# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/8/25

# His Resurrection Destiny



Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? —[Luke 24:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+24%3A26)

Our Lord’s Cross is the gateway into His life. His resurrection means that He has the power to convey His life to me. When I was born again, I received the very life of the risen Lord from Jesus Himself.

Christ’s resurrection destiny— His foreordained purpose— was to bring “many sons to glory” ([Hebrews 2:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2:10)). The fulfilling of His destiny gives Him the right to make us sons and daughters of God. We never have exactly the same relationship to God that the Son of God has, but we are brought by the Son into the relation of sonship. When our Lord rose from the dead, He rose to an absolutely new life— a life He had never lived before He was God Incarnate. He rose to a life that had never been before. And what His resurrection means for us is that we are raised to His risen life, not to our old life. One day we will have a body like His glorious body, but we can know here and now the power and effectiveness of His resurrection and can “walk in newness of life” ([Romans 6:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+6:4)). Paul’s determined purpose was to “know Him and the power of His resurrection” ([Philippians 3:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+3:10)).

Jesus prayed, “…as You have given Him authority over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him” ([John 17:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17:2)). The term Holy Spirit is actually another name for the experience of eternal life working in human beings here and now. The Holy Spirit is the deity of God who continues to apply the power of the atonement by the Cross of Christ to our lives. Thank God for the glorious and majestic truth that His Spirit can work the very nature of Jesus into us, if we will only obey Him.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The truth is we have nothing to fear and nothing to overcome because He is all in all and we are more than conquerors through Him. The recognition of this truth is not flattering to the worker’s sense of heroics, but it is amazingly glorifying to the work of Christ. Approved Unto God, 4 R

# CCEL – 4/8/25

In everything ye are enriched by him.—[I COR. 1:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.1.html" \l "iCor.1.5)

When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.—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?

In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine ye are the branches: he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.—To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.—Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.

[Rom. 5:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.6). -[Rom. 8:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.32).[Col. 2:9,10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.9).[John 15:4,5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.4). -[Rom. 7:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.7.html" \l "Rom.7.18). -[Eph. 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Eph.4.html" \l "Eph.4.7).[John 15:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.7). –[Col. 3:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.3.html" \l "Col.3.16).

“If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” [Luke 23:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.23.html" \l "Luke.23.31)

Among other interpretations of this suggestive question, the following is full of teaching: “If the innocent substitute for sinners, suffer thus, what will be done when the sinner himself—the dry tree—shall fall into the hands of an angry God?” When God saw Jesus in the sinner’s place, he did not spare him; and when he finds the unregenerate without Christ, he will not spare them. O sinner, Jesus was led away by his enemies: so shall you be dragged away by fiends to the place appointed for you. Jesus was deserted of God; and if he, who was only imputedly a sinner, was deserted, how much more shall you be? “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” what an awful shriek! But what shall be your cry when you shall say, “O God! O God! why hast thou forsaken me?” and the answer shall come back, “Because ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.” If God spared not his own Son, how much less will he spare you! What whips of burning wire will be yours when conscience shall smite you with all its terrors. Ye richest, ye merriest, ye most self-righteous sinners—who would stand in your place when God shall say, “Awake, O sword, against the man that rejected me; smite him, and let him feel the smart forever”? Jesus was spit upon: sinner, what shame will be yours! We cannot sum up in one word all the mass of sorrows which met upon the head of Jesus who died for us; therefore it is impossible for us to tell you what streams, what oceans of grief must roll overyour spirit if you die as you now are. You may die so, you may die now. By the agonies of Christ, by his wounds and by his blood, do not bring upon yourselves the wrath to come! Trust in the Son of God, and you shall never die.

# Word Live – 4/8/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/8/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/8/25

# Blind Faith?

A person standing on a hill with a sunset behind him

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

[**Read John 20:26–31**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=John+20:26%e2%80%9331)

26A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 27Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

28Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

29Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

**The Purpose of John’s Gospel**

30Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31But these are written that you may believe[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2020%3A26%E2%80%9331&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26899a)] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

**Footnotes**

1. [John 20:31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2020%3A26%E2%80%9331&version=NIV#en-NIV-26899) Or *may continue to believe*

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.[John 20:29](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=John.20.29)

In the first days of my faith, I envied the original disciples. As I read the Gospels, I wished I could have walked with Jesus and listened to His teaching as they did. I would have liked to know what His voice sounded like or see how He smiled. I thought it would be easier to believe if I had seen the risen Christ. Yet Jesus pronounced a blessing on all those who have not seen, yet believe (v. 29).

His appearance to the disciples a week after Thomas set the conditions under which he would believe is proof of Christ’s patience with those who struggle with faith. It does not mean that we can make similar demands. The faith that Jesus demands is empirical in the sense that it is grounded in actual experience that was repeated. But it is not controllable. Indeed, Jesus’ promise indicates that the empirical order of the Christian faith is the opposite of what Thomas demanded. In the Christian life, faith comes first. Experience flows from faith, not the other way around.

Jesus’ promise of blessing to those who believe without seeing is a gentle rebuke to Thomas (vv. 27–28). Does this mean that what Jesus demands from the rest of us is blind faith? Not at all! In verse 31, John says these things were written so that “you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

Our experience of Christ flows from faith, and that faith is based on the reliable record of God’s written Word. We have an empirical faith, too. Those who believe find that their experience confirms what Scripture promises. However, faith is always primary, and faith depends upon what God has said.

**Go Deeper**

Do you identify yourself with Thomas at times? Are you struggling with doubt today? How does “faith first” help you push away those questions?

**Pray with Us**

Jesus, You were willing to dispel Thomas’s doubts with the proof he could see. But today’s reading shows that, contrary to the popular saying, believing *is* seeing. Lord, strengthen our faith so we can see You more clearly.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/8/25

# BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER



**Read: EPHESIANS 4:1-6**

**Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ**

**4**As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2**Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3**Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **4**There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; **5**one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6**one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. EPHESIANS 4:2

I stopped behind a car at a red light the other day and noticed a bright sticker on the rear window boldly stating: "New Driver. Please Be Patient." Given all the road rage we hear about (or experience), what a great reminder to be patient with other drivers.

As I looked at the sticker, I wondered what would happen if people carried around signs that alerted us that they're a "New Parent" or "New Christian." If we knew what our neighbors, coworkers, or others we encounter throughout our day weregoing through, would we be more patient and even help them deal with their struggles?

We may be rushing through our days, trying to avoid being interrupted by others, but let's consider how Jesus treated people. He wasn't in a hurry. He had compassion on people and took the time to comfort and teach and show love to those He encountered.

As believers in Jesus, we're called to "live a life worthy of the calling [we] have received" (EPHESIANS4:1). The apostle Paul says that includes being completely humble and gentle; [being] patient, bearing with one another in love" (V. 2); and making every effort to live in peace and unity with each other *(v. 3).*

We may not know what challenges people are facing, but we can be patient with them. let's be an expression of Jesus' love to everyone we encounter on our daily path.

**NANCY GAVILANES**

**Reflect and Pray**

How can you be more patient with others? Who can you be a blessing to today?

Dear God, please help me to be more loving and patient with those You place in my path.

**INSIGHT**

When calling for gentleness and patience as believers in Jesus relate with each other, Paul recognized how difficult this can be. *"Bearing* with one another" (EPHESIANS 4:2) could also be translated *"putting up* with one another." The same word is used in Mark 9:19, where Jesus says, "You unbelieving generation .... How long shall I *put up* with you?" Paul doesn't naively imagine that maintaining unity in relationships with fellow believers will be easy, and he doesn't call for believers to always have positive feelings for each other. Instead, following Christ's example of humble, patient service, believers make the choice to “make every effort" (EPHESIANS 4:3) to press on in the difficult work of cultivating unity. Even within significant differences and relational friction, it's possible to demonstrate Christlike love for each other.

**MONICA LA ROSE**

# God Calling – 4/8/25

# Marks of the Kingdom

Our Savior, we greet Thee. Thy Love and Sacrifice we would return in our poor faulty measure by Love and sacrifice.

No gift is poor if it expresses the true Love of the giver. So to Me your heart's gifts are rich and precious. Rejoice in My glad acceptance as you bring your Easter offerings.

My children must make a stand. "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate" was the command. Today in life and work, in Love and service, My children must be outstanding. I called a Peculiar People to make known My Name. My servant Paul said that My followers must be willing to be deemed "fools" for My Sake.

Be ready to stand aside and let the fashions and customs of the world go by, when My Glory and My Kingdom are thereby served. Be known by the Marks that distinguish those of My Kingdom. Be ready to confess Me before man. To count all things as loss so that you may gain Me in your lives.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." 2 Corinthians 6:17

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/9/25

# Have You Seen Jesus?



After that, He appeared in another form to two of them… —[Mark 16:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Mark+16%3A12)

Being saved and seeing Jesus are not the same thing. Many people who have never seen Jesus have received and share in God’s grace. But once you have seen Him, you can never be the same. Other things will not have the appeal they did before.

You should always recognize the difference between what you see Jesus to be and what He has done for you. If you see only what He has done for you, your God is not big enough. But if you have had a vision, seeing Jesus as He really is, experiences can come and go, yet you will endure “as seeing Him who is invisible” ([Hebrews 11:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+11:27)). The man who was blind from birth did not know who Jesus was until Christ appeared and revealed Himself to him (see [John 9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+9)). Jesus appears to those for whom He has done something, but we cannot order or predict when He will come. He may appear suddenly, at any turn. Then you can exclaim, “Now I see Him!” (see [John 9:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+9:25)).

Jesus must appear to you and to your friend individually; no one can see Jesus with your eyes. And division takes place when one has seen Him and the other has not. You cannot bring your friend to the point of seeing; God must do it. Have you seen Jesus? If so, you will want others to see Him too. “And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either” ([Mark 16:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+16:13)). When you see Him, you must tell, even if they don’t believe.

O could I tell, you surely would believe it!  
O could I only say what I have seen!  
How should I tell or how can you receive it,  
How, till He bringeth you where I have been?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Christianity is not consistency to conscience or to convictions; Christianity is being true to Jesus Christ.  Biblical Ethics, 111 L

# CCEL – 4/9/25

Fear not; for I have redeemed thee.—[ISA. 43:1.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.43.html" \l "Isa.43.1)

Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel.—I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.—With the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is his name: he shall throughly plead their cause.—My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[Isa. 54:4,5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.54.html" \l "Isa.54.4)-[Isa. 44:22](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.44.html" \l "Isa.44.22). -[I Pet. 1:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html#iPet.1.19).[Jer. 50:34](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jer.50.html#Jer.50.34). -[John 10:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.10.html" \l "John.10.29).[Gal. 1:3-5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.1.html" \l "Gal.1.3).

“And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.” [Luke 23:27](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.23.html" \l "Luke.23.27)

Amid the rabble rout which hounded the Redeemer to his doom, there were some gracious souls whose bitter anguish sought vent in wailing and lamentations—fit music to accompany that march of woe. When my soul can, in imagination, see the Saviour bearing his cross to Calvary, she joins the godly women and weeps with them; for, indeed, there is true cause for grief—cause lying deeper than those mourning women thought. They bewailed innocence maltreated, goodness persecuted, love bleeding, meekness about to die; but my heart has a deeper and more bitter cause to mourn. My sins were the scourges which lacerated those blessed shoulders, and crowned with thorn those bleeding brows: my sins cried “Crucify him! crucify him!” and laid the cross upon his gracious shoulders. His being led forth to die is sorrow enough for one eternity: but my having been his murderer, is more, infinitely more, grief than one poor fountain of tears can express.

Why those women loved and wept it were not hard to guess: but they could not have had greater reasons for love and grief than my heart has. Nain’s widow saw her son restored—but I myself have been raised to newness of life. Peter’s wife’s mother was cured of the fever—but I of the greater plague of sin. Out of Magdalene seven devils were cast—but a whole legion out of me. Mary and Martha were favoured with visits—but he dwells with me. His mother bare his body—but he is formed in me the hope of glory. In nothing behind the holy women in debt, let me not be behind them in gratitude or sorrow.

“Love and grief my heart dividing,

With my tears his feet I'll lave—

Constant still in heart abiding,

Weep for him who died to save.”

# Word Live – 4/9/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/9/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/9/25

# Starting Over

A boat on a beach

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

[**Read John 21:1–15**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=John+21:1%e2%80%9315)

**Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish**

21 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021%3A1%E2%80%9315&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26900a)] It happened this way: 2Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021%3A1%E2%80%9315&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26901b)]), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3“I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

5He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

6He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

7Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021%3A1%E2%80%9315&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26907c)] 9When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

10Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” 11So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. 13Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

**Jesus Reinstates Peter**

15When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

**Footnotes**

1. [John 21:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021%3A1%E2%80%9315&version=NIV#en-NIV-26900) Greek *Tiberias*
2. [John 21:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021%3A1%E2%80%9315&version=NIV#en-NIV-26901) *Thomas* (Aramaic) and *Didymus* (Greek) both mean *twin*.
3. [John 21:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021%3A1%E2%80%9315&version=NIV#en-NIV-26907) Or about 90 meters

It is the Lord! [John 21:7](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=John.21.7)

Pastor and author Erwin Lutzer has called failure “the back door to success.” But at first, it often just feels like failure. When we stumble, we may find it difficult to get back up and start again. Even after seeing the risen Christ, Peter seemed to go backward rather than forward. When Peter made the sudden decision to go fishing in John 21:3, he was not merely looking for a way to pass time. Perhaps it was a decision born of necessity. Were the disciples running low on food? Did Peter feel his denial of Christ had disqualified him from serving the Lord, and all that was left was a return to his old vocation?

Whatever motivated Peter, the result was a failure that mirrored his initial call (Luke 5:4–11). When someone on the shore urged them to try again on the other side of the boat, it was John who recognized it was Jesus (v. 7). Jesus’ repeated questions and the command to “feed” His sheep in verses 15–17 could imply Peter’s sudden return to his old vocation sprang from concerns about the practical needs of the small band of disciples. Yet when they reached the shore with their miraculous catch, Jesus already had “a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread” (v. 9). Jesus’ questions were not intended to shame Peter but to remind him of his true vocation and recommission him. In addition to providing an opportunity to reaffirm his commitment three times (one for each denial), He promised that Peter would one day make good on his boast that he would lay down his life for Jesus (John 13:37).

Jesus’ promise made Peter curious about John’s fate, prompting a quick rebuke. Jesus’ new marching orders for Peter are the same as His original command: “You must follow me” (v. 22).

**Go Deeper**

How do you tend to compare yourself with other believers? What kind of obstacles might this create for you in following Jesus?

**Pray with Us**

Christ, protect us from repeating the apostle Peter’s mistakes. May we never grow so fearful and discouraged that we “go back to fishing”! Give us a steadfast faith to remember Your marching orders to Peter: “You must follow me.”

# Our Daily Bread – 4/9/25

# FORGETTING OUR SINS

A child looking at a shirt

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: ISAIAH 43:18-25**

18“Forget the former things;  
    do not dwell on the past.  
19See, I am doing a new thing!  
    Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness  
    and streams in the wasteland.  
20The wild animals honor me,  
    the jackals and the owls,  
because I provide water in the wilderness  
    and streams in the wasteland,  
to give drink to my people, my chosen,  
21    the people I formed for myself  
    that they may proclaim my praise.

22“Yet you have not called on me, Jacob,  
    you have not wearied yourselves for[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ISAIAH%2043%3A18-25&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18528a)] me, Israel.  
23You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings,  
    nor honored me with your sacrifices.  
I have not burdened you with grain offerings  
    nor wearied you with demands for incense.  
24You have not bought any fragrant calamus for me,  
    or lavished on me the fat of your sacrifices.  
But you have burdened me with your sins  
    and wearied me with your offenses.

25“I, even I, am he who blots out  
    your transgressions, for my own sake,  
    and remembers your sins no more.

**Footnotes**

1. [Isaiah 43:22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ISAIAH%2043%3A18-25&version=NIV#en-NIV-18528) Or *Jacob; / surely you have grown weary of*

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake. ISAIAH 43:25

Julie and her husband felt sadness and regret when they learned that their daughter had been shoplifting. But with God's help, when she came to them weighed down with sorrow, they forgave her-and they helped her make restitution and receive counseling. Some months after the revelation, when their daughter made an offhand comment about how they might not trust her anymore, Julie wondered, *What does she mean?* She didn't immediately think about her daughter's offense because God had removed the sting of it from her mind. She had decided not to dwell in the past but had asked God to help her forgive.

In that moment, God gave Julie a taste of His goodness and grace as she experienced the love He extends to His people. God told His people not to "dwell on the past" because He was "doing a new thing" (ISAIAH 43:18-19). He also made the beautiful declaration "I , even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own' sake, and remembers your sins no more" (v. 25). God could choose to hold our sins against us, but because of His love and mercy He doesn't. When we repent, He wipes our record clean.

Although our forgiven wrongdoing may have a negative impact on our lives and that of others, God will never hold that offense against us. He will enfold us in His mercy and grace.

**AMY BOUCHER PYE**

**Reflect and Pray**

When have you experienced the surprising love of God? How does His grace change and transform you?

Forgiving Father, thank Yau for running toward me with love. Please help me to turn from my sinful ways and return to You.

**INSIGHT**

In Isaiah 43:22-24, God grieves His people's failure to turn from their

sins; yet He offers hope. He's a loving God who forgives. He alone can blot out sins (V. 25). He's the one who "forgives all [our] sins" and "redeems [our] life from the pit" (PSALM 103:3-4). "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (VV.11-12). Jesus accomplished this once and for all through His sacrificial death on the cross. Now "everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (ACTS 10:43). John tells us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just" to forgive and make us clean (l JOHN 1:9). Finally, when we trust in Jesus, God "remembers [our] sins no more" (ISAIAH 43:25).

By: [**Alyson Kieda**](https://odb.org/author/akieda/)

# God Calling – 4/9/25

# Risen Life

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1

The Call comes on this My Day for all who love Me, to arise from earth-bands, from sin, and sloth and depression, distrust, fear, all that hinders the Risen Life. To arise to Beauty, to Holiness, to Joy, to Peace, to work inspired by Love and Joy, to rise from death to Life.

Remember that death was the last enemy I destroyed. So with death My Victory was complete. You have nothing then to fear. Sin, too, is conquered and forgiven, as you live and move and work with Me. All that depresses you, all that you fear, are powerless to harm you. They are but phantoms. The real forces I conquered in the wilderness, the Garden of Gethsemane, on the Cross, in the Tomb.

Let nothing hinder your Risen Life. "Risen with Christ," said My servant Paul. Seek to know more and more of that Risen Life. That is the Life of Conquest. Of that Risen Life was it truly said: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Fear and despair and tears come as you stand by the empty Tomb. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

Rise from your fears and go out into the sunlight to meet Me, your Risen Lord.

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Philippians 3:10

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/10/25

# Complete and Effective Decision About Sin



…our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. —[Romans 6:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+6%3A6)

**Co-Crucifixion.** Have you made the following decision about sin—that it must be completely killed in you? It takes a long time to come to the point of making this complete and effective decision about sin. It is, however, the greatest moment in your life once you decide that sin must die in you– not simply be restrained, suppressed, or counteracted, but crucified— just as Jesus Christ died for the sin of the world. No one can bring anyone else to this decision. We may be mentally and spiritually convinced, but what we need to do is actually make the decision that Paul urged us to do in this passage.

Pull yourself up, take some time alone with God, and make this important decision, saying, “Lord, identify me with Your death until I know that sin is dead in me.” Make the moral decision that sin in you must be put to death.

This was not some divine future expectation on the part of Paul, but was a very radical and definite experience in his life. Are you prepared to let the Spirit of God search you until you know what the level and nature of sin is in your life— to see the very things that struggle against God’s Spirit in you? If so, will you then agree with God’s verdict on the nature of sin— that it should be identified with the death of Jesus? You cannot “reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin” ([Romans 6:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+6:11)) unless you have radically dealt with the issue of your will before God.

Have you entered into the glorious privilege of being crucified with Christ, until all that remains in your flesh and blood is His life? “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me…” ([Galatians 2:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+2:20)).

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

It is impossible to read too much, but always keep before you why you read. Remember that “the need to receive, recognize, and rely on the Holy Spirit” is before all else. Approved Unto God, 11 L

# CCEL – 4/10/25

I am black, but comely.—[SONG 1:5.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.1.html" \l "Song.1.5)

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.—Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.

I am a sinful man, O Lord.—Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair.

I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.—Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.

When I would do good, evil is present with me.—Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing—Ye are complete in him.—Perfect in Christ Jesus.

Ye are washed, . . . ye are sanctified, . . . ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.—That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

[Psa. 51:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.51.html" \l "Ps.51.5). -[Ezek. 16:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ezek.16.html" \l "Ezek.16.14).[Luke 5:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.5.html" \l "Luke.5.8). -[Song 4:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.4.html" \l "Song.4.1).[Job 42:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Job.42.html" \l "Job.42.6). -[Song 4:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.4.html" \l "Song.4.7).[Rom. 7:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.7.html" \l "Rom.7.21). -[Matt. 9:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.9.html" \l "Matt.9.2).[Rom. 7:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.7.html#Rom.7.18). -[Col. 2:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.2.html" \l "Col.2.10). -[Col. 1:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Col.1.html" \l "Col.1.28).[I Cor. 6:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.6.html" \l "iCor.6.11). -[I Pet. 2:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html#iPet.2.9).

“The place which is called Calvary.” [Luke 23:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.23.html" \l "Luke.23.33)

The hill of comfort is the hill of Calvary; the house of consolation is built with the wood of the cross; the temple of heavenly blessing is founded upon the riven rock—riven by the spear which pierced his side. No scene in sacred history ever gladdens the soul like Calvary’s tragedy.

“Is it not strange, the darkest hour

That ever dawned on sinful earth,

Should touch the heart with softer power,

For comfort, than an angel’s mirth?

That to the Cross the mourner’s eye should turn,

Sooner than where the stars of Bethlehem burn?”

Light springs from the midday-midnight of Golgotha, and every herb of the field blooms sweetly beneath the shadow of the once accursed tree. In that place of thirst, grace hath dug a fountain which ever gusheth with waters pure as crystal, each drop capable of alleviating the woes of mankind. You who have had your seasons of conflict, will confess that it was not at Olivet that you ever found comfort, not on the hill of Sinai, nor on Tabor; but Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha have been a means of comfort to you. The bitter herbs of Gethsemane have often taken away the bitters of your life; the scourge of Gabbatha has often scourged away your cares, and the groans of Calvary have put all other groans to flight. Thus Calvary yields us comfort rare and rich. We never should have known Christ’s love in all its heights and depths if he had not died; nor could we guess the Father’s deep affection if he had not given his Son to die. The common mercies we enjoy all sing of love, just as the sea-shell, when we put it to our ears, whispers of the deep sea whence it came; but if we desire to hear the ocean itself, we must not look at every-day blessings, but at the transactions of the crucifixion. He who would know love, let him retire to Calvary and see the Man of sorrows die.

# Word Live – 4/10/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/10/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/10/25

# Back to School

A close up of a flame

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

[**Read Acts 1:6–11**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Acts+1:6%e2%80%9311)

6Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

9After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. [Acts 1:8](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Acts.1.8)

What did the disciples think would happen next after Jesus proved to them that He was alive following the resurrection? We get a clue from the question they asked in verse 6 of today’s reading: “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” They thought it was the end of the story. Or, perhaps more accurately, the beginning of a new one. What I don’t think they expected was that they would have to go back to school.

Verse 3 says Jesus “appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.” His aim was twofold. First, He would provide His followers with irrefutable proof of His bodily resurrection (v. 3). Jesus backed this claim by being with them in the flesh and eating with them (v. 4). Second, He would finish instructing them and prepare them for their next stage of ministry. For forty days, Jesus taught them about the kingdom of God (see Matt. 4:23). Yet despite all this instruction, His apostles still had questions. Specifically, they wanted to know when the kingdom would be restored to Israel (v. 6).

In his reply, Jesus pointed out that the timing was not their concern. The times and dates are things that “the Father has set by his own authority” (v. 7). The immediate task that lay before them was to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who would empower them to bear witness “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (v. 8). Jesus had spoken to them about the ministry of the Spirit. He had called Him “another advocate” who would “help you and be with you forever” (John 14:16). He is also called “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom. 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11).

**Go Deeper**

How does Jesus describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8? How does the Spirit help us?

**Pray with Us**

It’s amazing to realize that Your resurrection, Lord, is only the beginning of our new life with You. Thank You for giving us Your victory on the cross and inviting us to Yourself—to receive a gift of life.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/10/25

# THE WRIGHT SISTER

A group of people walking on a beach

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: ROMANS 16:1-12**

**Personal Greetings**

16 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%2016%3A1-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28338a)][[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%2016%3A1-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28338b)] of the church in Cenchreae. 2I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.

3Greet Priscilla[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%2016%3A1-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28340c)] and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. 4They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

5Greet also the church that meets at their house.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.

6Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you.

7Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%2016%3A1-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28344d)] the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.

8Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.

9Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

10Greet Apelles, whose fidelity to Christ has stood the test.

Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.

11Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew.

Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

12Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord.

Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

**Footnotes**

1. [Romans 16:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%2016%3A1-12&version=NIV#en-NIV-28338) Or *servant*
2. [Romans 16:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%2016%3A1-12&version=NIV#en-NIV-28338) The word *deacon* refers here to a Christian designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in Phil. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8,12.
3. [Romans 16:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%2016%3A1-12&version=NIV#en-NIV-28340) Greek *Prisca*, a variant of *Priscilla*
4. [Romans 16:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%2016%3A1-12&version=NIV#en-NIV-28344) Or *are esteemed by*

Our sister Phoebe ... has been the benefactor of many people, including me. ROMANS 16:1-2

Most people know about the Wright Brothers-Orville and Wilbur-who invented, built, and flew the first successful airplane in the early 19005. But few know the name Katherine

Wright: Yet in her brothers' story of creating their flying machine, Katherine was essential to their success. While her brothers concentrated on the myriad details and experiments that led to their invention, Katherine chose to quietly and lovingly help them. She kept their bicycle shop going (the brothers' source of income), left her teaching job to nurse Orville back to health after a plane crash, and managed the endless details of her brothers' growing fame.

The value of the support of others is seen in Scripture as well. One example is Phoebe, mentioned by Paul as a “benefactor of many people” (ROMAN516:2). And Priscilla and Aquila, a helpful couple presented in Paul's writing, hosted churches where Paul ministered and even “risked their lives" for him (v. 4). Additionally, the apostle complimented Mark, saying he was “helpful to me in my ministry” (2 TIMOTHY 4:11).

We can be the right brothers and sisters in Christ by serving others. The ongoing work of God needs helpers like Phoebe-and us-guided by Him to serve this way: "In humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but ... to the interests of the others" (PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4).

**DAVE BRANON**

**Reflect and Pray**

Who needs your help? What can you do to serve others in Jesus' name?

Dear God, please show me how to humbly serve others for Your glory.

**INSIGHT**

Paul's list of greetings at the end of Romans represents the many people he met during his journeys of sharing the hope of Jesus. Many of the believers in Christ whom he impacted (and who impacted him in return) ended up in Rome, and so he had a great deal of people waiting there for him before he even arrived. Both men and women shared in the apostle's work of evangelism, paving the way for him in Rome. As we join with other believers in caring for others, we reflect the hearts of those who assisted Paul.

By: [**Jed Ostoich**](https://odb.org/author/jedostoich/)

# God Calling – 4/10/25

# Pride Bars the Way

Obedience is one of the keys unlocking the door into My Kingdom, so love and obey. No man can obey Me implicitly without in time realizing My Love, in his turn responding by love to that Love, and then experiencing the joy won of the beloved, and the lover.

The rough stone steps of obedience lead up to the mosaic of Joy and Love that floor My Heaven. As one on earth who loves another says, "Where you are is home," so it is in relation with Me. Where I am is My Home -- is Heaven.

Heaven may be in a sordid slum or a palace, and I can make My Home in the humblest heart. I can only dwell with the humble. Pride stands sentinel at the door of the heart to shut out the lowly, humble Christ.

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." 1 John 3:22

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/11/25

# Complete and Effective Divinity



If we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection… —[Romans 6:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+6%3A5)

**Co-Resurrection.** The proof that I have experienced crucifixion with Jesus is that I have a definite likeness to Him. The Spirit of Jesus entering me rearranges my personal life before God. The resurrection of Jesus has given Him the authority to give the life of God to me, and the experiences of my life must now be built on the foundation of His life. I can have the resurrection life of Jesus here and now, and it will exhibit itself through holiness.

The idea all through the apostle Paul’s writings is that after the decision to be identified with Jesus in His death has been made, the resurrection life of Jesus penetrates every bit of my human nature. It takes the omnipotence of God— His complete and effective divinity— to live the life of the Son of God in human flesh. The Holy Spirit cannot be accepted as a guest in merely one room of the house— He invades all of it. And once I decide that my “old man” (that is, my heredity of sin) should be identified with the death of Jesus, the Holy Spirit invades me. He takes charge of everything. My part is to walk in the light and to obey all that He reveals to me. Once I have made that important decision about sin, it is easy to “reckon” that I am actually “dead indeed to sin,” because I find the life of Jesus in me all the time ([Romans 6:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+6:11)). Just as there is only one kind of humanity, there is only one kind of holiness— the holiness of Jesus. And it is His holiness that has been given to me. God puts the holiness of His Son into me, and I belong to a new spiritual order.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Always keep in contact with those books and those people that enlarge your horizon and make it possible for you to stretch yourself mentally. The Moral Foundations of Life, 721 R

# CCEL – 4/11/25

**In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.**—[PROV. 10:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.10.html" \l "Prov.10.19)

My beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.—He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.—If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body.—By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.—Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

Christ . . . suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.—Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

[Jas. 1:19](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.19). -[Prov. 16:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.16.html" \l "Prov.16.32). -[Jas. 3:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.3.html" \l "Jas.3.2). -[Matt. 12:37](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.12.html" \l "Matt.12.37). -[Psa. 141:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.141.html" \l "Ps.141.3).[I Pet. 2:21-23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.2.html" \l "iPet.2.21). -[Heb. 12:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.3).[Rev. 14:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.14.html" \l "Rev.14.5).

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.” **[Psalm 22:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.22.html" \l "Ps.22.14)**

Did earth or heaven ever behold a sadder spectacle of woe! In soul and body, our Lord felt himself to be weak as water poured upon the ground. The placing of the cross in its socket had shaken him with great violence, had strained all the ligaments, pained every nerve, and more or less dislocated all his bones. Burdened with his own weight, the august sufferer felt the strain increasing every moment of those six long hours. His sense of faintness and general weakness were overpowering; while to his own consciousness he became nothing but a mass of misery and swooning sickness. When Daniel saw the great vision, he thus describes his sensations, “There remained no strength in me, for my vigour was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength:” how much more faint must have been our greater Prophet when he saw the dread vision of the wrath of God, and felt it in his own soul! To us, sensations such as our Lord endured would have been insupportable, and kind unconsciousness would have come to our rescue; but in his case, he was wounded, and felt the sword; he drained the cup andtasted every drop.

“O King of Grief! (a title strange, yet true

To thee of all kings only due)

O King of Wounds! how shall I grieve for thee,

Who in all grief preventest me!”

As we kneel before our now ascended Saviour’s throne, let us remember well the way by which he prepared it as a throne of grace for us; let us in spirit drink of his cup, that we may be strengthened for our hour of heaviness whenever it may come. In his natural body every member suffered, and so must it be in the spiritual; but as out of all his griefs and woes his body came forth uninjured to glory and power, even so shall his mystical body come through the furnace with not so much as the smell of fire upon it.

# Word Live – 4/11/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/11/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/11/25

# Welcoming Committee

A sun shining through clouds

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

[**Read Acts 7:54–8:3**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Acts+7:54%e2%80%938:3)

**The Stoning of Stephen**

54When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 55But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

57At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 58dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

8 And Saul approved of their killing him.

**The Church Persecuted and Scattered**

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 2Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. 3But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. [Acts 7:56](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Acts.7.56)

A familiar saying asserts that “seeing is believing.” However, when it comes to biblical faith, this order is reversed. Those who look at the world through eyes of faith must train their vision to perceive reality as the Scriptures define it. Stephen saw a reality that the religious leaders could not. One of seven appointed by the fledgling church to make sure that the Hellenistic widows in the church were not overlooked in the daily distribution of food, he was also a compelling teacher whose teaching was accompanied by “great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8).

Stephen’s teaching provoked so much opposition that he was arrested and brought up on false charges before the Sanhedrin, the same body of religious leaders that had handed Jesus over to the Romans for execution. His defense, which was an extended recitation of the history of God’s people that highlighted the unbelief of the religious leaders, so infuriated them that they ground their teeth. But Stephen looked up and told them that he could see the glory of God and the risen Christ “standing at the right hand of God” (vv. 55–56). This was a “vision” in the sense that it was something that Stephen saw, but it was no figment of imagination.

Two important features stand out in Stephen’s description. One is the location. The description of Jesus as standing at the right hand of God’s glory echoes Jesus’ own words to the Sanhedrin at His trial in Luke 22:69. The other is the fact that Jesus was standing as if to welcome Stephen directly into God’s presence. The “young man named Saul” mentioned in verse 58, who watched with approval as Stephen was stoned to death, would soon become a follower of Jesus and go on to write that a Christian who is “away from the body” is “at home with the Lord” (Acts 22:20; 2 Cor. 5:8).

**Go Deeper**

What does Jesus’ location in this passage imply? In what way is faith a way of seeing?

**Pray with Us**

Lord Jesus, help us to see You, the world, and ourselves through the eyes of faith. May we not only see but also hear Creation itself declare Your glory. “The skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Ps. 19:1).

# Our Daily Bread – 4/11/25

# GOOD GRIEF

A dog sitting on the ground

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: 2 KINGS 2:7-14**

7Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. 8Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

9When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?”

“Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied.

10“You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not.”

11As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. 12Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.

13Elisha then picked up Elijah’s cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it. “Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you. 2 KINGS 2:2

A man named Hidesaburo Ueno taught at Tokyo's Imperial University in the 1920s. Every afternoon, he returned on the 3:00 p.m. tram to find his dog, Hachiko, waiting for him. One day Professor Ueno suffered a stroke during class and died. When he didn't get off the afternoon train, Hachiko lingered a while, then went home. The dog returned the next day at 3:00, and the next day, and the day after that, for ten years. Hachiko's loyalty touched the hearts of many Japanese, who came to sit with him.

Elisha was similarly committed to his master, Elijah. On the day Elisha knew he would lose him, Elisha refused to let him out of his sight. Then a chariot of fire whisked Elijah to heaven. Elisha choked out what he saw: "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" (2 KINGS 2:12). He picked up Elijah's cloak, the symbol of the prophet's power that had parted the Jordan moments earlier (v. 8), and asked, "Where now is the LORD the God of Elijah?" (v. 14). He struck the water, which parted as it had for his master. What a bittersweet day!

Have you lost someone you love? No words can do justice to your pain. Every sob releases memories of the love you shared. You hurt deeply because you loved deeply. How bittersweet! Thank God for this beloved person and for your capacity to love. Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak. What might you do?

**MIKE WITTMER**

**Reflect and Pray**

What tangible sign or ritual honors the memory of your loved one? How does Jesus help to carry your burden?

Dear Father, thank You for giving me people to love.

**INSIGHT**

After Elijah (Hebrew, "Yahweh is my God") had completed his ministry assignments, he was miraculously taken from the earth (2 KINGS2:11). Plans were in place, however, for God's work to continue among His people. Some years before, Elisha (Hebrew, "God is salvation") had been designated as Elijah's successor (SEE 1 KINGS 19:16-21). Centuries later, Jesus or *Yeshua* (Hebrew, "Yah [Yahweh] saves") also prepared for His departure after His death and resurrection. His work would go on through successors who saw Him when He ascended (ACTS 1:10-11) and were empowered by the Holy Spirit. We also can press on in Him even as we grieve those who are no longer with us.

**ARTHUR JACKSON**

# God Calling – 4/11/25

# Hold Your Fort

Remember that My followers are to be a peculiar people, separated from among others. Different ways, a different standard of living, different customs, actuated by different motives. Pray for Love.

Pray for My Spirit of Love to be showered on all you meet. Deal with yourself severely. Learn to love discipline.

Never yield one point that you have already won. Discipline, discipline. Love it and rejoice -- rejoice. Mountains can be removed by thought -- by desire.

"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:33

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/12/25

# Complete and Effective Dominion



Death no longer has dominion over Him.…the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God… —[Romans 6:9-11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+6%3A9-11)

**Co-Eternal Life.** Eternal life is the life which Jesus Christ exhibited on the human level. And it is this same life, not simply a copy of it, which is made evident in our mortal flesh when we are born again. Eternal life is not a gift from God; eternal life is the gift of God. The energy and the power which was so very evident in Jesus will be exhibited in us by an act of the absolute sovereign grace of God, once we have made that complete and effective decision about sin.

“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you…” (Acts 1:8)— not power as a gift from the Holy Spirit; the power is the Holy Spirit, not something that He gives us. The life that was in Jesus becomes ours because of His Cross, once we make the decision to be identified with Him. If it is difficult to get right with God, it is because we refuse to make this moral decision about sin. But once we do decide, the full life of God comes in immediately. Jesus came to give us an endless supply of life— “…that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” ([Ephesians 3:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+3:19)). Eternal life has nothing to do with time. It is the life which Jesus lived when He was down here, and the only Source of life is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even the weakest saint can experience the power of the deity of the Son of God, when he is willing to “let go.” But any effort to “hang on” to the least bit of our own power will only diminish the life of Jesus in us. We have to keep letting go, and slowly, but surely, the great full life of God will invade us, penetrating every part. Then Jesus will have complete and effective dominion in us, and people will take notice that we have been with Him.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

It is perilously possible to make our conceptions of God like molten lead poured into a specially designed mould, and when it is cold and hard we fling it at the heads of the religious people who don’t agree with us. Disciples Indeed, 388 R

# CCEL – 4/12/25

**What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.**—[ROM. 8:3.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html" \l "Rom.8.3)

The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered?—By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Forasmuch . . . as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren.

[Heb. 10:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.10.html" \l "Heb.10.1). -[Acts 13:39](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Acts.13.html" \l "Acts.13.39).[Heb. 2:14-17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.2.html" \l "Heb.2.14).

“My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.” **[Psalm 22:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.22.html" \l "Ps.22.14)**

Our blessed Lord experienced a terrible sinking and melting of soul. “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?” Deep depression of spirit is the most grievous of all trials; all besides is as nothing. Well might the suffering Saviour cry to his God, “Be not far from me,” for above all other seasons a man needs his God when his heart is melted within him because of heaviness. Believer, come near the cross this morning, and humbly adore the King of glory as having once been brought far lower, in mental distress and inward anguish, than any one among us; and mark his fitness to become a faithful High Priest, who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Especially let those of us whose sadness springs directly from the withdrawal of a present sense of our Father’s love, enter into near and intimate communion with Jesus. Let us not give way to despair, since through this dark room the Master has passed before us. Our souls may sometimes long and faint, and thirst even to anguish, to behold the light of the Lord’s countenance: at such times let us stay ourselves with the sweet fact of the sympathy of our great High Priest. Our drops of sorrow may well be forgotten in the ocean of his griefs; but how high ought our love to rise! Come in, O strong and deep love of Jesus, like the sea at the flood in spring tides, cover all my powers, drown all my sins, wash out all my cares, lift up my earth-bound soul, and float it right up to my Lord’s feet, and there let me lie, a poor broken shell, washed up by his love, having no virtue or value; and only venturing to whisper to him that if he will put his ear to me, he will hear within my heart faint echoes of the vast waves of his own love which have brought me where it is my delight to lie, even at his feet forever.

# Word Live – 4/12/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/12/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/12/25

# Late to the Party

A path in the woods with trees and text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

[**Read Acts 9:1–18**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Acts+9:1%e2%80%9318)

**Saul’s Conversion**

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest 2and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. 3As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

5“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. 6“Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

7The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

10In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

11The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”

13“Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. 14And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

15But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. 16I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

17Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,

Who are you, Lord? [Acts 9:5](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Acts.9.5)

I've often heard that when we get to heaven, we may be surprised by who we find there. Saul (later known as Paul) would certainly have surprised many who knew him. For years he had fiercely opposed Christ followers. Saul described his own conversion experience as an “untimely” birth and the “last” of the apostolic resurrection appearances by Christ (1 Cor. 15:8).

Saul was not seeking a relationship when the risen Christ confronted him on his way to Damascus. He was going there to arrest Jesus’ followers and take them back to Jerusalem as his prisoners (vv. 1–2). The only visual element that Luke mentions in this account is a glorious “light from heaven,” but the voice that spoke to Saul declared, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (vv. 5–6). After Saul arrived in Damascus, a disciple named Ananias also heard Jesus in a vision. He was told to go and meet Paul at “the house of Judas on Straight Street” to baptize him and explain the nature of his apostolic calling (vv. 10–16). Ananias confirmed that what had happened on the Damascus road was an “appearance” of Jesus (v. 17).

Saul had been temporarily blinded during this encounter and had to be led by hand into the city (vv. 8–9). When Ananias prayed for Saul, “something like scales” fell from his eyes (v. 18). This served a symbolic purpose, helping Saul understand the spiritual significance of what had happened. It was also an illustration of the mission Jesus had outlined for him: “to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me” (Acts 26:18).

**Go Deeper**

Do you have spiritual scales over your own eyes? Have you asked Jesus to remove them so that you can understand the truth?

**Pray with Us**

Almighty God, nothing is hidden from You! You opened Saul’s eyes, and he became Your faithful follower. Open the blind eyes of those who walk in their own wisdom, help them see You and see themselves as they are.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/12/25

# THE SPIRIT'S HELPFUL REMINDERS

A person holding a microphone in front of a stadium

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: JOHN 14:15-17**

**Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit**

15“If you love me, keep my commands. 16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=JOHN%2014%3A15-17%2C%2025-31&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26686a)] in you.

**Footnotes**

1. [John 14:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=JOHN%2014%3A15-17%2C%2025-31&version=NIV#en-NIV-26686) Some early manuscripts *and is*

**Read: JOHN 14:25-31**

25“All this I have spoken while still with you. 26But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

28“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. 30I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, 31but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

“Come now; let us leave.

The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, . .. will remind you of everything I have said to you. JOHN 14:26

One year, I agreed to sing a song before one of my son's sporting events. I practiced for weeks, but I knew the song by heart already. So when I walked onto the field with the teams lined up on both sides of me, I closed my eyes and prayed. I started singing the first few lines. Then, I froze. In that moment I couldn't remember the next line. A man behind me whispered the words I'd forgotten. As soon as I heard the helpful reminder, I belted out the rest of the lyrics with confidence.

We all need a little help sometimes. In John 14, Jesus explained that we love Him by obeying Him (V. l5), and He promised to ask the Father to give us a Helper-"the Spirit of truth" Iv. 171. Jesus said, "The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you" (V. 17). Though Jesus taught the disciples a lot while with them (v. 25), He said "the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (v. 26).

As we prayerfully read the Bible, the Holy Spirit helps us interpret, understand, and apply God's wisdom. His leading always aligns with Scripture-guiding, comforting, and transforming us in love, one helpful reminder at a time.

**XOCHITL DIXON**

**Reflect and Pray**

What can you do to better recognize the Holy Spirit's voice? How do you acknowledge Him daily?

Holy Spirit, please help me recognize Your voice and submit to You as You make me more like Jesus one helpful reminder at a time.

**INSIGHT**

On the night of His arrest, Jesus celebrated Passover together with His closest followers, which was a commemoration of their ancestors' liberation from slavery in Egypt (JOHN 13; SEE EXODUS 12:1-12). Christ reminded His disciples that they were special in the world (JOHN 14:16-18,22), just as God had reminded the Israelites of this through Moses in the wilderness (DEUTERONOMY 4:5-8; 7:7-9; 10:14).

Jesus' disciples won't be removed from this world, but they're to be distinct or set apart from it. Following God's commands is what set Israel apart from the rest of the world, and it's the thrust of Christ's commands to those who believe in Him.

By: [**J.R. Hudberg**](https://odb.org/author/jrhudberg/)

# God Calling – 4/12/25

# Golden Opportunity

I am your Guide. Strength and help will come to you; just trust Me wholly.

Fear not. I am evermore ready to hear than you to ask. Walk in My ways, and know that help will come.

Man's need is God's chance to help. I love to help and save. Man's need is God's golden opportunity for him of letting his faith find expression. That expression of faith is all that God needs to manifest His Power. Faith is the Key that unlocks the storehouse of God's resources.

My faithful servants, you long for perfection and see your bitter failures. I see faithfulness, and as a mother takes the soiled, imperfect work of her child and invests it with perfection because of the sweet love, so I take your poor faithfulness and crown it with perfection.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/13/25

# What To Do When Your Burden Is Overwhelming



Cast your burden on the Lord… —[Psalm 55:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Psalm+55%3A22)

We must recognize the difference between burdens that are right for us to bear and burdens that are wrong. We should never bear the burdens of sin or doubt, but there are some burdens placed on us by God which He does not intend to lift off. God wants us to roll them back on Him— to literally “cast your burden,” which He has given you, “on the Lord….” If we set out to serve God and do His work but get out of touch with Him, the sense of responsibility we feel will be overwhelming and defeating. But if we will only roll back on God the burdens He has placed on us, He will take away that immense feeling of responsibility, replacing it with an awareness and understanding of Himself and His presence.

Many servants set out to serve God with great courage and with the right motives. But with no intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ, they are soon defeated. They do not know what to do with their burden, and it produces weariness in their lives. Others will see this and say, “What a sad end to something that had such a great beginning!”

“Cast your burden on the Lord….” You have been bearing it all, but you need to deliberately place one end on God’s shoulder. “…the government will be upon His shoulder” ([Isaiah 9:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+9:6)). Commit to God whatever burden He has placed on you. Don’t just cast it aside, but put it over onto Him and place yourself there with it. You will see that your burden is then lightened by the sense of companionship. But you should never try to separate yourself from your burden.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

We never enter into the Kingdom of God by having our head questions answered, but only by commitment. [The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption](http://www.dhp.org/Products/Quotable-Oswald-Chambers--The__BW382.aspx?affid=RBCHAMB)

# CCEL – 4/13/25

**Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.**—[PROV. 3:9.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Prov.3.html" \l "Prov.3.9)

He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.—Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.

God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister.

I beseech you . . . brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.—The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.—Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

[II Cor. 9:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.9.html" \l "iiCor.9.6). -[I Cor. 16:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.16.html" \l "iCor.16.2).[Heb. 6:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.6.html" \l "Heb.6.10).[Rom. 12:l](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.12.html" \l "Rom.12.1). -[II Cor. 5:14,15](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.14). -[I Cor. 10:31](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.10.html" \l "iCor.10.31).

“A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me.” **[Song of Solomon 1:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.1.html" \l "Song.1.13)**

Myrrh may well be chosen as the type of Jesus on account of its preciousness, its perfume, its pleasantness, its healing, preserving, disinfecting qualities, and its connection with sacrifice. But why is he compared to “a bundle of myrrh”? First, for plenty. He is not a drop of it, he is a casket full. He is not a sprig or flower of it, but a whole bundle. There is enough in Christ for all my necessities; let me not be slow to avail myself of him. Our well-beloved is compared to a “bundle” again, for variety: for there is in Christ not only the one thing needful, but in “him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;” everything needful is in him. Take Jesus in his different characters, and you will see a marvellous variety—Prophet, Priest, King, Husband, Friend, Shepherd. Consider him in his life, death, resurrection, ascension, second advent; view him in his virtue, gentleness, courage, self-denial, love, faithfulness, truth, righteousness—everywhere he is a bundle of preciousness. He is a “bundle of myrrh” for preservation—not loose myrrh to be dropped on the floor or trodden on, but myrrh tied up, myrrh to be stored in a casket. We must value him as our best treasure; we must prize his words and his ordinances; and we must keep our thoughts of him and knowledge of him as under lock and key, lest the devil should steal anything from us. Moreover, Jesus is a “bundle of myrrh” for speciality; the emblem suggests the idea of distinguishing, discriminating grace. From before the foundation of the world, he was set apart for his people; and he gives forth his perfume only to those who understand how to enter into communion with him, to have close dealings with him. Oh! blessed people whom the Lord hath admitted into his secrets, and for whom he sets himself apart. Oh! choice and happy who are thus made to say, “A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me.”

# Word Live – 4/13/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/13/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/13/25

# Resurrection and Promise

A close-up of a branch with leaves

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

[**Read Romans 4:13–25**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Romans+4:13%e2%80%9325)

13It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, 15because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

16Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. 17As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%204%3A13%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28040a)] He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

18Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%204%3A13%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28041b)] 19Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. 20Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. 22This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” 23The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, 24but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

**Footnotes**

1. [Romans 4:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%204%3A13%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#en-NIV-28040) Gen. 17:5
2. [Romans 4:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%204%3A13%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#en-NIV-28041) Gen. 15:5

He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. [Romans 4:25](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Rom.4.25)

C. S. Lewis observed that the Bible speaks about faith in two senses. First, it describes faith as belief. Faith is a matter of accepting what the Bible asserts to be true, as true. The second description of faith is linked to dependency. Faith is trust—our dependence upon God. In Romans 4, the apostle Paul speaks of faith in both senses, using Abraham as a model.

If it feels as if we have entered the conversation in the middle of the discussion, it is because we have. Paul is explaining why righteousness only comes through faith in Jesus Christ and not through the Law (see Rom. 3:21–22). The key is to depend on God’s promise to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We cannot make ourselves righteous by our own efforts. Abraham believed God’s promise to give him an heir rather than being daunted by his own inability (4:19). He was “fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised” because he was “strengthened in his faith” by God’s promise (vv. 20–21).

Paul reveals that God’s plan all along was to make righteousness a gift that comes by believing the promise rather than a work to earn righteousness through human effort. He did this “so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham” (v. 16). The resurrection of Jesus was the ultimate proof that we can trust God to make good on this promise (v. 25). We tend to think that the power of faith depends upon us as if it were a feeling we can stir up for ourselves. In reality, the opposite is true. The power of faith depends upon God.

**Go Deeper**

Where are you looking for faith? Are you looking within yourself or concentrating on God’s ability to do what He promised?

**Pray with Us**

Lord, thank You for the life of Abraham, for his faith that led to the emergence of a nation. Show us how to trust You like Abraham did, even when nothing is certain, and the journey is difficult.

# Our Daily Bread – 4/13/25

# LISTEN TO THE STONES

A pile of rocks on the ground

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: LUKE 19:37-40**

37When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

38“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=LUKE%2019%3A37-40&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25770a)]

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

39Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

40“I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

**Footnotes**

1. [Luke 19:38](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=LUKE%2019%3A37-40&version=NIV#en-NIV-25770) Psalm 118:26

"I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." LUKE 19:40

After our family held a riverside memorial service for my father, we each selected a stone to help us remember him. His life had been a checkerboard of wins and losses, but we knew his heart had been for us. My fingers traced my stone's smooth surface and helped me remember to hold him close.

In Luke 19, Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem while the crowds waved palm branches, shouted Hosannas, and cheered, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord !" (v. 38; SEE JOHN 12:12-13). In the Pharisees' disdain of what they perceived to be a blasphemous claim of messiahship, they ordered Jesus to tell the disciples to be quiet. Jesus replied, "If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out" (LUKE 19:40).

The stones do cry out - in many ways. God has used stones throughout the story of His love for us. Two rough-hewn stones carried ten chiseled commandments to tell us how to live (EXODUS 34:1). Stones of remembrance piled by the Jordan River and in the middle of the river reminded generations of Israelites of God's provision and faithfulness (JOSHUA 4,8-9 NLT). The one rolled into place to contain Jesus' body is the same one that rolled away to show He had risen (MATTHEW 27:59-66; LUKE 24:2). We "hear" this stone as it reminds us of Jesus' words: "I am the resurrection and the life" (JOHN 11:25).

Listen to the stones and lift your own voice along with them in praise to our loving Father.

**ELlSA MORGAN**

**Reflect and Pray**

How have the stones of God's work in our world "cried out" to you? What message might God intend for you to take to heart?

Dear Father, thank You for using even stones to speak of Your love. For further study, read Give Me a Sign at DiscoverODB.org.

**INSIGHT**

Some scholars believe that Jesus' statement in Luke 19:40 that “if [the crowds] keep quiet, the stones will cry out" is a reference to Habakkuk 2:11: "The stones of the wall will cry out, and the beams of the woodwork will echo it." Others suppose that the stones in view are the stones of the very gates themselves, as seen in Psalm 118:19-20; "Open for me the gates of the righteous ... the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter." Whether Luke 19:40 echoes an Old Testament text or not, it's an example of poetic imagery where inanimate objects praise God (SEE ALSO PSALM 114:6; PSALM 148; ISAIAH 55:12). Jesus had often refused praise during His earthly ministry. Now He not only accepted it but encouraged it. When humans fail to praise the Creator, the creation itself will praise God.

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

# God Calling – 4/13/25

# Gentle With All

Love and laugh. Make your world the happier for your being in it. Love and rejoice on the gray days.

There are wilderness days for My Disciples as well as Mountains of Transfiguration, but on both it is duty, persistently, faithfully done, that tells.

Be gentle with all. Try to see the heart I see, to know the pain and difficulty of the other life, that I know. Try, before you interview anyone, or speak to anyone, to ask Me to act as interpreter between you two.

Just live the spirit of prayer. In speaking to Me, you find soul-rest. Simple tasks, faithfully done and persisted in, bring their own reward, and are mosaics being laid in the pavement of success.

Welcome all who come here. I love you.

"Let love be without dissimulation." Romans 12:9

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/14/25

# Inner Invincibility



Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me… —[Matthew 11:29](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+11%3A29)

“Whom the Lord loves He chastens…” ([Hebrews 12:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+12:6)). How petty our complaining is! Our Lord begins to bring us to the point where we can have fellowship with Him, only to hear us moan and groan, saying, “Oh Lord, just let me be like other people!” Jesus is asking us to get beside Him and take one end of the yoke, so that we can pull together. That’s why Jesus says to us, “My yoke is easy and My burden is light” ([Matthew 11:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+11:30)). Are you closely identified with the Lord Jesus like that? If so, you will thank God when you feel the pressure of His hand upon you.

“…to those who have no might He increases strength” ([Isaiah 40:29](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+40:29)). God comes and takes us out of our emotionalism, and then our complaining turns into a hymn of praise. The only way to know the strength of God is to take the yoke of Jesus upon us and to learn from Him.

“…the joy of the Lord is your strength” ([Nehemiah 8:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nehemiah+8:10)). Where do the saints get their joy? If we did not know some Christians well, we might think from just observing them that they have no burdens at all to bear. But we must lift the veil from our eyes. The fact that the peace, light, and joy of God is in them is proof that a burden is there as well. The burden that God places on us squeezes the grapes in our lives and produces the wine, but most of us see only the wine and not the burden. No power on earth or in hell can conquer the Spirit of God living within the human spirit; it creates an inner invincibility.

If your life is producing only a whine, instead of the wine, then ruthlessly kick it out. It is definitely a crime for a Christian to be weak in God’s strength.

**WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS**

Jesus Christ is always unyielding to my claim to my right to myself. The one essential element in all our Lord’s teaching about discipleship is abandon, no calculation, no trace of self-interest. Disciples Indeed, 395 L

# CCEL – 4/14/25

**My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.**—[PSA. 63:5,6.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.63.html" \l "Ps.63.5)

How precious . . . are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.—How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!—Thy love is better than wine.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.—Thou art fairer than the children of men.

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.—His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend.

[Psa. 139:17,18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.139.html" \l "Ps.139.17). -[Psa. 119:103](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.119.html" \l "Ps.119.103). -[Song 1:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.1.html" \l "Song.1.2).[Psa. 73:25](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.73.html" \l "Ps.73.25). -[Psa. 45:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.45.html" \l "Ps.45.2).[Song 2:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.2.html" \l "Song.2.3). -[Song 5:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.5.html" \l "Song.5.15).

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.” **[Psalm 22:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.22.html" \l "Ps.22.7)**

Mockery was a great ingredient in our Lord’s woe. Judas mocked him in the garden; the chief priests and scribes laughed him to scorn; Herod set him at nought; the servants and the soldiers jeered at him, and brutally insulted him; Pilate and his guards ridiculed his royalty; and on the tree all sorts of horrid jests and hideous taunts were hurled at him. Ridicule is always hard to bear, but when we are in intense pain it is so heartless, so cruel, that it cuts us to the quick. Imagine the Saviour crucified, racked with anguish far beyond all mortal guess, and then picture that motley multitude, all wagging their heads or thrusting out the lip in bitterest contempt of one poor suffering victim! Surely there must have been something more in the crucified One than they could see, or else such a great and mingled crowd would not unanimously have honoured him with such contempt. Was it not evil confessing, in the very moment of its greatest apparent triumph, that after all it could do no more than mock at that victorious goodness which was then reigning on the cross? O Jesus, “despised and rejected of men,” how couldst thou die for men who treated thee so ill? Herein is love amazing, love divine, yea, love beyond degree. We, too, have despised thee in the days of our unregeneracy, and even since our new birth we have set the world on high in our hearts, and yet thou bleedest to heal our wounds, and diest to give us life. O that we could set thee on a glorious high throne in all men’s hearts! We would ring out thy praises over land and sea till men should as universally adore as once they did unanimously reject.

“Thy creatures wrong thee, O thou sovereign Good!

Thou art not loved, because not understood:

This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile

Ungrateful men, regardless of thy smile.”

# Word Live – 4/14/25

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

# Scripture Union – 4/14/25

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

# Today in the Word – 4/14/25

# Raised to Life

A person's hands on a book

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

[**Read Romans 6:1–14**](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible/?pas=Romans+6:1%e2%80%9314)

**Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ**

6 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%206%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28075a)] that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

8Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. 14For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

**Footnotes**

1. [Romans 6:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%206%3A1%E2%80%9314&version=NIV#en-NIV-28075) Or *be rendered powerless*

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.[Romans 6:8](https://www.todayintheword.org/bible-verses/verse/?pas=Rom.6.8)

Is it possible to place too much emphasis on faith? Some Christians worry that preaching a gospel of faith will lead to what they describe as “easy believism.” Some in Paul’s day accused him of preaching a gospel where we can “go on sinning so that grace may increase” (v. 1). His response was an emphatic denial (v. 2).

What then will keep a Christian from continuing in sin? Paul says the key to victory over sin is understanding how Christ’s death and resurrection have changed us. He emphasizes two primary effects of faith where the practice of sin is involved. First, those who have believed have “died to sin” because their “old self was crucified with him” (vv. 2, 6). What Paul describes as “our old self” is that part of our nature whose only inclination is bent on sin. It is the “ruling” principle of our nature that causes us to be deceived by and enslaved to sin (see Eph. 4:22). Second, the resurrection of Jesus introduced a new capacity into the believer’s nature that shows itself in several ways. Paul describes it as a freedom from slavery to sin (v. 7) that flows out of new life that we receive from Christ (v. 11) and that places us under the rule of grace rather than Law (v. 14).

In other words, the problem as Paul diagnoses it is not that some people believe too much. It is that they know too little. Their mistake is failing to recognize the full extent of what has been given to them. It is important to note that the critical factor in all of this is not effort but faith. This lifestyle is possible because they “count” or “reckon” themselves to be “dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (v. 11).

**Go Deeper**

How do you view yourself? What do you need to know to have a faith-based approach to dealing with the tug of sin?

**Pray with Us**

Though the world seems to be steeped in sin, Your truth, Lord God, penetrates our hearts and speaks to our inner being. What a glorious reality that in Christ, we are “dead to sin but alive to God” (Rom. 6:11)!

# Our Daily Bread – 4/14/25

# SHARING GOSPEL RESOURCES

A couple of buildings in a yard

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Read: ROMANS 1:8-17**

**Paul’s Longing to Visit Rome**

8First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. 9God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you 10in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God’s will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

11I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— 12that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith. 13I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%201%3A8-17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27944a)] that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

14I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. 15That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

16For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%201%3A8-17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27948b)] just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%201%3A8-17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27948c)]

**Footnotes**

1. [Romans 1:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%201%3A8-17&version=NIV#en-NIV-27944) The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in 7:1, 4; 8:12, 29; 10:1; 11:25; 12:1; 15:14, 30; 16:14, 17.
2. [Romans 1:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%201%3A8-17&version=NIV#en-NIV-27948) Or *is from faith to faith*
3. [Romans 1:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS%201%3A8-17&version=NIV#en-NIV-27948) Hab. 2:4

I am not ashamed of the gospel. ROMANS 1:16

The venue and accommodations for our leadership meeting in downtown Chicago were in stark contrast with the neediness I encountered on my way there-neediness that included individuals who lacked the basics of food and shelter. The differences helped me picture and articulate things we needed to include in our vision planning for serving in the city and elsewhere: to get gospel resources (anything given by God to help spread the message of His love and salvation) to places where they're needed most.

At the time Paul wrote to the Roman believers in Jesus he hadn't visited them yet-but wanted to: "I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong-that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith" (ROMANS 1:11-12). The apostle was looking forward to a "gift exchange" that would benefit him and others as they sought to live for Jesus and serve others.

The resources we possess include the spiritual gifts and material resources given to us by God. May we allow Him to use us to compassionately reach out to people with the gospel message. And, as God empowers us, let's open our hearts, hands, and lips to serve others. May we do so "[un]ashamed of the gospel. because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes" (V. 16).

**ARTHUR JACKSON**

**Reflect and Pray**

How will you share the good news of forgiveness that you've received? How can you meet others' physical needs while sharing the love of Christ?

Dear Jesus, please help me to unashamedly share the good news of Your forgiveness.

**INSIGHT**

Romans opens with Paul identifying himself as "an apostle ... set apart for the gospel of God" (1:1). His letter is written "to all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people" (V. 7). Yet he singles out the gentiles for special mention (vv. 5-6), perhaps because their inclusion in the family of faith was still a radical concept. Paul reiterates this cross-cultural unity later in the chapter: "The power of God .. . brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile" (v. 16). His example inspires us to reach out to people in new places with the love of Christ.

**TIM GUSTAFSON**

# God Calling – 4/14/25

# Equally Yoked

My children, I guide you always. The walking in the way may not be always carried out, but the guiding is always so sure. God is using you both in marvelous ways. Go on gladly. You will see.

To be a perfect gymnast you must learn balance. It is balance and poise, perfect balance and poise, I am teaching you now. This will give you power in dealing with the lives of others, and that power is already being marvelously manifested.

The vision you both have is the means of clearing the obstacles away. When My disciple sees My purpose ahead, that very sight is the power that clears away every obstacle along the range of vision. You will both have mighty power to do this. Spiritual Light is in itself a miracle-worker.

People waste so much time in seeking to work out what they see. I declare to you that in the seeing My purpose all is done. Truly I said to My Disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." But to you, and the twos who gather to hear Me as you do, I can declare those things now, that then I left unsaid.

Is not the message of My servant Paul now plain: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," because My Guidance is intensified immeasurably in power, when the two are one in desire to be with Me -- but so few have understood.

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Isaiah 30:21