a group of Episcopalians worship right across the hall from him.

He didn't agree with them on some things, but here's what he wrote in 1667. It seems that we are some of the first whoever in the world from the foundation of it thought of ruining and destroying persons of the same religion with ourselves merely upon the choice of some peculiar ways of worship in that religion.

Now, that's probably a subject that deserves a much deeper treatment. A lot of caveats there, but that's more or less where he stood. And by the way, his views of tolerance actually hit us pretty close to home.

William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, was a student of John Owen. And through him and through others, Owen essentially exported his views of tolerance to the United States or what would become the United States.

He once wrote a letter to the governor of Massachusetts pleading with him, do not persecute the Baptists. Well, for the last 23 years of his life, Owen, he was not only a writer, but he was also a pastor.

[ 31 : 40 ] Unfortunately, he wasn't always able to stay with his church. The political situation forced him to move around a lot.

near the end of his life, he wrote this to his church. Although I am absent from you in body, I am in mind and affection and spirit present with you and in your assemblies.

For I hope you will be found my crown and rejoicing in the day of the Lord. But even when he couldn't be with them, he always made plans to ensure they were cared for.

So let me read an example of a letter he wrote to the church during this time. He said, I beseech you to hear a word of advice in case the persecution increases, which it is like to do for a season.

I could wish that because you have no ruling elders and your teachers cannot walk about publicly with safety, that you would appoint some among yourselves who may continually, as their occasions will admit, go up and down from house to house and apply themselves peculiarly to the weak, the tempted, the fearful, those who are ready to despond or to halt and to encourage them in the Lord.

[ 32 : 58 ] Choose out those unto this end who are endued with a spirit of courage and fortitude and let them know that they are happy whom Christ will honor with his blessed work.

And I desire the persons may be of this number who are faithful men and know the state of the church. By this means you will know what is the frame of the members of the church which will be a great direction to you even in your prayers.

So as I said, Owen never wrote that much about his personal life but we certainly get glimpses into his heart. He loved the church.

He loved God's people. He never said to them, well, you know, circumstances won't allow me to be with you so, you know, figure it out. I'm not there.

No, he continued to lead them. He continued to care for them and encourage them and give them pastoral counsel and at the heart of this pastoral counsel was insisting upon their need for the word of God.

[ 34 : 05 ] In Acts chapter 6, the apostles told the church it would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the spirit and wisdom.

We will turn this responsibility over to them and we'll give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. Owen once wrote about this passage emphasizing that pastors must preach the word because the church desperately needs the word.

He says, this is the most important task a pastor has of everything a pastor will do preaching the word faithfully, continually. Then he writes, nor is it required only that he preach now and then at his leisure but that he lay aside all other employments though lawful, all other duties in the church as unto such a constant attendance on them as would divert him from this work that he give himself unto it.



That is the preaching of the word. Without this no man will be able to give a comfortable account of his pastoral office at the last day. Speaking of preachers, I wish I had time to delve into the relationship John Owen had with John Bunyan.

Owen loved Bunyan. He was unsuccessful but he tried to get Bunyan out of prison but he still visited Bunyan and I don't know whether it's true or not but one story says that King Charles once asked Owen why he bothered to visit such an uneducated tinker and hear him preach in a prison cell.

[ 35 : 51 ] Why waste your time? And supposedly Owen replied, could I possess the tinker's abilities for preaching? Please your majesty, I would gladly relinquish all my learning.

He had great respect for Bunyan but Owen was able to help Bunyan in one way. Once Bunyan was released from prison after those 12 years I think it was, he came out holding the manuscript for the Pilgrim's Progress and Owen said, let me set you up with my publisher which he did and the rest is history.

By the way, they were actually buried together in London just five years apart. Well, one of Owen's friends in the ministry, David Clarkson, spoke at his funeral.

That is Owen. Instead of him, a great light is fallen, one of imminency for holiness, learning, parts, and abilities. A pastor, a scholar, a divine of the first magnitude.

Holiness gave a divine luster to his other accomplishments. It shined in his whole course and was diffused through his whole conversation or lifestyle.

[ 37 : 03 ] Holiness was certainly at the heart of Owen's entire ministry. In the introduction to his book of the mortification of sin and believers, Owen writes, I hope I may be, excuse me, I hope I may own in sincerity that my heart's desire unto God and chief design of my life are that mortification, that is, that warring against and killing of sin and universal holiness may be promoted in my own and in the hearts and ways of others to the glory of God that so the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may be adorned in all things.

Maybe you've heard that expression, be killing sin or it will be killing you. John Owen. It seems the thrust of everything he did, everything he wrote was to encourage the killing of sin and the pursuit of holiness.

Even when he stood before the parliament, he continually referred to this theme of holiness. Never mind our weapons of war, he said. We need the armor of God.

And he's talking to the politicians, he's talking to the government. He pleaded with his government to engage in a different kind of warfare, a spiritual warfare, following Cromwell's decimation of the Irish.

Here's what he said to parliament. How is that Jesus Christ is in Ireland only as a lion staining all his garments with the blood of his enemies and none to hold him out as a lamb sprinkled in his own blood with his friends?

[ 38 : 51 ] He went on to say, do your utmost for the preaching of the gospel in Ireland. And remember, Owen, he did all of this through personal hardships.

Extremely turbulent, uncertain times, he was often humbled by God's hard providences. Yet it is very clear that he trusted in God's sovereignty. He led a life of constant meditation, constant prayer, constant study.

And then in his final days, he prepared to meet Christ. I'll close with this. This is what John Piper says regarding the end of his life.

The last thing Owen was doing as the end of his life approached was communing with Christ in a work that was later published as Meditations on the Glory of Christ.

His friend, William Payne, was helping him edit the work. Near the end, Owen said, Oh, Brother Payne, the long wished-for day has come at last in which I shall see the glory in another manner than I have ever done or was capable of doing in this world.

[ 40 : 06 ] Piper says, John Owen contended for the fullness of biblical faith because he wanted generations after him to enjoy that same long wished-for day when we will see the glory of Christ in another manner than we have ever seen it here.

He knew that our final salvation depends on our present scene of the glory of Christ in the gospel. And he knew that it is the pure in heart who see this glory.

The purifying work of the Holy Spirit opens us to see and savor the glory of God in the face of Christ. This spiritual insight in turn enables us to be more and more conformed to Christ.

Therefore, Owen saw the intimate connection between contending for the gospel and being consecrated by the gospel. He never made controversy nor its victory an end in itself.

The end was to see Jesus Christ, to be satisfied with him and to be transformed into his likeness. For this great spiritual transaction there must be spirit and truth.

[ 41 : 17 ] And that meant in his day consecration and controversy, prayer and study, faith and a fight to preserve its foundation for others.

And I suppose that's still true in our day. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for great and faithful men of the past such as John Owen.

We thank you for the example they left for us and the many wonderful teachings that allows them to still speak the truth to us so many generations later.

May we learn the most important lessons such as the significance of personal holiness. Lord, we want to be more and more conformed to the image of Christ.

We know this is all of your grace but we also ask that you would bless our study of your word, that you would bless the preaching of your word, that you would bless the encouragements that we give to one another.

[ 42 : 28 ] We pray that you would bless all of those means which you employ to conform us, to transform us, to make us into the image of your son.

We thank you for your word which is a powerful tool in this life both to change us for the better but also to preach and deliver to a dying world.

May you bless all of these efforts. May you bless this church. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.