

#8 of 12 - 5 & 10 on the 15th

(a monthly series on impactful Christians who poured out (5) their lives in Christ's strength and power (10) sent out around the 15th of each month)

"A Life Framed by the Word: The Legacy of Matthew Henry"

Scripture that Characterized His Life:

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

– Psalm 119:105

Intro Refrain - This is the eighth in a monthly series this year entitled *Victorious Christians You Should Know* from Warren Wiersbe's book by this title, introducing you each month to one amazing Christian from the past.

Church history is so important! It's both encouraging and inspiring to hear how Christians have sought the Lord, lived for Him, been sustained by Him to accomplish great things in the Kingdom of God, and then die and pass into eternal life. We are the church in our time! We must both take up the cause of Christ in our day and also live for Jesus with dedication and passion – laying down our lives so that the life of Christ might be lived in us and through us. I hope these short sketches inspire you to read more about each of these Christians and to go out, asking Holy Spirit, to help you live a more earnest and uncompromising Christian life.

"A Life Framed by the Word: The Legacy of Matthew Henry"

A Matthew Henry quote that Characterized His Life:

"He whose head is in Heaven need not fear to put his feet into the grave." – Matthew Henry

Matthew Henry (1662–1714) stands as one of the most revered Bible commentators in Christian history, known primarily for his monumental *Commentary on the Whole Bible*. His life was marked by profound devotion, a deep love for Scripture, and a tireless commitment to ministry. Born on October 18, 1662, in Broad Oak, Flintshire, Wales, Henry was the son of Philip Henry, a respected Nonconformist preacher who was ejected from the Church of England for refusing to conform to the Act of Uniformity in 1662. From an early age, Matthew was shaped by his father's strong biblical convictions, Puritan piety, and commitment to religious liberty.

Early Life and Education

Matthew was a precocious child with a quick intellect and an insatiable hunger for Scripture. By age nine, he could read the Bible fluently in both English and Latin. His early education was directed by his father, who instilled in him both theological depth and moral seriousness. Later, he studied law in London, but his heart remained with the ministry. He once reflected, *"I would rather be a preacher of the Gospel than the greatest scholar or statesman in the kingdom."*

The political and religious landscape of England at the time deeply influenced Henry. As a Nonconformist, he was part of a marginalized group that dissented from the Church of England. Yet, he never allowed bitterness or resentment to color his ministry. Instead, he emphasized the grace and sovereignty of God in all things.

Ministry and the Famous Commentary

In 1687, at the age of 25, Henry was ordained as a Presbyterian minister and began pastoring a congregation in Chester. His preaching was expository, practical, and passionate – marked by a clear focus on applying biblical truths to daily life. His pastoral work thrived for over 25 years, during which time he began the work for which he is most remembered: *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, commonly known as *Matthew Henry's Commentary*.

Though Henry only lived to complete his exposition through the book of Acts, his notes and outlines were so thorough that a group of fellow ministers completed the rest using his writings as a guide. The work was a massive achievement: a devotional, theological, and practical guide that continues to influence pastors, theologians, and laypeople today.

His approach was deeply Christ-centered, often seeing types and shadows of Christ even in the Old Testament narratives. He once wrote, *"The Scriptures were not written to make us astronomers, but to make us saints."* This perspective undergirded all his work – Scripture was for transformation, not mere information.

Legacy and Final Days

In 1712, Henry moved to London to continue his ministry, but his health began to fail. He died suddenly on June 22, 1714, at the age of 52. His final words reportedly were, *"A life spent in the service of God and communion with Him is the most comfortable life that anyone can live in this present world."*

Today, Matthew Henry's legacy endures through the countless readers who turn to his commentary for clarity, encouragement, and depth. His life was a testament to the power of Scripture to guide, transform, and sustain. In his own words:

"The more we see of God in His Word, the more we shall see of God in our lives."

Selected Scriptures and Quotes:

- *"Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counselors." – Psalm 119:24*
- *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable..." – 2 Timothy 3:16*
- *"When we take God for our God, we take His Word for our rule." – Matthew Henry*
- *"He whose head is in heaven need not fear to put his feet into the grave." – Matthew Henry*