

Bread of The Word

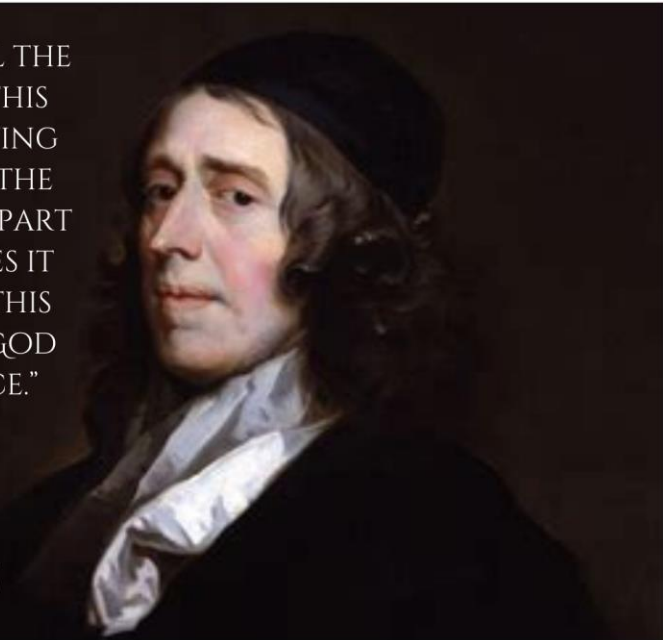
Trail of Breadcrumbs

August 16, 2021

John Owen's Solution to Lukewarm Christianity

"GRACE WILL NOT BE HIGH UNTIL THE SOUL BE LAID VERY LOW. AND THIS PREPARES THE SOUL FOR RECEIVING MERCY IN A SENSE OF PARDON, THE GREAT THING AIMED AT ON THE PART OF THE SINNER; AND IT PREPARES IT FOR EVERY INCUMBENT DUTY. THIS BRINGS THE SOUL TO WAIT ON GOD WITH DILIGENCE AND PATIENCE."

JOHN OWEN 1616-1683



*"Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!
O Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleas for mercy!"*

[English Standard Version \(Psalm 130:1-2\).](#)

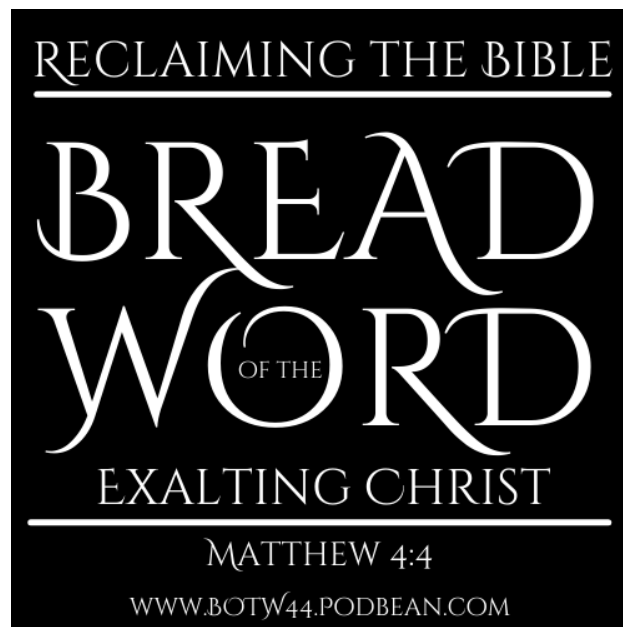
Puritan-age North America was very different, yet, had many of the same issues that persist today. Legalism and moral excellency had become the focus of many churchgoers. A pastor by the name of John Owen wrote an extensive treatise on what he believed to be the solution to the issue at hand. Owen proposed that the spiritual apathy that existed so abundantly in the Church ultimately stemmed from a skewed view of God's Forgiveness. His treatise, "The Forgiveness of Sin: A Practical Exposition of Psalm 130", addresses the nature of God's great grace, and identifies the implications that this forgiveness has on the way we ought to live.

Owen's literary style is often considered to be linguistically ambitious. Owen is notoriously difficult to read at the first glance, due to the amount of information and insight that he packs into each sentence and paragraph. Perhaps one of the most astute observations that Owen makes is made very early in the book. Owen notes that the most abhorrent sins are the ones committed by believers. Thus, when Owen writes of the depths that believers will find themselves in as a result of Sin, he writes that a "Perplexed thoughtfulness about their great unkindness towards God is another part of the depths of sin-entangled souls."

Owen continues in typical Puritan fashion to expound upon with great care for the text of Psalm 130 and the implications of it. He covers a great span of theological topics which bear great weight regarding the believers' outlook on forgiveness. Owen goes from the nature of forgiveness to the guidelines for how Christians are to act as they go before the Throne of Grace to obtain forgiveness for their sins and ties it all back to Man's necessity for the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. From there, Owen draws to a close with a grand crescendo beckoning the sinner to come unto Christ as the doorway to Salvation. Owen brings together such a vast array of theological topics, with such clarity and insight, all while backing up his claims and connections with an ample supply of Scripture.

In summary, Owen truly brings together a definitive work on this Psalm, as well as on the subject of forgiveness which shall prove to be a source of conviction for the nonbelieving churchgoer, while being a source of further surrender to a pastor or long-time Christ-follower. His analysis of the text and synthesis of ideas is suited to a vast spectrum of people, that this piece will truly continue to be used of God to draw His Church into a further state of surrender at His feet, as it has done so to our present day.

Perhaps the most fitting way to conclude is to let Owen speak for himself through his closing remarks from this treatise; “A saving participation of grace and forgiveness leaves a deep impression of its fulness and excellency on the soul of a sinner; so was it here with the Psalmist. Having himself obtained forgiveness, he knows no bounds or measure, as it were, in extolling it. There is with God mercy, redemption, plenteous redemption, redeeming from all iniquity; I have found it so, and so will every one who shall believe it.”



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*“Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”* (Matthew 4:4 ESV)

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