# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/18/25

# Will I Bring Myself Up to This Level?



…perfecting holiness in the fear of God. —[2 Corinthians 7:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=2+Corinthians+7%3A1)

“Therefore, having these promises….” I claim God’s promises for my life and look to their fulfillment, and rightly so, but that shows only the human perspective on them. God’s perspective is that through His promises I will come to recognize His claim of ownership on me. For example, do I realize that my “body is the temple of the Holy Spirit,” or am I condoning some habit in my body which clearly could not withstand the light of God on it? ([1 Corinthians 6:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6:19)). God formed His Son in me through sanctification, setting me apart from sin and making me holy in His sight (see [Galatians 4:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+4:19)). But I must begin to transform my natural life into spiritual life by obedience to Him. God instructs us even in the smallest details of life. And when He brings you conviction of sin, do not “confer with flesh and blood,” but cleanse yourself from it at once ([Galatians 1:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+1:16)). Keep yourself cleansed in your daily walk.

I must cleanse myself from all filthiness in my flesh and my spirit until both are in harmony with the nature of God. Is the mind of my spirit in perfect agreement with the life of the Son of God in me, or am I mentally rebellious and defiant? Am I allowing the mind of Christ to be formed in me? (see [Philippians 2:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2:5)). Christ never spoke of His right to Himself, but always maintained an inner vigilance to submit His spirit continually to His Father. I also have the responsibility to keep my spirit in agreement with His Spirit. And when I do, Jesus gradually lifts me up to the level where He lived— a level of perfect submission to His Father’s will— where I pay no attention to anything else. Am I perfecting this kind of holiness in the fear of God? Is God having His way with me, and are people beginning to see God in my life more and more?

Be serious in your commitment to God and gladly leave everything else alone. Literally put God first in your life.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

God created man to be master of the life in the earth and sea and sky, and the reason he is not is because he took the law into his own hands, and became master of himself, but of nothing else.  The Shadow of an Agony, 1163 L

# CCEL – 3/18/25

Mine eyes fail with looking upward.—[ISA. 38:14.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.38.html" \l "Isa.38.14)

Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.—My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.

Ye have need of patience.

While they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.—Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.—That blessed hope,. . . the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

[Psa. 6:2-4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.6.html" \l "Ps.6.2). -[Psa. 55:4-6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.55.html" \l "Ps.55.4).[Heb. 10:36](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.36).[Acts 1:10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.1.html" \l "Acts.1.10). -[Phi. 3:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.3.html" \l "Phil.3.20). -[Tit. 2:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.2.html" \l "Titus.2.13).

“Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” [Galatians 3:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.3.html" \l "Gal.3.26)

The fatherhood of God is common to all his children. Ah! Little-faith, you have often said, “Oh that I had the courage of Great-heart, that I could wield his sword and be as valiant as he! But, alas, I stumble at every straw, and a shadow makes me afraid.” List thee, Little-faith. Great-heart is God’s child, and you are God’s child too; and Great-heart is not one whit more God’s child than you are. Peter and Paul, the highly-favoured apostles, were of the family of the Most High; and so are you also; the weak Christian is as much a child of God as the strong one.

“This cov'nant stands secure,

Though earth’s old pillars bow;

The strong, the feeble, and the weak,

Are one in Jesus now.”

All the names are in the same family register. One may have more grace than another, but God our heavenly Father has the same tender heart towards all. One may do more mighty works, and may bring more glory to his Father, but he whose name is the least in the kingdom of heaven is as much the child of God as he who stands among the King’s mighty men. Let this cheer and comfort us, when we draw near to God and say, “Our Father.”

Yet, while we are comforted by knowing this, let us not rest contented with weak faith, but ask, like the Apostles, to have it increased. However feeble our faith may be, if it be real faith in Christ, we shall reach heaven at last, but we shall not honour our Master much on our pilgrimage, neither shall we abound in joy and peace. If then you would live to Christ’s glory, and be happy in his service, seek to be filled with the spirit of adoption more and more completely, till perfect love shall cast out fear.

# Word Live – 3/18/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 3/18/25

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 3/18/25

# Rules of Engagement

A person standing on a rock with arms raised

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[Read Deuteronomy 20:1–20](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+20:1%e2%80%9320)

**Going to War**

20 When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. 2When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. 3He shall say: “Hear, Israel: Today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not panic or be terrified by them. 4For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.”

5The officers shall say to the army: “Has anyone built a new house and not yet begun to live in it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else may begin to live in it. 6Has anyone planted a vineyard and not begun to enjoy it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else enjoy it. 7Has anyone become pledged to a woman and not married her? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else marry her.” 8Then the officers shall add, “Is anyone afraid or fainthearted? Let him go home so that his fellow soldiers will not become disheartened too.” 9When the officers have finished speaking to the army, they shall appoint commanders over it.

10When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace. 11If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. 12If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city. 13When the Lord your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. 14As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the Lord your God gives you from your enemies. 15This is how you are to treat all the cities that are at a distance from you and do not belong to the nations nearby.

16However, in the cities of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. 17Completely destroy[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2020%3A1%E2%80%9320&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5445a)] them—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the Lord your God has commanded you. 18Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the Lord your God.

19When you lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees by putting an ax to them, because you can eat their fruit. Do not cut them down. Are the trees people, that you should besiege them?[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2020%3A1%E2%80%9320&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5447b)] 20However, you may cut down trees that you know are not fruit trees and use them to build siege works until the city at war with you falls.

**Footnotes**

1. [Deuteronomy 20:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2020%3A1%E2%80%9320&version=NIV#en-NIV-5445) The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them.
2. [Deuteronomy 20:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2020%3A1%E2%80%9320&version=NIV#en-NIV-5447) Or *down to use in the siege, for the fruit trees are for the benefit of people.*

For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory. [Deuteronomy 20:4](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Deut.20.4)

War is an inevitable and tragic reality of living in a sin-soaked world. This was true for ancient Israel as well; it needed to defend itself against hostile neighbors. However, Moses provided Israel with a set of rules for warfare that were in stark contrast to common practices of that time.

These guidelines, which were different than those reserved for the Canaanites (see March 3), placed limits on Israel’s conduct. Instead of being led by a general, their pre-battle speech was to be given by a priest. The priest would remind Israel that their success would not depend on the might of their arms, but upon the Lord’s presence with them (vv. 3–4). Israel was only to fight battles approved by the Lord. They could not just pick fights with whomever they wanted.

Moses also outlined several reasons why someone could get an exemption from military service. If they built a new house, planted a vineyard, or got engaged, they did not have to fight (vv. 6–7). Marriage, building, and farming all had a priority over war. Even those who simply felt afraid were allowed to leave, highlighting a compassionate approach to military conscription (v. 6).

When the battle commenced, Moses instructed Israel to offer peace to a city first (v. 10). Only if they refused would a battle be fought. During the battle, Israel was to protect the fruit trees and not ravage the land. As Moses put it, “Are the trees people, that you should besiege them?” (v. 19).

This passage is a reminder that God often calls His people to operate in ways that counter cultural norms. Our engagement with the world should be grounded in our trust in God’s sovereign presence with us. Passages on war also evoke a longing for the return of the Lord Jesus. Only then will true justice and peace reign (Phil. 2:9–11).

**Go Deeper**

Reflect on the guidelines God established for war. How do those differ from our modern-day views? How are they similar?

**Pray with Us**

“[Y]our God is the one who goes with you to fight for you” (Deut. 20:40). Almighty God, may we believe that this beautiful promise in today’s key verse is for us as well. We bless Your holy presence in our lives!

# Our Daily Bread – 3/18/25

# GOD-GIVEN SKILLS AND TALENTS

A person playing a piano

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**Read: EXODUS 31:1-11**

**Bezalel and Oholiab**

31 Then the Lord said to Moses, 2“See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 3and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— 4to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, 5to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. 6Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you: 7the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant law with the atonement cover on it, and all the other furnishings of the tent— 8the table and its articles, the pure gold lampstand and all its accessories, the altar of incense, 9the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, the basin with its stand— 10and also the woven garments, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests, 11and the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place. They are to make them just as I commanded you.”

I have filled [Bezalel) with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge

and with all kinds of skills-to make artistic designs. EXODUS 31:4

Some of the most famous pianists in the world, including Van Cliburn and Vladimir Horowitz, relied on Franz Mohr, chief concert technician at Steinway & Sons in New York, to ensure that their concert pianos were ready for performances. A master piano tuner, Mohr was sought after for his intricate knowledge of pianos and great skill developed over decades. Mohr believed his skills were an avenue to serve God, and he regularly shared his faith with pianists and performance staff.

When the nation of Israel was preparing to build the tent of meeting and other items necessary for worship, they needed individuals with expert skills (EXODUS 31:7-11). God appointed two skilled artisans, Bezalel and Oholiab, to do the work and filled them with the "Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills-to make artistic designs" (vv 3-4). In addition to their specialized skills, God empowered them with His Spirit to guide their work. Their willingness to use their unique talents in service to God allowed the Israelites to appropriately worship Him.

Whether or not we consider ourselves artistic, each of us has unique, God-given gifts that we can use to serve others (ROMANS 12:6). Empowered by the Spirit, we can serve and worship God through our work using the Wisdom, understanding, and skills He's given us.

**LISA M. SAMRA**

**Reflect and Pray**

What are some of the talents God's given you? How might you use them to serve Him?

Heavenly Father; please remind me that the abilities You've given me are to be a holy offering.

**INSIGHT**

God told Pharaoh to "let my people go, so that they may worship me” (EXODUS 7:16;8:1, 20;9:1,13; 10:3). Two months after leaving Egypt, the Israelites encamped at the base of Mount Sinai (19:1-2) where God gave His people the law (CHS. 20-24) and instructions on how they were to live, worship, and serve Him (CHS. 25-31). The tabernacle, built according to God's exact blueprint, was His dwelling place-"a holy sanctuary so [he could) live among [his people]" (25:8 NLT). God appointed two master craftsmen, Bezalel and Oholiab, and gave them special abilities to lead the work and teach other craftsmen and artisans (31:1-6; SEE 35:10-34). God also endowed others with enhanced skills to accomplish the work (31:6-11; SEE 35:35-36:2)

By: **K.T.Sim**

# God Calling – 3/18/25

# Your Resolutions

Listen, listen, I am your Lord. Before me there is none other. Just trust Me in everything. Help is here all the time.

The difficult way is nearly over, but you have learnt in it lessons you could learn in no other way. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Wrest from Me, by firm and simple trust and persistent prayer, the treasures of My Kingdom.

Such wonderful things are coming to you, Joy - Peace - Assurance - Security - Health - Happiness - Laughter.

Claim big, really big, things now. Remember, nothing is too big. Satisfy the longings of My Heart to give. Blessing, abundant blessing on you both now and always. Peace.

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and   
mighty things, which thou knowest not." - Jeremiah 33:3

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/19/25

# Abraham’s Life of Faith



He went out, not knowing where he was going. —[Hebrews 11:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Hebrews+11%3A8)

In the Old Testament, a person’s relationship with God was seen by the degree of separation in that person’s life. This separation is exhibited in the life of Abraham by his separation from his country and his family. When we think of separation today, we do not mean to be literally separated from those family members who do not have a personal relationship with God, but to be separated mentally and morally from their viewpoints. This is what Jesus Christ was referring to in [Luke 14:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+14:26).

Living a life of faith means never knowing where you are being led. But it does mean loving and knowing the One who is leading. It is literally a life of faith, not of understanding and reason— a life of knowing Him who calls us to go. Faith is rooted in the knowledge of a Person, and one of the biggest traps we fall into is the belief that if we have faith, God will surely lead us to success in the world.

The final stage in the life of faith is the attainment of character, and we encounter many changes in the process. We feel the presence of God around us when we pray, yet we are only momentarily changed. We tend to keep going back to our everyday ways and the glory vanishes. A life of faith is not a life of one glorious mountaintop experience after another, like soaring on eagles’ wings, but is a life of day-in and day-out consistency; a life of walking without fainting (see [Isaiah 40:31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+40:31)). It is not even a question of the holiness of sanctification, but of something which comes much farther down the road. It is a faith that has been tried and proved and has withstood the test. Abraham is not a type or an example of the holiness of sanctification, but a type of the life of faith— a faith, tested and true, built on the true God. “Abraham believed God…” ([Romans 4:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4:3)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Civilization is based on principles which imply that the passing moment is permanent. The only permanent thing is God, and if I put anything else as permanent, I become atheistic. I must build only on God (John 14:6). The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption, 565 L

# CCEL – 3/19/25

God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in the turning away every one of you from his iniquities.—[ACTS 3:26.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.3.html" \l "Acts.3.26)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercies hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.—Saved by his life.

Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy.

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.—In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him.—Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

[I Pet. 1:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.3). -[Rom. 5:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.10).[Tit. 2:13,14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Titus.2.html" \l "Titus.2.13). -[I Pet. 1:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html" \l "iPet.1.15).[Eph. 1:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.1.html" \l "Eph.1.3). -[Col. 2:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.9). -[John 1:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.16).[Rom. 8:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.32).

“Strong in faith.” [Romans 4:20](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.4.html" \l "Rom.4.20)

Christian, take good care of thy faith; for recollect faith is the only way whereby thou canst obtain blessings. If we want blessings from God, nothing can fetch them down but faith. Prayer cannot draw down answers from God’s throne except it be the earnest prayer of the man who believes. Faith is the angelic messenger between the soul and the Lord Jesus in glory. Let that angel be withdrawn, we can neither send up prayer, nor receive the answers. Faith is the telegraphic wire which links earth and heaven—on which God’s messages of love fly so fast, that before we call he answers, and while we are yet speaking he hears us. But if that telegraphic wire of faith be snapped, how can we receive the promise? Am I in trouble?—I can obtain help for trouble by faith. Am I beaten about by the enemy?—my soul on her dear Refuge leans by faith. But take faith away—in vain I call to God. There is no road betwixt my soul and heaven. In the deepest wintertime faith is a road on which the horses of prayer may travel—aye, and all the better for the biting frost; but blockade the road, and how can we communicate with the Great King? Faith links me with divinity. Faith clothes me with the power of God. Faith engages on my side the omnipotence of Jehovah. Faith ensures every attribute of God in my defence. It helps me to defy the hosts of hell. It makes me march triumphant over the necks of my enemies. But without faith how can I receive anything of the Lord? Let not him that wavereth—who is like a wave of the Sea—expect that he will receive anything of God! O, then, Christian, watch well thy faith; for with it thou canst win all things, however poor thou art, but without it thou canst obtain nothing. “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”

# Word Live – 3/19/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 3/19/25

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# Today in the Word – 3/19/25

# Do to Others

A person holding his head

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

[**Read Deuteronomy 22:1–12**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+22:1%e2%80%9312)

22 If you see your fellow Israelite’s ox or sheep straying, do not ignore it but be sure to take it back to its owner. 2If they do not live near you or if you do not know who owns it, take it home with you and keep it until they come looking for it. Then give it back. 3Do the same if you find their donkey or cloak or anything else they have lost. Do not ignore it.

4If you see your fellow Israelite’s donkey or ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. Help the owner get it to its feet.

5A woman must not wear men’s clothing, nor a man wear women’s clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this.

6If you come across a bird’s nest beside the road, either in a tree or on the ground, and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, do not take the mother with the young. 7You may take the young, but be sure to let the mother go, so that it may go well with you and you may have a long life.

8When you build a new house, make a parapet around your roof so that you may not bring the guilt of bloodshed on your house if someone falls from the roof.

9Do not plant two kinds of seed in your vineyard; if you do, not only the crops you plant but also the fruit of the vineyard will be defiled.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2022%3A1%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5480a)]

10Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together.

11Do not wear clothes of wool and linen woven together.

12Make tassels on the four corners of the cloak you wear.

**Footnotes**

1. [Deuteronomy 22:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2022%3A1%E2%80%9312&version=NIV#en-NIV-5480) Or *be forfeited to the sanctuary*

Did you know that in Alabama it is illegal to make a person in church laugh by wearing a fake mustache on Sunday? In North Carolina, it is illegal for a bingo session to last more than five hours! This is a sample of laws that are technically still on the books, but no longer enforced.

Deuteronomy 22:1–12 contains a series of laws that may seem irrelevant to believers today. Are Christians supposed to obey these laws? If, as followers of Christ, we are not under the Mosaic Law, why are they still in the Bible? These laws reveal God’s character. They describe how God wanted Israel to live within their cultural context. They are authoritative to us as God’s revelation. They are a source of wisdom as we reflect on the values on which these laws were founded.

Some laws in this section were given to remind Israel that they were to be a separate and distinct people. They were not to wear clothing of two different kinds of cloth (v. 11) or plant fields with different kinds of seeds (v. 9). These are not moral issues, but they would be a physical reminder of Israel’s call to be holy.

Many laws describe how they should treat others. If you saw an ox or goat wandering, you were to care for it until its owner came looking for it (vv. 1–3). If you saw an animal that had fallen and the owner was struggling to help the animal back to its feet, you were to help (v. 4). There is even a law related to having compassion for wild birds (vv. 6–7).

Jesus summarized the Law in this way to His disciples: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 7:12).

**Go Deeper**

What principles can we take from these laws regarding everyday life? How do they inform the way we treat others and relate to our community?

**Pray with Us**

Though some laws in Deuteronomy seem not to apply to our modern life, You made them all work together, God, to grow a holy people for Yourself. May we see deeper into Your perfect Law, may Your commands give light to our eyes.

# Our Daily Bread – 3/19/25

# DRESSED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

A couple of boys in suits in a hallway

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: ISAIAH 61:1-3**

**The Year of the Lord’s Favor**

61 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,  
    because the Lord has anointed me  
    to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
    to proclaim freedom for the captives  
    and release from darkness for the prisoners,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ISAIAH%2061%3A1-3%2C%2010-11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18845a)]  
2to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor  
    and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,  
3    and provide for those who grieve in Zion—  
to bestow on them a crown of beauty  
    instead of ashes,  
the oil of joy  
    instead of mourning,  
and a garment of praise  
    instead of a spirit of despair.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
    a planting of the Lord  
    for the display of his splendor.

**Footnotes**

1. [Isaiah 61:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ISAIAH%2061%3A1-3%2C%2010-11&version=NIV#en-NIV-18845) Hebrew; Septuagint *the blind*

**Read: ISAIAH 61:10-11**

10I delight greatly in the Lord;  
    my soul rejoices in my God.  
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation  
    and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,  
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,  
    and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
11For as the soil makes the sprout come up  
    and a garden causes seeds to grow,  
so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness  
    and praise spring up before all nations.

He has sent me ... to bestow on them ...a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. ISAIAH 61:1-3

Two eight-year-old boys in Maine-a rural American state made their mark by wearing business suits to school on Wednesdays. Soon “Dapper Wednesdays" became a favorite day, as other classmates and school staff dressed up too. James, who launched the idea, loved hearing compliments. "It just made my heart feel really good." Their Wednesday attire set the kids

apart as proud students of their school.

Our spiritual clothing, which sets us apart as God's own, gladdens our hearts too. "My soul rejoices in my God," said Isaiah, "for he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels" (ISAIAH 61:10).

As the Israelites went into exile, their clothing-spiritual and material-was threadbare and worn. Isaiah offered them a hopeful promise: God's Spirit would "bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair" (V.3).

The same promise rests on God's people today. Jesus said that by His Spirit we would be "clothed with power from on high" (LUKE 24:49). Christ provides us with a wardrobe of “compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (COLOSSIANS 3:12). Clothed by Him, we reflect His love to the world.

**PATRICIA RAYBON**

**Reflect and Pray**

How does God's Spirit help you "dress" in compassion, kindness, and patience? How are others affected by your Spirit-led behavior?

When I wear worldly values, dear God, please change my spiritual clothing.

**INSIGHT**

In the synagogue of Nazareth (LUKE 4:16-19), Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah portions of what we know as Isaiah 61. Isaiah's prophecy was perfectly fulfilled in Christ (LUKE 4:21). Prior to this, the Holy Spirit had descended upon Christ (3:22). He was full of the Spirit and was empowered by Him (4:1,14). Other passages in Isaiah likewise speak of the Spirit as the unique garment of Christ (God's anointed, His designated ruler). One such passage is Isaiah 11:2-3: "The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD-and he will delight in the fear of the LORD." While Jesus donned the Spirit uniquely and perfectly (SEE JOHN 3:34), those who belong to Christ are similarly dressed.

**ARTHUR JACKSON**

# God Calling – 3/19/25

# Courage

I am here. Fear not. Can you really trust Me? I am a God of Power, as well as a Man of Love, so human, yet so divine.

Just trust. I cannot, and I will not, fail you. All is well. Courage.

Many are praying for you both.

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." - Psalm 20:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/20/25

# Friendship with God



Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing…? —[Genesis 18:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Genesis+18%3A17)

**The Delights of His Friendship.** Genesis 18 brings out the delight of true friendship with God, as compared with simply feeling His presence occasionally in prayer. This friendship means being so intimately in touch with God that you never even need to ask Him to show you His will. It is evidence of a level of intimacy which confirms that you are nearing the final stage of your discipline in the life of faith. When you have a right-standing relationship with God, you have a life of freedom, liberty, and delight; you are God’s will. And all of your commonsense decisions are actually His will for you, unless you sense a feeling of restraint brought on by a check in your spirit. You are free to make decisions in the light of a perfect and delightful friendship with God, knowing that if your decisions are wrong He will lovingly produce that sense of restraint. Once he does, you must stop immediately.

**The Difficulties of His Friendship.** Why did Abraham stop praying when he did? He stopped because he still was lacking the level of intimacy in his relationship with God, which would enable him boldly to continue on with the Lord in prayer until his desire was granted. Whenever we stop short of our true desire in prayer and say, “Well, I don’t know, maybe this is not God’s will,” then we still have another level to go. It shows that we are not as intimately acquainted with God as Jesus was, and as Jesus would have us to be— “…that they may be one just as We are one…” ([John 17:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17:22)). Think of the last thing you prayed about— were you devoted to your desire or to God? Was your determination to get some gift of the Spirit for yourself or to get to God? “For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him” ([Matthew 6:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6:8)). The reason for asking is so you may get to know God better. “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart” ([Psalm 37:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+37:4)). We should keep praying to get a perfect understanding of God Himself.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

It is an easy thing to argue from precedent because it makes everything simple, but it is a risky thing to do. Give God “elbow room”; let Him come into His universe as He pleases. If we confine God in His working to religious people or to certain ways, we place ourselves on an equality with God.  Baffled to Fight Better, 51 L

# CCEL – 3/20/25

The entrance of thy words giveth light.—[PSA. 119:130.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.130)

This . . . is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.—God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—The Word was God. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.—If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.—Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.—Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

[I John 1:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.1.html" \l "iJohn.1.5). -[II Cor. 4:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.4.html" \l "iiCor.4.6). -[John 1:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.1),[4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.1.html" \l "John.1.4). -[I John 1:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.1.html" \l "iJohn.1.7).[Psa. 119:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.11). -[John 15:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.3).[Eph. 5:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.8). -[I Pet. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.9).

“My beloved.” [Song of Solomon 2:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.2.html" \l "Song.2.8)

This was a golden name which the ancient Church in her most joyous moments was wont to give to the Anointed of the Lord. When the time of the singing of birds was come, and the voice of the turtle was heard in her land, her love-note was sweeter than either, as she sang, “My beloved is mine and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.” Ever in her song of songs doth she call him by that delightful name, “My beloved!” Even in the long winter, when idolatry had withered the garden of the Lord, her prophets found space to lay aside the burden of the Lord for a little season, and to say, as Esaias did, “Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.” Though the saints had never seen his face, though as yet he was not made flesh, nor had dwelt among us, nor had man beheld his glory, yet he was the consolation of Israel, the hope and joy of all the chosen, the “beloved” of all those who were upright before the Most High. We, in the summer days of the Church, are also wont to speak of Christ as the best beloved of our soul, and to feel that he is very precious, the “chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.” So true is it that the Church loves Jesus, and claims him as her beloved, that the apostle dares to defy the whole universe to separate her from the love of Christ, and declares that neither persecutions, distress, affliction, peril, or the sword have been able to do it; nay, he joyously boasts, “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

O that we knew more of thee, thou ever precious one!

“My sole possession is thy love;

In earth beneath, or heaven above,

I have no other store;

And though with fervent suit I pray,

And importune thee day by day,

I ask thee nothing more.”

# Word Live – 3/20/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 3/20/25

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 3/20/25

# Grounded in Compassion

A person kneeling on the street with a person kneeling on the ground

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[**Read Deuteronomy 23:15–25**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+23:15%e2%80%9325)

**Miscellaneous Laws**

15If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand them over to their master. 16Let them live among you wherever they like and in whatever town they choose. Do not oppress them.

17No Israelite man or woman is to become a shrine prostitute. 18You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2023%3A15%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5519a)] into the house of the Lord your God to pay any vow, because the Lord your God detests them both.

19Do not charge a fellow Israelite interest, whether on money or food or anything else that may earn interest. 20You may charge a foreigner interest, but not a fellow Israelite, so that the Lord your God may bless you in everything you put your hand to in the land you are entering to possess.

21If you make a vow to the Lord your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the Lord your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. 22But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. 23Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the Lord your God with your own mouth.

24If you enter your neighbor’s vineyard, you may eat all the grapes you want, but do not put any in your basket. 25If you enter your neighbor’s grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to their standing grain.

**Footnotes**

1. [Deuteronomy 23:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2023%3A15%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#en-NIV-5519) Hebrew *of a dog*

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD. [Proverbs 19:17](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Prov.19.17)

In the 18th century, groups of Enlightenment thinkers joined forces with many evangelical Christians to form an anti-slavery movement. This was unprecedented because, at the time, slavery existed on every inhabited continent. Israel also lived in a world where slavery was a part of everyday life. One could become a slave due to debt or through being captured in war. God’s people had experienced this oppression firsthand during their time in Egypt.

In Deuteronomy 23, Israel was given laws to regulate certain aspects of this practice. What is surprising is the law outlined in today’s reading. If a slave ran away from their master, Israel was instructed not to hand them back (v. 15). Instead, they were to give the fugitive space to live among them and instructed to “not oppress them” (v. 16). This is just one of many counter-cultural and compassion-based laws.

Some other laws in this section are also grounded in compassion. Israelites were not to charge interest on loans to any fellow Israelite (v. 19). Loans were meant to help the vulnerable, not to make a profit. There were different rules for loaning money to foreigners (v. 20). The law also gave rights to people to eat grapes from a vineyard while traveling or pick grain (vv. 24–25). Of course, they could not harvest someone else’s produce, but this provision would have supported and refreshed people, and in a world without convenient restaurants or gas stations helped them to procure food.

These laws demonstrate God’s compassion for the poor and vulnerable. In a world riddled with sin, there will always be the oppressed. The church is called to embody God’s care for them (James 2:14–17; Gal. 2:10; 1 Tim. 6:18) — “whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD” (Prov. 19:17).

**Go Deeper**

What surprises you about the laws in this portion of Deuteronomy? How can we carry out God’s call to care for others with compassion?

**Pray with Us**

Today’s Scripture teaches us about the vital importance of compassion for those who suffer, who are poor and vulnerable. Dear God, enable us to live in Your light with faith and humility, as true salt of the earth.

# Our Daily Bread – 3/20/25

# JOY IN JESUS

A quote on a black background

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: JOHN 16:16-24**

**The Disciples’ Grief Will Turn to Joy**

16Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

17At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father’?” 18They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”

19Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’? 20Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. 21A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. 22So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. 23In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Your grief will turn to joy ... and no one will take away your joy. JOHN 16:20, 22

"I have the right to be happy," said a teenager as she spoke before a legislature. Yet she could have been anyone, anywhere, speaking for everybody. It's our human cry. One self-help

guru even said, "God wants you to be happy."

Is that true? It's not wrong to pursue happiness. That desirable state of mind, however, ebbs and flows with our moment-by-moment circumstances, and the fulfillment of one person's desires can crush the happiness of another.

Jesus points us to something better. He knew He was about to be nailed to a Roman cross, where He would bear the weight of the world's sin. Yet His concern was for His disciples. He told them, "You will weep and mourn while the world rejoices." But He also said, "Your grief will turn to joy" (JOHN 16:20). Then He promised, "No one will take away your joy" (V.22).

This kind of joy is more than a good feeling based on desirable things happening to us. It grows out of doing the will of our Father in heaven. Jesus also said, "Seek first (God's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (MATTHEW 6:33).

Happiness can slip away with the next unpleasant circumstance. The joy that comes from following Jesus can thrive despite those circumstances.

**TIM GUSTAFSON**

**Reflect and Pray**

How does chasing what you want ultimately leave you unhappy? What's the difference between happiness and joy?

Dear Father, please teach me to learn the difference between temporary happiness and lasting joy.

For further study, read Jesus Is in the Room at DiscoverODB.org.

**INSIGHT**

The Upper Room Discourse (JOHN 14-16) is the main teaching focus of John's gospel. The night before Jesus went to the cross, He was preparing His disciples for His crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and return. He told them that their "grief (would] turn to joy" (16:20).

One of the main features of Jesus' teaching in these chapters is the promise of the coming Holy Spirit-Christ's provision for His people after His departure. This promise was eventually fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (SEE ACTS 2), some ten days after Jesus' ascension to heaven, when the Spirit came to indwell believers in Christ.

By: [**Bill Crowder**](https://odb.org/author/billcrowder/)

# God Calling – 3/20/25

# Help from Everywhere

Your foolish little activities are valueless in themselves. Seemingly trivial or of seemingly great moment, all deeds are alike if directed by Me. Just cease to function except through Me.

I am your Lord, just obey Me as you would expect a faithful willing secretary to carry out your directions. Just have no choice but Mine, no will but Mine.

I am dependent on no one agency when I am your supply. Through many channels My help and material flow can come.

"I delight to do thy will, O my God." - Psalm 40:8

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/21/25

# Identified or Simply Interested?



I have been crucified with Christ… —[Galatians 2:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Galatians+2%3A20)

The inescapable spiritual need each of us has is the need to sign the death certificate of our sin nature. I must take my emotional opinions and intellectual beliefs and be willing to turn them into a moral verdict against the nature of sin; that is, against any claim I have to my right to myself. Paul said, “I have been crucified with Christ….” He did not say, “I have made a determination to imitate Jesus Christ,” or, “I will really make an effort to follow Him” —but— “I have been identified with Him in His death.” Once I reach this moral decision and act on it, all that Christ accomplished for me on the Cross is accomplished in me. My unrestrained commitment of myself to God gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity to grant to me the holiness of Jesus Christ.

“…it is no longer I who live….” My individuality remains, but my primary motivation for living and the nature that rules me are radically changed. I have the same human body, but the old satanic right to myself has been destroyed.

“…and the life which I now live in the flesh,” not the life which I long to live or even pray that I live, but the life I now live in my mortal flesh— the life which others can see, “I live by faith in the Son of God….” This faith was not Paul’s own faith in Jesus Christ, but the faith the Son God had given to him (see [Ephesians 2:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2:8)). It is no longer a faith in faith, but a faith that transcends all imaginable limits— a faith that comes only from the Son of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

An intellectual conception of God may be found in a bad vicious character. The knowledge and vision of God is dependent entirely on a pure heart. Character determines the revelation of God to the individual. The pure in heart see God. Biblical Ethics, 125 R

# CCEL – 3/21/25

**Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.**—[REV. 3:2.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.3.html" \l "Rev.3.2)

The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.—Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.—Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life.—The just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand.

[I Pet. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.4.html" \l "iPet.4.7). -[I Pet. 5:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.5.html" \l "iPet.5.8). -[Deut. 4:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Deut.4.html" \l "Deut.4.9). -[Heb. 10:38,39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.38).[Mark 13:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Mark.13.html" \l "Mark.13.37).[Isa. 41:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.41.html" \l "Isa.41.10),[13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.41.html" \l "Isa.41.13).

“Ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone.” [John 16:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.16.html" \l "John.16.32)

Few had fellowship with the sorrows of Gethsemane. The majority of the disciples were not sufficiently advanced in grace to be admitted to behold the mysteries of “the agony.” Occupied with the passover feast at their own houses, they represent the many who live upon the letter, but are mere babes as to the spirit of the gospel. To twelve, nay, to eleven only was the privilege given to enter Gethsemane and see “this great sight.” Out of the eleven, eight were left at a distance; they had fellowship, but not of that intimate sort to which men greatly beloved are admitted. Only three highly favoured ones could approach the veil of our Lord’s mysterious sorrow: within that veil even these must not intrude; a stone's-cast distance must be left between. He must tread the wine-press alone, and of the people there must be none with him. Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, represent the few eminent, experienced saints, who may be written down as “Fathers;” these having done business on great waters, can in some degree measure the huge Atlantic waves of their Redeemer’s passion. To some selected spirits it is given, for the good of others, and to strengthen them for future, special, and tremendous conflict, to enter the inner circle and hear the pleadings of the suffering High Priest; they have fellowship with him in his sufferings, and are made conformable unto his death. Yet even these cannot penetrate the secret places of the Saviour’s woe. “Thine unknown sufferings” is the remarkable expression of the Greek liturgy: there was an inner chamber in our Master’s grief, shut out from human knowledge and fellowship. There Jesus is “left alone.” Here Jesus was more than ever an “Unspeakable gift!” Is not Watts right when he sings—

“And all the unknown joys he gives,

Were bought with agonies unknown.”

# Word Live – 3/21/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 3/21/25

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 3/21/25

# Generosity in Relationships

A person on a sand dune

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[**Read Deuteronomy 24:1–22**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+24:1%e2%80%9322)

24 If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, 2and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, 3and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, 4then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the Lord. Do not bring sin upon the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

5If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.

6Do not take a pair of millstones—not even the upper one—as security for a debt, because that would be taking a person’s livelihood as security.

7If someone is caught kidnapping a fellow Israelite and treating or selling them as a slave, the kidnapper must die. You must purge the evil from among you.

8In cases of defiling skin diseases,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2024%3A1%E2%80%9322&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5534a)] be very careful to do exactly as the Levitical priests instruct you. You must follow carefully what I have commanded them. 9Remember what the Lord your God did to Miriam along the way after you came out of Egypt.

10When you make a loan of any kind to your neighbor, do not go into their house to get what is offered to you as a pledge. 11Stay outside and let the neighbor to whom you are making the loan bring the pledge out to you. 12If the neighbor is poor, do not go to sleep with their pledge in your possession. 13Return their cloak by sunset so that your neighbor may sleep in it. Then they will thank you, and it will be regarded as a righteous act in the sight of the Lord your God.

14Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. 15Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

16Parents are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their parents; each will die for their own sin.

17Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. 18Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.

19When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. 21When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. 22Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.

**Footnotes**

1. [Deuteronomy 24:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2024%3A1%E2%80%9322&version=NIV#en-NIV-5534) The Hebrew word for *defiling skin diseases*, traditionally translated “leprosy,” was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. [Deuteronomy 24:18](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Deut.24.18)

The actor and comedian Charlie Chaplin once quipped, “Judge a man not by how he treats his equals but by how he treats his inferiors.” How we treat those who have no power over us is a good measure of our values and character.

Deuteronomy 24 contains a series of laws that seem a bit random. However, most of them deal with how Israel should treat those in a powerless or vulnerable position. For example, if a man divorced his wife, he had to provide her with a certificate of divorce (v. 1). This would protect the woman so the man could not claim later he was still married to her. It freed her to legally marry someone else (v. 2).

If a man was recently married, he was exempt from military service for one year (v. 5). This provision affirmed the value of marriage. If someone owed you a debt, you could not take one of their millstones as a pledge (v. 6). That would prevent them from grinding grain to make money to pay you back. Similarly, if someone owed you money, you could not enter their house to get their pledge (v. 10). This prevented you from choosing from among their possessions what you most wanted as a pledge.

For employers, the regulations were geared toward preventing abuse, “Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy…pay them their wages each day before sunset” (vv. 14–15). There were laws that prevented farmers from being overly efficient harvesting their fields so that food was left over for the “foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow” (v. 19).

Again, these laws demonstrate God’s heart for the poor and needy. He hears their cry and upholds their claims to justice (v. 15). We should treat others the way that the Lord has treated us, with generosity and grace (vv. 18, 22).

**Go Deeper**

Think of a few practical ways you can demonstrate generosity and grace in your personal or business relationships.

**Pray with Us**

When we are faced with our own difficulties and sorrows, may we say together with the Psalmist: “Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me” (Ps. 27:7).

# Our Daily Bread – 3/21/25

# GOD'S OWN

A group of colorful objects on a black surface

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: ISAIAH 41:1-7**

**The Helper of Israel**

41 “Be silent before me, you islands!  
    Let the nations renew their strength!  
Let them come forward and speak;  
    let us meet together at the place of judgment.

2“Who has stirred up one from the east,  
    calling him in righteousness to his service[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ISAIAH%2041%3A1-7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18454a)]?  
He hands nations over to him  
    and subdues kings before him.  
He turns them to dust with his sword,  
    to windblown chaff with his bow.  
3He pursues them and moves on unscathed,  
    by a path his feet have not traveled before.  
4Who has done this and carried it through,  
    calling forth the generations from the beginning?  
I, the Lord—with the first of them  
    and with the last—I am he.”

5The islands have seen it and fear;  
    the ends of the earth tremble.  
They approach and come forward;  
6    they help each other  
    and say to their companions, “Be strong!”  
7The metalworker encourages the goldsmith,  
    and the one who smooths with the hammer  
    spurs on the one who strikes the anvil.  
One says of the welding, “It is good.”  
    The other nails down the idol so it will not topple.

**Footnotes**

1. [Isaiah 41:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ISAIAH%2041%3A1-7&version=NIV#en-NIV-18454) Or *east, / whom victory meets at every step*

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. ISAIAH 41:1

One day, while serving as my mom's live-in caregiver, we visited an art exhibit. We were emotionally and physically drained. I gazed at two wooden row boats filled with colorful

blown-glass shapes inspired by Japanese fishing lures and flower arrangements. The Ikebana and Float Boats display sat in front of a black wall on a reflective surface. Speckled, spotted, and striped glass orbs, like oversized gumballs, were plied into the smaller boat. From the hull of the second boat, long, twisted, and curved glass sculptures rose like vibrant flames. The artist had shaped each piece of molten glass through the refining fires of the glassblowing process.

Tears streaked my cheeks as I imagined God's caring hand holding me and my mom-His beloved children-through our hardest days. As God shapes the character of His people through refining fires in life, He affirms that our hope comes from being known and knowing we belong to Him (ISAIAH 43:1). Though we can't escape hardship, God promises to protect us and be present (V. 2). His identity and His love for us make His promises secure (vv. 3-4).

When life's circumstances heat up, we may feel fragile. We may even be fragile. But God holds us firmly in love, no matter how blazing hot the furnace gets. We are known. We are loved. We are His!

**XOCHITL DIXON**

**Reflect and Pray**

Why does knowing you belong to God bring you hope during times of affliction? How has God used refining fires to shape your character?

Loving God, thank You for holding me, molding me, and reminding me that I'm Yours.

**INSIGHT**

More than one hundred years before it occurred, Isaiah prophesied Jerusalem's destruction in 586 BC and Judah's seventy-year exile in Babylon (ISAIAH 39:6-7; SEE 2 CHRONICLES 36:15-21; 2 KINGS 20:16-18; JEREMIAH 52:4-27). But God wouldn't abandon His people, even though He'd punish them for their covenantal unfaithfulness. In Isaiah 40-66, the prophet speaks of the deliverance from that exile and Judah's restoration. Chapters 40-48 focus on the return from the Babylonian captivity and the means by which God would accomplish it. God assured His people of His unfailing love because they're His chosen people. He's their God and Savior who has chosen, redeemed, and honored them. They need not fear the Babylonians the exile or their future. “You are precious and honored in my sight," He assured them. "Do not be afraid, for I am with you" (43:4-5) .

**K. T. SIM**

# God Calling – 3/21/25

# All Is Well

Remember My Words to My disciples, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Can you tread the way I trod? Can you drink of My cup? "All is well." Say always, "All is well."

Long though the way may seem, there is not one inch too much. I, your Lord, am not only with you on the journey - I planned, and am planning, the journey.

There are Joys unspeakable in the way you go. Courage - courage - courage.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet  
 believing, ye rejoice*.* ” – 1 Peter 1:8

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/22/25

# The Burning Heart



Did not our heart burn within us? — [Luke 24:32](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+24%3A32)

We need to learn this secret of the burning heart. Suddenly Jesus appears to us, the fires are kindled, we have wonderful visions, then we have to learn to keep the secret of the burning heart that will go through anything. It is the dull, bald, dreary, commonplace day, with commonplace duties and people, that kills the burning heart unless we have learned the secret of abiding in Jesus.

Much of our distress as Christians comes not because of sin, but because we are ignorant of the laws of our own nature. For instance, the only test as to whether we ought to allow an emotion to have its way is to see what the outcome of the emotion will be. Push it to its logical conclusion, and if the outcome is something God would condemn, allow it no more way. But if it be an emotion kindled by the Spirit of God and you do not let that emotion have its right issue in your life, it will react on a lower level. That is the way sentimentalists are made. The higher the emotion is, the deeper the degradation will be, if it is not worked out on its proper level. If the Spirit of God has stirred you, make as many things inevitable as possible, let the consequences be what they will. We cannot stay on the mount of transfiguration, but we must obey the light we received there; we must act it out. When God gives a vision, transact business on that line, no matter what it costs.

"We cannot kindle when we will  
The fire which in the heart resides,  
The spirit bloweth and is still,  
In mystery our soul abides;  
But tasks in hours of insight will’d  
Can be through hours of gloom fulfill’d."

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Jesus Christ can afford to be misunderstood; we cannot. Our weakness lies in always wanting to vindicate ourselves. The Place of Help

# CCEL – 3/22/25

**Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan.**—[GEN. 13:10,11.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.13.html" \l "Gen.13.10)

Just Lot . . . that righteous man.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—Remember Lot's wife.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.—Be not ye . . . partakers with them. For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

[II Pet. 2:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.2.html" \l "iiPet.2.7).[Gal. 6:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.6.html" \l "Gal.6.7). -[Luke 17:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.17.html" \l "Luke.17.32).[II Cor. 6:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.14),[17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.17). -[Eph. 5:7,8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.7),[10,11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.5.html" \l "Eph.5.10).

“And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed.” [Matthew 26:39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.26.html" \l "Matt.26.39)

There are several instructive features in our Saviour’s prayer in his hour of trial. It was lonely prayer. He withdrew even from his three favoured disciples. Believer, be much in solitary prayer, especially in times of trial. Family prayer, social prayer, prayer in the Church, will not suffice, these are very precious, but the best beaten spice will smoke in your censer in your private devotions, where no ear hears but God's.

It was humble prayer. Luke says he knelt, but another evangelist says he “fell on his face.” Where, then, must be thy place, thou humble servant of the great Master? What dust and ashes should cover thy head! Humility gives us good foot-hold in prayer. There is no hope of prevalence with God unless we abase ourselves that he may exalt us in due time.

It was filial prayer. “Abba, Father.” You will find it a stronghold in the day of trial to plead your adoption. You have no rights as a subject, you have forfeited them by your treason; but nothing can forfeit a child’s right to a father’s protection. Be not afraid to say, “My Father, hear my cry.”

Observe that it was persevering prayer. He prayed three times. Cease not until you prevail. Be as the importunate widow, whose continual coming earned what her first supplication could not win. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Lastly, it was the prayer of resignation. “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Yield, and God yields. Let it be as God wills, and God will determine for the best. Be thou content to leave thy prayer in his hands, who knows when to give, and how to give, and what to give, and what to withhold. So pleading, earnestly, importunately, yet with humility and resignation, thou shalt surely prevail.

# Word Live – 3/22/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 3/22/25

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# Today in the Word – 3/22/25

# Justice and Kindness

A person with a cat

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[**Read Deuteronomy 25:1–19**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+25:1%e2%80%9319)

25 When people have a dispute, they are to take it to court and the judges will decide the case, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty. 2If the guilty person deserves to be beaten, the judge shall make them lie down and have them flogged in his presence with the number of lashes the crime deserves, 3but the judge must not impose more than forty lashes. If the guilty party is flogged more than that, your fellow Israelite will be degraded in your eyes.

4Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.

5If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband’s brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. 6The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

7However, if a man does not want to marry his brother’s wife, she shall go to the elders at the town gate and say, “My husband’s brother refuses to carry on his brother’s name in Israel. He will not fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to me.” 8Then the elders of his town shall summon him and talk to him. If he persists in saying, “I do not want to marry her,” 9his brother’s widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, “This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother’s family line.” 10That man’s line shall be known in Israel as The Family of the Unsandaled.

11If two men are fighting and the wife of one of them comes to rescue her husband from his assailant, and she reaches out and seizes him by his private parts, 12you shall cut off her hand. Show her no pity.

13Do not have two differing weights in your bag—one heavy, one light. 14Do not have two differing measures in your house—one large, one small. 15You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. 16For the Lord your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly.

17Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. 18When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and attacked all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. 19When the Lord your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!

The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel. [Proverbs 12:10](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Prov.12.10)

When Scripture repeats something, we should pay careful attention. In Deuteronomy 25, there is a law that we might be tempted to gloss over except for the fact that it gets repeated in the New Testament not just once but twice!

The law is found in verse 4: “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.” I don’t know about you, but I do not own an ox. If I did, I would not use it to tread out grain— there are machines that do that much more effectively. So, why should modern readers pay attention to this obscure law?

There is a principle here that gets unpacked later in the Old Testament. First, we are not to be cruel to animals. Making an ox labor treading on the grain while not allowing it to eat any of it would be tantalizing and unkind to the animal. “The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel” (Prov. 12:10).

But there is a second, deeper principle here. The apostle Paul quoted this law on two occasions in the context of compensation for those who lead and teach in the church (1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18). Read in context, Paul’s reasoning is a “how much more” type of argument. If an ox should benefit from the produce of its labor, how much more should a minister of the gospel be supported by their labor? Paul shows us how the Law is relevant in the life of a believer today. We are not under the Mosaic covenant, but those laws reveal deeper theological principles that help us understand the character of God and provide us with wisdom for how to live in ways that please Him. Care for animals and concern for just wages are still issues we face today.

**Go Deeper**

Read the New Testament mentions of this verse (1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18). How does this Scripture apply to those serving in ministry?

**Pray with Us**

Lord, thank You for the important principles and rules of the life of faith that You revealed in the book of Deuteronomy. Give us better understanding of their relevance for the life of a believer today.

# Our Daily Bread – 3/22/25

# THE BIBLE'S CHERISHED WORDS

A book open on a colorful surface

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**Read: JOHN 6:60-69**

**Many Disciples Desert Jesus**

60On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”

61Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? 62Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! 63The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=JOHN%206%3A60-69&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26321a)] and life. 64Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.”

66From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

67“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.

68Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

**Footnotes**

1. [John 6:63](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=JOHN%206%3A60-69&version=NIV#en-NIV-26321) Or *are Spirit*; or *are spirit*

You have the words of eternal life. JOHN 6:68

My dad carried his beloved Bible for more than thirty years before the worn binding finally split in two. When we took it to a book binder for professional restoration, the . craftsman was curious about what made the book so special. It wasn't an expensive antique, and its pages were full of handwritten notes. His questions about the Bible created an opportunity

for my family to share the gospel and pray with him.

Yes, the Bible is more than just a family heirloom or a nice decoration. Inside its pages are the "words of eternal life” (JOHN 6:68) as God reveals Himself to us through His Son. The opening chapter of the gospel of John says that Jesus is the "Word [who) was with God, and , .. was God” (1:1). He's described as making "his dwelling [home) among us" (v. 14). The Bible contains not only the account of the life of Christ but also all of God's activity throughout the ages, from creation to its eventual redemption.

During His time on earth, Jesus spoke words that were "full of the Spirit and life" (6,63). When He gave a difficult teaching and the crowds grumbled and many "turned back and no longer followed him" (v. 66), His disciples chose to stay. They realized that no other words could satisfy. My dad felt the same way about his Bible. Through many mountains and valleys in his life, God provided hope, direction, comfort, and truth through the words of Scripture.

**KAREN PIMPO**

**Reflect and Pray**

Whose words have you allowed to shape your life? What words from Scripture are inspiring you today?

Dear God, as I read Your Scripture today, please open my ears to hear Your voice.

**INSIGHT**

In John 6, Jesus' teaching that His disciples would have "no life in [them)" if they didn't "eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood" (V. 53) was a difficult one for them to understand (V. 60). After Christ responded to their "grumbling" (v. 61) by saying "no one can

come to me unless the Father has enabled them" (v. 65), "many ... no longer followed him" (V.66).

But despite the difficulty of the message, Jesus' words were also filled with the hope of resurrection, a theme that can be seen in the word life. This passage describes Christ's death as offering up His body "for the life of the world" (V. 51). Whoever accepts by faith this sacrifice for Sin receives God's grace and "has eternal life and [He) will raise them up at the last day" (V. 54). Peter seemed to have partly understood, confessing, “You have the words of eternal life" (v. 68).

**MONICA LA ROSE**

# God Calling – 3/22/25

# A Bud Opened

To me, your intimate Friend, all Power is given. It is given Me of My Father, and have not My intimate friends a right to ask it?

You cannot have a need I cannot supply. A flower or one thousand pounds, one is no more difficult than the other.

Your need is a spiritual need to carry on My work. All spiritual supply is fashioned from Love. The flower and the thousand pounds - both fashioned from Love to those who need it. Do you not see this?

I thought of you, a bud opened, you converted that into a cheer for one you love or a smile. That cheer meant increased health. Increased health means work for Me, and that means souls for Me.

And so it goes on, a constant supply, but only if the need is a spiritual one.

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends." - John 15:15

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/23/25

# Am I Carnally Minded?



Whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal? — [1 Corinthians 3:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+Corinthians+3%3A3)

No natural man knows anything about carnality. The flesh lusting against the Spirit that came in at regeneration, and the Spirit lusting against the flesh, produces carnality. "Walk in the Spirit," says Paul, "and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh"; and carnality will disappear.

Are you contentious, easily troubled about trifles? "Oh, but no one who is a Christian ever is!" Paul says they are, he connects these things with carnality. Is there a truth in the Bible that instantly awakens petulance in you? That is a proof that you are yet carnal. If sanctification is being worked out, there is no trace of that spirit left.

If the Spirit of God detects anything in you that is wrong, He does not ask you to put it right; He asks you to accept the light, and He will put it right. A child of the light confesses instantly and stands bared before God; a child of the darkness says – "Oh, I can explain that away." When once the light breaks and the conviction of wrong comes, be a child of the light, and confess, and God will deal with what is wrong; if you vindicate yourself, you prove yourself to be a child of the darkness.

What is the proof that carnality has gone? Never deceive yourself; when carnality is gone it is the most real thing imaginable. God will see that you have any number of opportunities to prove to yourself the marvel of His grace. The practical test is the only proof. "Why," you say, "if this had happened before, there would have been the spirit of resentment!" You will never cease to be the most amazed person on earth at what God has done for you on the inside.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

There is no allowance whatever in the New Testament for the man who says he is saved by grace but who does not produce the graceful goods. Jesus Christ by His Redemption can make our actual life in keeping with our religious profession. [Studies in the Sermon on the Mount](http://www.dhp.org/Products/Studies-in-the-Sermon-on-the-Mount%e2%80%94Gods-Character-and-the-Believers-Conduct__0098.aspx?affid=RBCHAMB)

# CCEL – 3/23/25

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.**—[REV. 4:8.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.4.html" \l "Rev.4.8)

Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.—Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground . . . I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.—To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.—I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour.

As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.—Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own.—Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.—Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

[Psa. 22:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.22.html" \l "Ps.22.3). -[Exo. 3:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.3.html" \l "Exod.3.5). -[Isa. 40:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.40.html" \l "Isa.40.25). -[Isa. 43:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.43.html" \l "Isa.43.3),[11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.43.html" \l "Isa.43.11).[I Pet. 1:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html#iPet.1.15). -[I Cor. 6:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.6.html" \l "iCor.6.19). -[II Cor. 6:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.16). -[Amos 3:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Amos.3.html" \l "Amos.3.3).

“His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” [Luke 22:44](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.22.html" \l "Luke.22.44)

The mental pressure arising from our Lord’s struggle with temptation, so forced his frame to an unnatural excitement, that his pores sent forth great drops of blood which fell down to the ground. This proves how tremendous must have been the weight of sin when it was able to crush the Saviour so that he distilled great drops of blood! This demonstrates the mighty power of his love. It is a very pretty observation of old Isaac Ambrose that the gum which exudes from the tree without cutting is always the best. This precious camphire-tree yielded most sweet spices when it was wounded under the knotty whips, and when it was pierced by the nails on the cross; but see, it giveth forth its best spice when there is no whip, no nail, no wound. This sets forth the voluntariness of Christ's sufferings, since without a lance the blood flowed freely. No need to put on the leech, or apply the knife; it flows spontaneously. No need for the rulers to cry, “Spring up, O well;” of itself it flows in crimson torrents. If men suffer great pain of mind apparently the blood rushes to the heart. The cheeks are pale; a fainting fit comes on; the blood has gone inward as if to nourish the inner man while passing through its trial. But see our Saviour in his agony; he is so utterly oblivious of self, that instead of his agony driving his blood to the heart to nourish himself, it drives it outward to bedew the earth. The agony of Christ, inasmuch as it pours him out upon the ground, pictures the fulness of the offering which he made for men.

Do we not perceive how intense must have been the wrestling through which he passed, and will we not hear its voice to us? “Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” Behold the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, and sweat even to blood rather than yield to the great tempter of your souls.

# Word Live – 3/23/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 3/23/25

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# Today in the Word – 3/23/25

# Giving to God

A person and children hugging

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[**Read Deuteronomy 26:1–19**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+26:1%e2%80%9319)

**Firstfruits and Tithes**

26 When you have entered the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, 2take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the Lord your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name 3and say to the priest in office at the time, “I declare today to the Lord your God that I have come to the land the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us.” 4The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the Lord your God. 5Then you shall declare before the Lord your God: “My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. 6But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, subjecting us to harsh labor. 7Then we cried out to the Lord, the God of our ancestors, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. 8So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. 9He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; 10and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, Lord, have given me.” Place the basket before the Lord your God and bow down before him. 11Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household.

12When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. 13Then say to the Lord your God: “I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, according to all you commanded. I have not turned aside from your commands nor have I forgotten any of them. 14I have not eaten any of the sacred portion while I was in mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor have I offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the Lord my God; I have done everything you commanded me. 15Look down from heaven, your holy dwelling place, and bless your people Israel and the land you have given us as you promised on oath to our ancestors, a land flowing with milk and honey.”

**Follow the Lord’s Commands**

16The Lord your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. 17You have declared this day that the Lord is your God and that you will walk in obedience to him, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws—that you will listen to him. 18And the Lord has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands. 19He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honor high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the Lord your God, as he promised.

Rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household. [Deuteronomy 26:11](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Deut.26.11)

I recently had a conversation with one of my students who was wrestling with the idea that he hasn’t done enough to earn God’s favor. The beauty of the gospel is that our relationship with God does not depend upon what we do but upon God’s work of salvation centered in Jesus. Paul sums this up well: “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

Our response to this tremendous gift is an outpouring of gratitude. Deuteronomy 26 describes the annual offering of “first fruits” and the tri-annual tithe (v. 2). These requirements of the Law were not to be done out of a sense of obligation or to earn God’s favor. Instead, they were to be the natural response to what God had done. When the worshiper presented the basket of first fruits to the priest, he would recite an important story (vv. 5–10). He would recount how Abraham was a “wandering Aramean” whose descendants ended up in Egypt (v. 5). They grew to become a great nation but were enslaved by Pharaoh (v. 6). The people cried out to the Lord, and the Lord delivered them from slavery into the land of Canaan, “flowing with milk and honey” (vv. 8–9). The worshiper was now offering a gift of thanksgiving (v. 11).

These tithes and offerings were not only used to support the priesthood, but would also be enjoyed by the worshipper and their family (v. 11). Additionally, they were used to provide for the “Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow” (v. 12). Like ancient Israel, we can forget what God has done for us. In communion, we remember Christ’s death for our sin and look forward to His return. Believing this precious truth results in a life grounded in gratitude.

**Go Deeper**

What would it look like for you to offer “first fruits” to the Lord? At the dinner table, why not fill a small basket with notes offering your thanks to God?

**Pray with Us**

Jesus, what can I give You that You haven’t already given to me? Don’t let me forget, like ancient Israel did, what You have done in my life. When You knocked on the door of my heart, You offered Your very life to me.

# Our Daily Bread – 3/23/25

# BEING STILL BEFORE GOD

### A pond with a bench and trees AI-generated content may be incorrect.

### **Read: PSALM 46 [**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%2046&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14616a)**]**

**For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to *alamoth.*[**[**b**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%2046&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14616b)**] A song.**

1God is our refuge and strength,  
    an ever-present help in trouble.  
2Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
    and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
3though its waters roar and foam  
    and the mountains quake with their surging.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%2046&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14618c)]

4There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
    the holy place where the Most High dwells.  
5God is within her, she will not fall;  
    God will help her at break of day.  
6Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
    he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

7The Lord Almighty is with us;  
    the God of Jacob is our fortress.

8Come and see what the Lord has done,  
    the desolations he has brought on the earth.  
9He makes wars cease  
    to the ends of the earth.  
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
    he burns the shields[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%2046&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14624d)] with fire.  
10He says, “Be still, and know that I am God;  
    I will be exalted among the nations,  
    I will be exalted in the earth.”

11The Lord Almighty is with us;  
    the God of Jacob is our fortress.

**Footnotes**

1. [Psalm 46:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%2046&version=NIV#en-NIV-14616) In Hebrew texts 46:1-11 is numbered 46:2-12.
2. [Psalm 46:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%2046&version=NIV#en-NIV-14616) Title: Probably a musical term
3. [Psalm 46:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%2046&version=NIV#en-NIV-14618) The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 7 and 11.
4. [Psalm 46:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=PSALM%2046&version=NIV#en-NIV-14624) Or *chariots*

Be still, and know that I am God. PSALM 46:10

I love the idea of stillness. Of quiet. Of resting in the refuge of God's care (PSALM46:1). And an often-quoted passage from Psalm 46 teaches us that quieting our hearts, our minds, and our souls is integral to knowing God: "Be still, and know that I am God" (v. 10).

But being still isn't easy, is it? Being quiet-and especially trying to still our hearts before God-can sometimes seem almost impossible. Why is that?

One of the most basic laws of physics tells us that objects in motion tend to stay in motion." So shifting from constant motion, activity, and obligation isn't easy because it involves. letting the momentum of our activity come to rest. We might think of it like a boat's wake: even as a boat tries to stop, the momentum of its wake-the waves it caused that are now catching up to the still boat-still roll beneath, pushing it along.

If you recognize the value of stillness but struggle to get there, that's one reason why. Our activities and overall pace are like that "object in motion." So give yourself plenty of space and grace as you sit before God and rest in Him. It may take some time for the waves of your spiritual "wake" to wash past you, to settle into being quiet before Him.

**ADAM R. HOLZ**

**Reflect and Pray**

What keeps you from being quiet before God? How will you make time to intentionally be still?

Father, we live in a noisy world, full of activity. Please help me to learn to be quiet before You, to wait out the waves of my soul and trust that You're present.

**INSIGHT**

Psalm 46 considers two primary sources of human fear: natural disasters (vv. 2-3) and the chaos of war (v. 6). In contrast to the seas that "roar and foam" (natural disasters) is the "river whose streams make glad the city of God" (vv.3-4). This city is Jerusalem. Theologian Kevin R. Warstler tells us the river is likely a metaphor for “God's presence and blessings that fill Jerusalem and flow to other nations" (CSB Study Bible). And though the nations may be "in uproar" (the second source of fear), God "lifts his voice, the earth melts" (v. 6). He also "makes wars cease" (v. 9). In each case, God's presence means safety. "The God of Jacob is our fortress" (vv 7, 11).

**TIM GUSTAFSON**

# God Calling – 3/23/25

# Until Your Heart Sings

I am beside you to bless and help you. Waver not in your prayers. They shall be heard. All power is Mine. Say that to yourself often and steadily.

Say it until your heart sings with the Joy of the safety and power it means to you.

Say it until the very force of the utterance drives back, and puts to naught, all the evils against you.

Use it as a battle cry - "All power is given unto My Lord," "All power is given unto My Friend," "All power is given unto My Savior," and then you pass on to victory.

"He ruleth by his power for ever." - Psalm 66:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/24/25

# Decreasing For His Purpose



He must increase, but I must decrease. — [John 3:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+3%3A30)

If you become a necessity to a soul, you are out of God’s order. As a worker, your great responsibility is to be a friend of the Bridegroom. When once you see a soul in sight of the claims of Jesus Christ, you know that your influence has been in the right direction, and instead of putting out a hand to prevent the throes, pray that they grow ten times stronger until there is no power on earth or in hell that can hold that soul away from Jesus Christ. Over and over again, we become amateur providences, we come in and prevent God; and say – "This and that must not be." Instead of proving friends of the Bridegroom, we put our sympathy in the way, and the soul will one day say – "That one was a thief, he stole my affections from Jesus, and I lost my vision of Him."

Beware of rejoicing with a soul in the wrong thing, but see that you do rejoice in the right thing. "The friend of the Bridegroom . . . rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." This is spoken with joy and not with sadness – at last they are to see the Bridegroom! And John says this is his joy. It is the absolute effacement of the worker, he is never thought of again.

Watch for all you are worth until you hear the Bridegroom’s voice in the life of another. Never mind what havoc it brings, what upsets, what crumblings of health, rejoice with divine hilarity when once His voice is heard. You may often see Jesus Christ wreck a life before He saves it. (Cf. Matt. 10:34.)

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Beware of isolation; beware of the idea that you have to develop a holy life alone. It is impossible to develop a holy life alone; you will develop into an oddity and a peculiarism, into something utterly unlike what God wants you to be. The only way to develop spiritually is to go into the society of God’s own children, and you will soon find how God alters your set. God does not contradict our social instincts; He alters them.  Biblical Psychology, 189 L

# CCEL – 3/24/25

**Abraham believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.**—[GEN. 15:6.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.15.html" \l "Gen.15.6)

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him: but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

The just shall live by faith.—Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).—Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.—With God nothing shall be impossible. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

[Rom. 4:20-24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.4.html" \l "Rom.4.20).[Rom. 4:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.4.html" \l "Rom.4.13).[Rom. 1:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.1.html" \l "Rom.1.17). -[Heb. 10:23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.23). -[Psa. 115:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.115.html" \l "Ps.115.3). -[Luke 1:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.1.html" \l "Luke.1.37),[45](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.1.html" \l "Luke.1.45).

“He was heard in that he feared.” [Hebrews 5:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.5.html" \l "Heb.5.7)

Did this fear arise from the infernal suggestion that he was utterly forsaken. There may be sterner trials than this, but surely it is one of the worst to be utterly forsaken? “See,” said Satan, “thou hast a friend nowhere! Thy Father hath shut up the bowels of his compassion against thee. Not an angel in his courts will stretch out his hand to help thee. All heaven is alienated from thee; thou art left alone. See the companions with whom thou hast taken sweet counsel, what are they worth? Son of Mary, see there thy brother James, see there thy loved disciple John, and thy bold apostle Peter, how the cowards sleep when thou art in thy sufferings! Lo! Thou hast no friend left in heaven or earth. All hell is against thee. I have stirred up mine infernal den. I have sent my missives throughout all regions summoning every prince of darkness to set upon thee this night, and we will spare no arrows, we will use all our infernal might to overwhelm thee: and what wilt thou do, thou solitary one?” It may be, this was the temptation; we think it was, because the appearance of an angel unto him strengthening him removed that fear. He was heard in that he feared; he was no more alone, but heaven was with him. It may be that this is the reason of his coming three times to his disciples—as Hart puts it—

“Backwards and forwards thrice he ran,

As if he sought some help from man.”

He would see for himself whether it were really true that all men had forsaken him; he found them all asleep; but perhaps he gained some faint comfort from the thought that they were sleeping, not from treachery, but from sorrow, the spirit indeed was willing, but the flesh was weak. At any rate, he was heard in that he feared. Jesus was heard in his deepest woe; my soul, thou shalt be heard also.

# Word Live – 3/24/25

# <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/>

# Scripture Union – 3/24/25

[**https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/**](https://scriptureunion.org/encounters/)

# Today in the Word – 3/24/25

# Consequences, Consequences

[**Read Deuteronomy 27:1–26**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Deuteronomy+27:1%e2%80%9326)

**The Altar on Mount Ebal**

27 Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people: “Keep all these commands that I give you today. 2When you have crossed the Jordan into the land the Lord your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with plaster. 3Write on them all the words of this law when you have crossed over to enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you. 4And when you have crossed the Jordan, set up these stones on Mount Ebal, as I command you today, and coat them with plaster. 5Build there an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones. Do not use any iron tool on them. 6Build the altar of the Lord your God with fieldstones and offer burnt offerings on it to the Lord your God. 7Sacrifice fellowship offerings there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the Lord your God. 8And you shall write very clearly all the words of this law on these stones you have set up.”

**Curses From Mount Ebal**

9Then Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, “Be silent, Israel, and listen! You have now become the people of the Lord your God. 10Obey the Lord your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today.”

11On the same day Moses commanded the people:

12When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. 13And these tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.

14The Levites shall recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice:

15“Cursed is anyone who makes an idol—a thing detestable to the Lord, the work of skilled hands—and sets it up in secret.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

16“Cursed is anyone who dishonors their father or mother.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

17“Cursed is anyone who moves their neighbor’s boundary stone.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

18“Cursed is anyone who leads the blind astray on the road.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

19“Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

20“Cursed is anyone who sleeps with his father’s wife, for he dishonors his father’s bed.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

21“Cursed is anyone who has sexual relations with any animal.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

22“Cursed is anyone who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

23“Cursed is anyone who sleeps with his mother-in-law.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

24“Cursed is anyone who kills their neighbor secretly.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

25“Cursed is anyone who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

26“Cursed is anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out.”

Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

Obey the LORD your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today. [Deuteronomy 27:10](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Deut.27.10)

Ceremonies often mark important transitions in life. High school graduation marks a transition toward adulthood. Marriage celebrates the start of a lifelong union between a man and woman. In Deuteronomy 27, Moses looks forward to a significant transition for Israel—they would cease to wander in the desert and take up residence in the Promised Land.

To mark this occasion, Moses outlined a dramatic ceremony. After writing out the Law publicly on stones coated in plaster, half of the tribes would ascend Mount Ebal and half would ascend Mount Gerizim (vv. 12–13). From Mount Ebal, the tribes and Levites would recite the curses of the covenant if Israel was unfaithful. From Mount Gerizim, the tribes and Levites would pronounce the blessings of obedience. In Deuteronomy 27, the focus is on the curses.

Curses were pronounced against those who violated clear standards the Lord had established. The curse was not operated by magic. Rather, it was a pronouncement with which God would judge. A common thread here is that these were all actions that could be done in secret: worshiping an idol in one’s home (v. 15); moving boundary stones (v. 17); misleading a blind person (v. 18); oppressing the foreigner, widow, or orphan (v. 19); various sexual sins (vv. 20–23); murder (v. 24); and bribery (v. 25).

The Lord desires His people to live holy lives, not just in public when everyone notices but also in private when only the individual and the Lord might know about it. Ultimately, Israel failed to keep the covenant. As Scripture clearly teaches, “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23). The message of the gospel is that what Israel could not do—and what we cannot do—the Lord has done for us: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13).

**Go Deeper**

How does this passage demonstrate God’s view of sin and disobedience? What challenge does this give us about so-called “private” sin?

**Pray with Us**

Father, what a joy to see Your presence with the people of Israel in Deuteronomy. You taught and guided them by Your Word. And You do it for us as well.

We are in awe of the life-giving power of Your Word!

# Our Daily Bread – 3/24/25

# A MODERN-DAY PAUL

An old person wearing glasses and a hat

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**Read: MATTHEW 28:16-20**

**The Great Commission**

16Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord., ROMANS 12:11

George Verwer's life changed dramatically when he became a believer in Jesus during a Billy Graham crusade in 1957. Soon after his conversion, he began Operation Mobilization (OM), and in 1963 the mission sent two thousand missionaries to Europe. OM went on to become one of the largest mission organizations of the twentieth century, sending out thousands each year. At the time of George's death in 2023, the mission had more than 3,000 workers from 134 countries working in 147 countries, and nearly 300 other mission agencies had been established as a result of contact with OM.

Like the apostle Paul, George had a passion to bring people to saving faith in Christ. After Paul's dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus, he became a zealous missionary for God, fervently following Jesus' command to "go and make disciples of all nations" (MATTHEW 28:19). In his missionary journeys, he also trained Timothy and others to go out and do the same.

Because of Paul's Spirit-inspired writings, people throughout the centuries have been emboldened to share the gospel. He knew the vital importance of Jesus' Great Commission (vv 19-20). That's why, in Romans 12, he reminds us: "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the lord" (v. 11). When we have the Holy Spirit living inside us, He makes us zealous to tell others about Christ.

**ALYSON KIEDA**

Who has inspired you in your faith journey? How can you prepare to share your faith with others?

Dear God, please help me be a bold witness for You.

**INSIGHT**

Matthew 28:19-20 is referred to as the Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." This evangelism mandate appears in varying forms in the New Testament: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (MARK 16:15). Repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations" (LUKE 24:47). "As the Father has sent me I am sending you" (JOHN 20:21). "You will be my witnesses .. to the ends of the earth" (ACTS 1:8).

The Great Commission is more than proclaiming that Jesus died for our sins and rose again. We carry out the mandate to "go and make disciples" when we baptize believers, teach them to obey the Scriptures, and encourage them to follow Christ as their master.

K. T. SIM

# God Calling – 3/24/25

# Know Me

I am here. Seek not to know the future. Mercifully I veil it from you.

Faith is too priceless a possession to be sacrificed in order to purchase knowledge. But Faith itself is based on a knowledge of Me.

So remember that this evening time is not to learn the future, not to receive revelation of the Unseen, but to gain an intimate knowledge of Me which will teach you all things and be the very foundation of your faith.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." - 2 Peter 3:18