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Puritans, Preaching, and Productivity with Joel Beeke

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Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

Dr. Joel Beeke is the president of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, a pastor of the Heritage Reformed Congregation in Grand Rapids, and editorial director of Reformation Heritage Books. In this conversation, Dr. Beeke, Kevin, and Justin dive into the theological and historical world of the Puritans, providing reading suggestions for both beginners and experts. They also talk about improving your preaching through expository and experiential content.

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Timestamps:

Gift Ideas [0:00 – 2:00]

Accomplishing Much [2:00 – 8:57]

Family Foundation [8:57 – 11:30]

Denominations & Hyper-Calvinism [11:30 – 16:58]

Experiential Preaching [16:58 – 34:21]

The Weary, Wayward, Lazy, & Lost [34:21 – 37:21]

Puritans [37:21 – 57:24]

Book Recommendations [57:24 – 1:04:30]

Books and Everything:

Gift Ideas:

Good News of Great Joy: 25 Devotional Readings for Advent, by John Piper

Be Thou My Vision: A Liturgy for Daily Worship, by Jonathan Gibson

ESV Concise Study Bible

New Morning Mercies: A Daily Gospel Devotional, by Paul David Tripp

George Whitefield: God's Anointed Servant in the Great Revival of the Eighteenth Century, by Arnold Dallimore

Spurgeon, by Arnold Dallimore

Lectures to My Students, by Charles Spurgeon

Preaching & Preachers, by Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Pastoral Theology, by Thomas Murphy

The European Reformations, by Carter Lindberg

Worldly Saints: The Puritans As They Really Were, by Leland Ryken

Transcript

[Music] Greetings and salutations. Good to have our listeners back, whether for the first time or our loyal listeners glad to have you with us. This is Life and Books and Everything.

I'm Kevin Deung joined with Justin Taylor. Colin is out today and we have a special guest that I will introduce in just a moment. Just want to thank one more time.

Crossway our sponsor for this season and come into you if you're looking for a last-minute gift idea. John Piper's book of Advent Devotions, the number of good devotionals around Advent themes and John Piper has one with Crossway this year and encourage you to look at that. And also I mentioned last week but we'll highlight again the new book by Johnny Gibson, Be thou My Vision which is an excellent resource.

It has 31 days praying through. I've been calling it a reformed version of the Book of Common Prayer in some ways. It's taking the idea of praying through kind of a daily office but you can use it personally or for daily worship with your family and inserting reformed confessions and historical creeds and it's really really a lovely resource and I've started using it since I got my copy last week.

We bought copies for all of our staff members at our church and really encourage to have people use it. In fact we bought three books Justin from Crossway, the ESV, concise study Bible, the Be Thou My Vision and then Paul Tripp's New Morning Mercies if someone wants to start a reading plan, a devotional plan for the new year. So our guest

for the last episode of this season and after this we'll take a break for several weeks over the holidays.

Lord willing be back at sometime in January. Thanks for being with us for this season of episodes and glad to finish the year off with Dr. Joel Beakey. Now I'm gonna read just some of this but I can't get through all of it because Joel does a lot.

In fact he told us he just walked into his office about a minute ago having gotten off of the plane. Now I don't think he has a private plane that drops him right off at the seminary. So he did have to fly into Gerald R. Ford Airport I imagine but Joel is currently the president and professor of systematic theology and homiletics at Puritan Reform Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids.

I've been doing that since 1994. Pastor of Heritage Reform Congregation in Grand Rapids since 1986. He's also the editor of Puritan Reform Journal, banner of Sovereign Grace Truth, editorial director of Reformation Heritage Books, vice president of the Dutch Reform Translation Society.

He's written or co-authored just 100 books or so and written many many articles for periodicals, chapters, encyclopedias. In fact this is contributed 2,500 articles. Is that even possible? 2,500 articles and he has a new book.

Well with all of that he almost always has a new book but he has one that just came out. Reform Systematic Theology Vol. 3 I'm holding it up even though you're listening to this and can't see it but Spirit and Salvation by Joel B. Kean Paul Smalley the third in Joel's Magnum Opus although we hope he keeps writing many more books on Reform Systematic Theology published by Crossway.

His PhD is in Reformation Post Reformation Theology from Westminster Seminary Writing on the Assurance of Faith. Wow Joel thank you for being with us. It's great to be with you Kevin.

Thanks for having me. Let me ask a question just right off the bat with that whole list of things and this is a question that I get and sometimes when people ask me the question I say well let me tell you about Joel Biki. The question I get sometimes is now how do you do all the things that you do and I say well if you think I do a lot of things go talk to Joel.

So Joel I know you don't want to we're not trying to puff you up but you are amazingly productive and it produced lots of things so tell us how do you manage by God's grace to write so much to lead a church a seminary to travel and speak what is it that allows you to do so many things. Well I guess the short answer to that is I just say to people my wife that's all I say because I mean I tell my theological students don't try to copy me in any way here because I am a workaholic I love the Lord's work and I work long hours and my wife realizes that my work is important and yeah she just lets me work long hours and

I'm a plotter but I think I think the most important thing in my life is that I just was called by God in a moving powerful way just overwhelming way when I was 15 years old to ministry to lifetime ministry and I just want to give my all for that and I feel closest to God when I write even though writing hard work sometimes it's frustrating you know what it's like Kevin right you you sit at your computer and the thoughts don't come and you're frustrated but other times I get what I'm sure you get this too you get what I call a writer's high sort of like a runner's high and you've been running for a long time and suddenly you can't click the keys fast enough and you feel close to God and maybe you're even weeping while you're writing it so I feel I feel like I'm a compulsive writer I have to write even if I'm going to be published it does so much good for my own soul now is this this same habits was a different when you had kids in the house is this somewhat tied to season of life how much have you grown into this yeah I didn't I you know I was doing my PhD studies I didn't write publish any books then because I was consumed with full-time ministry and full-time PhD so that was that was all I could handle that the children did they suffer I always said to my wife you know I did play with them for an hour so I have to suffer every night then I go back to work and I said you know if if any one of our children ever shows any signs of rebellion I have to stop conferences I have to stop a lot of stuff and God was just really gracious to us with our kids they just did wonderfully well so it's just your grace but yeah obviously I work more now than I did that yeah and do I have that's right I think I heard you say one time that that your discipline is you just alluded to it you know you have a meal and you know we had to kids you'd spend some some kid time but then you're going back in and doing writing from you know post dinner until bedtime are you one of those guys I always tell people I'm not like that I had a friend who wrote books and he would you know get up at four in the morning and write for four hours I need I need a break I need a study time but it sounds like you can hammer away at a few hours a day is that how you do your discipline it's hard to say I just I do have a lot of things going on in my life so during the day of course my study doors open here and so I have a hundred different little things that happen people pop in in the seminary and so I'm happy if throughout the day I can just do all the things that come for that day plus email and then when I come back from supper say 7 30 in the evening I get a second wind and my wife is also late night person so that's helpful so then I work till 11 30 12 and then I spent a couple hours of my life we walk up and down a letter street here every night about midnight and jumping the hot tub maybe and have some time together but I go to bed about one o'clock in the morning so I'm not I'm not an early morning Puritan I'm a late night writer yeah that's right Justin go ahead joy I'd love to hear a little bit about your father and you're growing up years I know that you were introduced to John Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress through his regular reading to your family what was he into the Puritans in general was he just into Bunyan does he have a similar ministry and ambitions and work ethic like you have yeah my dad had a really good work ethic off all four of my siblings to are just really yeah they're hard workers my dad just his life was the church and he was a carpenter he wasn't interested at all in making money just enough to get money on the table and the

rest was devoted to the church he had an eighth grade education but he was uncanny in that he had just this really clear ability to teach simply and moving lay and he would often do it with emotion and with tears and he would have an extended family worship with us every Sunday night going through Pilham's Progress he'd read it to us for about 30 to 40 minutes and we didn't erupt him and ask him questions and he'd set it down and he'd teach us often weeping and it was powerful so he was a bit of a hyper-cavanist as was my background in those early years and it was only later on in his life that he really had a lot of freedom in Christ and just was very free with the offer grace he changed in about his 50s after I was out of the house and after I was preaching but he was one of those hyper-cavanists who just really believed firmly in what he and he lived it and he talked about it and though though his theology needed a little bit of correction he was he was he was bona fide he was the real thing and my mother was very very quiet about speaking about spiritual things but was just a prayer warrior and very very loving and very kind I didn't think my dad cared about what happened to me in daily life all I knew is that he loved my soul but my mother cared a lot about my daily life as well so between the two of them you know I did have a just a wonderful upbringing a lot of love in our home and really close to siblings and where did you grow up Joel Kalamazoo Michigan yeah yeah so my dad was an elder for 40 years in the church ruling out the same denomination yeah and the the it's hard to it's hard to explain but in that denomination there were only five or six ministers that that was typical so the elders would lead the worship services they'd read sermons from forefathers and then they'd pray and take the whole service so my dad was really kind of like the senior elder for for decades and was the whole denomination hyper-calministic it was it was never once reformed and then later on there was a split and I was forced because 2,000 people came out from nine different churches I was really forced to start a new denomination which is called heritage reformed yeah and then we started this seminary at that time I was a theological teacher in the in the old denomination as well this is bit of a freewheeling conversation here but I'm really curious your your thoughts on this Joel so we both have grew up in Dutch reform traditions though very different traditions I grew up in in the RCA and I'm I'm not in the RCA and there are reasons for that but I'm thankful for many of the things that I learned in RCA churches and being in Grand Rapids I know you're very familiar with RCA and CRC so I love my my Dutch reformed roots and it was very important to my family and it still is I I will sometimes say jokingly though it was serious that if I ever had a a girlfriend in high school or an interest or a date my mom usually asked two questions is she Dutch and is she reformed and I got the important one right I'm married a reformed girl she wasn't Dutch and that's that's quite all right but I thought before it is it is very hard to find vibrant dynamic evangelistically minded thoroughly or orthodox Dutch reformed movements not not just here but it seems worldwide it seems like you either have the the hyper Calvinism and tradition for tradition's sake or all across the board you have Dutch reformed traditions which have really gone liberal and lost their confessional moorings do you see the same thing and if you do why do you think it's so hard to find in the Dutch reformed tradition that sort of

we love the confessional tradition and we love Jesus yeah yeah am I wrong your question has you know I've got a thousand thoughts I want to say all at once and there's so many I can't I don't know where to begin but let me let me just condense it down to this so I there were a lot of very godly people in the denomination I grew up on that were not hyper Calvinist okay I'm just saying there was a tendency in that direct right also in my father when he was younger Joe can you say five seconds of just what is hyper Calvinism just thinking of listeners any different brands of hyper Calvinism of course but I'm talking about in my father for example he would say you can only offer grace freely to those who've already come under conviction of sin so not to every hero and so there was a lot of focus on the experience of sin and misery first part of the Heidelberg catechism and not as much on experiencing Christ in deliverance and and and and gratitude the third section of the catechism and of course I was saying we need to experience all three for 100% we're you know we're just very sinful and we do have total depravity but we have total deliverance in Christ and that's also experiential and total total gratitude so what happened when when the split was you know from my perspective I would say the 2,000 people that came out were probably the most it is a general stroke broad stroke here we're some of the most Christ-centered evangelistic people in the denomination so our churches Kevin I would say I'll go to bat for our churches here right I would say our churches are very evangelistic every single congregation is very active in the community with all kinds of prison ministry nursing home ministry outreach ministry Sunday School ministry to the children in the neighborhood and and so on but what happens when you when you have a real focus on and sit in misery and the need to experience these things is that when people do get delivered and find freedom in Christ they do tend then to be very outreaching and full of Christ and so I have a lovely congregation today of 750 people it's very active very alive and I just can't ever think of leaving these people until until old age would take me away I guess so I think there's some general things that you said that were true but I think there are there are groups that also in the Netherlands that are very very alive and that are conservative and reform going back to some of our previous questions just about all the things you do what where's your sweet spot now I know you do a lot of things and you must like all of them but I sometimes look at different people around who are also very busy and you know might say that I bet John Piper is you know most alive maybe arcing a biblical passage or preaching and other people that might be traveling and speaking or someone like Mark Devers and off the charts extrovert and I just envision him wanting to hang out with interns somewhere around the world speaking on church membership or something what what's what's your sweet spot that you feel like wow I could I was just made to do this well that's a hard question for me because I've been trying to figure out my whole life if I made a version or an extrovert I think I'm both I love almost everything about ministry I love preaching of course and I love I love doing chapels for high school and elementary kids that's a that's a sweet spot and I love writing and I love pastoring but I think my drive my burden life is to not throw away the baby but just just maybe the dirty bathwater of my background my my passion is to is to preach and teach in a reformed experiential way

that connects with the hearts of God's people and especially I want I want the children of God to grow in grace to become more and more conformed to Christ and to know the experience of what that's like so it's not just head knowledge or just I brought I was brought up this way but I want them to be alive and that gives me my greatest satisfaction I see God's people growing and falling more in love with Christ and emulating Him and just just being conformed to His image. Joel one of your many books came out 2018 500 pages also published by Crossway Reform Preaching Proclaiming God's Word from the heart of the preacher to the heart of His people and you said before we we hit record here that you think this is maybe the first time that anybody has put this sort of vision to writing so give us in a nutshell what what is this vision of experiential preaching how is it different from you know the renaissance of expositional preaching that we see in many quarters? Yeah well it is it is expositional preaching and it is although in the you know in the Dutch background tradition we do use the hyperketicism as as a basis for preaching and we do preach some of the feast days as well so we're not always preaching directly through a Bible book but Reformed experiential preaching is always expositional it's always dark trinal it's always biblical it's always practical but it's also experiential which is what I argue that everyone from Zwingley all the way down to Lloyd Jones has been doing of a conservative Reformed tradition for the most part it it lessened in the in the 18th century with Charles Finney coming on the scene and our minimalism but all the preachers basically that were Reformed from Zwingley all the way to early 18th century or mid 18th century certainly through Edwards we're experiential and by that I mean they would explain how the Holy Spirit works all these wonderful doctrines in the soul and and how we live these doctrines and how they become alive for us so just in a nutshell it's one thing for me to stand up and say you know dear church family the the doctrine of Christ's intercession is a precious doctrine to us because it means Jesus is interceding for us and that's wonderful that's the doctrine but it's another thing to say have you ever experienced this sweetness of the intercession of Christ that every single moment every single second of the clock he is interceding for you individually as well as collectively for all his people so that when you come to the end of your prayers and you're you're in deep trouble and you're you're overwhelmed with affliction you can rely on him that he's interceding at the right hand of the Father for you do you know the sweetness of that you know something like that so that's just a a little flash of an experiential comment that a minister might make so we're bringing people through experiential preaching like the Puritans did like Calvin did to to say these things that we teach every single doctrine we teach is also a doctrine it has an experiential practical dimension to it and that makes Christianity become not just alive but just vibrant in your life and preachers who did this throughout church history tended to have very mature congregations who who strove for holiness and are very Christ-centered and so what I'm trying to say is experiential preaching is the one-dimension of preaching today that is most minimized at the peril of the church.

Joel talked to us a little bit about the contemporary reformed world in America because not all reformed folks share your enthusiasm for the experiential aspect there's there's a number of reformed people that are very suspicious of Edwards and the affections and think that this this whole stream leads towards introspection and not having crew assurance and I know assurance is something that has been at the forefront of your ministry for a long time so can you talk a little bit about the wider reformed world what would people I mean as you explained it my heart's resonating with it but certain reformed types would be if not gnashing their teeth at least gritting them. Yeah yeah well first of all Justin I owe a lot to you a lot to you for your willingness to publish the first book ever written on reformed experiential preaching and then call him yeah I don't know if you remember but a month or two later and you heard that I was working on my life's legacy of teaching Systematics and you asked me you know is this going to have the same experiential flavor throughout and I said of course and you said well send me send me a manuscript proposal because if we're going to become known as the reformed experiential preaching publisher or one of them we also would be interested in reformed experiential teaching and when you said that to me you don't know that but chills were going up and down my spine and tears were in my eyes because it excited me so much that you'd be interested in that and I feel very strongly this is what the whole reformed world needs more more of now there's an increasing number of reform preachers that are preaching experientially and I rejoice with that and that's running across all kinds of reformed denominations and through our own ministry of Reformation Heritage Books where we sell about seventy five hundred different titles from seventy different publishers most of which have this flavor to them we're increasingly selling lots and lots of reformed experiential material to reform ministers in a number of the Presbyterian and Reformed denominations but yes it's still a remnant it's still not the majority and the majority have the you know they preach maybe very soundly the reformed truths but when you don't preach experientially what happens is there's certain amount of people that will peel off because they want a really close life with God and they don't hear how that happens under such preaching they hear the doctrines it fills their minds but it doesn't penetrate the depths of their soul and so a lot of those people end up in Pentecostal churches where you get you know the preacher preaching to the heart but not to the mind and so my point my burden is to show people that the preacher and that's what Puritan Reform Seminary is also all about we train men to preach to the mind to the soul into the also practically to the hands and feet we want to reach the whole man and when you don't do that it's something's missing and and so people feel that and often they say it's too boring you say doctrine is boring and that's why that's why we're writing this series of books for you Justin for crossway to show that no doctrine in the Bible is boring every doctrine is full of life every doctrine penetrates the experience for the soul every doctrine is practical in that it reaches our hands and feet and so what we do in this series of books and especially volume three which just came out on the spirit and salvation we're basically doing five things with my with my co-author my TA Paul Smalley and he's taking my notes and flushing them out adding

footnotes and all kinds of things so he's earned a full co-authorship here he's he's a dear brother so what we're doing is we're doing five things we're saying what does the Bible say about this particular doctrine what does church history say pro and con then how do you experience it how does it made real to you in your heart of hearts and you're in most being and for how is it then made practical in your life coming from within you in your outward life and then five how do you end in Daxology praising God for this glorious doctrine and so we end each chapter with as you know with a poem or or hymn in which you're praising God so that is the old way of doing systematics and then in this volume three that just came out last week we attach ethics at the end of soteriology because as you know very well ethics often goes in a liberal direction today I say it always goes about 20 20 years behind 10 20 years behind society the world because it's not grounded in systematic theology and biblical theology and so the old style of doing ethics back in the 17th 18th century among the reform was to have it be part of your your reform systematic theology a couple years ago Joel I did a lecture here at RTS on Freelingheisen and I used the volume that you did years ago I think you did an introduction of his life and then you edited and collated some some sermons I think that was actually in an RCA historical series that that book came out and then I used some other resources on Freelingheisen and of course he he had his imperfections as as we all do but what I was struck by his sermons is how and what's a challenge to me as a preacher how direct they were how it experiential and one of the ways people may hear experiential and think does that mean that the preacher's just is he crying all the time is he getting emotional well we're we're not afraid of affections and that's good but it's also a way of speaking to your hearers and you read those sermons and such a frank explicit directness to the hearer to consider their sins to consider their lostness before Christ when I teach pastoral ministry here and I just do a little section on preaching because that's not mainly what the class is about but I talk about the difference but many other people have used the same thing but I talk about the difference between preaching about the gospel and preaching the gospel and it's kind of what you were saying there about the intercession of Christ it's one thing and I think there are many good reform in who are well equipped to preach about the gospel but it's sort of a thing off to the side it's here's how this system of salvation works and isn't it good news there's this thing the cross and Christ and here who he is and then we're sinners and there's a wonderful explanation of how the soteriology works but what what I tell is we need to then turn to our people that God has given to us to speak and say with directness of language and gentleness of hearts and boldness of resolve do you know Christ some of you here this morning are probably are living a double life you're far from Christ you've wandered from him you're dead in your sins and trespasses would you come to him and I think many of us have not seen good models of that it may be it sounds too that's too much fervor to it but but I do think there is something of that missing in some of our circles and I come into to people to read those old sermons I know people don't read old sermons like they used to but you really can learn in not only what they say but the manner in which they say it how directly they speak I think Lloyd Jones says it's a

difference between being an advocate and being a witness you know saying yeah he here it is come and and that's why you know Packer could say that Lloyd Jones preaching hit him like you know electric shock therapy there was just something of the nearness of God it can't be manufactured and none of us are going to preach like the doctor I certainly don't have his giftedness but I hope there's that directness are there other aspects of this experiential preaching or you mentioned models are there some contemporary we don't want to put anyone on a pedestal but are there people that you would say listen to this man or read these sermons or or look at this sort of approach that would help us yeah yeah so yeah just backing up a moment of free and realize and now no freedomized is very interesting because he was very very direct now he would be really almost on the extreme of the experiential tradition that's right how direct he was and sometimes even saying you know using names to label the unsaved that we're rather derogatory and that that's that's a minority in the experiential tradition I think he overdid it a bit there and when he got older by the way he pulled back from that that's right yeah but yeah I think I think you know using Lloyd Jones as a reference here is great because I use him as a chapter in my book on experiential preaching I mean Lloyd Jones was a perfect example because he himself said when I go here a preacher if he doesn't need to be extraordinarily gifted but if I walk on a church and feel I've been in the presence of God I'm edified and if there's something to do with the sermon if there's something needs to change in my life there's something overwhelming impressions that come and I feel like I've been worshipping God and I bow in his presence you see that's what an experiential preacher wants is here is to walk away with you want to be growing in grace you want to be growing in in a conscious experiential presence of the Most High God in the worship service and have that translate into a daily life in which you have genuine communion with God based in the Word of God and there are preachers like you know I mean Sinclair Ferguson has that you have a two Kevin when I listen to you preach I feel like I've been in the presence of God and you apply you apply the word but there are a number of reform preachers and I don't want to be critical here but there are a number of reform preachers who are fairly well known that I just feel like there's from my background I just feel like there's very little application and all of a sudden they say amen before there's hardly any application and I go well where's the application who's gonna who's gonna change their life from this sermon and and we I think the preacher was just getting warmed up and all of a sudden you know so I think application is very important and like you touched on discrimination it's a disaster when a preacher says in his prayer Lord if there's anyone here today that doesn't know the or know you please please bring them to repentance or whatever I mean in my church if I said that people would be very upset I mean they'd be looking around what one person doesn't you know 749 people I wonder who that one person is no no you preach to the unsaved you preach primarily to the saved of course but you in each sermon you have some evangelistic note and you're reaching out for the hypocrite you're reaching out for the backslider you're reaching out for the nominal professor so in every sermon you have all kinds of different hearers sitting in front of you and the problem today is when you only preach to

God's people comforting messages you're not doing the full job of the pulpit you're not being like a like a prophet of the Old Testament where you're warning the ungodly and you're calling the backsliding to return yeah I get four sort of types of people in my head I just call them the weary the wayward the lazy and the lost and it's not like every sermon I'm tracking through those four things but it tries to it helps me stay honest because I think any preacher we gravitate towards some and so you said I think there's a lot of men who think everyone in the service every Sunday is in the weary category and that's right many are and so don't forget that they need comfort they they've come and they're they're tired they're exhausted they're sick of their sins they need the healing balm of gilead but if we think that's everyone every Sunday and we're not preaching also to the wayward who are living a duplicitous life or the lazy who need an alarm to the unconverted to quote the book or the lost and need you know us to defend the truth that we're preaching okay some of you there may be an objection that runs like this and here's an explanation to it I think because of our personality upbringing or where we've been we tend to gravitate and think that every one of our hearers is in the same place and needs either just a big bear hug every Sunday or they need a punch in the gut and we need to remember there's a lot of different people and they need to hear all of the contours of of God's word and I think experiential expositional preaching at its best allows us to do that no that's great that's great that just shows you how much of a puritan you are well there well thank you that's a good compliment no no can I just add one thing to it real quickly yes please so you have four categories and it'd be interesting to to mesh those four categories with with the old Puritan categories you know William Perkins established seven categories and but it's interesting like he would say among God's people there are those who are beginners in grace and they're lacking full assurance they they're new to the faith and then there's the assured Christian who's strong and vibrant but there's also the backsliding Christian so and and there's there's or the careless so there's three or four categories of Christians but even they would even separate categories among the unbelievers there's the impressed unbeliever who's still unconverted but he knows what he needs but maybe his heart is still in the world and then he needs to be preached to but then there's also the indifferent or the hypocrite who's in the church you don't even know why he's there maybe he's there because his parents want to be there so this includes children who are unsaved and teenagers who are unsafe and they need a particular kind of address but just like you said not every sermon do you do you do you reach out to all seven of these categories are in your case all four but over a period of time if you're preaching the whole council of God you've got to reach all those people yeah that's right let's let's use that to transition and talk about one of your other big books I had my assistant pull up Joel Bieke books sorted by Amazon popularity as of last week number one is your new volume three reform systematic theology and number two is a Puritan theology doctrine for life tell us about that big book what's in it and what you were hoping to accomplish with it yeah well that book I co-authored with with Mark Jones and actually what happened on that book is he sent me 13 chapters to do a book on Puritan covenant theology I said wow Mark these are

fantastic and by the way I've been thinking of taking my life study of the Puritans and and doing a kind of systematic theology not of the Puritans but not touching every single subject but just touching those subjects that they really had something to contribute to the reform faith and I just said you know is that something you you'd like to I haven't done much with Puritan covenant views I said that would be a really important section of the book we could take your 13 chapters I could add some of mine we could see where it goes he said fantastic let's do it and I said well how about you know when I'm 65 or when you know I'm retiring he goes no let's do it now I said okay he said in fact why don't you send me a list of subjects I send him 80 subjects he goes 80 subject this is way to so we paired it back down to 40 and then by the time we got those 40 done we added one we got to do a Providence John Flable mystery we got it okay there's another one we got it back up to 60 and our goal in the book was therefore to give you all the highlights of Puritan systematic theology and then give you eight or nine chapters to show how they took all those doctrines and brought them home to their marriage that's a chapter to their family to their to their own zeal to their meditation to their prayer life so hence the subtitle a doctrine for life and because it is such a big book we were going to just do 3000 in the first press run but it somehow people picked it up on social media just before it came out and when it was at the printer this is a really neat thing we we said I called the printer and said can you ramp it up to 6000 he goes yeah that's fine so we did 6000 and all 6000 were sold in the first six days I've never had a book like that and so we went back to press with six more thousand and they were all gone in six weeks and then another 6,000 they were gone in a couple months and another 4,000 and then since then it's been reprinted several times so it showed me something amazing it showed me that there's a lot of people out there that want to understand the Puritans know they have something special know there's a spirituality about them that could help them grow and grace but they have difficulty reading the original Puritans so they hold back but now they have a book that explains what the Puritans teach and they respond to it and they love it and so actually that book is probably my most popular book and a lot of it deals with it I mean a lot of it to be credited to Mark Jones because you had a wonderful job but I love I love selling that book to people as well because it's an intro volume that gets them excited about the Puritans and then they start going to the what they do what what I tell them to do too is go from that book as an intro go to the Puritan Treasures for today series which we're doing which are just short Puritan books of a hundred to hundred fifty pages each where every sentence is edited and it reads like it was written yesterday and and go through some of those and then get into Thomas Watson John Flable John Bunyan some of the easier Puritans to read Justin do you have a question or I have more Puritan questions yeah I was gonna ask on the Puritans too that so somebody's in that position they've kind of dabbled a little bit perhaps they've read from the Puritan theology who are the best Puritan authors to start with and what works in particular if if someone says I you know I believe you that they have a lot to teach us but I want something readable and relatable to my spiritual life and I probably don't want to start with the works of John Owen but where do I jump in yeah start with start with

Puritan Treasures for today there's about a dozen books there triphane over sinful fear by John Flable's a great one or stop loving the world by William Greenhill is another great one and then you guys at Crossway and Banner Truth and in RHB we all have a spattering of books where whether it's John Owen or someone else we've edited them in a more mild way where they're very very true to the original but I did a book for a totally deal glory a long time ago that I often recommend Heaven taken by storm by Thomas Watson you know I just put noted all the difficult words and you know something like that is a good place to start and then Watson in general yeah the original Watson he's got short sentences he's really pretty easy to read once you get going and once people get hooked and feel the substance in these books compared to the typical book today then then they're on the roll and then they want to read Flable they want to read Thomas Brooks they they want to you know Stephen Sharnock said a bit harder but I would say Watson Flable Bunyan and read the great classics I mean I get people coming to me who've never even read Post progress I mean what what a read that is so so start with some of the great classics I have to follow up controversial questions about the Puritans oh dear so so what about anticipate them okay so here's one of a historical nature and I've heard this argument before and and I'm interested in how you respond to it because I think there's yeah I'm just interested in how you respond to it for good historian say what say banner of truth our HB what sort of our tribe has done to reinvigorate the Puritans is a bit of selective reading that the Puritans historically the Puritan movement was broader than just the reformed guys that are being reprinted that there were many impuretons there were Puritans that were more of a political nature that they weren't all they didn't all fit this sort now the guys that you're talking about were Puritans but Puritan is not just shorthand for you know Ernest reformed theologians it was a broader ecclesiastical political label in England and there were other sorts of Puritans than the ones that we might read or banner of truth would republish what do you say about that historical argument regarding the Puritans yeah there's a tad of true to it in some ways but it's there's a tad of truth to it in every movement in history the reformers are the same way I just saw in Spurgeon's library down in down in the south Wolfgang muscolous in English is systematic theology I was thrilled I've never seen a copy of my life in English and why why isn't that been reprinted Wolfgang muscolous was a great great writer well because John Kelvin overshadowed them with his institutes so there's a lot of Puritan books that aren't being published some of them don't deserve to be published because they weren't the best writers they weren't the best preachers and every Puritan was a straight A preacher and that's natural that history is is unkind to Epigons and they kind of get left left to lay but if you if you if you read the biographies of all the Puritans it's astonishing there's no group of writers in church history where such a large percentage has been reprinted in the last 60 years there's been 1,000 Puritan books reprinted now there's probably five to ten thousand that have been written but some don't deserve a reprint so I think you just need to look at it that way and there are fringe members of the Puritan movement there were a handful less than 1% there were a minion John Goodwin being the most famous and then there are the more radical

Puritans sometimes we call pilgrims who just cut ties with the Church of England all together weren't even interested in hearing anything about the Church of England Puritans wanted the Church of England still to reform even if they felt if they were kicked out of it they still cared they were real churchmen the mainstream Puritans so yeah you have the more radical separatists generally speaking they were not as good writers as the mainstream Christians a few of them other books are known but yeah so the movement was a bit wider but the cream the cream is being reprinted that's amazing how many have been reprinted now that's a good answer that second question which maybe hits closer to home for for most people listening a contemporary critique of the Puritans might go something like this the Puritans were a bunch of dead white guys that's how you might put it crassley more sophisticated you might say well they were writing from a place of privilege or they were in their time supportive of imperial sort of movements or certain specific ones especially if you get to the American colonies you know had slaves like Jonathan Edwards so why why are we spending all of this time in the Puritans sure there's some things but can't we find the same sort of things from other folks so how do you respond because it seems to me Puritan interests in the Puritans since whatever the then say the 19th 20th into our century waxes and wanes and it was at a low ebb and then Lloyd Jones and Packer and the Puritan conference and Banner of Truth and all the republishing and I do have a fear not that it's all going to dissipate but it seems like in the last five to ten years there's been even among say broadly evangelical folks a reinvigorated pushback on the Puritans not for some of the reasons that may have existed 50-60 years ago but for these new issues of class gender race identity what's your apologetic for the Puritans when those objections arise yeah well first of all let me say Reformation Heritage books our sales are going through the roof and a lot more than the Puritans and in my own reading lifestyle I always have a Puritan but going but I have a lot of other stuff going as well so we're not just dependent on the Puritans and no one I think is advocating advocating that today but more people are reading the Puritans than ever before it's not de-escalating it's expanding and I think it's because people want a close life with the Lord there's a hunger out there in our secular world to have a more real a more close life with the Lord that's where the Puritans have their strength so I've served three churches in my life they've all been between 700 and 800 people and in all three churches when I came there they weren't doing much reading now all three churches I I'm just really passionate about getting churches to read and I've seen this with other ministers too where they've done this same thing the level of holiness in the church will grow when your people are reading the Puritans they're being searched they're being encouraged they're being allured they're they're seeing that the reality of the Christian faith as never before and so the Puritans have a lot to offer us do they have their blind spots well of course every movement has their blind spots slavery is in a abhorrent thing 100% against it no matter what excuses you can use how well the Puritans treated their slaves and brought them into their family worship and brought them to church and many of them were converted and you can use all those arguments but the fact is we are totally opposed to that but

then you need to ask yourself the question how many Puritans had slaves so everyone always mentions Jonathan Edwards but scholars today are constantly debating is Jonathan Edwards a Puritan not because he ate 18th century the Puritan movement is often considered to have expired in 1689 some dated at 1704 Edwards was born in 1703 and lived as 1758 if you count him as a Puritan yes then he's one Puritan who had a few slaves you tell me Kevin what other Puritans had slaves very very few the slavery movement was largely 18th century movement in America and it's spilling over into 19th century when there were no Puritans unless you count Edwards as one George Woodfield is a different stripes than a Puritan and all the other leaders after that and so a lot of them had slaves yes there were maybe a handful of minor Puritans that had slaves totally wrong totally a blind spot and I totally condemn it but what I don't appreciate is when people say oh the Puritans had slaves mm-hmm they should say probably 1% of the Puritans had slaves and we regret that maybe 2% I don't know the exact figure but very very few Puritans had slaves and so people who are trying to impugn the movement due to imperialism and those kinds of things today they're going by other people 19th century people 20th century people and people around them who are saying all kinds of things they're not aware of what they're saying that aren't really true they're caricatures on the internet and they're always or not always that's a exaggeration almost always people who haven't read the Puritans themselves one of the one of the resources we haven't talked about regarding the Puritans is the the video series that that you did and there's others and I think I have a brief talking head appearance in there but you know I I watched that did that come out last year whenever yeah yeah documentary the Puritan documentary I watched the whole thing through and you know I did it in the morning when I was on the treadmill or on my bike or it but it just struck me this is amazing we have such an embarrassment of riches anybody who's getting up to you know exercise in the morning or do something you know you can be more spiritual than me and watch it with your kids and pray together or something but we have such an embarrassment of riches you can sit and it's very well produced and it has good teaching and it gives certain vignettes of individuals and it's a really good place to start or if you've been in the Puritans a long time it's just a great place to kind of give a summation of it in several hours of this documentary so really well done in command it how can people get that documentary Joel yeah heritage books.org is a cheap okay you can get it probably I don't know almost 50% off now I think it's 80-90 dollars and it was 150 retail yeah so what that does is it gives you an intro book to the Puritans just a really simple intro book by Michael Reeves and myself gives you the two-hour movie and we dumped \$400,000 to produce that movie so that was I mean it was a real investment on our part but yeah I think God is really blessed it it's gone it's gone very well and then there's 35 lessons on the Puritans just giving you introductory lessons by people like yourself at Orr Sinclair Ferguson and I've got some in there as well and on different aspects of Puritans on marriage Puritans on family Puritans on conversion Puritans on politics etc and in blind spots of the Puritans that type of thing and what we're doing right now is we're taking that Reeves Biki book out and we've rewritten a few chapters and polished it up a bit

more and we're publishing as a paperback that will come out in February so people want just a separate little book of an intro to the Puritans that hopefully will become just a standard book to hand out to people all by itself as an intro to the Puritans that's great Justin one last question then I'm gonna ask for some book recommendations as we wrap up. Joel if you could hang out with one Puritan for the day ha ha ha ha who would you choose? Oh man that's so hard that's so hard right now the name that pops into my mind is actually a Scottish Puritan so when I use a Puritan with a small P instead of a capital P but I'd love to be with Samuel Rutherford I'd love to say to him tell me about your love for Christ how did you write such beautiful letters? Yeah yeah I mean I had Rutherford's on a bridge copy of his letters which is like six seven hundred pages on my nightstand for more than 20 years whenever I would feel the least bit down I would just pick up that book and start reading him I didn't have to read more than two pages where he just filled me so with Christ he just lifted me up again and it's it's just great so we are doing by the way this is exciting I do want to say this we're doing a 13 volume of the complete works of Samuel Rutherford in the next nine years that's what is projected anyway averaging 921 pages per volume Chad Van Dixhorn John Coffey Matthew Vogan Mark Kohler myself are five editors of the series we have 71 people involved signing contracts for for preface and editing each volume and three of the volumes have never been translated from Latin including a systematic theology against our meaningism that Rutherford wrote that's that's being translated as we speak so it's very exciting I that's great yeah I was gonna ask if John Coffey you know John was my doctoral dissertation supervisor and of course did his doctoral work on Rutherford and yeah he's an expert I'm really glad he's part of that project yes he's great and and Chad Van Dixhorn is he's become the lead editor he's kind of organized that we got huge style sheets of I don't know 20-30 pages of all the details that we have to remember with each book so yeah final questions here first just your books you have so many books we only talked about three or four is there another book or two you would want to mention that's one of your favorites that you've written that you would love for people to to check out sure thank you for that opportunity yeah meet the Puritans I wrote with Randall Peterson and what that does that's kind of a companion volume to a Puritan theology Puritan theology gives you their theology and meet the Puritans gives you the life story most of them were in prison and all kinds of things and persecution they went through so they didn't always live this kind of imperialistic free life they were they were people who suffered they they lost half their children and so I tell those stories a lot of people use this book as a daily devotional just read one story a day 150 Puritans all have been reprinted and then we have at the end of each article of their life we give you one to two paragraphs on each one of the 700 books that were reprinted by the Puritans by the time it was written now there's we're rewriting we're going to add it to it now next year and bring it up to the thousand mark because no the 300 titles have been done but so that gives you the biography and the bibliography and then the Puritan theology book gives you the theology and then the other book I quickly mentioned is living for the glory of God which I did for RC sprawl introduction to Calvinism and what I tried to do in that book with the help of Synchro

Ferguson Michael Hake and some other guys we wrote a book where we're trying to present that Calvinism is warm and contagious not just cold distant causal windsome and the best way the Reformed faith is the best way to interpret the whole of scripture to bring the whole council of God and we look at all different aspects of the Reformed faith like the Reformed view of politics Reformed view of marriage Reformed view of ethics Reformed view of a doxology as well as the five points and things like that.

That's great so this is a very hard final question because you have so many books that you know and love and I'm just gonna ask if you have one that pops to your mind in a few different categories it could be an old book it could be by a contemporary author could be published by RHB or by crossware anyone but say there's a minister listening to this podcast in wants and edifying uplifting biography of a pastor go what book do you recommend oh yeah I would say Arro Dallimore is two-volume set of George Whitfield or the two volumes of Spurgeon's life those those have moved me more than more than anything else that's great what if there's a what if the pastor says I want to read a book to help me grow as a preacher in the new year yeah if you haven't read the classics I would read lectures to my students by Spurgeon preaching preachers by Lloyd Jones and don't forget pastoral theology by Thomas Murphy that's a great great book as well and then what if somebody a lay person out there wants to read more history they're not looking to get a PhD in history but they want to get some history of let's say in particular post-reformation Puritans to the present what book or books do you recommend to understand that better yeah how they go in different categories there of Carl Lindberg's book on under Reformation's I think is really really readable and pleasurable and just really informative and good Puritans these side stuff that I've written if I had to pick the best Puritan book I would say Worldly Saints by Leila Reiken that is really good and simple to read but just very informative and Bruce Shelley is some really I don't like the opening chapter or two on the New Testament but his for one volume church history you know for a beginner that's a really good book yeah and that's another conversation maybe I'm always looking for that because besides Bruce Shelley when people say you know someone in my church I want to I want a summary I don't want to read multiple volumes but I want something more than a hundred pages yeah give me a beginner's introduction to church history I go back to that and I don't know if you know that somebody needs to write a new version of that or do something that's I don't think the best thing is that if you want it really really really really short you know we took Sinclair Ferguson's yeah five-minute summary of of all his things he did in the Columbia South Carolina pulpit we turn into a little book but that's that's like two pages per century that would be that where you could start out but he also did another book now that Reformation Trust that's right that's maybe a 200 page paperback that would be good that would be good as a starter last category someone in the new year wants to read a book that will magnify the cross of Christ yeah you know Twain Orleans gentle and lowly it's just a just a really moving book for a lot a lot of people I think rightly so that's been really popular RHB 2 we've sold thousands of them for crossway that's a great book and

if you want something a little bit older I think the suffering Savior by F.W. crewmocker it's just a really moving book he makes Christ's suffering so very real I wept many a time reading that book what my Savior has done for me and then if you want to go back to the Puritans when I was 17 years old I read Christ our mediator by Thomas Goodwin that's the book more than any other book that brought me to spiritual liberty in Christ and to see my life was hit with Christ in God it's wonderful well I'd love to keep talking about books but you just you just got back to town and so grateful for you taking the time to be with us Joel thank you for your your work in the church and in the seminary and publishing and your own writing and great God gives you good health and good energy for many years to come so thank you to all of our listeners out there Lord willing we'll be back in the new year and until then glorify God enjoy him forever and read a good book you you (bells ringing)

[buzzing]